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For immediate release



Sinapse Graphic International - Simulators & Software for the Graphic Arts

SINAPSE Simulators Help North Jersey Media Group Gear Up for New Technology

**Training and Simulation Have Always Been Concerns –
One Way of Increasing Productivity**

When the North Jersey Media Group (NJMG), which prints *The (Bergen) Record*, *The Herald News*, and more than 40 weekly newspapers, decided to invest in a WIFAG OF 371 direct-imaging press, it wanted to give its press operators a jump on training by purchasing a Sinapse Graphic Newspaper Simulator.

The WIFAG OF 371, the first of its kind to be installed in the United States, utilizes ABB press controls, so the company chose a version of the Sinapse simulator that integrates into the ABB console, allowing the user to practice the exercises on the same console used to run the press.

The NJMG currently has five presses in its inventory, two double-wide TKS presses, two double-wide Mitsubishi presses, and a single-wide MAN Roland press, ranging from 12 years to 24 years. In addition to the WIFAG, the NJMG is upgrading the press controls on its Mitsubishi presses to ABB, so the simulator will ease them through the transition.



Keith Horens and Tim Calligan of NJMG in front of their Sinapse – ABB Simulator

The company has 120 press operators, and the goal is to have all of its operators comfortable operating all of its presses. “Cross-training is a core value for us,” says Brent Woodman, production director for the North Jersey Media Group. “To this end, the simulator is a great tool.”

Supporting Core Values

Another core value is simulation itself. “We’ve been using simulation for years, in terms of process flow, designing mailroom systems, determining throughputs, and driving deadlines based on simulated results,” says Woodman. “It’s part of our larger philosophy of continuous improvement.”

This commitment goes back more than a decade, including programs such as the Certification for Continuous Improvement Mentoring, the Partners 2000 program, and the QSE (Quality Service Every Time) program. The company even has its own office of continuous improvement. “Continuous improvement is not just something you do, but a fundamental business philosophy,” Woodman explains. “It’s about getting work habits to change.”

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When press operators have a problem, for example, one of the big mistakes they make is trying to implement a solution before fully understanding the problem. Simulation changes this mentality. “By digging in and taking processes apart, they begin to start understanding why they do things and whether there is a better way,” he explains. “This has allowed us to make some big improvements in our workflow and engage people at all levels of the organization.”

Take on-time performance. Most newspapers know whether their press finished on time or late. The North Jersey Media Group knows whether each finished late, and if so, why. It also knows where the problem occurred and what needs to be done to prevent it from happening in the future. “The net result is, maybe I can start my press 20 minutes later,” says Woodman.

“This has allowed us to make some big improvements in our workflow and engage people at all levels of the organization. As the press operator figures out what’s wrong, the simulator is counting off dollars.”

Where Simulation Fits

How does press simulation fit in? If press operators can get to good copy within six minutes versus 16 minutes, they have made a significant improvement in time and cost. “A 56-page newspaper equates to about 15 cents of paper,” Woodman says. “If I have a few thousand waste copies at 15 cents each, it adds up day to day, year to year. On the other hand, you don’t want to send out copies below your quality standard. By helping your press operators understand the process, they develop a better understanding of this balance.”

Woodman is also impressed with how the simulator reflects real-life situations. “You are looking at the screen, and all of a sudden, your page is out of register. Or you might have a plate blinding issue or your water dries up. Meanwhile, the simulator is saying, I’m running press at 55,000 iph, so I’m on bad copy right now, so it’s ticking the clock off. As the press operator figures out what’s wrong, the simulator is counting off dollars.”

To date, all of the North Jersey Media Group’s 120 press operators have gone through the simulator training program. Operators are rotated in during press downtime. “We get them in there whenever there is an opportunity, and we make sure there is an equal opportunity,” says Woodman. “If someone hasn’t been on it in six weeks, we can get him on there.”

While some operators embraced the simulator immediately, it took less-technology-savvy operators a little more time. “But once they understand it’s there for them to have fun with, and they see what they can do with it, they start to warm up to it,” Woodman says. “Initially, there was some intimidation, but I don’t see that now.”

Results continue to be good – still room for productivity gains

After a year of working with the simulator, Woodman is very pleased with the results. Once the WIFAG is on line at the end of 2006, he expects to see these benefits increase. “The Sinapse simulator is a well thought out program. A lot of effort went into it,” he says. “The WIFAG press is brand new and employs the latest technology for ink, water and register control. Our other presses are much older, which presents some challenges to productivity, so once we finish all of our upgrades, we’ll see even greater results than we do now.”

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