



Preserving memories

Every picture tells a story

John F. Jacobson, Jr., is a busy man, thanks to photo books.

His travels have taken him from Dscoop, the annual conference for HP press users, to the trade shows of the Photo Marketing Assn. (PMA) and Wedding and Portrait Photographers Assn. Jacobson, the president of On Demand Machinery (ODM) in Elizabeth, NJ, also is logging plenty of international air miles—Asia is a fast growing market for his bindery equipment.



ODM customers produce an average of 750 books per day.

ODM's vividly named equipment somehow seems at odds with the celebratory and personal nature of the hardcover books produced on them. The Casemaking Line can be used with the Sticker single-blade casing-in machine and the Smasher Single Station building-in machine. ODM also offers an automatic side sewer ("Super Sewer") as well as a fully automatic, self-adjusting building-in machine ("Super Smasher").

Don't be fooled by these tough sounding names; ODM's equipment is designed for easy operation. "Our innovation is not so much selling machines but teaching people how to make books," says Jacobson. "The majority of photo books in the United States are built on our equipment. We've educated the marketplace."

ODM's users range from small printers with one digital press and book production line to a photo processor with 25 presses and 18 sets of ODM equipment under one roof. A basic system, depending on the configuration, typically costs \$80,000.

After investing \$500,000 for a digital press, many printers are tempted to economize in the bindery. Jacobson shows prospects a stack of unbound sheets and a photo book, and asks them to consider what each is worth: "The value of the photo book is tenfold—do you really want to skimp on the binding?"

Photo books arrived in 1995

A visit to MyPublisher.com a few years ago provided Jacobson's introduction to photo books. Carl Navarre, formerly of Atlantic Monthly Press, founded MyPublisher in 1995. Since 2002, the Valhalla, NY, company has sold and shipped more than 5 million photo books.

"Photo books are very powerful," says Jacobson. "Two years ago, when my sister got married, she went to Shutterfly and created a book telling the story of her brothers, documenting our growing up. I was in tears."

Beyond storytelling, photo books offer excellent archival qualities. "Ink on paper is the best archiving system [we have]," says Jacobson. "That's one thing few people market."

Jacobson credits the photo book boom to the convenience of the Internet coupled with the convergence the printing, publishing and photography industries. Shutterfly, Lulu and other online photo book vendors are leveraging social media, too. Photos that consumers originally uploaded to Facebook, Flickr, Photobucket and similar sites are easily preserved in photo books.

Made here

ODM machinery is made in the United States, a tradition Jacobson is determined to continue. "In the 20 years I've been doing this, that's one of my proudest accomplishments," he says. "On an international flight, the passenger next to me assumed I was going to China to see my supplier. I said, "No, I'm going to install some equipment in Seoul, South Korea."



ODM's (www.odmmachinery.com) free guide demystifies the book making process from sewing and casemaking to casing-in and building-in.

Briefly Noted

- Mohawk Panoramic Papers (www.mohawkpaper.com/panoramic) combine its i-Tone digital surface technology with Tru-Flat binding technology from Convertible Systems. Images can flow seamlessly across the fold.
- Kompac (www.kompactech.com) EZ Koat 20 UV/aqueous coater accepts sheets up to 20.5 inches wide and has a rated speed of 105 fpm.
- M-Photo (www.m-photo.com) develops and sells production floor management systems for professional photolabs and print shops using digital print technology.
- Holmberg's (www.flexbind.com) FlexBind technology integrates a flexible hinge into approved photo substrates. It's a photobook page product for press printed lay-flat photobooks. See www.flexbind.com.
- Tap (www.tappackgingsolutions.com) now offers ¾ wrapped covers. Bonded leather wraps the back, spine and ¾ over the book's front panel.
- xpedx (www.xpedx.com) offers Morgana's AutoCreaser, DocuMaster, DigiFold, DigiCreaser and more.