



*"With experienced employees hard to come by, not only do we no longer need to depend on an aging workforce, but we've significantly improved productivity."*

Mark Goodwin, Gazette Printing



Bindery Operator Glen Cooke (left) and Production Manager John Chereski run a signature application on the Standard Horizon AFC-746F at Gazette Printing.

Easthampton, MA printer addresses labor concerns in the bindery

## Automated Folding Eliminates Bindery Worries for Gazette Printing.

AFC-746F B1 Pallet-Feed Folder outperforms manual equipment and delivers ease-of-use and productivity.



Mark Goodwin, President and Owner

The East Coast's oldest continually operating printing company – also probably the oldest in the U.S. – reflects the old saying, "A rolling stone gathers no moss, but it gains a certain polish." Gazette Printing is under family ownership, and its current owners, Mark and Paula Goodwin, have been busy making sure their business has that polish. "At the time we purchased the company in 2006," Mark Goodwin says, "we were running a lot of older equipment, so we have been updating our prepress and production operations."

One area that still needed attention was the bindery. Goodwin points out that experienced bindery employees are hard to come by, and there is a very competitive market for their services. "Good bindery people know they can jump ship and go to another company for more money," he says. "If you only have one or two bindery workers and one or both leave, it puts you in a bind,

so to speak, especially if you are a one-shift 40" operation like we are."

Gazette had been running traditional manual buckle folders with a 20-year bindery veteran. "We had redundancy in the press room," Goodwin says, "but not in the bindery. If you can't get the work out the door because of bindery bottlenecks, you have a real problem. And

people want a three-day lead time, so there is not much room for error."

Goodwin was concerned about these issues when Standard Finishing approached him about a year and a half ago, guaranteeing they had the premier, fully automated B1 cross-folder that money could buy, outperforming others. "I was hesitant," he says. "It was a big investment and at the time, I was getting the work done. But I visited their Boston demo center and liked what I saw. They proved to me that the AFC-746F Folder would outperform manual equipment three to one. In other words, this folder can do with one operator what it would take three operators to achieve in a day shift. The level of automation exceeds anything else out there."

Not only that, but Standard also promised that anyone from anywhere in the organization could easily be trained

to operate the AFC-746F, even if they have never done a fold in their life. "Based on what I saw," Goodwin notes, "I decided to make the leap. Coincidentally, while I was in the decision process, I received a resume from a local company that produced web forms, a prepress person that was looking for a job. I told him about the potential investment, that I liked the machine but didn't have anyone to operate it. He was game, so I hired him; and that was the final piece of the decision puzzle."

The AFC-746F has fully lived up to its promises, according to Goodwin. The new staff member, who had been doing estimating at his previous company, went through Standard's training program and became the company's lead bindery operator within 90 days.

"Not only do we no longer need to depend on an aging workforce," Goodwin comments, "but we've significantly improved productivity. Instead of being a worry, bindery has become a secondary thing, dependable and not a concern anymore. We can now fold 20,000 16-page signatures in one and a half hours, and it's no big deal. We provide fewer overs and have never come up short on a job; in fact, we typically have sellable work within three or four sheets out of the machine. The AFC-746F is worth its weight in gold, and I can't say enough good things about Standard's service. If you are a 40" shop, you would be crazy not to have this folder!"

**Next up:** Goodwin is planning to go back to Standard to explore what they have to offer in automated perfect binders!