



Océ Case study

Strahm Automation and Mailing Services



Strahm and the Océ ColorStream 10000

This fast-growing Kansas City service bureau had two objectives: to accommodate the growing demand for high-quality color transactional documents and to eliminate the costs and logistical headaches of managing pre-printed color shells. The Océ ColorStream™ 10000 system provided just the right solution for both color and black & white jobs. It also delivered positive results, including streamlined operations, a lower cost of ownership, increased flexibility and vivid, high-quality color.

Competing smarter through automation

Strahm Automation and Mailing Services is a Kansas City based service bureau that provides its customers with a variety of services, including document composition, handling, printing and distribution. For more than nine decades, Strahm has built its reputation on a steadfast commitment to service, quality and innovation. The company is committed to leveraging the latest digital document technology and market strategies to ensure customer satisfaction and a competitive edge.

Strahm produces a variety of jobs for customers, including statements, invoices and other customer communications, a diverse workload that demands high levels of accuracy and responsiveness. Not surprisingly, the company is always on the lookout for opportunities to automate processes and optimize production and delivery.

“We thrive in a market where many other providers are unwilling to compete,” explains Strahm’s President, Brian Dicker. “Most of our competitors want to service long-running, high-volume print jobs. We go against the mainstream by combining and processing many small runs at once. This approach can demand a great deal of intervention and customization. So our strategy is to automate as much of the process as possible.”

A focus on technology

Strahm Automation and Mailing Services serves a customer base that includes a diverse array of customers with equally diverse document composition, printing and processing requirements. While the vast majority of Strahm’s volumes are black & white, the job mix frequently calls for color logos and customized forms that once were produced exclusively on pre-printed color stock.

Printing and process excellence are key concerns for Strahm, so it wasn’t long before the company recognized that maintaining and warehousing an unwieldy inventory of preprinted forms was far too expensive. What’s more, loading and unloading paper stock was taking far too much time. Staying ahead of the competition meant implementing a technology solution that would not only streamline operations, but could process multiple cutsheet applications and help eliminate unnecessary costs and process steps.

The challenge: increasing process efficiency

“We print a multitude of small jobs, many of them less than 10 pages,” Dicker points out. “The process required a lot of manual intervention and warehousing because of the variety of pre-printed stock used,” Dicker notes. “We wanted to eliminate that burden and establish a more efficient process.”

Given that digital color printing has historically been cost-prohibitive, Dicker and his team were skeptical about the cost of purchasing and running a color machine. “We thought the cost of digital color would be too high,” recalls Dicker, “so the challenge was finding a system that could deliver the right mix of color and black & white printing and affordability too. Ninety percent of our transactional work requires high-quality color. But it doesn’t have to be brochure-quality color. Many of the digital color devices we considered offered the level of quality we needed, but had a price tag and a cost of ownership to match. We wanted something in between that would give us high quality at a cost appropriate to our needs.”

The solution: the Océ ColorStream 10000

The print team evaluated several machines. They selected the Océ ColorStream 10000 continuous feed full-color digital press because it delivered the perfect balance of speed, flexibility, Graphic Arts quality and low operating costs. The Océ ColorStream 10000 system enables Strahm to print a variety of statements, invoices and other customer communications in color without having to maintain a costly inventory of pre-printed stock.

The system prints full-color output with vibrant quality at a speed of 172 images per minute, enabling providers like Strahm to respond to growing demands for high-quality color, print-on-demand and personalized color marketing applications.

Océ dot modulation is a unique feature that enriches color applications with crisp graphics and smooth gradations for illustrations and photos. For added flexibility, the system can print black & white applications at a speed of 852 images per minute with multi-level graphic arts quality. Thanks to this

application flexibility, the Océ ColorStream 10000 system does more than provide Strahm with an appealing cost of ownership for color printing. It makes excellent economic sense for black & white jobs as well. “With the Océ ColorStream 10000 system, we can print black & white jobs at a competitive price point,” says Dicker. “And we can print both high-volume color and black & white jobs on a device that gives us the performance and flexibility we need. Other products we considered simply didn’t support this level of production flexibility and affordability.”

Then there’s the issue of preprinted stock. In addition to supporting Strahm’s business growth and market strategy, the Océ ColorStream 10000 system flexibly handles a wide range of transactional document applications. “The Océ ColorStream 10000 system gives us flexible and appropriate business color on the fly at a very fast speed,” notes Dicker. “As a result, we no longer have to worry about managing a warehouse full of cutsheet preprinted shells.”

Reliability was another critical factor that figured into the decision to purchase the Océ ColorStream 10000 system. Strahm had a long-standing relationship with Océ and had found Océ equipment to be extremely dependable. “We felt very comfortable about continuing our relationship with Océ,” recalls Dicker. “When we first saw the Océ ColorStream 10000 system in action we were convinced that it would be a workhorse as well. “And that belief is proving to be true. Today, the system prints nearly a third of all of the work that goes through our facility.”

Océ and the bottom line

In addition to productivity benefits, the Océ ColorStream 10000 system is delivering bottom line results as well. Dicker anticipates saving more than \$150,000 per year as a direct

result of the efficiencies made possible by the Océ ColorStream 10000 printer. “When you consider operator intervention, administration and warehousing costs, our savings are significant,” he says.

And while the cost savings and efficiencies meet Strahm’s strategic objectives, advantages in operating costs with the Océ ColorStream 10000 meet the organization’s operational goals. “That was a huge factor in our decision,” says Dicker. “We finally got those costs in line thanks to the Océ system. Océ offered the only solution that made sense for both color and black & white printing.”

The Océ experience

Strahm purchased the Océ ColorStream 10000 system for several reasons. These included the demonstrated capabilities of the device, the proven reliability of Océ technologies, and the care and diligence of the sales and technical teams who modeled and tested applications to prove that the Océ ColorStream system could handle Strahm’s specific applications. This “seeing is believing” approach provided Strahm with the confirmation it needed to move forward with the implementation. The fact that Strahm already had a relationship with Océ further bolstered the company’s confidence in the potential of the Océ ColorStream solution.

The future looks bright...

In a market that is nothing if not competitive and constantly changing, Strahm is convinced that the Océ ColorStream 10000 system will play a key role in helping the company continue to improve efficiencies and strengthen its competitive position. “The future is in digital color printing and our people are really excited about how the Océ ColorStream 10000 system is changing the way we work,” says Dicker.

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