



**c.p. bourg®**

The Print Finishing Experts

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## **Mercury Marine Makes Waves with Bourg BB3002 Perfect Binder**

In the high-performance world of outboard engines and marine power products, you wouldn't think bookbinding would make waves. But with a rising tide of decreasing run-lengths for service literature increasingly produced just-in-time, Mercury Marine's decision to install a C.P. Bourg BB3002 Automated Perfect Binder in 2004 proved a smart decision that's looking better than ever.

Mercury Marine, based in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, is the world's leading manufacturer of recreational marine propulsion engines. A \$2.3 billion division of Brunswick Corporation (NYSE: BC), Mercury and its 6,200 employees worldwide provide engines, boats, services and parts for recreational, commercial and government marine applications under the Mercury, Mariner, MerCruiser and many other brands.

The company's Printing and Mailing Solutions Department, with manager Michael Schrader at the helm, employs 20 people and includes graphic design, printing, binding and fulfillment services. The department lays down 90 million printing impressions per year and perfect binds about 80,000 books per year on the BB3002 – mostly service manuals for dealers and customers, as well as some sales and marketing materials and internal company documents.

In his 23 years with the in-plant shop, Mike Schrader has seen a major shift toward shorter run lengths for all projects. At the same time, the size of owners' manuals, and parts and service manuals kept expanding.

With products dating back several decades, Mercury needs to stock several thousand manuals, each with different part numbers. Balancing the need to fulfill customer requests in a timely fashion while limiting warehouse space poses a significant challenge, Schrader explains.

"One of our books comes packaged with each of the thousands of products we sell, and 40% of our sales come from outside the US. Plus, there's a healthy resale market – if you buy your neighbor's Mercury outboard, for example, you'll call us to get a service manual. So we have to be ready to meet worldwide demand for sales and for customer service requests," says Schrader.

"To save warehouse space and prevent having to store several hundred thousand dollars worth of manuals, our goal is to keep in stock as few copies of each as possible and to simplify the process of replenishing them."

## **The Search for the Perfect Binder**

Mercury's Printing and Mailing Solutions Department uses two Xerox DocuTechs to print the literature, so that aspect was covered. But the books then had to be bound, and that proved a problem. Despite using the same cover on all its manuals, the group's Mueller Pony Perfect Binder took 20 to 25 minutes to set up for each book. And the machine could only bind books less than two inches thick.

"Some of our manuals were over 2-¼ inches," Schrader explains. "To compensate, we either had to split them into 2 books or find someone else to bind them for us, and neither alternative was acceptable.

"So when I started looking for a new binder, I wanted two things: a short set-up time that would allow us to store fewer manuals while maintaining our fulfillment responsiveness, and the ability to bind books over 2-¼ inches."

Mike Schrader's investigation led him to purchase and install one of the first C.P. Bourg BB3002 Perfect Binders in North America. The Bourg BB3002 Perfect Binder is a totally automated, near-line machine that uniquely offers the performance, versatility and quality needed for both short and long runs. The BB3002 allows a single operator to set-up even a complex perfect bind, and within one minute to start producing even different-sized books one right after another.

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

"The automatic operation of the BB3002 makes set-up a snap," says Schrader. "Setup takes ten to 15 seconds, and as long as you understand the concepts of perfect binding, it is quite easy to run. It moves the glue pots and does everything else for you. One of our operators took a real liking to it and works with it most of the time, but pretty much everybody in our production facility knows how to use the machine," he explains.

Plus, with the BB3002 ability to bind up to 600 books per hour up to 12.6 x 15.15 inches from four-hundredths of an inch to 2.36 inches thick, it easily satisfied Schrader's second requirement.

## **Automatic Features Speed Production**

A Bourg innovation on the BB3002 called Symmetrical Cover Registration also fits with Mercury's approach of putting the same cover on all its manuals. 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, without operator intervention.

"We throw the book block into the pocket and when it clamps down on it, it figures out how thick it is. The cover wraps from the back edge around to the front. It's designed to fall short of the front edge of the

book to leave space for all the information – the part number, model number, everything. With the Bourg, we can run books of several thicknesses one after another and use the exact same cover. We just keep loading them in and without trimming anything we take each book off and it's ready to go," says Schrader.

"Since we've had the BB3002, we produce about 2 weeks worth of manuals at a time as we need them. Eventually we'll produce customer orders on demand, as they come in," he adds.

As for reliability, "It's been great," says Schrader. "Bourg is a great company to work with, and they're committed to service. Any time we've ever had any issues they are always happy to help us out."

Schrader admits there was one sticking point. "We tried using a different glue one time, to save a few bucks. But it just wasn't working. The glue we get from Bourg is definitely the best for that machine."

Now, with binding perfectly positioned for the future, Mike Schrader and Mercury's Printing and Mailing Solutions Department can enjoy some smooth sailing as production cycles tighten and run lengths decrease.

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