

## CASE STUDY

## AZ Litho Invests in Komori and MBO to Significantly Advance Efficiency



AZ Litho is a full-service commercial printer based in Tucson, Arizona. The company, celebrating 70 years in business, provides start-to-finish packaging and commercial print solutions for clients from California to the East Coast to Mexico. The company was operating an older press that was nearing the end of its life, requiring a significant budget to maintain, along with having to work around unplanned downtime. To remain competitive in the industry, those issues required a turnaround.

“When we started looking at the numbers, the decision came down to whether we should keep spending all this money on maintenance or bite the bullet and buy a new press,” said Ron Gilson, General Manager at AZ Litho. “In making the decision, we considered what we really needed in a press given what we wanted to accomplish from a workflow standpoint. We knew we wanted to partner with Komori and, with that, we knew exactly which press we wanted.”

### The ROI of speed

AZ Litho chose the six-color Komori Lithrone G40 *advance* with coater and LED-UV curing (GL640 *advance* + C LED). Given the larger sheet size of the press, and its ability to efficiently process a wider range of difficult stocks, they immediately saw a major increase in productivity on their current work.

Furthermore, the press is a sound platform for printing on heavier packaging stocks, fitting their goal to expand further into the packaging industry. With a reputation as the Southwest’s leading green printer, AZ Litho also liked that the GL640 *advance* is an environmentally responsible press. The LED curing has substantial energy savings compared to conventional drying and releases no VOCs to the environment. Shorter, automated makereadies save paper, consumables, energy, waste and over-run counts, all supporting their initiative of having a smaller carbon footprint.

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— RON GILSON, General Manager, AZ Litho



“We bought our first Komori press approximately 18 years ago and had great luck with it, so that experience weighed in on the decision,” said Gilson. “We also wanted to put a larger focus on our packaging area. The GL640 *advance* is designed to easily handle the heavy board-type stocks that are required for packaging. For that reason, we now move all our packaging jobs to the new press. Plus, it also runs faster and the makeready times are better than our other presses.”

With the automation features provided on the GL640 *advance*, the company reports it has seen a 25% to 50% reduction in makeready time, as well as a reduction in the amount of makeready paper waste. Komori’s KHS-AI intelligent software with self-learning supports AZ Litho’s ability to provide the color consistency critical for packaging materials and the children’s books the company produces. “Everything about this press is fast and we are faster because of it,” said Gilson. “We are hanging plates faster, we are up to register faster, we are up to color faster. Everything about the GL640 *advance* provides a speed to the production process like nothing we have ever experienced before.”

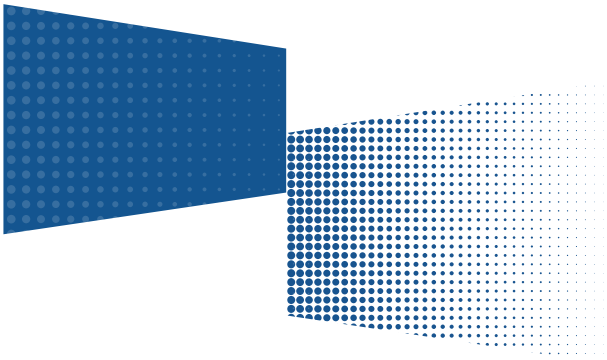
AZ Litho is experiencing the benefits of the higher productivity this press delivers in recurring jobs, such as an Arizona state calendar they do each year. It is a large run that previously took 10 days to complete, mainly because operators were on and off the press waiting for dry time. This year, they did

the entire job in four days. The addition of LED-UV made it possible for the sheets to come off the press dry, ready to be sent to the bindery without delay. This savings in time is making a huge difference in the company’s productivity and competitiveness.

### Folding technology rounds out the advanced workflow

Productivity gain was also top of mind when the company decided to add the MBO H+H KL112 to its fleet of MBO folders. Already utilizing two MBO Automated Folders, M80-6/6/4 Auto and T765EA Auto, for their perfect binding production, the KL112 fits AZ Litho’s pharmaceutical literature needs. The machine is uniquely designed to make the small folds needed for PIs, inserts and other miniature folded products, widely used in the pharmaceutical, veterinary, medical, clinical trial, cosmetic, chemical and related industries. The benefit of the folder is that it can reduce a large sheet with a vast array of legal, FDA and physician related information to a small, folded size that fits in the small packaging of those markets.





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— **RON GILSON**, *General Manager, AZ Litho*

“Our MBO equipment offers the full automation and modularity that is perfect for our commercial applications, as well as deftly handling the way books are built,” said Gilson. “Its ability to provide quick changeovers for different paper weight saves a huge amount of time. The benefits of having the in-house capabilities the MBO folders deliver means we can get products to customers faster and ultimately be more profitable.”

### **Making jobs easier and customers happy**

Like most printers today, AZ Litho is faced with a lack of skilled labor. The company is luckier than most in that it has two long-term employees that have been press operators all their lives, as well as several younger employees in training. Gilson is impressed that the skilled labor issues due to many press operators aging out is something both Komori

and MBO anticipated, thus their focus on research and technology into new equipment that doesn’t require operators with years of experience.

“I was at a meeting in Chicago with Komori several years back and I remember the president of Komori stating that the company anticipated an impending labor issue in the print industry and knew they had to prepare for it,” said Gilson. “I remember thinking ‘wow, they have been thinking about this issue for a long time.’ Now we see the result with the new, advanced automated equipment that offers more sophisticated control of operations to make jobs easier on the operators.”

Gilson says that while doing things better and faster internally is important, the real goal behind it all is to make AZ Litho’s customers happy. “If our customers are happy, we are happy and I know Komori is helping make that happen,” said Gilson. “Komori has been behind us the whole time. This isn’t a company that says here’s a new press, we’ll see you later. They are simply a great company to have as a partner. Their service is good, their parts are good and, obviously, their machines are good—all of which makes it possible to deliver on our promise of great quality and competitive pricing for our customers.”

