

CASE STUDY:

The First Komori G37 Installed in the U.S. “Makes Printing Fun Again” for Print Solutions



In 1970, John and Azadouhie Vartanian founded the Fifth Avenue Printing Company in New York City. Within 14 years, the company grew exponentially and they opened a second location in Fort Lee, New Jersey. Current company owner, Paul Vartanian, the son of the company's founders, assumed management of the company in 1990. Paul Vartanian attributes the company's continued growth to ensuring customer service is always Print Solutions' central focus, along with delivering a fresh approach to print communications. By 2001, the company required additional space, so they relocated to a 7200 sq. ft. facility in Englewood, New Jersey. Additionally, to better promote its business philosophy, the company was renamed Print Solutions.

“We started changing our model from being an organization that basically took a project and just produced it, to being more customer centric. That means really listening to what our customers' needs are and making sure we have all the capabilities required to meet them,” said Vartanian. “Over the last few years, the print market has experienced a shift. Orders are changing. Customers need things faster and in smaller quantities. We reached a point where our two half-sheet presses were at capacity, so we decided to take the plunge and invest in more advanced technology.”

Finding the right technology

After Vartanian made the decision to purchase new equipment, he first considered expanding with new equipment in the digital area. His initial contact with Komori was to investigate the purchase of an Impremia IS29 UV inkjet press, which seemed to follow the current trend of converting to digital print. However, further analysis indicated that 75% of the firm's existing business was offset print and demand for that type of work was solid. The issue was not necessarily changing the print medium, it was how to make their already-successful print solution more competitive, more value-added and able to compete in an evolving print industry. “I realized we would be changing our business model significantly if we were going to go all digital,” he said. “When I learned that a 37-inch automated offset press was coming on the market, and of its potential for significantly increasing our productivity, I knew this press was absolutely the right decision.”

A compact press that is big on performance

Print Solutions chose a five-color Komori Lithrone G37 (GL537), making it the first Lithrone G37 installed in the U.S. It is a compact sheetfed press that offers a 640 x 940 mm maximum sheet size. Capable of printing sheets up to 37 inches in width, including full sheet sizes such as 23 x 35 for signature work, the press has the power to address the full span of requirements in the publishing and commercial printing segments.



Vartanian noted that the GL537 changed the landscape of what the company could produce because now, instead of printing a 4-up half sheet, they can print 8-up, resulting in significant increases in efficiencies and productivity. An additional factor in the decision was the physical size of the press. The GL537 fit nicely in the facility, which had challenges to expand due to location. The new press fits in less space than the two original half-sheet machines, yet delivers more productivity and a bigger sheet size.

The GL537 has a full complement of automation features targeted to use minimal labor and materials to control manufacturing costs and be competitive. "With this Komori press, you can do makeready in under ten minutes and run at 15,000 sheets an hour. That was the tipping point for me. We now have some projects that actually have produced 20-sheet makereadies. Not all jobs achieve this of course, but there are many jobs that have. Still, we are very pleased with 50-60 sheet makereadies as a standard. When you compare that with short-run digital—and you do the calculations—it comes out to a fraction of the price and it's faster," said Vartanian.

Adding more strength to the process

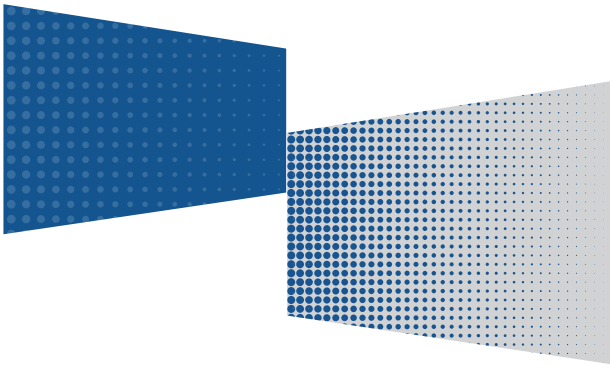
Part of the company's strategy is to ensure their fleet of equipment works together to provide solutions from start to finish, supporting the desired efficiency in the pressroom. This meant additional investments

in finishing solutions was required to keep pace with the high productivity of the GL537. With the recent acquisition of MBO by Komori, there was a natural synergy to provide a new folding solution for the finishing area. "Our folder was old and not reliable. We needed to upgrade the technology with folding that was tight, clean and registered," said Vartanian. "We chose an MBO B2 size folder. The MBO is just a fantastic folder. The spiral rollers really allow us to produce at a high speed and keep consistent folding. It perfectly complements our new Komori press. We also upgraded other processes along the way, including a new wide format printer, new digital cutting system, long cutoff toner digital printer and more. We now have more productivity with less footprint—and flexibility that makes it possible to answer our customers' diverse needs."

Delivering print with a tangible difference

Print Solutions works for a variety of clients producing publications, newsletters, postcards and educational materials. Creative design, direct mail and wide format complement the company's offerings, allowing for a one-stop experience. While the firm will continue to serve these customers, offering strategic print solutions,





the GL537 gives the company entry into other markets. In addition to its larger print format, the new press uses energy curable LED UV ink and coating technology. This opens up opportunities for a wide range of embellishments, such as flood and spot coatings, reticulated, soft touch and strike-through coatings and much more. Notes Vartanian, “We want the printed piece to tell a story, to appeal to the sense of touch to give the piece a little bit more life. So instead of just expanding the overall gloss or your standard conventional inks, we’re trying to tap the senses using embellishments.”

Benefits far exceed expectations

In selecting a new press, Vartanian attended demonstrations with the major manufacturers, all of whom were introducing presses in a similar format size. He decided to invest in the Komori GL37 in large part because of Komori’s reputation for service and support. Print Solutions had been working with four- and five-color conventional presses and had to learn how to operate an LED UV press with its highly automated features. “Komori promised not to leave us until we were ready,” said Vartanian. “The partnership with Komori has been amazing. I knew they would sell me a great press and support it, get it installed and running, but I think they’ve gone above and beyond, staying with us until we were comfortable.” This is the mission of “Kando” at Komori, exceeding expectations. A sign hangs in Paul’s office with the word “Kando,” which now influences his own decisions with his customers.

Connected automation for real-time data

The new GL537 is also equipped with KP-Connect, Komori’s printing task control software that gives Print Solutions access to real-time data on what the press is doing. “I absolutely love this from a management perspective,” said Vartanian. “I can check in real time to see what is going on with the press and how many times the press stopped and why. I can see the speeds we are running and what the production stats are for the day. I get a daily report as part of our KomoriKare package, a comprehensive support program that supports the efficiency and productivity of our pressroom.” The data presents itself graphically and logically to be analyzed and acted upon. Irregularities stand out so they can be focused on and corrected. “KP-Connect is making us more competitive now and better managers in general,” said Vartanian.

Vartanian reports the new press is nothing short of amazing. He concluded, “We selected technology that can help us do all the work that we currently do and still expand our market. It’s almost limitless what we can get done with this press. It has exceeded my expectations and yet I don’t feel we’ve even reached the point where we’re utilizing it to its fullest capacity. The best thing about the GL537 is that it makes printing fun again.”

