



Sohokkai Corporation. Japan Heidelberg Prinect Production Manager

- The keys to switch were Portal and Subscription
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Sohshiro Tamura, President of Sohokkai Co., Ltd. says he aims to promote DX and more efficient corporate management with the introduction of Prinect Production Manager.

Printed materials are used to convey feelings (emotion) from one person to another. Sohokkai Corporation (Asahikawa, Hokkaido; President: Soshiro Tamura) celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2023. We offer a full range of services to our customers in Hokkaido and outside Hokkaido, mainly in Tokyo, including printed materials ranging from publications to general commercial and on-demand services, as well as digital tools such as website creation, data system construction, and network maintenance.

Sohokkai has been using Heidelberg's workflow software Prinect since 2003. With the introduction of the Speedmaster CD102 in 2015, the company began to fully integrate the prepress and printing processes. In 2020, they switched from a licensing agreement for some Prinect functions to a subscription agreement called Prinect Production Manager.

The keys to switch were Portal and Subscription

Regarding the reason for the switch to Prinect Production Manager, President Tamura said, "To be honest, we strongly felt that we wanted to improve the efficiency of our interface with our clients by introducing a system from another company that would allow us to check proofs and give correction instructions in the browser.

On the other hand, what was a headache at the time was the cost of each additional purchase and upgrade of Prinect's online functionality. When we heard that the software subscription, Prinect Production Manager, included a portal to interface with our customers, and that there would be no cost for future upgrades because it was a subscription, we made the decision to switch."

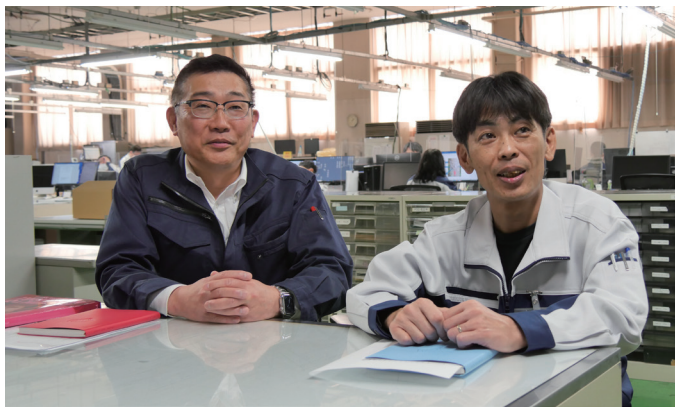
However, he says that even after actually connecting with customers through Portal, it took time to get things moving in a way that would contribute to Sohokkai's business. "It took about a year for the portal submission to actually start working. Naturally, it is a tool to be used by customers, so we had to explain it to them first. The sales staff, who were reluctant at first, gained confidence when they saw that the portal was actually working and the customers were happy with it, and they started to introduce it to other customers aggressively.

Although there are variations among sales people, I believe that as such small successes accumulated, the superiority of the portal was gradually recognized both inside and outside the company. In addition, as a sales representative, we can now use the portal as one of the tools to differentiate ourselves from our competitors. Going digital has also increased our sales efficiency, leading to a reduction in errors, wasted costs, and time." He recalls the steady efforts made by the entire company, including the sales team.

50 hour/month reduction and improvement of press utilization rates for day shift with Prinect Production Manager

“At the time, the day shift press utilization rate was low, and there was a need to change this, so we were working on various measures within the company. There were many jobs that were submitted that day and printed that day, and submissions were concentrated in the evening. This meant that there were many situations where the printing presses were down during the day. So we decided to increase the number of items that could be printed during the day shift. And to do that, we needed to improve the efficiency of the entire plant, and we started working on this because we knew we could use the automation of Prinect.” explains Aki, manager of the Prepress Section, about the initial challenges.

Regarding the results after the introduction of the system, he says, “By using the Prinect Production Manager’s portal submission, we were able to speed up the timing to pre-press for printing during the day shift by a wide margin. If it is not a complicated imposition, it is submitted after passing through the RIP with automatic imposition, so there is no need for plate-making work, and all that is left is checking, but some things can go without checking, so we have been able to reduce our workload by about 50 hours per month, especially for 20 regular items. Thanks to this, the number of holidays and overtime work, which used to be the norm, has been drastically reduced.”



Yasuhiro Taninaka, Deputy General Manager of the Production Department (left) and Keiichiro Aki, Manager of the Prepress Section (right), working internally on measures to improve the day shift press utilization rate.



Expecting various functions throughout the production process

President Tamura commented, “We have heard that many useful functions of Prinect Production Manager can be used by printers at no extra cost. We would like to learn more about what it can do, and if there are any functions that can be useful to us, we would like to actively use them in the future. For example, we would like to immediately use the input of information about the papers that can be utilized throughout the production process, schedule assembly, which still involves a lot of analog work throughout the company, and pallet sheets, which could be done easily.

As a manager, the most important thing is visualization. If we cannot see what is important, we cannot make improvements and set goals for the future, so we would like to digitalize the prepress department, where it is particularly difficult to see the process. At the same time, we expect Heidelberg to come up with new proposals that will be useful for our business.” He also expressed his expectations for their potential they will unfold with Heidelberg.

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