

Precision is our culture. Success is the result.

Located in south central Minnesota, Precision Press Inc. is a label, flexible packaging and forms printing company with a well-earned reputation for exceptional precision and quality. Precision's modern 213,000 sq. ft facility houses over 40 presses, most of which are offset lithography for label and flexible package printing. Precision Press is part of the Taylor Corporation family of global providers. Taylor Corporation is a Forbes Private 200 company and stands as one of the top 5 graphic communications and commercial print companies in North America.

We spent some time with Lee Timmerman, Precision's President, and asked him about his company's focus, challenges and successes.

Mr. Timmerman said, "What I would really like to present is that Precision Press can help companies with the vital Point-of-Purchase 12 second decisions consumers make at the store.

Offset print on lightweight film is a way for brand owners to not only reduce their costs but to achieve life-like renderings of their products on the shelf. Point-of-purchase is hugely important for people when they're in the store. If they're not habitually going after a brand, they're looking at the graphics on the labels to help them determine their choice. If something looks substantially more appealing, they may even try that instead of their familiar brand. Offset graphics has the ability to make products look like they're in a photograph—appetizing and real as opposed to maybe the flexo print that is currently the standard on flexible film."

I understand that you have flexo units on some of your offset press is that correct?

"We have four flexo presses which are primarily used for specific application and also several flexo stations on our offset web presses used primarily for white ink or varnish coats, but we're ninety percent offset. Today we have more than 30 web-offset presses in narrow to mid-size," noted Timmerman.

In the past you've worked to reduce energy consumption and that led to an 8% reduction in energy costs. You projected that you wanted an additional reduction of 3% in 2013. How did that work out—did you achieve it?



Lee Timmerman of Precision Press with his latest Martin Automatic splicing unwind.

"Yes, we did," said Timmerman. "We have a high electric bill because of the UV and EB curing components on our presses so reducing that cost is something that we go after in a big way, not only from the sustainability standpoint, but also because it shows up on our bottom line. I'm particularly proud of our company because we are a zero-landfill facility. We've had to work hard to do that.

We will not bring in chemistries just because it opens up the process window and makes it easier. We challenge ourselves to operate with chemistry that's safe for our employees, safe for consumers and less volatile to the environment. Everything is recycled back and what we can't recycle goes to the electric company to be burned as fuel to generate more electricity."

Your company has an ISO 9001, ISO 13485, ISO 14001 and ISO 22000 certification. How has that impacted your business?

Timmerman answered, "All these certifications, while they're nice from a marketing standpoint to be able to tell customers that you have them, what they really

mean is that you operate in a prescribed manner for a good manufacturing process and you have controls in place that allow consistency. At the end of the day, all these certifications tell your customer how you operate your company and that you are a reliable supplier.”

You have a new Goss offset press and you have installed Martin equipment on it. Tell me more about that.

“We originally put Martin components (ECPFI Automatic Lap Splicer & LRD Automatic rewind) on the front and back of our Muller Martini press six years ago and we were very impressed with their precision and reliability,” continued Timmerman. “A press is only as good as its weakest link and the Martin components have been hugely reliable. They allowed us to maintain tension on various film weights which is critical

“We found that Martin delivered the greatest precision and reliability so it was the best choice for our application.”

in offset printing. So when we decided to add an even wider, 33 ½”, and faster 9 unit Sunday Vpak 500 Goss press, we wanted to open up our window of substrates even more than what we had before. Controlled web tension is critical to maintain great print quality and when you desire to run many different substrates, a top notch unwind/rewind is needed.

“The new Goss press is an important production component and we wanted to get the most out of our investment. We were very happy with the Martin units that we had bought earlier, but we still researched the market to see if there was anything better out there. We found that Martin delivered the greatest precision and reliability so it was the best choice for our application. Since we had a really great history with Martin equipment, we were very confident it would be a good addition to our new Goss press. We purchased some upgrades on the Martins that reduced the friction component even more so we could run the very thin films down to 0.5 mil. The upgrades have been spot on and they’ve been a great investment.

“I love the fact that Martin has their base model and gives you options to add the capability to run either

very heavy or really thin film substrates. That’s really meeting the need out there and I really appreciate that. Martin is in a good position because as offset gets more into film, there is nobody out there that can touch them. I can’t say enough positive about Martin products, they’re amazing—they run every day, they don’t cause us trouble and when you’re in a manufacturing situation, that’s about the highest praise you can give.”

What do you see in Precision Press’s future?

“I see a continued growth opportunity for web-offset printing on thin films. Flexo and Gravure have been the only way to make that material for shrink and for pouching. While flexo continues to improve in quality, flexo graphics still degrade over time and because the plates are expensive, printers have a tendency to push it before replacing them. This creates an up and down image quality curve that leads to inconsistency. You don’t have that problem in offset. With offset you can do great imaging with four-colors versus needing ten colors on a flexo press, and you don’t have to charge customers for plates.

“As offset press manufacturers refine their products and offset graphics show their value on the shelf, more people will see the opportunities in the marketplace and offset will gather a bigger share of the market. Not just because of the photo realistic graphics, although I think that’s the biggest part, but the cost—it’s a lot less expensive for the consumer company with offset rather than flex or gravure. At the end of the day, you can combine cost savings with improved graphics and that’s a win, win.

“As for Precision’s future, we’ve invested heavily during the last eight years in the IML (Injection Mold Label) market. IML has been a very strong packaging element in Europe and usually Europe is five to ten years ahead of the US in label printing. You can go over there and see what’s coming here in the future. IML will continue to grow in the US. It’s had a slow start but



SKINNYPACK™, an eco-friendly and cost-effective container produced by IPL with in-mould label by Precision Press, won gold at the 2014 IMDA awards.

most of those problems have been automation issues. We have vast run sizes compared to Europe and to do



A Martin LRD Automatic Transfer Rewinder enables the Goss Vpak press to run roll-to-roll without stopping.

that we need to have high count cavity molds. The automation to drive that has been complicated and the special labels used need to be very consistent. Robotics has improved and label precision is there so we're able to do it now.

more of these rigid plastic containers with some really great print quality on them. You will also begin to see it more in shrink labeling and flexible packaging. When you get into offset-quality, blueberries will actually look like real, fresh blueberries instead of blue blobs. Not only will the graphics improve but you can now change shapes and have custom shaped containers that help identify brand. This helps consumers find their brand in the midst of a crowd of rounds.

"We've invested in barrier IML over the last three years and we now have some unique capabilities that allow us to create our own substrates. We can create barrier labels for injection mold containers that are very

resistant to oxygen and to vapor transmission. Today we are really at the level of glass, and products that are currently packaged in heavy and breakable glass bottles can now be packaged in less expensive lightweight plastic containers. In addition, we're matching our labels composition to the containers so they're recyclable.

"There are a lot of good things happening today with barrier technology to preserve the contents. We're also able to do retort because of the properties of our unique substrates and we're achieving high-pressure pasteurization, which is perhaps where things are headed in the future for sterilization.

"The advent of robotics in our finishing allows us to group orders on our presses. And with robotics, we have a lot better assurance to the client that we're not mixing labels, which is a big deal in food labeling. When the robotics can automatically pick up an entire sequence of labels and put them in separate trays, you don't get the mixing that can happen in a lot of other systems today.

"As you can easily see, Precision Press is not a static company. We're constantly innovating and developing new solutions for customers that just cannot find a solution anywhere else."

To learn more about Martin Automatic splicers and rewinders, please click [here](#):