Leoma and LeRoy Baker with daughter Rhonda Capps in front of their XP5000

Riding the servo bus

Danielle Jerschefske visits LTI to celebrate the installation of Mark Andy's servo driven technology

Labels, Tags and Inserts Inc. hosted an Open House at its Burlington, North Carolina facility to celebrate the addition of the new Mark Andy XP5000 servo driven press to the shop floor. A. LeRoy Baker, who has been in the industry since 1959, opened LTI in 1994 with four Mark Andy presses and the help of his wife and children. He had previously owned a print plate shop called Roto-Plate, but decided to switch to a print house when the flexographic technology began to change in the 1990's. Butler says, 'I want only the best, and that's what we will pass along to our customers.'

Just two years ago, LTI invested $1.7 million into the newest equipment, replacing all of its older machinery. The 13-inch Mark Andy fully servo XP5000 press is a welcomed new addition to the high tech shop. The XP5000 possesses a fully electronic servo driven system programmed to drive minimum waste and maximum productivity. Designed as a multi-process platform, each print station can complete several converting processes, including rotary screen, die-cutting and hot and cold foil stamping.

Each of the eight stations on the XP5000 has a computerized interface control panel combined with internet diagnostics for pre-registration, auto registration control and re-register. 'Proprietary register control algorithms is what allows the XP to maintain exceptional print quality throughout the entire run, minimizing waste and delivering maximum throughput,' says Jeff Feltz, director, product management, Mark Andy.

LTI installed a re-lam and de-lam, two UV coating units and a corona treater to shock films so they are ink receptive. There is also a roll end auto shutdown feature in the XP that the saves the operator 2-3 minutes per changeover. With this feature, unwind tension automatically shuts off, splice clamps engage and the rewind motors shut down. When splicing is complete the press can start printing sellable product almost immediately with minimal adjustments to the tension.

'The servo press is the latest and greatest invention for flexo printers,' says Rhonda Capps, vice president, LTI and daughter of founder LeRoy Baker. 'It allows us to print on a wider range of substrates from thicker material to films. With the self registration controls on every print station we do not have as much waste and can run at faster speeds, giving the customer a product that is comparable to offset printing.' Capps reports that the set up time for the press is quicker and still prints great quality even when run at high speeds.

'This press allows us to complete orders we have never been able to do before,' continues Capps. 'Technology is very important to us. Even other print shops come to us to help them complete orders that they cannot do on their own equipment.'

Specifically, the XP5000 servo press is significant to LTI because of its Variprint capability. LTI wants to break into the film and shrink sleeve markets; now that they are able to change the plate roll to run at a different speed than the pacing roll, LTI can print elongated images on stretchy films leaving little to no print distortion once the film retracts again post-print. LTI is very excited about this.

In addition to the XP5000, LTI has three other Mark Andy presses in house, an 8-color 3000 UV and two 6-color 2200s. There is a BST ProMark video monitor attached to each press and all have sheet and roll capability. A butt splicer is attached in line onto the 3000 which increased productivity of the press by 40 percent.

Capps says, 'We feel that Mark Andy has been a partner to us in the truest sense, working together to make LTI the best it can be. We have certainly seen our production increase because of the improvements Mark Andy continues to build on.' ■