

A SOLID HISTORY IN PAD PRINTING

More than a quarter of century's developments are outlined by Karen Krulikowski

Pad Print Machinery was founded in 1985 with the goal of being number one in customer service and satisfaction. In the quest for that goal, the company says it is driven to become partners with its customers to create machines that satisfy their requirements 100%. The performance toward this goal has enabled dramatic growth.

Julian Joffe is the founder and CEO of Pad Print Machinery of Vermont. Although Joffe earned his degree in zoology, he had a penchant for manufacturing as a result of the many hours he spent tinkering with automation in his father's workshop.

Joffe began working at his father's textile machinery business and took over leadership of the company – expanding the business to include pad printing. He became interested in this process after recognising its limitless potential and innovative applications. Joffe and his family moved to the USA in the mid-eighties. In 1985, he struck an alliance and became the exclusive North American distributor of Comec brand pad printers, settling in Yonkers, NY in a pre-World War I building with a staff of four.

During the next ten years business flourished. However, Joffe began to feel the draw to New England living. In 1995, he could no longer resist the urge to live a simpler, more enriched lifestyle and moved to Vermont. It was then that Pad Print Machinery of Vermont was born in what had been, during the fifties and sixties, the sole movie theatre in picturesque Manchester, VT.

As the company continued to grow both in number of employees and the amounts of machines being built at any given time, it began to suffer a terminal case of claustrophobia. In 2003, a move was made to a new airy and spacious facility, just five minutes north from the cramped quarters in the old theatre.



A typical tagless print

Also developing and growing were the types of products and services that PPMOV offered. New innovations in mechanical engineering and electronics featured CNC equipped and servo-driven pad printers, which are extremely fast, precise and reliable.

TAGLESS PRINTING DEVELOPMENTS

PPMOV was at the forefront of developing tagless printing more than eight years ago, working with numerous apparel manufacturers of T-shirts, underwear and lingerie to identify brands, sizes, and care labels by printing directly on the fabric. The company also worked with these manufacturers to develop turn-key solutions including operator and technical training, plate-making, custom pads and graphic support and has multiple operations in Asia, Central and South America, Philippines and the USA.

In addition to its growing product line, PPMOV has continued to increase its production and engineering staff. "This expansion brings our engineering and machine assembly team to a full one-third of our staff," states Joffe. "One of our major areas of expertise is customising automation systems for our clients, and we have been fortunate to find the quality of engineering talent we required to fulfil our needs, along with our existing capabilities.

"We now have a greater representation in the areas of CAD modelling and design, automation fixture design, new machine conceptualisation and execution, automation process control engineering, and Microsoft systems' software programming," Joffe

continues. "This broadening of engineering expertise allows us to respond quickly to our customers' needs and to be flexible to changing market dynamics. Especially with US-based companies re-sourcing back home, efficiency through automation is the name of the game."

Joffe adds: "Included in the company's growth is the sales engineering team who assist customers with existing operations, advising in the development of new systems to improve efficiency and cost savings in their operations."

THE COMPANY TODAY

Today PPMOV offers a full line of pad printing equipment from table-top models to sophisticated fully automated printers, plus a full complement of accessories and consumable supplies. Included are devices for conveying, feeding, loading/unloading, inline pre-treatment, rotary automation, and post-curing. The company also designs and builds specialised machines to fit whatever unique application a customer may dream up.

Additionally ink, graphics, pad and plate departments work in tandem with PPMOV's engineering design and manufacturing teams to provide the right consumables for unique printing challenges. There is also a full technical support group who can train operators at the company's Vermont facility or at the customers' site, troubleshoot issues and assist with machine set-up on-site.

PPMOV regularly partners with medical device manufacturers to research and develop new techniques for printing on difficult-to-



Pad Print Machinery of Vermont's premises



The XD070 single-pass greyscale industrial ink-jet printer for high volume jobs



The versatile KP08, shown in a three-colour configuration



The XE Tech 16-20 is a fully automatic and computerised pad printing centre

mark products. For example, its 360 degree catheter printing machine with auto-feeder is claimed to be unmatched by the competition, as is the company's 13-colour catheter banding machine. These machines are currently printing on a wide variety of plastics, metal, ceramic and glass items including rapid-test diagnostic devices, ostomy supplies, OTC pharmaceuticals, catheters, syringes, diabetes testing equipment and more.

In 2005, Pad Print Machinery of Vermont entered the ink-jet technology market with its first offering of a single-colour system purchased from a manufacturer in the United States. After promises of a bright future and offerings coming soon, in early 2006, the six-colour machine never materialised and the company being used went out of business.

This was a hard blow and a big

disappointment to the company and its customers, but it picked itself up and made the decision not to be placed in this situation again. Thus began the PPMOV Ink Jet Division and, with a small team of dedicated professionals, it started designing its own monochrome ink-jet systems built locally in the USA.

Throughout, PPMOV has used the knowledge it has gained over time. The monochrome ink management system and experience with system integration was used to create a revolutionary new system that has components field-tested during a period of years.

MOVING INTO INDUSTRIAL INK-JET

Fast forward to 2010 and, at the SGIA show in October, PPMOV unveiled an eight-colour

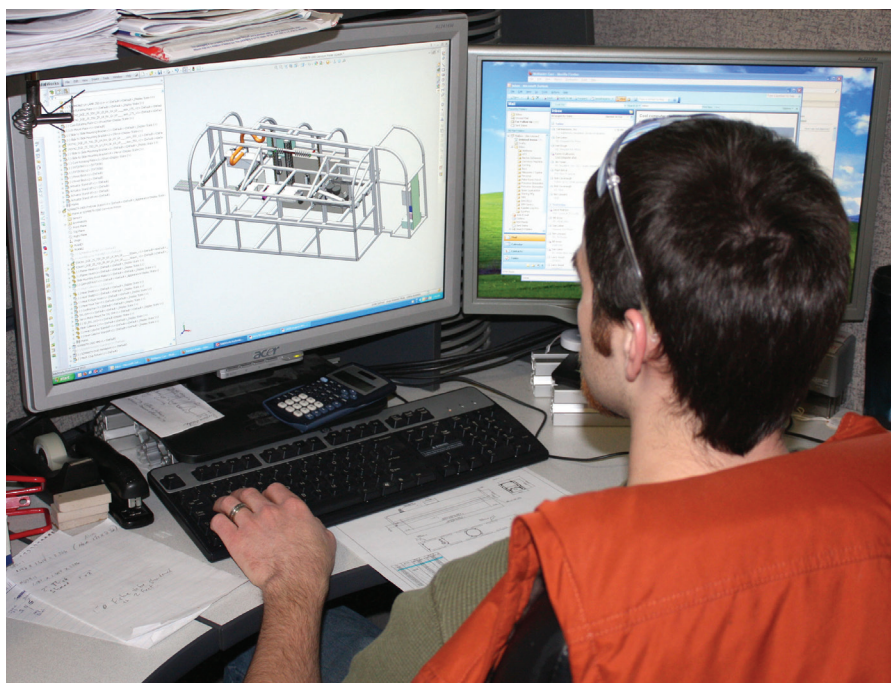
industrial digital ink-jet printer, the XD070. This is capable of fine lines and details in a single pass at 406.4 mm (16 inches) per second/360 dpi, ideally suited for multi-colour printing on flat and semi-flat surfaces.

The company's engineering team and software developers designed this new ink-jet system with the focus of changing jobs on the fly. Using UV inks that cure within seconds, this new multi-colour ink jet is fully programmable and customisable for in-line applications. With no pads, clichés or screens to change, and the capability to pre-program print jobs, the printing process has virtually no down-time. In this ultra-competitive world economy, high volume and cost-efficient manufacturing isn't just a goal; it's mandatory.

PPMOV continues to grow with new product offerings and has led the pad printing industry with breakthrough innovations such as the ability to print on medical devices as small as 0.1016 mm (.004 inch) with its eight-colour industrial digital ink-jet printer where opportunities are just beginning.

Currently, the Pad Print Machinery of Vermont's team includes 43 highly skilled and motivated individuals plus full engineering, software development and tech support teams. In pursuing its goal of number one in customer service and satisfaction, the company is constantly pushing the envelope, discovering more and more ways seamlessly to incorporate pad and ink-jet printing into the customer manufacturing process. ■

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Sophisticated design and engineering expertise is essential for quick customer response

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