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HOW PROJECT MANAGEMENT HELPS YOUR NEW WEB PRESS MEET PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

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Another White Paper in a series from the manroland, Inc. Print Technology Center

Printers considering a new press typically spend months and even years researching different manufacturers and models, visiting installations in other operations, sitting through presentations, evaluating proposals, negotiating prices and options and finally committing to a major multi-million dollar investment in technology that will significantly impact their level of success for years to come.

Despite all of this, many new-press investment projects fall short of meeting the buyer's expectations — even when the press is up-and-running within the timeline agreed to once the contract is signed.

Why?

In this White Paper we examine key factors that contribute to "over-promised and under-delivered" printer feelings, and the role of project management in new press projects. We will point out things to look for — indicators of the press provider's commitment and ability to deliver on short-term as well as sustainable performance goals over the lifecycle of your press — including items and actions that have been shown to significantly impact customer satisfaction:

- Supplier specialists dedicated to your project during crucial project stages
- The process itself: key phases along with items and issues addressed in each
- Interaction: when, and how extensively, project management interfaces with not only the customer, but also various supplier departments and disciplines, from sales through installation and ongoing service
- Tools and techniques employed to ensure timely, thorough project execution
- Additional value-added systems and services that can advance long-term performance goals.

With many new press projects, broadening Project Management's traditional role can help generate earlier payback as well as greater long-term bottom line returns.

by Kai Schüler
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Redefining Project Management:

What it is, what it does, and how adding new perspectives can multiply results

Traditionally, the printing industry has looked at Project Management as purely a technical function; more specifically, organizing and implementing the installation and commissioning of a new press. This is true among printers as well as most press manufacturers themselves.

Another traditional perception of new-press projects is that pieces of a puzzle are being brought together to create an image that will match "the picture on the box," so to speak. Suppliers can run the risk of standardizing products and (worse yet) homogenizing customer operations, trying to "shoehorn-in" solutions that don't quite fit user needs precisely.

In any case, Project Management activities typically begin after the contract is signed, with a simple, worthy goal: Get it in, get it up, run trials, produce saleable output as quickly as possible, hopefully, within an agreed-upon timetable.

Frequently, however, installation timetables are not met — a phenomenon that many printers accept as "par for the course" because, as one industry observer noted, "they see it happening to others, and they don't know any better."

Installation timing is not the only issue, however.

The high cost of slow utilization.

Even more frequently, once a press is producing saleable product and a customer signs-off on the installation, it can still take longer than expected before the capacity of a new press is utilized at a reasonably high level. Numerous "hiccups" and sometimes minor-yet-disruptive issues result in costly downtime and require adjustments. *(See "Early Payback in Productive Press Time" chart below.)* The cost of lost, non-productive hours adds up fast.

This is another phenomenon that fuels "over-promised and under-delivered" attitudes among printers, but is routinely accepted as the norm.

Of course, some post-installation press "optimizing" is inevitable. Ideally it begins at a higher level of capacity utilization, however, and reaches the targeted level in a matter of weeks, which, in turn, boosts both productivity and bottom-line returns dramatically. These installations typically have far fewer (and less serious) issues in subsequent years, too.

There must be a reason for this. Actually, there's more than one.

Start sooner, stay longer. Think 'performance.'

Comparing less-than-ideal with best practice scenarios reveals distinct differences linked directly to Project Management. At its best ...

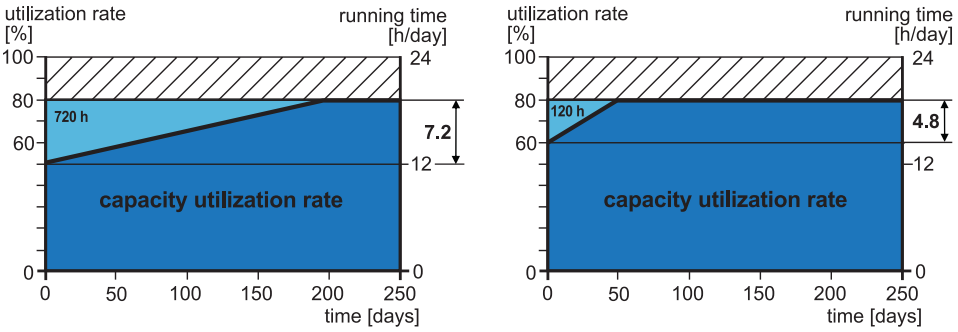
1. Project Management becomes involved early in the sales/purchase process, plays key roles through the machine warranty period, and provides a seamless transition into extended press lifecycle servicing.

2. Project Team focus is on customer goals and desired end-results, along with system-wide equipment functional and performance requirements to ensure that these expectations are met.

3. The project is fully thought through with the customer, in order to develop an optimum installation plan.

Early Payback in Productive Press Time

Maximizing efficiency by minimizing dysfunctional cost.



Expanded Project Management can pay in many ways — including earlier use of more press capacity. Whether yours is an $800/hour press or $1200, additional productive hours such as the 600 achieved here, can add up to a tidy sum.

Upstream planning, of course, affects end results. And a well-developed plan needs to cover environment as well as training for the crews, since today's projects often deliver new technologies which need to be addressed.

The performance you need vs. the press you 'want.'

Fact is, no printer is buying a press, per se. He's buying performance in terms of greater productivity, workflow efficiency, ability to take on new markets and business opportunities in the future — all of which is aimed at satisfying his customers, while increasing his own ROI.

Although published press performance specifications provide one measure of machine potential — capabilities that are often demonstrated by seeing the "same" press working elsewhere — every print operation is unique. Some customers, for example, have a strong focus on technical uptime and productivity, but startup waste is less important due to lengthy, high-volume runs. Startup waste is a huge issue, however, along with rapid makereadies, in operations where short runs are the norm.

Furthermore, today's new-press projects are not merely puzzles with pieces that clearly, cleanly abut each other. A high degree of technical complexity coupled with increased workflow integration presents many interfacing challenges along with system options and ancillary issues to resolve. System components may even be added as the project proceeds.

In short, press manufacturers are not just delivering a piece of equipment, but a functional performing system to address a range of individual customer requirements. And project management plays a key role in ensuring that the system achieves performance and ROI goals.

Managing the risks involved with complex systems.

This is easier said than done, however. As business integration grows more important, new-press projects become more complex. Complexity may stem from the large scale of a project, its high degree of technical complexity, workflow integration, or a combination of these and other factors.

As a result, the potential for missteps, oversights or other errors is compounded. Thus, project management could be viewed (to use a term common to insurance and financial services industries) as "risk management."

Managing the interrelated risks inherent in today's new-press projects requires a far greater level of skill and attention to detail than it once did.

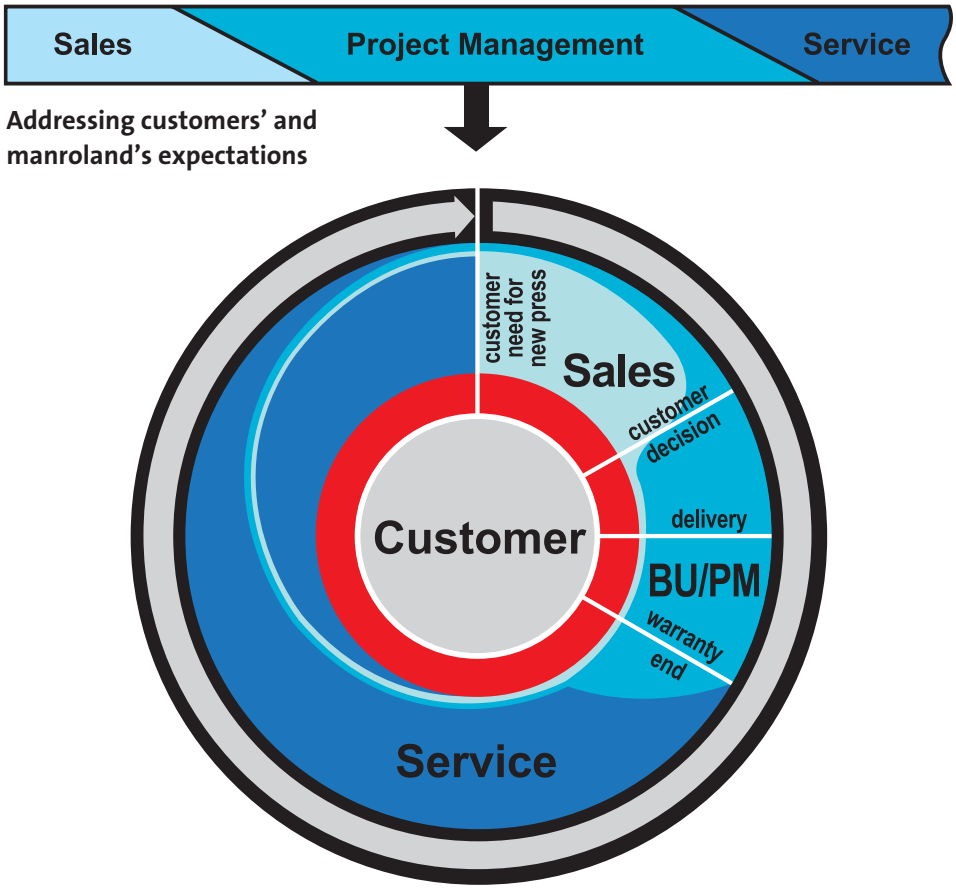
Note: the importance of managing these risks applies to smaller as well as large-scale operations. For a single-press mid-size shop, the relative complexity is at least as great; and successful project implementation is a huge undertaking, indeed.

Project Management cycle and Press Lifecycle.

Success stems from Project Management that never stops ... that has no clearly drawn start- or end-points. It's like a handrail that runs full-circle from the beginning of the press selection process throughout the life of the machine, guiding and providing touch-points for all manufacturer-customer activities. *(See 'Lifecycle' Project Management graph)*

'Lifecycle' Project Management

From a one-off project to a continued partnership



Customer-centric approach involves Project Management as an ongoing partner from the time a printer begins to articulate his needs in a new press ... providing guidelines, touch-points and performance-support assurance throughout the press lifecycle.

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To be sure, there still are "phases" in the process; but from a project management standpoint, they overlap, interrelate, blend and flow from one to the next.

- **Pre-Contract Sales/Purchase phase,** when customer goals are being articulated. This is a good time for Sales to be joined by Project Management, providing technical consultation on design of the press and related issues.
- **Delivery/Installation phase,** when the Project Manager takes the lead, usually with an Installation Manager functioning as his "wing man."
- **Production/Warranty phase,** with ongoing Project Management involvement and assistance as needed.
- **Press Lifecycle Service phase,** when various service and support systems become most prominent.

Only the customer's primary point-of-contact changes during different phases. And again, note that these are not finite, start-stop sequential phases; various aspects overlap and interrelate. Each phase, regardless of its point of contact, is managed like a project within the overall project.

Today's Project Manager: The how-to, go-to guy.

Whether functioning as that primary contact or in a supporting role, Project Manager contributions impact activities in every phase, at every press lifecycle stage.

> "Planning was the biggest factor in being able to start the press up on the first try, versus working through problems. We ran white paper one day, inked the press up the next day, timed the unit and ran the first live job."

By virtue of the Project Manager's close involvement with the factory and thorough knowledge of each machine's technological features, capabilities and limitations, he is quick to grasp customer issues, aspirations and expectations, and evaluate the extent to which a particular press can address them.

Another prerequisite for accurate evaluation, however, is understanding the customer's business, inside and out: The clientele they're serving, what they're running; how clients, types of output, run lengths and more may change in the future. Even "jargon" can be an issue: Typical industry terms can be used differently and carry special meanings in different shops. The Project Manager must be sure to clearly understand how they're used by the specific customer with whom he's working.

All of this helps the Project Manager quickly connect-the-dots not only in system configuration and setup, but with non-press production and finishing issues, or special service-support programs that can enhance overall performance and payback.

And it starts with Project Management being brought in very early in the phase one Sales/Purchase process. *(See Extended Project Management graph below.)*

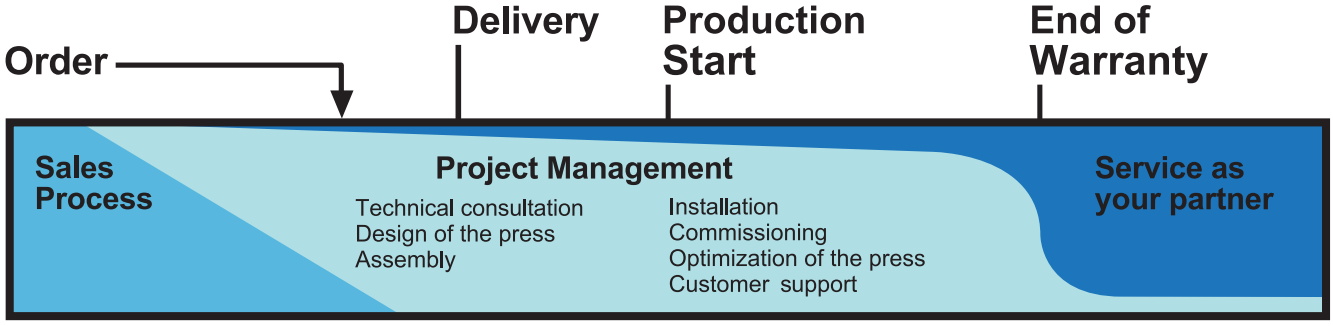
Pre-contract: Identifying potential glitches, tailoring press performance specs.

In an ideal scenario, project management teams up with sales almost as soon as talks commence. And with good reason.

During this orientation period, customer needs as well as "wants" are being articulated. The Project Manager hears them firsthand, and can make sure (first things first) that he clearly understands each and every one. Only then can he link them fully and accurately to specific presses and options — and call on engineering or other resources, if needed — to ensure the supplier's ability to deliver the technology that will deliver the promise on expectations expressed.

Case in point: A printer who produces primarily 4-color catalogs with high page counts and short run lengths, was investigating new press options. In the course of pre-contract discussions, he mentioned that he would love the productivity advantage of running 64-

Extended Project Management



Today, best practices in Project Management can be summed up by "start sooner — stay longer," as an integral player in multiple aspects extending from press selection all the way through the warranty period and even beyond, ensuring that vital systems are in-place when ongoing service becomes the primary issue.

page signatures instead of 24- or 32-page sigs. Although not widely practiced for short-run work, this capability would greatly increase makeready efficiency — delivering a huge plus with his short run lengths.

Paper stock analysis led by Project Management and Engineering determined that the stocks he needed could be run in 64-page signatures — if a special cross perforation is utilized. By equipping the press with a laterally motorized adjustable cross perf system (which is also pre-settable), the perforation could be handled efficiently in makereadies.

This solution secured production effectiveness for the customer, along with versatility to handle various format sizes — while delivering the desired 64-page signature productivity and efficiency.

Another case, where the customer provided an up-front list of items that were important to him, the Project Manager was able to understand and address the series of issues in short order. The customer later commented on other keys to his project's success, such as installation meetings and planning documents that helped everything go smoother, and kept unknowns to a minimum. He also praised the accuracy of the supplier's scheduling, plus the speed and ease with which the parties were able to jointly address and resolve deviations that occurred.

It's best when project plans are not only detailed and complete, but also readily available to customers and Project Team members to work with daily.

Tools to keep projects on-track.

Of course, the best project plans use numerous tools to document and communicate with all parties involved. Schedules, milestone charts, budget and cost charts are just some of the tools that indicate if a project is on track — and, if not, can point toward the timing and type of corrective action needed.

One excellent item is a Site Inspection Checklist for everything from what needs to be installed and who supplies them (rigging company, press manufacturer or the customer), to similar details regarding Power Cables to Connection Points, Chilled Water, Cable Raceways ... Customer-provided personnel (who, and when needed) ... even First Aid & Emergency info. Checklists can easily contain 40-50 items; sections could be titled Offloading, Mechanical/Electrical, Mounting Area, and General Issues.

Tools such as these need to be an integral part of the supplier's processes and networked across the organization, with a high degree of visibility. And they must be kept current.

In addition, gathering and organizing project details in one place can make an immeasurable difference in on-time vs. delayed installation and startup. One tool used by Best-Practice organizations is a detailed Project Planning book.

Customized All-in-One Planning Data Book

Details, details, details: they're all here, clearly organized and spelled out by Project Management for each and every customer press installation. This particular Data Book includes 87 pages in 16 sections, from press configuration and interfaces, through electrics/electronics, fountain-solution and ink supply processing systems, to blankets, plates, load points and schematic drawings. Plus a handy section for Changes & Updates, if and as needed.

A well-prepared Project Planning book can function as an all-in-one Action Guide, and is almost certain to generate positive responses.

- First-time customers are likely to be impressed; chances are, they have never seen so much information so clearly, simply pulled together in one highly functional, working document.

- Customers who have previously experienced having a Planning Book, will probably ask about it and want to get it as soon as possible.

Communication tool keeps all parties up-to-date.

This isn't surprising, since the whole purpose is to provide a complete collection of information covering every item, area and issue involved in the installation... in an easy-to-use format that won't just "sit and gather dust" on a shelf.

Simply stated, it's a communication tool for all parties involved, to keep everyone up-to-speed on project progress, to help pinpoint deviations in timing and/or project components, and expedite corrective action.

Planning Book sections typically cover press configuration, of course, and show exactly where interfacing points are. Plus flow rates, electric power and gas and compressed air requirements ... water analysis, litho materials, all the consumables; not to mention ink supply and fountain solution processing systems, blankets, plates, load points, various schematic drawings — the works.

All manufacturers provide necessary details to new-press customers. So, as you evaluate suppliers, look for more than the bare minimum and, importantly, ask to see examples that will indicate how complete, clearly organized and easily referenced their "details" are.

Planning Book "catch:" With one project, having detailed information pulled together and accessible led to a big issue being identified and resolved before it became a major problem. The customer, reviewing the Project Planning Book, noted a previously unmentioned item. "We have unstable power in this area," he revealed, "and I have generators to handle that. But the response curves don't mesh with your equipment specifications." He and the manufacturer quickly, jointly addressed the issue. The supplier was able to make adjustments in manufacturing — making sure that the electronics could handle the little "hiccup" when his generators needed to kick in — before it became much harder to resolve during (or after) installation.

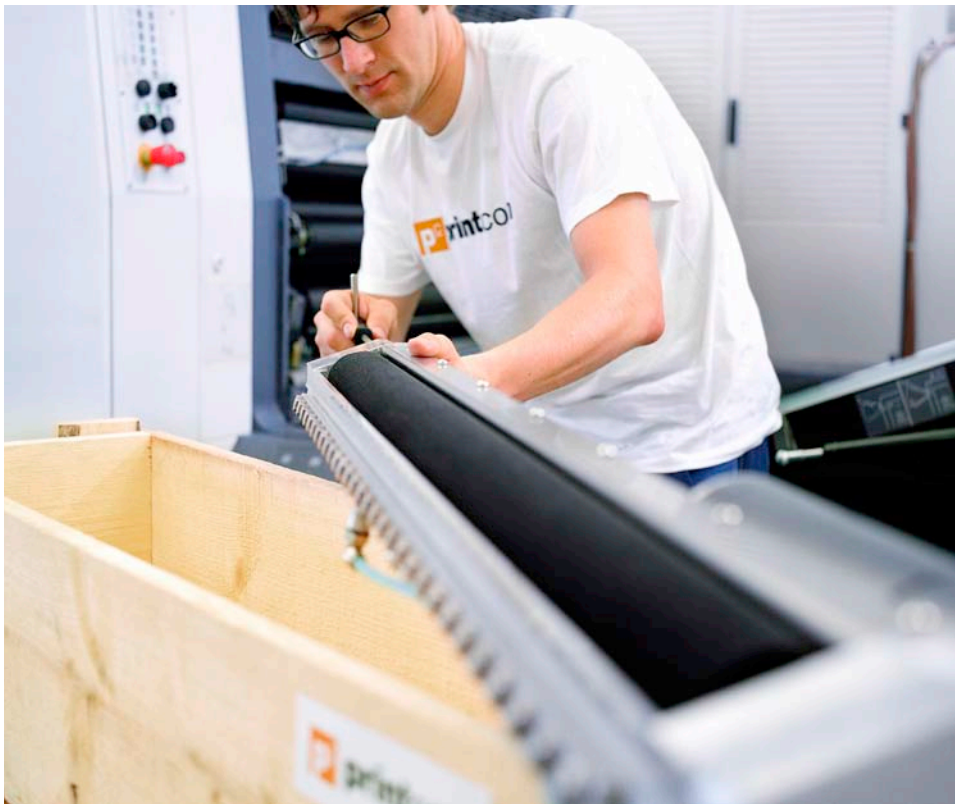
Startup defined: Saleable product on skids now. Not 'someday soon.'

Installation timetables and press startup dates run the risk of being less than "firm." Of course, utilizing the schedules, milestone charts and other project management tools mentioned earlier can certainly help alleviate such problems. Chances are, the detailed information and effort required to prepare a Planning Data Book (or similar document), would help, too.

To avoid disappointment in your startup expectations, however, be sure to find out what your manufacturer's team truly intends to deliver on startup day. In many cases, "startup" means beginning to run the press... merely starting to put ink on paper... barely beginning the trial-run process.

One benchmark target that makes sense, would be for you to specify that, at a minimum, inking and trial runs have been completed. Successfully.

This would mean it's ready for you to push the button and print saleable paper — lots of it. Right away.



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Anticipating the unexpected, and handling the unanticipated.

Of course, even "the best laid plans" can be blind-sided now and then. Which makes an even stronger case for early and ongoing Project Manager involvement in your new-press process, and making sure that your equipment supplier provides detailed plans and tools that can help direct you in coping with unexpected problems.

This also includes rare instances when meeting customer "expectations" means unexpected expectations.

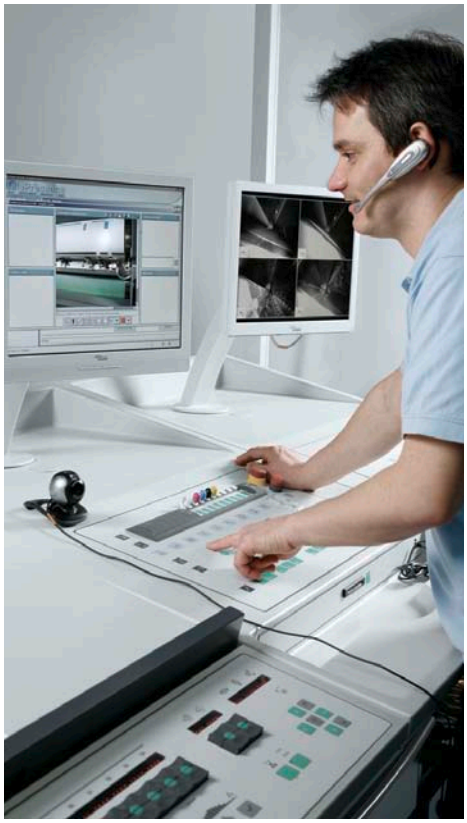
One such case involved the successful, on-schedule installation of a new web press for a previously all-sheetfed customer. At start-up, the slight corrugation of the sheet — a commonly occurring and accepted phenomenon in heatset web-offset — surprised the customer who was used to (and expected to see) perfectly flat sheets. The output did not meet their sheetfed-based expectations. Project Management brought in specialists who devised ways to adjust the customer's process and minimize the effect, producing sheets that then met customer criteria.

Here again, detailed overall Project Management planning helped to quickly identify items and areas that could be "tweaked" in order to resolve this unexpected problem.

Training: A critical component in every project.

Although operator training is typically "standard" with press purchases, Project Management ensures that this, too, is tailored to the particular print operation, equipment and systems.

It's not enough for personnel to simply become familiar with advanced press technologies, but to learn how to make the most of them in order to deliver the performance you're looking for. In addition, all-new systems designed to expand business opportunities may be incorporated into the new configuration,



requiring special and/or more extended sessions in the overall training program.

Customers are also wise to consider follow-up refresher or advanced-performance training, which can be a highly beneficial post-installation project component — and even more crucial when business growth or operator turnover puts new people at the controls. Depending on the particular equipment, systems and level, training could be provided on-site or at your press vendor's site.

Warranty period & beyond: Selecting value-added options with high payback potential.

Some manufacturers offer value-added press services that provide for future upgrades in your system. Such options not only can revitalize a machine's productivity, but also open the door to new business opportunities as your marketplace evolves.

Project Management ensures that relevant options are evaluated in light of printer-specified goals.

Advanced, remote service, if available from your press manufacturer, is another option that's typically well worth the investment. One example: 24/7 machine monitoring technology designed into the press, coupled with remote service capability. When this service is specified by the customer, it is supported worldwide by specialists who can resolve many issues in minutes, or confine downtime to a few hours vs. days.

Even when a machine is under warranty, if remote service such as this saves just one half-day of downtime, it will more than pay its way in virtually any operation.

Warranty "handover" with Project Management takes place, of course, when the warranty period ends. Although Service now becomes the printer's primary manufacturer contact, numerous value-added items frequently suggested by Project Management — remote service, for example, when the customer chooses for it to continue — will deliver for years to come.

Performance monitoring: An indicator of supplier commitment to sustained performance.

Another capability designed into presses with some manufacturers, sometimes referred to as "performance monitoring," keeps tabs on an extensive range of press activities anywhere in the world.

This type of system tracks various performance numbers, including faults that could alert users to impending problems and/or point the way toward solving them. It enables the manufacturer to analyze, for instance, the splicing reliability of all networked presses by splicing types. And when the presses are networked, the supplier can access this information at any time, to help resolve issues that arise.

The ultimate result is extended ability to help customers realize a higher level of sustained press performance, year after year.

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Beware of 'showcase installations.' Seek more information.

Every manufacturer has some new-press installations that go "like clockwork," with on-schedule startups and smooth performance. Likewise, few can avoid having some that, for one or several reasons, simply don't go as quickly or as well.

Consequently, when you evaluate various presses and manufacturers, chances are, it will pay for you to closely consider three key things:

- Consistency: How well and how often do they meet more than one customer's expectations?
- Timing: Seek specific definitions of "startup" and other relevant terms, and ascertain how frequently they actually deliver on-time.
- Customer orientation in the Project Management process: See how they go about not only focusing on your specific system needs and the steps required to meet them, but how their methods and tools can help identify items that may be delayed or off-track, and can efficiently bring them back in-line.

Additionally, find out how soon Project Management becomes involved, lending its expertise to your new-press process. In most cases, the sooner, the better.

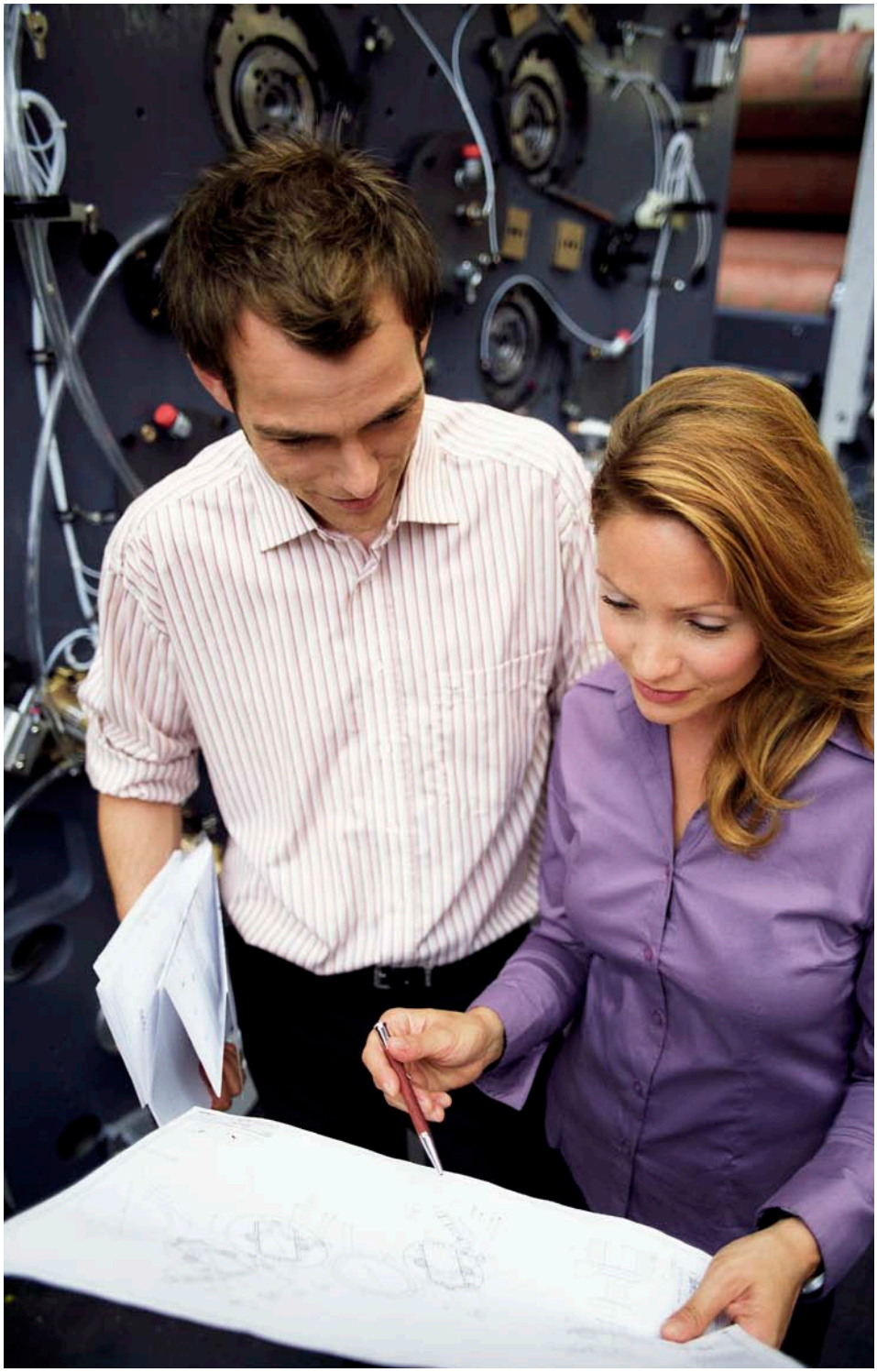
Why settle for less?

It's all part of a process and program geared to meet customer expectations and performance goals, with ...

- Specialists dedicated to your project, and early involvement by Project Management
- Project phases with specified activities, and seamless transitions within the overall program
- Frequent, extensive interaction among customer and supplier departments throughout the process
- Relevant tools to keep all parties up-to-date, and to ensure timely, complete project execution
- Value-added systems and services to enhance long-term, sustainable performance.

This kind of Project Management virtually guarantees a press manufacturer's ability to deliver on customer expectations, including yours.

When it's time to move toward your next new press, don't settle for less.



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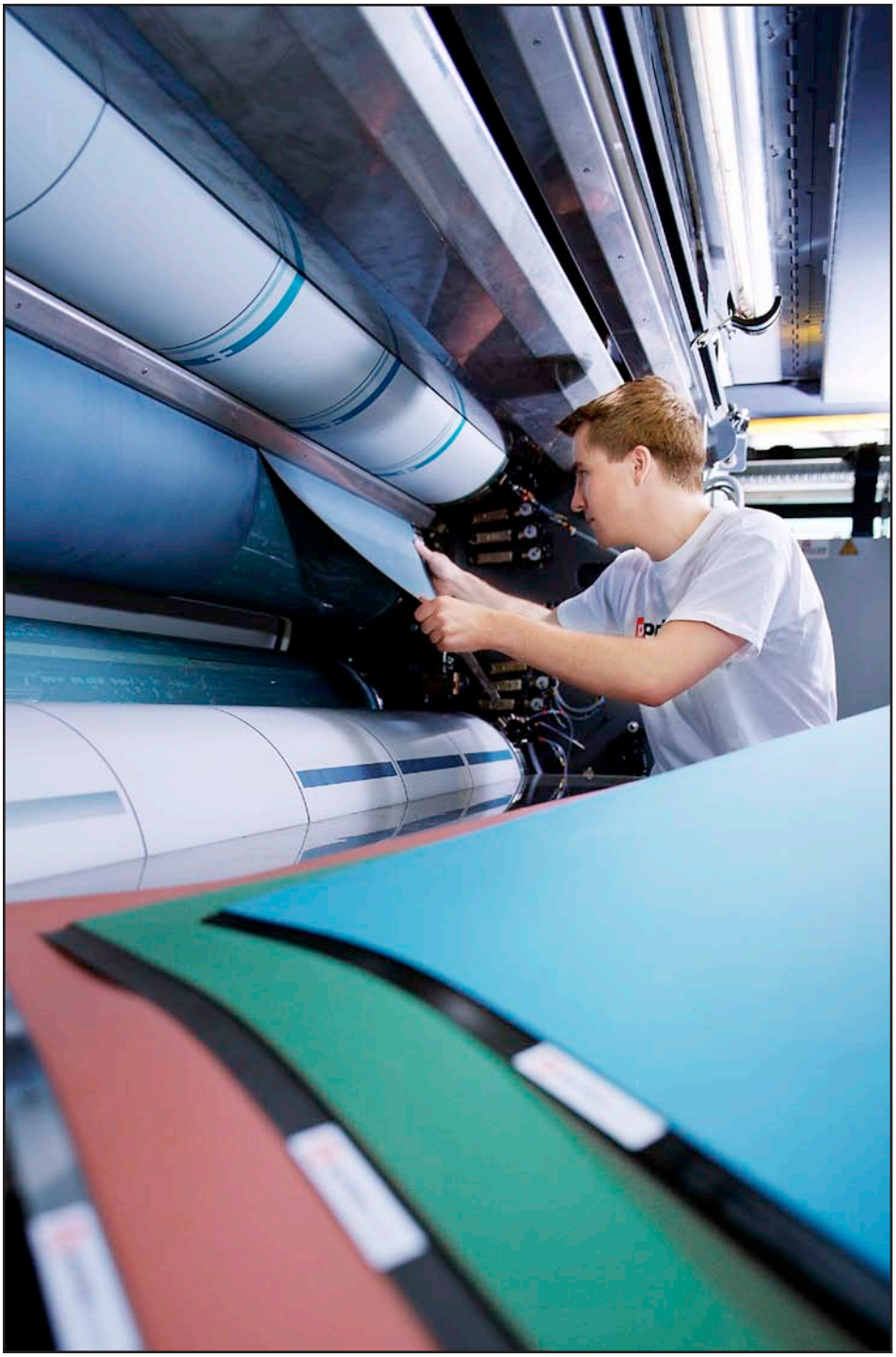

Located at manroland U.S. headquarters in Westmont, Illinois, the Print Technology Center serves as a focal point for addressing customer-specific as well as industry issues. At any given time, a combination of press owners and operators, industry experts, engineers, field sales and technical specialists may be exchanging viewpoints along with data and information, while advancing new ideas and practical recommendations for meeting both current and perceived future challenges.

On-site presses may be used to test and/or verify concepts and suggestions. The Center also functions as a demo site, frequented by prospective and current customers.

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