



c.p. bourg®

The Print Finishing Experts

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‘Packing Parachutes and Delivering Wedding Cakes’

How Acme Bookbinding achieves quality in a short-run world.

If points were scored for professional intensity, Paul Parisi would be in the Business Olympics. Parisi is president of Acme Bookbinding, a family-owned Charlestown, Massachusetts-based trade shop and industry icon that specializes in binding any and every kind of book imaginable – as long as the customer wants a quality product.

The company traces its beginnings to 1821 and the J.G. Roberts Company, making Acme Bookbinding the oldest continuously operated book bindery in the world. Over the years, the company has grown from a one-person basement operation to a manufacturer with a staff of 185 operating in a modern 100,000-square-foot facility that has world class systems and machinery.

The full service bindery specializes in manufacturing hardcover and paperback books for major, well-established publishers with rigorous manufacturing requirements for discriminating audiences. The bindery also serves mid-size and smaller clients and even handles orders for individuals. In fact, Acme binds thousands of single copy hardcover books every day, many of which are for private clients. Acme’s hardcover and softcover products can be Smyth sewn or adhesive bound with hotmelt, PUR or PVA. Its products include case binding and paperback binding, textbook rebinding, and library binding. Through one of its divisions, Acme Bookbinding serves printers, publishers, libraries, government agencies and other businesses throughout the country.

Acme’s recent acquisition, the Harcourt Bindery, specializes in custom leather hand binding with hand-tooled gold work, gilt edges and a wide selection of handmade marbled papers. Harcourt also offers custom clamshell boxes, slipcases, and repair work. Harcourt, founded in 1900, offers high end custom work that complements Acme’s highly automated book production capabilities.

Acme’s newest division, Imaging and Digital Printing, offers facsimile reproduction of out-of-print books and digital printing of short-run books on-demand. And that’s where a C.P. Bourg BB3002 Perfect Binder fits right in with Paul Parisi’s business strategy. The C.P. Bourg BB3002 is a totally automated, near-line perfect binder that is unique in offering the performance, versatility and quality needed for short-run perfect binding.

Packing Parachutes – on Short Order

“Our business is packing parachutes and delivering wedding cakes,” says Parisi. “We can’t make mistakes, and we have to deliver the product on time. We face impossible deadlines, all the time. Every job we do is rush and every book we make has to be beautiful. And because we do tall books, short books, thin books and thick books, we need equipment that is very flexible and bet-your-first-born-child reliable.”

Its experience and long history in bookbinding gives Acme perspective on historical trends, as well as a perfect position from which to survey new ones. And its location a few miles from downtown Boston and the area’s world-class educational, financial and medical institutions, as well as its large industrial base, gives Acme a keen view on emerging trends.

With the rise of digital printing, Parisi has seen an increase in short run paperback orders, which are not well suited to Acme’s 8,000 book per hour perfect binder. Authors, publishers, museums, art galleries, banks, insurance companies, and many other clients are discovering the availability of high-quality, digitally-printed, short-run paperback books. Everybody wants professional-looking books to represent their project and now this service is available. Plus, Parisi notes, there’s growing demand for just-in-time manufacturing of books as they are ordered—one book for one order. In addition to manufacturing one order of many books for a warehouse, Acme now is being asked to produce many orders for individual clients’ purchases.

“It’s clear that the digital printing market will grow rapidly, meaning more and more production will be short-run or on-demand,” Parisi explains. “Today, if someone wants a hundred books they order a hundred. If someone wants a thousand, they order a thousand. And if they want one, they’ll order one. Now, with the Bourg machine, we can produce a quality-bound book for this market at a reasonable cost.”

Meeting the Digital Revolution Head-on

The C.P. Bourg BB3002 augments and complements Acme’s workhorse perfect binder – a multi-million-dollar, 28-pocket Kolbus Ratiobinder. The Kolbus is a big machine (over 200 feet long) designed for big jobs and high production speeds of up to 8,000 books per hour—gathering many signatures, binding them, trimming, stacking and delivering perfect finished products. A team of skilled operators runs this amazing combination of integrated machines, producing hard-cover book blocks, sewn paperbacks or perfect bound books made with a two-shot system of cold glue, hot melt or PUR adhesive. Computer-assisted setup enables operators to change from one book to the next with less than 30 minutes of set-up time to turn out the first saleable book. “Although our Kolbus binder does a beautiful job and is essential for large orders, it’s not practical for short runs of even several hundred books and certainly not for single copies,” Parisi explains. “To meet the digital revolution head-on, we needed a perfect binder that could take jobs from offset or digital workflows and have the books bound and shipped by the time the Kolbus is getting up to speed.”

Acme sought a binder that could handle short runs efficiently. If one could be found, Parisi reasoned, Acme could accept business from new customers whose primary need was short run paperbacks, but

who might also have other projects more suited to Acme's higher volume manufacturing capability. A short-run perfect binder could also enhance sales to long-run customers by allowing a few finished samples of their books in advance of the main order.

In 2006, Paul Parisi began the search for a near-line perfect binder that, quite simply, could do high-end, high quality, short-run books. Fast set-up, high reliability of the equipment and high quality of the finished product were all critical factors, he says. "We looked at other machines and we brought books with us that we knew would be trouble. And every time, half a day later, we didn't have a single book bound satisfactorily. "Then we went to a Bourg customer location and tried the same books, and every book out was good on the first try. And it wasn't just that [C.P. Bourg Sales Representative] Bob Kelsey was a better demonstrator. We've had the same experience since installing the machine here. Every book we bind on the Bourg is a quality product we're proud to call an Acme-bound book," Parisi explains.

Sheer Simplicity

In January 2007, Acme installed a C.P. Bourg BB3002 Perfect Binder tied to a Bourg-supplied in-line Challenge CMT-330 three-knife trimmer adjacent to the Kolbus perfect binder on the production floor. The BB3002 allows an operator with a few hours of training and limited mechanical aptitude requirements to set-up just about any perfect bind job— within one minute – and start producing books one right after another—even if every book is a different title.

Among its many advances, the BB3002 features an icon-driven operating system displayed on an 11-inch color touchscreen. This operator-friendly interface allows most functions – including milling, in-line side gluing, scoring and suction cover-feeding – to be easily selected from a list of menu options and set digitally.

Another Bourg advance called Symmetrical Cover Registration makes the most of the BB3002 onboard computer technology. As it clamps the book block, the BB3002 automatically measures thickness and calculates the centerline of the cover to fasten the spine perfectly, without fail. Symmetrical Cover Registration also enables binding books of the same size and different thicknesses one after another automatically, without operator intervention.

The BB3002 also offers many other capabilities required for short run perfect binding:

- An automatic jogger with amplitude and vibration control adjusts to paper type and book thickness.
- Programmable milling up to 3 mm, with up to four notching tools and thickness bypass, speeds set-up and ensures quality.
- Operator programmed automatic side-gluing eliminates manual adjustments and errors.

And it's fast. The BB3002/ CMT-330 binds up to 400 books per hour as small as 3.5 x 3.9 inches and up to 12.59 x 15.15 inches to meet its full-rated cover spec of 27.9 x 15.5 inches.

"Another factor in our decision was expert service," says Parisi. "With Bourg, I have several service technicians who know the machine well enough that I can phone any of them and say, 'This is the

problem' and they'll say, 'Try this' and they're right. But typically, Bourg's machine has been so simple and trouble-free that we haven't needed help – which is the ideal."

After a rare pause Parisi says, "We had a run of 500 books this morning. The job was in and out on the Bourg with no problems. If it's a run of 10,000 books, we're not going to put it on the Bourg. But if it's hundreds or tens – and certainly one – we definitely are going to put it on the Bourg."

"Frankly, nothing else comes close."

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