

Postpress investment solidifies Buffalo News' commercial footing

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The Buffalo (N.Y.) News is among the newspapers that have increased commercial printing in recent years. The paper in 2009 began printing the regional edition of The New York Times, as well as printing The Daily News of Batavia, N.Y. Since then, it's continued to add commercial work at a feverish pace, signing on with four new publishers in the past year alone.

To further supplant that position, the publisher recently began looking for stitchers and stackers that could better accommodate multiple products.

"In June we took on Community Papers of Western New York and we signed a 10-year contract to print 300,000 copies for them," Bryan Carr, vice president of production for The Buffalo (N.Y.) News told *News & Tech*.

In total, The News produces more than two-dozen different publications for that group, half of which are tabloids that require stitching.

The News operates two Colora presses from KBA, and tapped MotterStitch for

stitching equipment. The daily installed two MotterStitch Cylinder Stitchers in August. Currently the units, which are equipped to run at full press speeds, are handling 150,000 stitched tabloid pages per week for the paper, MotterStitch said.

"One of our presses has dual delivery with both a rotary and jaw folder and we installed MotterStitch units on both of those folders," Aaron Gallivan, The News' assistant production manager explained.

In addition to the stitched tab commercial work, Carr said the new stitchers give the publisher the option of stitching sections of its own daily if it chooses to do so in the future. The last piece of the puzzle will be a forthcoming upgrade of the software for the Siemens controls on the stitchers.

Besides stitchers, The News was also looking for a stacker solution that could run multiple products. The publisher in December installed a TS-800 stacker from Schur that went live shortly after the New Year. Rather

than having to be moved based on different jobs, the new stacker resides in a single location to accommodate all jobs on the Colora pressline.

Prior to the addition of the Schur unit, the bulk of The News' commercial work was run on two Gammerler KL 6000 stackers.

"Now we use the Schur stacker for some of that workload," Gallivan said. The Schur stacker has also enabled News staff to perform preventive maintenance on the Gammerler stackers without disrupting the workload.

Tying bundles

The smaller size of the TS800 stacker allows the publisher to accommodate a tie line in the mailroom to handle bundle tying on some of the newer commercial jobs, with a smaller amount of labor.

"Our newest print work was approximately 28 weekly metro papers with varying draws," Gallivan explained. "Most of these require

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Schur TS800 stacker at The Buffalo News.

tying and have lower page counts.

"The stackers in our tie lines could not handle the lower page counts very well and the Gammerler stackers were too big to fit in the footprint we have for the tie lines. The Schur stacker fit in line with very little modifications."

The TS800 handles the lower-page-count 10-18-page tabs.

"Having it in line has saved on manning for piling then tying," Gallivan said. "It ejects right in the tyer and is piled."

The News' additional commercial jobs include those for the Villager, the Ellicottville Times and Wainfleet of Port Coborne,

Ontario — all added in the past year. It also handles printing for the Chautauqua Star, America Sports Media of Rochester, Neighbor-to-Neighbor Publishing of East Aurora, N.Y., college publications and Pennysaver pubs serving Eden and Angola.

Carr said The News will continue to court commercial work. To keep pace, the publisher is also retrofitting its Goss press gripper conveyors and will install updated Siemens drives on those units.

"Our presses are 10 years old," Carr said. "I am now training our production management staff on performing predictive and preventive maintenance. One of the biggest things in older plants is 'run till failure,' so we don't have time to have broken down equipment. We need to be able to project when things are going to need to be fixed."

Carr said The News' press is running up to capacity — 70,000 copies per hour. It can produce 80 pages, 24 of them in color. ▲