

'Short-Run Solutions' Help Aggie In-plant Grow



An operator at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service runs a job on the in-plant's Sterling Punchmaster.

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Shrinking run lengths call for new strategies, so that's what the in-plant at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, in College Station, Texas, set out to do.

"We started purchasing bindery equipment from Spiel Associates in 2010 with the Sterling Punchmaster and Coilmaster III plastic coil binding system," says Associate Director Derek Seim. "These high-speed machines were perfect for us — until the runs started getting smaller and smaller."

Like many other print shops around the country, the in-plant at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service needed to implement shorter setup times for these shorter runs.

"We turned to Spiel Associates for short-run solutions," Seim says.

The in-plant added a Sterling Digipunch, which has automatic touchscreen setup.

"We can set up a job in under a minute, and since the machine includes a five-ream feeder and stacker, the operator can just walk away once the machine starts punching," explains Seim. "When he comes back in as little as two to three minutes, all the paper is punched and ready for binding."

The in-plant also installed a Sterling Coilmaster Jr. TS, which also has a touch screen. It can be set up in a couple of minutes as opposed to taking 10-20 minutes, like on the larger Sterling Coilmaster III.

"We still use it for the odd long run, or for thick books. It's nice because it forms the coil in-line and drops it straight into the binder. For short runs, we make our coil ahead of time on the [Sterling] Coilmaker and feed the Coilmaster Jr. manually," Seim says.

"When we decided to go into perfect binding, we again turned to Spiel, who sold us the Sterling Digibinder," adds Seim. "This machine sets up automatically. All you have to do is put down the cover, and it is self-adjusting when you change the book's thickness. It's even easier to run than the Digipunch."