



From left: Danny Burt, Terry Johnson and Chris Anderson stand in front of DMBA Central Services' seven-color HP Indigo 7000 digital color press.

Using Metrics to Boost Efficiency

Thanks to a new analytical tool, Deseret Mutual Benefit Administrators has noticeably improved the performance of its in-plant.

WITH 16 full-time employees, the Central Services department at Deseret Mutual Benefit Administrators (DMBA) is responsible for printing, mailing, document imaging, physical facilities, disaster recovery and security services. Located in Salt Lake City, DMBA is a non-profit organization that administers the welfare and financial benefits for companies affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The centerpiece of the printing operation is an HP Indigo 7000 digital color press, which it added five years ago. The shop also runs a pair of HP LaserJet 9050s for check printing, a Ricoh MP C4503, a Hasler HJ950C for envelope production, a Xanté Impressia and an Epson Stylus Pro 9890 wide-format printer. The shop is currently implementing EDU Business

Solutions' Print Shop Pro for MIS and Web-to-print.

Though roughly half of the in-plant's daily volume comprises statements, such as explanation of benefits statements, HIPAA forms and benefit checks, the shop also prints booklets, brochures, manuals and more for the communications department. The mailing department picks up, scans and routes all of DMBA's inbound mail, either physically or digitally through a workflow system after it is scanned and indexed or run through an OCR engine.

Continuous Improvement

Central Services' management is always looking to increase equipment utilization, implement continuous improvements and meet the expanding demands of customers. To do so, management needed a better understanding of various operations and resource allocations to proactively maintain a cost benefit over outsourcing.

Its Print MIS software didn't provide information on press productivity, equipment utilization or insights into operational improvements. Press log data did not reveal relevant data about *why* the press was not printing or what barriers limited printing usable output.

"We have been working off of assumptions and 'guesstimates' related to uptime versus idle time versus down time on our print, mail and ancillary equipment," remarks Manager Mike O'Hara.

The in-plant wanted to replace these "guesstimates" with fact-based metrics. So in December of 2014, DMBA implemented the SpencerMetrics system, a measurement and analysis tool that provides managers with real-time data, measuring the productivity of their digital presses and ancillary equipment as they are used on the shop floor. DMBA deployed it in the printing department where it had its highest investment—the HP Indigo 7000.

Within days of acquiring the SpencerMetrics system, it was up and running. Management had immediate visibility into the operations. Impressed with the convenience, value and affordability of the SpencerMetrics system, DMBA extended it into the mailing department. The scalability of the system allowed the company to deploy on a completely different type of device—a Pitney Bowes 8 Series inserting

system. DMBA was now able to employ standardized analytics and reporting across the printing and mailing departments.

“With SpencerMetrics we can visualize what we are doing in our production department. It is helpful to prioritize the work; it shows problems visually that we can then collectively explore to close the gaps,” says O’Hara. “We are seeing that we were not as efficient as we could be and have realized that we need to do some things differently and more efficiently. We continue to learn from the system even after a year. It has been an eye-opening experience for us.”

Answering Critical Questions

At DMBA, the SpencerMetrics solution facilitated identification of several issues and helped to answer critical questions. The in-plant was able to:

- Validate operator feedback and make strategic decisions.
- Gauge the magnitude of an equipment or workflow-related problem and allocate resources accordingly. This includes quantifying downtime associated with the problem to get attention from management or the manufacturer.
- Gain a deeper understanding of job scheduling issues

to learn why, for example, it may be taking longer to get a job done—incurring overtime costs—or why a time-critical job had to be outsourced.

- Better estimate resources and job schedules.
- Prioritize and sequence work to better understand why employees are doing things that are costing money but aren’t translating into value for customers.

“We’ve been able to sit down with our operators and show them how efficiently we’re performing as a team,” O’Hara notes. “We are also working towards the creation of specific performance measures for our operators. We will be using SpencerMetrics to support our expectations and outcomes.”

The SpencerMetrics system has provided useful data that the in-plant is using to its advantage.

“I’ve been able to produce and share reports displaying excessive amounts of time spent on repairs, consumables and maintenance,” O’Hara says. “As a result, we’ve been able to work through, identify and resolve training and service issues with both our operators and some vendors.”

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Use the SpencerMetrics savings calculator to see how efficiency improvements can impact your bottom line:

www.spencermetrics.com/calculator.html