

Capita plc is the UK's leading provider of business process outsourcing and integrated professional support service solutions. Capita's clients include organizations in public and private sectors, including finance, government, law enforcement, education, retail, travel and transport, utilities, and insurance. The company has 75,000 employees in locations around the UK.

Case Study

Capita plc

Achieving Precise Control and Tracking of Print Communications



“Every piece of print that we produce must be completely traceable during its journey through our production operation.”

Challenge

The Mansfield operation of Capita Document & Information Services was a greenfield expansion of the company's production platform. The goal was achievement of near-lights-out operations from 6 AM to 10 PM, five days per week. This required an integrated software solution that could track and QC each and every printed piece, from composition through final insertion into the mail stream.

Solution

Capita chose to work with Ironsides Technology to implement Ironsides APT™ as the umbrella solution that integrates the end-to-end workflow across the production platform as well as enabling quality control and real-time reporting. This unifying solution enabled Capita to meet its goal of complete traceability from composition through final preparation for entry into the mail stream.

Results

Ironsides APT is the integrating force behind a highly efficient and unique workflow that has enabled Capita to develop a near-lights-out operation with full transparency and accountability. From composition to the point print is spooled to the plant's two production inkjet presses until printed pieces are ready for mailing with highly personalized self-wrap envelopes, Capita has assembled a best-of-breed workflow that positions its print operation for future growth.

“Ironsides APT was the only solution on the market that could give us the integration we needed across all of our kit. And the promised after-sales support has been fabulous.”

Best-of-Breed Solutions

“The Mansfield plant was a greenfield development,” explains the *Director of Operations* for Capita Document and Information Services. “It was born out of a need for growth and a desire to build a lean, continuous feed color printing operation that would differentiate us in the marketplace and stimulate that growth.”

In considering how best to build this new facility, Capita considered whether to implement an end-to-end solution from one vendor or to assemble a multi-vendor solution comprised of best-in-class components. “We decided on the latter approach,” the Director says. “While that is a more complex approach, we believed that by choosing the right partners, we would be able to build a truly revolutionary operation.”

A Whole Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

After carefully researching all options, the team settled on a unique and powerful combination of best-in-breed components, including:

- GMC Inspire, an open, flexible and easy-to-use document composition suite;
- Two production inkjet web presses with Hunkeler unwinders, rewinders and perforators deployed in a roll-to-roll workflow, the first to be installed in the UK;
- A full complement of near-line finishing, including:
 - A Bell & Howell IPEX consolidator, also a first-in-the-UK installation;
 - A CMC JWR paper wrap envelope line for in-line wrapping of printed envelopes;
- Video capture technology at strategic points in the production process for QC and auditing;
- Ironsides APT, tracking from Ironsides Technology, tracking from the printer and inserter all the way through to the mail sorter, managing reporting dataflow, exception processing, reprint requests and more.

The Director points out that Ironsides APT sits above and controls the entire solution, adding, “It is integrated with every bit of equipment and software we have in the production line, from composition, printing and web inspections through to wrapping of the final envelope.”

100 Percent Assured

Based on the real-time shop floor data passed to Ironsides APT throughout the entire production process, progress for each individual mail piece is easily accessible. “Once APT automatically examines color, content and 2D barcodes and is satisfied that we have a good mail piece,” the Director says, “APT sends a marker upstream indicating that. If it spots an error or damage to a piece, a message is sent upstream that there is a bad mail piece, and that mail piece is held in the reprint queue. The damaged mail piece is sent to a reject queue to be discarded or provided to the customer, depending on service level agreements.

“We do not open mail packs to check them. The accuracy of the system is such that we assume damaged pieces will be reprinted. The point here is near-lights-out—we don’t want operators touching mail.” He also indicates that yet another camera system is used in a fusion of CMC and Ironsides Technology to take time-and-date stamped images of each page that are retained in the system for 90 days.

Another benefit of the system is the ability to quickly and easily make last-minute changes. “One example,” He says, “is that we might receive a last-minute notification that 100 mail pieces in a run of tens of thousands need to be pulled based on a ‘deceased’ list. We can automatically pull pieces at any stage in production leveraging Ironsides APT, our single point of control, eliminating the need to manually pull these pieces.”

Capita and Ironsides have planned additional phases of this project to streamline the workflow even more, ensuring that Capita retains a significant competitive advantage in the marketplace.