



Mercury Print Productions drives growth in book printing with the KODAK PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press

Mercury Print Productions, based in Rochester, NY, USA, has always been an early adopter of innovation, allowing them to improve the productivity, quality and cost efficiency of print. Founded in 1969, the company was active as a commercial printer for several decades before turning its focus to the production of books for the educational sector around 15 years ago. Today, the educational market accounts for almost 80 percent of Mercury's sales.

A key investment was the purchase of a KODAK PROSPER 5000XL Press in July 2011, which was joined by further PROSPER Presses in subsequent years. With the inkjet web presses from Kodak, Mercury was able to innovate and achieve tremendous growth in the educational books business, which, according to the company's CEO John Place had been virtually devoid of digital printing products until then.

Innovative Kodak continuous inkjet technology sparks growth

Mercury currently employs 220 people and has sheetfed and web offset, sheetfed and web inkjet, sheetfed toner and wide format inkjet facilities. In the fall of 2023, the company expanded its inkjet production printing capacity with the world's first installed KODAK PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press, the fastest inkjet web press currently available on the market.

Mercury and Kodak have a unique partnership and Mercury has long relied on Kodak technology for both digital and offset printing. Mercury uses KODAK SONORA Process Free Plates on its sheetfed and web offset presses, which are imaged on KODAK MAGNUS and TRENDSETTER Platesetters. The fully cloud-based version of the KODAK PRINERGY Platform integrates and automates Mercury's digital and offset workflow and prepares data for all presses and printing processes. "PRINERGY is the workhorse of everything we do in our shop. It helps us be more agile and more automated, so we can do more with less," says President Christian Schamberger. "Using PRINERGY's Rules Based Automation, we have been able to increase output in prepress anywhere between 40 and 50 percent without having to increase our personnel."

More inkjet speed, more substrate flexibility

John Place, Mercury's CEO, explains why the PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press came at exactly the right time for the company: "The PROSPER 7000 Turbo stood out for its exceptional speed which lets us go for longer runs. Thanks to this high productivity, we can meet the growing demands of customers in terms of shorter lead times and on-demand manufacturing. Another important factor was PROSPER 7000 Turbo's ability to print on gloss, dull or matte-coated stocks in high quality. This enables us to produce more sophisticated textbooks and trade books



and thus win additional work.” Mercury prints both standard offset papers without priming and inkjet-treated stock in a wide weight range on the PROSPER 7000 Turbo. If no change of the paper stock is required, a job changeover on the press is a matter of minutes.

Utilizing KODAK Stream Continuous Inkjet Technology and KODAK EKTACOLOR Inks, the PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press offers printing speeds of up to 410 mpm (1,345 fpm) and a throughput of up to 5,523 A4 or U.S. letter pages per minute. Thanks to its maximum web width of 648 mm (25.5 in) and print width of 621 mm (24.4 in), it can print A4 textbook pages in 3-up (3 copies side by side). The PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press offers three optimized print modes – Quality, Performance and Turbo – which allow easy adjustment of print speed and quality to the requirements of each job, always ensuring maximum production efficiency. Mercury currently runs around 90 percent of print jobs in Turbo Mode and 10 percent in Quality Mode. As higher-quality trade jobs are on the rise, Mercury can run jobs at various resolutions to fit their business needs.

Today, Mercury operates two PROSPER 5000 Presses in addition to the PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press. All of them run 24/7, produce from roll-to-roll and are supervised by one operator per shift. The printed rolls are processed on sheeting lines with the resulting paper stacks being fed into normal print finishing and bookbinding.

A real game changer for Mercury

“The higher efficiencies and productivity of the PROSPER 7000 Turbo enabled us to be more cost-effective and get the quantity range of jobs higher than we had seen in the past. For example, for a typical 600-page job on the PROSPER 5000, we would not go over 1,500 to 2,000 copies. With the PROSPER 7000 Turbo, we are up to about 4,000 to 5,000 copies. We always decide whether to print in offset or with PROSPER based on an individual cost estimation for each order,” states Christian Schamberger. “What’s more, the PROSPER 7000 Turbo empowered us to seek new business where we were not necessarily the most competitive in the past. This will enable us to significantly grow our volume.”

John Place is enthusiastic about the productivity of the PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press. “The big question for us is always how many impressions we can get out of the machine in one day. We recently achieved 4.5 million pages within 24 hours on our PROSPER 7000 Turbo. That was a great milestone. And the largest single job we’ve printed on the machine to date was 1.4 million pages.” Christian Schamberger adds, “With its tremendous productivity and greater substrate flexibility, the PROSPER 7000 Turbo Press is a real game changer for us. It prints incredibly fast. We run jobs on uncoated paper at well over 1,000 fpm. This means the press needs a new paper roll every 15 to 20 minutes.”

Mercury's leadership team is very satisfied with the operational reliability of the PROSPER Presses. And if support is needed, Christian Schamberger has nothing to complain about, “A big



plus for Kodak is its service team, it's phenomenal. We cannot afford any press downtime. In this respect, Kodak is an excellent partner for us, the level of service and support second to none.”

Mercury Print Productions has always been at the forefront of its key business areas through continued investment in Kodak digital and offset technology and is prospering as a result. Considering the rapidly changing marketplace, John Place is certain where the greatest business opportunity in printing lies in the future, “We believe that inkjet is where the growth is for Mercury.”

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