



Adam DeMaestri,
BR Printers' President and CEO

BR Printers increases capacity and throughput with new book production solutions from Hunkeler and Horizon.

The Standard Hunkeler Roll-to-Plowfold solution at BR Printers produces ready-to-bind, glued book blocks and allows the in-line HP T240 Page-Wide Web press to run at its maximum rated speed.



BR Printers, founded in Silicon Valley at the birth of the production digital printing era in the early 1990s, now has several locations nationally. These include mirrored book printing plants in San Jose, California (HQ) and Independence, Kentucky, direct mail providers, C&D Printing and Egan Printing Co. in Colorado, Content Management Corporation (CMC) in CA, an offset book printer, National Graphic Solutions (NGS) in Appleton, Wisconsin, as well as the recently acquired C.J. Krehbiel Company in Cincinnati, Ohio now rebranded as BR Ohio.

"Demand for book printing has been a growth area and saw even more growth during the pandemic as people on lockdown found more time to both read and write books," says Adam DeMaestri, BR Printers' President and CEO. "As a result, the book printing market in the United States is somewhat underserved, and we have seen increasing demand in our Kentucky and California plants. We were seeking a way to improve throughput and productivity in our Kentucky operation, especially the ability to run our HP T240 PageWide Web press at its rated speed of over 500 feet per minute, instead of at half that speed with the previous roll system."

The company began a review of the available options and determined that this "need for speed" could best be met by two solutions from Standard Finishing: an in-line Hunkeler Roll-to-Plowfold solution for producing ready-to-bind, glued book blocks and a near-line Hunkeler/Horizon Roll-to-Saddlestitch solution for booklet production. "Not only would these solutions allow us to ramp up the speed of the press to its maximum rated speed on the book block line, but with the addition of the saddlestitch line, it would allow us to build that business as well, for which we were seeing growing demand," DeMaestri explains.

DeMaestri notes that, currently, about 80% of the volume produced by BR Printers in Kentucky is in perfect bound and spiral books,

with the remainder being saddlestitched. "This new Hunkeler/Horizon equipment will allow us to shift that volume over the next few months and a growing percentage of the units will now be saddlestitched," he says.

In anticipation of the increased throughput generated by being able to run the press at rated speed, BR Printers also decided to add another perfect binder to maximize productivity. "We already had a Standard Horizon BQ-470 with an HT-1000V perfect binding/trimming solution in place, along with a stand-alone BQ-270 binder, that have been serving us well," DeMaestri says. "We also recently acquired a Standard Horizon BQ-480 Perfect Binder, substantially increasing our capacity for producing perfect bound books." All of the Horizon equipment has been installed and maintained by their trusted Standard dealer, Graphco.

One of the key benefits of the new binding solution, according to DeMaestri, is its level of automation. "With our existing perfect binder, we had to place the book block in the clamps. Now we just put book blocks on the infeed conveyer, and they are automatically fed into the binder. The barcode on the books tells the trimmer what is coming down the line regardless of run length from book-of-one to a few thousand. All in a seamless process that requires much less operator intervention with less room for error."

DeMaestri and BR Printers were not new to Standard Finishing; in fact, he says, "We have their equipment in Kentucky and San Jose – they have been great partners for us. This new generation of equipment has really increased the automation, allowing us to produce more books every day, which we needed to do. I've visited their Demonstration Center in Boston, and I also attended Hunkeler Innovationdays in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 2019. The people in both organizations are terrific. They deliver a good product and they stand by it. That's absolutely critical in a fast-paced business like ours!"

