

CASE STUDY

KP-Connect Pro Supports Digital Transformation with Greater Visibility and Control of Schedule and All Processes



Koseikan Co., Ltd. celebrated its 85th anniversary this year. The company formed a business alliance with the Tenmaya department store in 1969 and is currently a wholly owned group company of Tenmaya. Koseikan's main business is planning, design production, printing, and web production. Beginning in 2021, the company began its digital transformation in its print facility using Komori's KP-Connect Pro. In doing so, the company has achieved great results in improving production management efficiency and changing the consciousness of employees.

Process prior to KP-Connect Pro

Koseikan's process previously involved extracting data from the MIS, editing plans for each production machine on Excel, listing them, and outputting them on paper. Meetings with site personnel were held twice each day, at midday and in the evening, to provide progress reports on production. However, there was frequent back and forth determining the latest information. These types of conversations also frequently took place among the sales, design, and platemaking staff. Since job priorities often changed, operations that relied on people experienced interruptions and waste due to communication lags and timing delays, significantly reducing process management

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— Director Iwai, Japan, Koseikan Co., Ltd.

effectiveness.

The company's factory had three sheetfed offset presses (one from Komori and two from other manufacturers), one webfed offset press (from Komori), one POD system, three cutting machines, and one folder (all from other manufacturers). Since machines from multiple manufacturers were in operation, centrally managing and visualizing the progress of each machine was also difficult.



At the manufacturing site, 15 operators are working on multi-skilled printing and processing.

“When I visited a company that had the capability to share the status of current production with the sales department, I realized that our company was lagging behind. Even though we tried in the past to tackle digital transformation, it was not possible to fully achieve it,” Director Iwai said. During one of these visits, he was shown a demo of Komori’s KP-Connect Pro. “I was shocked to learn of the existence of a digital system capable of managing all print factory processes in cooperation with MIS and I decided to introduce my team to KP-Connect Pro,” he said.

KP-Connect Pro results in many improvements

The first improvement the company experienced was the reduction of employing a person in charge of scheduling printing. Since KP-Connect Pro’s scheduler automatically calculates each job’s load based on standard times, there was no longer a need to dedicate staff to working on schedules, allowing those staffers to work in departments with a greater need for support. The second improvement was the elimination of process meetings, which removed the need to prepare meeting materials and reduced the amount of time spent responding to inquiries.

Since KP-Connect Pro makes it possible to check the latest information on the schedule and progress, from handing over press-ready plates to finishing, the number of progress-related inquiries drastically fell. It was no longer necessary to hold two daily process meetings, making it possible for staff to use their time more effectively and shortening the amount of time spent entering on-site daily work reports. Using the iPad, the amount of work required for inputting daily reports was greatly reduced, including for daily reports on other manufacturers’ machines and updating this information in real time.



Daily reports for the machines are managed on an iPad, regardless of the manufacturer. “It’s very easy to understand what you can input on the iPad. I think anyone can start using KP-Connect Pro right away since by using an iPad. You can record data from older machines or machines from other companies that cannot directly collect data,” said Director Iwai.



Manager Yanagihara operates the KP-Connect Pro scheduler. "Once the initial settings are solid, all you have to do is input the job information and the day's process schedule will be completed. I think dependence on people is being solved."

The company utilizes the visualized information in a variety of ways. General Manager Yorizane says, "Being able to see each machine's load status makes it easier to distribute the workload and we almost never outsource work. If there is no work in the morning due to the previous day's press-ready plate situation, it's now possible to stagger working hours, which can reduce unnecessary overtime," said Process Control Group Manager Yanagihara. "Being able to see the progress of each department has changed my management of the schedule."

The sales/production and manufacturing sites were working at different locations, which caused issues with information sharing. However, since the final data and the press-ready plates were made visible, the participation of sales has also changed and the delay in receiving final data has been eliminated.

Cooperation with MIS and improvement due to KP-Connect Pro

The operation status of each machine obtained by KP-Connect Pro is also linked to MIS and cost management is performed using the data.

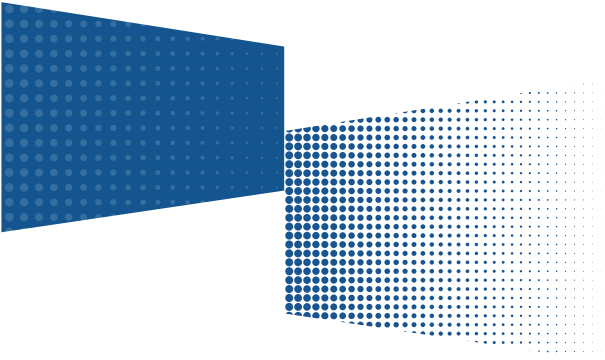
In the latter half of 2021, the company called on its employees to "become an organization that can talk in numbers" and embarked on a business transformation. A task force called "margin improvement" was launched to promote business-wide improvements. "Each team selects a General Manager and one member to work on improving the profit margin across the company. KP-Connect Pro data is used in each department for improving operational mechanisms and the workflow," said Director Iwai." The scope of the task force is wide-ranging, including elimination of waste and bottlenecks, reduction of wasteful overtime by improving productivity, and price negotiations for outsourcing and materials."

Employee awareness rises

Regarding the investment effectiveness of KP-Connect Pro, Director Iwai noted, "In addition to the annual cost reduction of more than 6 million yen, there are improvements such as productivity gains and reduction of overtime work due to the easy visualization of press production and operating conditions."

Only two years after its introduction, KP-Connect Pro has already become indispensable. "KP-Connect allows us to communicate with pre-press and post-press while looking at the data. Everyone thinks for themselves and works on their own work, and the organizational culture is improving," said General Manager Oda.

President Uchida sums it up, "We want to be a company that can provide customers with the maximum synergy of digital and analog, and one that can grow with its feet firmly on the ground. Thanks to KP-Connect Pro, our company is now able to proceed with a successful digital transformation."



“In the future, we would like to analyze the data obtained by KP-Connect Pro and use it to improve the workplace.”

– **KAORU IWAI**, *Director and General Manager of the Management Department*



“We use KP-Connect Pro to allocate work to each machine so that work can be completed on time. Overtime hours have been reduced by about 25% compared to last year.”

– **KAZUHISA YORIZANE**, *General Manager of the Management Team*



“We use icons to indicate job status. Sales and production are also aware of this and we no longer have to wait for plates.”

– **KOICHI ODA**, *General Manager of the Manufacturing Team*



“Sales and production staff now contact us spontaneously. Losses due to delays receiving final data have also been reduced, except in cases of customer circumstances.”

– **IKUKO YANAGIHARA**, *Manager of the Process Control Group of the Management Team*