



BENNETT PURCHASES SECOND DIGITAL PRESS

THE RAPID SUCCESS IN DIGITAL PRINTING HAS PROMPTED THE U.S. SHEET PLANT TO ADD ANOTHER BARBERÁN JETMASTER



by JACKIE SCHULTZ

Just two years after installing a Barberán Jetmaster digital printer, the first in the U.S., Bennett Packaging has ordered a second machine. The new Jetmaster will be installed early next year at the company's Lee's Summit, Missouri, headquarters facility.

Purchasing the first machine in the U.S. and only the third one built by Barberán was considered a game changing move and a leap of faith by Bennett. When the Jetmaster was installed in 2015, few corrugated companies had digital printing capabilities. The recent decision to purchase their second machine reflects Bennett's success with the new printing technology.

"The feedback from customers has been very positive. Bennett has brought on some pretty substantial pieces of business that they wouldn't have had access to before," says Garrett Bradley, President of Gemini North America, the North American distributor for Barberán.

The Jetmaster was one of the first large-format production speed, single pass digital presses to enter the corrugated market. It prints at 6,800 sq meters (73,000 sq ft) per hour and is available in either four- or six-color and in three sizes: 1260mm (48-inch), 1680mm (66-inch), and 1890mm (74-inch). The machine prints CMYK with optional light cyan, light magenta and orange and violet at 360 dpi.

With its inherent efficiencies and capabilities, digital printing has significantly expanded Bennett's market share. The company has successfully transitioned existing clients to digital and added a third shift on its 66-inch six-color Jetmaster.

About 90% of existing litho-lam jobs and about 20% of high graphics flexo direct print jobs have been switched to the digital press. Bennett's second Jetmaster will be 48 inches wide to more closely align with litho-lam jobs, which are typically printed on 40-inch offset presses.

This digital press gives our customers another production option when they want high-graphic packaging to stand out in the retail space

Robert Sweet, Bennett Sales Manager

GOLD STANDARD SERVICE

Customers' rapid acceptance of digital printing combined with Bennett's digital printing proficiency laid the groundwork for the second machine. The company has done extensive testing and experimentation with color matching and board in order to perfect the outcome, resulting in award-winning results.

Robert Sweet, Bennett Sales Manager, says the Jetmaster allows Bennett to be more competitive against litho and flexo. He says the Jetmaster is perfect for four- and six-color process printing typical for point-of-purchase displays, which Bennett has always excelled at in the flexo and litho-lam arena. "This digital press gives our customers

another production option when they want high-graphic packaging to stand out in the retail space. Also, the variable data capability is beneficial. We can run multiple creative versions, one run after the other, without long setup times or changeovers, and no tooling charges. That's the type of value we can bring."

Bradley agrees and says digital printing on corrugated provides customers with significant added value, such as versioning, personalization, fast turnaround and less inventory. "A big issue for customers is scrap and waste. If you're buying pre-print you're going to lock in a certain amount of rolls and if the product doesn't go well or you don't use all of it, you're going to scrap the rest. The same thing is true with litho. If you buy litho and you change the print

now you're stuck with whatever you committed to. With digital, you run the job, the next week if you want to change the print, you change the print."

While the Jetmaster's image quality is often comparable to litho, Bradley points out that the resolution isn't the most important aspect for customers. "People are happy with the image quality, but the market is not really asking for better print quality or lower prices. Right now what the market wants is more capacity. In order for large CPG companies to really embrace this there has to be enough capacity out there to handle their business. For example, one large CPG company could probably fill 10 machines. The problem is they don't have access to 10 machines right now, but in the future they will. When that time comes, as more production comes on line, it will start to ramp up very quickly."

"I'm hearing that quite a bit," says Traci Strickert, Bennett

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Director of Marketing. "The interest and demand are both there. We know that numerous publicly held companies have initiatives in place to reduce raw materials used in their packaging. The digital print process is a good solution, but their annual volumes are causing them to move slowly. We're seeing that they are starting by transitioning new projects, or projects that may require frequent art changes, for example, then proceeding from there."

STRONG PARTNERSHIP

Bennett Packaging and Barberán forged a strong partnership after the installation of the Jetmaster, allowing both companies to expand their respective markets. "Bennett is interesting proof of the success of a digital printer in the corrugated

market, and both our companies are growing in the U.S.," says Dennis van IJzerloo, Barberán Export Area Manager.

In many ways, the partnership reflects remarkable similarities in how both companies operate. Both are family-owned mid-sized businesses that excel at producing high quality products and exceptional customer service.

Based in Barcelona, Spain, Barberán has been manufacturing printing equipment for the furniture industry for almost 45 years and moved to digital in 2007. The company entered the corrugated market in 2013. Today, corrugated represents the largest share of Barberán's machine sales.

Bradley attributes Barberán's success to its keen focus on

customer needs. "I've been working with them since Bennett bought the machine and then directly with them for the last 18 months or so. They are more of a solution-based company. Barberán builds a production machine that is very reliable and they want to stay at the forefront of the market. They're very focused on satisfying the customers, and they're open to making changes, whether that's software or hardware."

Barberán is establishing a U.S. based service department for training, machine maintenance and troubleshooting. The department will be run by Gemini North America. Barberán is also planning to establish a U.S. users' group to share best practices and leverage the spend on consumables.

Bennett's 66-inch six-color Jetmaster was the first installed in the U.S.



2015

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www.BennettKC.com

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digital printing machine
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Dennis van IJzerloo,
Barberán Export Area Manager



One major difference between Barberán and other digital press manufacturers is that Barberán does not control the consumables. "I don't see Bennett making the decision to buy a machine and for sure a second machine without having control of the consumables because the ink and the primer over time will cost more than the press," Bradley says. "That's a critical part of the equation and something that anyone getting into digital printing needs to consider how they're going to manage those consumables."

SUCCESS IN THE U.S.

By early 2018 Barberán will have seven Jetmasters installed at U.S. companies. The company also has presses installed in Europe, Australia and Israel. Currently, the backlog on new machines is about six months.

"Companies in the U.S. are interested in the technology because it presents opportunities for them

to replace their existing processes like litho-lam and offer additional flexibilities and advantages with the digital technology to their clients," van IJzerloo says. "That is why the U.S. market is growing because Americans see that there is a potential market that can earn decent money."

"By next summer the capacity in the U.S. is going to be pushing a

billion sq ft where two years ago it was zero," Bradley says. "Digital is going to grow very quickly because box plants are going to be much more efficient, they're going to have less inventory and less scrap and their costs are going to go down and the market is going to be attractive to it for all the same reasons. It's just a more efficient way to produce." ■

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