



CASE STUDY

HOW FORT ORANGE PRESS IS HELPING EXPAND THE PRINT GAME

SMART CHANGE STARTS HERE.



“While our objective is print perfection, we place an utmost importance on building long-lasting relationships with our accounts and consumers, ensuring success for each individual involved.”

— Robert Witko, President & CEO, Fort Orange Press

“Printing is more than just dots.”

What does the average person think when he thinks about print? Ask a dozen people and you might get a dozen different answers. Like everything, the answer is in the presentation. At Fort Orange Press, which proudly boasts the aforementioned phrase on its website’s homepage, printing is many things. Printing is the award-winning service Fort Orange has delivered to every job for the past 100-plus years, whether the times called for letterpress, traditional offset, and now digital. Printing is also the strategic and forward-thinking decisions that the Albany, New York, print service provider brings to every project.

Family owned and operated since 1905, Fort Orange Press has grown into one of the northeast’s leading commercial printing companies, with clients stretching to greater New York City and as far north as the Canadian border. With a diverse set of seasoned print professionals, Fort Orange possesses the expertise, visionary intelligence, and acute business insight to help lead the print community headlong into the 21st century.

For Robert Witko, there is no other way. A print “lifer,” the president and CEO grew up in the business. When he was named president and CEO in 2009, he succeeded his brother, Michael, who had taken the reins from their father. Frank Witko started as a sales representative for Fort Orange in 1956, eventually working his way up through various management positions to president in 1962. He later became a majority stockholder and chairman in 1973.

As Robert will tell you, his father’s progressive leadership and thinking paved the way for a generation of Witko involvement, which also included his sister, Kim. “In this business, it is one thing to claim performance ability, and it is quite another to have the resources to support that claim,” he says.

That starts with having the right team. The essence that is Fort Orange lies in its people, from the management team, to skilled craftsmen and administrative staff. “Not only is our ownership third-generation, but we’ve had generations of production employees as well,” Robert says. “We take

craftsmanship to a new level by staying at the forefront of technological changes. Additionally, having a customer base that is as excited as we are with adoption of new technology, as we continuously look to enhance their brand identities."

Take the company's foray into the world of digital printing, particularly production inkjet. After installing a varioPRINT i300 and a ColorStream 3900 last year, Fort Orange now has the versatility to run both sheet fed and inkjet web covers, enabling it to pick and choose where and when to utilize the technology to reach maximum efficiency.

"Inkjet gives us the ability to provide our customers an expanding catalog of product offerings and services," Robert says. "From books to direct mail and magazines, the inkjet process has allowed our team to utilize these presses as a maximum cost benefit for our customer. Inkjet has enhanced our storefront capabilities, giving us the flexibility to decide which press will be optimal for each specific job. It has also allowed our team the ability to provide shorter lead times on low volume, high frequency orders."

In the eye of the beholder...

Every project is different. Each carries with it a unique characteristic that can call for the most straightforward approach or something a bit more creative. To help set the tone at Fort Orange, every customer who comes in with a project gets one-on-one time with the team. Each team member seeks ways to save costs, make recommendations, and add some peace of mind.

"Our team has a good working knowledge of what they have to do to provide a beautifully designed piece," Robert says. "They have a unique opportunity to be there with our customers for each step along the way to bring a design to life."

That is also where inkjet comes into play. Fort Orange is able to offer a multitude of proofing options that are not always so easily accomplished in traditional offset. "This provides an opportunity to our client to see exactly what their final product will look and feel like before the actual production takes place," Robert says.



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In today's highly competitive landscape, every opportunity to gain an edge is critical. Adding inkjet has afforded Fort Orange the advantages of digital printing, including VDP, customization, personalization, as well as the ability to produce a higher volume in a quicker and more efficient fashion. Robert says it has become the perfect technological upgrade to complement its dry toner presses and has proven to be an on-ramp to the more traditional offset production.

"The ability to shorten lead times for low volume, high frequency orders has also been a huge addition to the printing industry," he says. "As the world continues to move forward, so too does the printing industry. The speed, quality, and productivity improvements that inkjet presses offer are just the beginning of the printing industry's transformation into the modern world."

This kind of attention to detail is what helps build relationships. For example, Robert recalls the working partnership Fort Orange has built with a family owned publishing business near Buffalo, New York. The customer needed to produce short-run full color textbooks consisting of more than 150 pages each to support its educational skills teaching syllabus. The handbooks contained colorful illustrations that help assist children with their reading skills.

After consulting with the company, Fort Orange found the publications were a perfect fit for the ColorStream 3900. Today, Fort Orange helps deliver two up-trimmed book blocks from its bindery, helping utilize cost-effective and vibrant inkjet imaging.

"While our objective is print perfection, we place an utmost importance on building long-lasting relationships with our accounts and costumers, ensuring success for each individual involved," Robert says. "We like to think that is what makes an exception in the printing industry."

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