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Jim Dishong, Manager of Output Services, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield

RS Roll-to-Roll Gets High Marks

Industry

Insurance

Application

Insurance statements & mailings

Printers

Océ PageStream 1060

Solution

RS Roll-to-Roll SD:

RS Unwind

RS Rewind

RS Inserter Unwinds

“With constant budget constraints we’re always trying to cut costs. We can’t buy new equipment or make other investments or changes unless we are guaranteed a payback,” said Jim Dishong, manager of output services at the East Campus of Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Operating with high volume and under constant budgetary constraints, Highmark sought out Lasermax Roll Systems, the world’s largest supplier of paper handling equipment for highspeed digital printers, to help automate the output services department.

A long-term partnership with Lasermax Roll Systems has helped Highmark reduce labor costs while significantly increasing productivity in both the printing and mailing functions of the output services department.

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield serves its membership from two Pennsylvania campuses – the East Campus in Camp Hill, and the West Campus in Pittsburgh. According to Dishong, the output services

department – East employs 76 people and generates six million pieces of mail each month, including explanation of benefit statements, pay and no pay statements and Medicare summary notices. In addition, the department also prints and mails approximately one million checks to providers and subscribers.

Already familiar with the benefits of roll input on their printers, the logical next step was to gain the similar roll feed benefits available on the inserters. Lasermax Roll Systems RS Roll-to-Roll SD solutions were installed in the print room, accompanied by Inserter Unwinders in the mailroom.

The RS Roll-to-Roll SD allows the Océ PageStream 1060 printers to run unattended for hours and its high quality rolls offer problem free feeding of inserters in the mailroom, both of which have produced dramatic changes in the department.

“The Roll-to-Roll and Inserter Unwinder installation has been a tremendous success,” Dishong said. “We’ve experienced huge savings in productivity and it’s allowed us to get a



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Increased labor productivity has been the chief benefit of the RS Roll-to-Roll SD in the print room. Now one person can run four printers.

“The printer can run for four to five hours unattended,” he said.

The mailroom has experienced similar labor productivity benefits. One person can run a mail machines, where before, Dishong said, two people were needed per high speed mailer - a 50% reduction in labor requirements. Mail equipment runs for up to six hours without re-loading.

These labor productivity gains in both print and mail rooms free up staff to take inventory or perform other jobs in the department. More significantly, Dishong has been able to reduce staff on a permanent basis.

“We were able to cut a couple people from the printing area and six from the mail equipment and add them to other departments in the company,” he said.

Employees with the right qualifications were able to move to higher positions within the company, such as technical areas like production control or programming. The department also went a long time not hiring; if somebody quit, the position was not filled.

Along with the increase in labor productivity, the mailroom also experienced a big jump in inserter productivity due to the better quality paper resulting from the roll. Unlike fanfold paper, with its tented perforations, rewind paper is smooth and reduces inserter jams significantly.

“The high quality rewind paper was hugely beneficial when compared to paper from a stack. No one told us to expect that, it was a total surprise,” Dishong said. “The better paper going into the mail equipment reduced paper jams by at least 60 to 70 percent.”

Less jams equals less downtime for the staff to stop and restart the machine, boosting inserter productivity. Dishong has found that the Lasermax Roll Systems equipment interfaces well with other equipment and is so reliable, especially on the inserters, that he can't remember the last time he had to call for service.

“I guess that really says something about the equipment's reliability,” he said. “It's one of those things you really take for granted with Lasermax Roll Systems.”

While uneasy at first about not seeing what was being printed on the rewind rolls, Highmark soon was confident with the process.

“Initially, it was a little strange not to see what was being printed, but we got over that pretty quickly,” Dishong said. “The only thing that is done in a stack now are the payout checks, and we definitely look at those.”

Dishong has other changes in the works for the department. He plans to bring in Lasermax Roll Systems' cut/stack solutions as an alternate output to his rewinders. He also anticipates upgrading the mailing equipment to use pinless paper, to take advantage of the Lasermax Roll and Océ equipment's pinless capability.

“The ability to buy raw paper without holes and processing it will save us between five to 10 percent in paper costs,” he said. “We've gotten a tremendous payback from the RS Roll-to-Roll and Inserter Unwinder. I can see the return on our investment in our financial statements.

“And the cut/stack systems will save an additional \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year in click charges and paper costs,” Dishong concluded. “Lasermax Roll Systems' equipment and service provide business solutions that help me contain costs and increase productivity today and will continue to meet the challenges of tomorrow.”

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