



Miles Kilday and Brandon Kilday, co-owners of American Calendar Company, alongside the Fujifilm J Press at their facility in Greenville, Tennessee.

The competitor's edge

AMERICAN CALENDAR COMPANY RAMPS UP BUSINESS WITH HELP FROM FUJIFILM'S J PRESS

It's all about the customers. What they need. When they need it. How it is delivered to them. When the American Calendar Company was looking to gain an even stronger foothold in today's competitive landscape, it needed a strategy that could hit all those criteria—and then some.

Staying on the forefront of the workflow and technological advances pacing the industry has long been the forte for American Calendar, a family-owned company that is steeped in a rich history. Starting out in the patent medicine business, it printed almanac calendars to advertise the patent medicines it offered. In all, the company has been producing calendars since well before the turn of the century. Today, the Greeneville, Tennessee-based company manufactures and distributes customized promotional calendar products for a large distributor network throughout North America and beyond.

To keep pace with its network's ever-evolving needs, the American Calendar team wanted to strengthen its equipment portfolio to accommodate the growing calls for smaller, shorter runs. The goal was two-fold: Significantly cut lead times and offer new customization options.

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American Calendar's search led it to the FUJIFILM North America Corporation, Graphic Systems Division team. After meeting with Fujifilm reps, American Calendar decided on the J Press, which would not only help it hit the mark on the quality its customers demanded, but also offer shorter, high quality print runs (as few as 100 or less pieces), at a low cost.

“The J Press allows us to take the next step in providing advanced printing options for our customers,” says American Calendar Company co-owner Miles Kilday. “The technology provides new capabilities for us to meet high-volume short run needs with quicker turnaround times and better pricing. We are able to offer our customers the option to do full color at a more attractive price than others, and we can now offer our customers the option to fully customize each page.”

The J Press B2+ sheet-fed digital inkjet press continues to revolutionize the marketplace by offering a litho quality and cost effective solution for print runs of just one or thousands. The J Press helped the American Calendar team gain a competitive advantage by helping fulfill its customer expectations and offer cost-effective short print runs—turnaround times that cut the time in half.

“This new timeline has even afforded us an additional three weeks in our prime season for meeting customer demands,” Kilday says.

The J Press is paced by its unprecedented attention to detail in the areas of quality, productivity, flexibility, production efficiency and environmental performance. For example, because the J Press provides streamlined printing, there is no plate production required or any need to run up to color, which means make-ready times and associated waste are a thing of the past. And with no need for a number of pressroom solutions typically used on offset presses, a facility's carbon footprint is significantly reduced.

Along with cutting lead times and increasing efficiency, the J Press helped American Calendar Company expand its offerings. By adding the press, the company launched three new products in 2020—a move that helped it pick up new business from existing and acquire new customers as a result. “Our decision to purchase the Fujifilm J Press was rooted in our desire to pro-

vide more value to customers through offering products previously unavailable,” says Brandon Kilday, co-owner.

Being able to introduce new capabilities has been a lucrative selling point. For example, the American Calendar Company team now can offer full color for the same price as black and white, as well as offer customers the option of changing an image on every page of the calendar without added production costs.

Because of the flexibility of the J Press platform, Kilday says the company is planning to expand its offerings into additional markets with products such as posters, pocket folders and short-run digital packaging.

Along with the J Press, American Calendar Company acquired Fujifilm XMF print workflow software, which has helped power its entire shop, and improve efficiencies and productivity by operating through a single workflow.

Ed Pierce, product manager, FUJIFILM North America Corporation, Graphic Systems Division, says the success that American Calendar Company has had helps the industry at large maintain the type of quality its customers expect today. “Our customers across North America rely on the J Press to provide the quality of an offset press, with the versatility to handle short and larger press runs alike, with color consistency and repeatability that Fujifilm is known for.”

As the Kildays reflect on the goals American Calendar Company has ahead, they say partnering with Fujifilm was the kind of decision that will continue to pay dividends. “With the way loyalty goes in today's world, you had better be on your A game,” Brandon says. “We anticipate that our customers over time will realize they can get better quality with our solutions.”

