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The team at Documation stands in front of the Horizon BQ-500 Perfect Binder which is part of their newest Smart Binding System used for true book-of-one production.

L to R: Samantha Jaskowski, Prepress Manager; Randall Krass, IT Manager; Jeremy Stanek, Vice President of Operations; Joe Strauch, Production Manager

“We are already running two shifts per day on our two current Hunkeler systems and it’s not enough to utilize the full capacity of the Horizon binders. This new line will ensure there’s no bottleneck and will help us get even more volume out of our binders.”

– Jeremy Stanek, Vice President of Operations, Documation



Documation partners with Standard Finishing to further its digital transformation.

The history of Documation begins in 1999 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, with the acquisition of an in-plant printing operation, formerly owned by a company that organized seminars. After the acquisition, Documation continued to produce materials used in the original owner’s seminars like paper-based direct mail, brochures, and other onsite materials.

Jeremy Stanek, Documation’s Vice President of Operations, explains that Documation’s original founder leveraged the expertise the company gained by serving the seminar company and began producing similar work for a variety of associations such as the American Bar Association. Soon, they leveraged existing perfect binding capabilities to branch out and serve publishers as well. In 2012, the company was bought by Brad Stuckert, the current CEO, and began to reinvent itself again for a digital world.

Since then, the company has evolved to be 100% digital with a focus on print-on-demand, particularly books. Stanek adds, “We still print for the seminar company; we do about 65 million brochures and postcards for them every year, and we are doing quite a bit of direct mail as well. But books have increasingly become our focus, especially since we serve many web-to-print providers with online bookstores needing to process book-of-one orders.”

As early as 2010, Documation had begun acquiring finishing equipment from Standard, including a Horizon SB-07 Perfect Binder and a BQ-470 Perfect Binder, both with HT-80 trimmers. In 2017, the company decided to begin investing in additional equipment to become a true on-demand printer with the ability to produce book-of-one on demand. On the print side, the company acquired two HP PageWide T200 series inkjet web presses that run roll-to-roll with Hunkeler unwinders and rewinders.

The printed rolls are used to support two separate workflows at Documation. The first is short-run, print-on-demand applications. In this workflow, printed rolls are transferred to one of two nearline Hunkeler Roll-to-Cut/Stack systems to produce stacks or book blocks which are then taken offline for finishing. Stanek notes that the company runs finishing offline to accommodate the wide variety of applications they produce at a scalable volume. This offline finishing operation includes the Horizon SB-07 and BQ-470 Perfect Binders, as well as a newer Horizon SB-09 Perfect Binder and StitchLiner Mark III Saddlestitcher acquired in 2021. The SB-09, a nine-clamp binder, is configured in-line with a Horizon HT-1000V Trimmer and an automated CBF Conveyor. This configuration allows one operator to easily lay books on the conveyor belt to be fed directly into the binder clamps.



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- 1 The Hunkeler Unwinder feeds printed rolls into the CS6 Cutter at the front end of the Smart Binding System.
- 2 Cut sheets enter the Horizon AFV-564 for signature folding as part of the book-of-one production process.
- 3 The Horizon LBF-500 feeds loose sheet book blocks into the BQ-500 for perfect binding before heading into the HT-1000V for final trimming.
- 4 Bound books exiting the SB-09 Perfect Binder are delivered to the inline HT-1000V Trimmer.
- 5 Loose sheet, unglued book blocks are fed into the BQ-500 Perfect Binder via the LBF-500.
- 6 Documation’s Jeremy Stanek and Standard’s Regional Sales Manager, Mark Brown, discuss the newly installed Hunkeler Gen 8 Roll-to-Cut/Stack line.
- 7 Bindery operator prepares to load sheets into the bins of the collator on the StitchLiner Mark III Saddlestitcher.
- 8 Finished booklets are neatly delivered from the StitchLiner Mark III Saddlestitcher.

Most recently, Documation installed a third Hunkeler Generation 8 Roll-to-Cut/Stack line for more flexibility and to meet increased capacity requirements for this workflow. “We are already running two shifts per day on our two current systems and it’s not enough to utilize the full capacity of the Horizon binders. This new line will ensure there’s no bottleneck and will help us get even more volume out of our binders,” says Stanek.

The second workflow is true book-of-one production. In this workflow, printed rolls are transferred to one of two Smart Binding Systems. In this configuration, a printed roll is fed into the Hunkeler cutter and through the Horizon signature folder. Book blocks are then automatically fed into a Horizon perfect binder and through the HT-1000V Three-knife Trimmer. The two Smart Binding Systems are nearly identical, both going from roll to finished book in one automated process, but the newest line features the LBF-500 Book Block Feeder feeding book blocks into Horizon’s newest perfect binder, the BQ-500. Documation was proud to be the first North American installation of the LBF-500 and it is working out beautifully for them, according to Stanek. The LBF Feeder eliminates the need to glue book blocks upstream since the system can feed loose sheet, unglued book blocks as well as folded signatures.

“Prior to 2017,” Stanek explains, “we were trying to do on-demand using digital printing technology with some lower-end, toner-based equipment, but we did not have digital finishing including signature validation, dynamic folding to allow us to get a single book from a 20” web, or barcode reading for cover-to-book-block matching, and it was not particularly efficient or cost effective. We were probably doing about 200 books a day, and because of the analog finishing configuration, we were often printing twice as many books as we actually needed. Now that we actually have a fully digital system in place, we are producing about 6,000 books per day with the same number of people, so quite an improvement in productivity. We also grew our revenues from about \$15 million in 2017 to more than \$22 million in 2022.”

Documation has also been very happy with the quality of the equipment acquired from Standard Finishing and has full confidence in the Standard team. “As with any new installation, there were a few bumps in the road. But Standard Finishing was right there with us, even bringing in technical support from Horizon in Japan to resolve an issue that ultimately ended up with Horizon redesigning part of the equipment. No equipment is ever going to run perfectly right out of the gate and these are very complex lines. It’s the way Standard responded and resolved the problems that sets them apart.”

Documation also credits Standard Finishing’s dealer in their area, EO Johnson, as their first line of support. “We’ve worked with them for years,” Stanek said, “even before our digital transformation, and they are a terrific partner as well.”