



# Kodak UpFront Software Brings Best Practices and Across-the-Board Savings to Action Printing

**Success Story  
from KODAK**

# ROI leads to top international printing industry award

## Established

- 1970

## Number of employees:

- 300+

## Location:

- Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, USA

## Services:

FTP file submission, scanning services, retouching, color adjustment, photo manipulation, digital proofing, offset printing, web printing, automated folding, perfect binding, saddle stitching, postal drop shipping, delivery, and fulfillment.

## Clients served:

Publishers, manufacturers, state governments and more.

## Typical Products:

Manuals, catalogs, publications, tabloid magazines, directories and books.

Action Printing, a division of the Gannett Company, has been providing quality service to its customers since 1970. Having started out with a 12,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility, the company has expanded five times and now has a 100,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility with more than 300 part-time and full-time employees. Today, it is one of Fond du Lac's largest employers and boasts annual revenues of over \$20 million from customers in 41 states.



**UpFront** software ensures accurate job plans so errors never get to prepress or production.

Action Printing prints 350 commercial printing products monthly. Their market niche includes short runs and quick turnaround for directories, manuals, catalogs, and books printed on uncoated text with coated covers.

## Homegrown system resulted in errors and wasted time

In the past, customer service representatives (CSRs) at Action Printing created layouts with a customized spreadsheet program. Electronic prepress employees would then take these layouts and attempt

to match them to an existing **Kodak Preps** layout or create a new one.

Using the customized solution was a time-consuming process and opened the door to potential errors. These errors included images printing in the gripper, paper sizes too small to create a lip, grind-offs omitted from layouts, and color bars burning on the image area or off the press sheet.

Employees were often afraid to reuse old layouts and would take 20 minutes or more to create a new one, even if a duplicate was already on file.

"Wrong layouts were being used to output jobs, and we wouldn't catch the problem until everything was output," recalls Marji Bastian, Customer Service Department manager. "The entire job would have to be scrapped and we would have to start over. Although our plant runs 24 hours a day, our CSRs work only eight. If a problem was caught off-shift, the job had to be delayed, or someone would have to go back to the office in the middle of the night.

"While we were proud of our homegrown system, we knew that there had to be something better."

**"We wanted a system that could archive old layouts for reuse and eliminate duplication wherever possible, such as the rekeying of data."**

- Marji Bastian, Customer Service Department Manager





**The Customer Service Department.** Seated: Sueann Baerwald, CSR; Don Woods, CSR; Standing: Kathy Hahn, CSR; Marji Bastian, Dept. Mgr.; Sarah Birthman, CSR.

## UpFront software becomes the plant's "best-practices" tool

"A consultant from the GATF (Graphic Arts Technical Foundation) recommended **Kodak UpFront** production planning software," continues Bastian. "Since we were already successfully using **Kodak Preps** imposition software, we were really interested in trying it."

"UpFront software put an end to the problem of variations in layouts and job planning," she relates, "and this has been key to saving time and money."

According to Bastian, the team was delighted with **UpFront** software's wizard-driven, straightforward interface that gave error messages if something wasn't done properly.

It was the software's immediate effects, however, that truly made the difference.



Action Printing won the CPPI Award as a result of their improved productivity with **UpFront** software..

"UpFront software put an end to the problem of variations in layouts and job planning," she relates, "and this has been key to saving time and money. Now, as we learn which layouts run best through our plant, we can incorporate them into the software, and they become our default operating procedures. For us, **UpFront** software is a 'best-practices' tool."

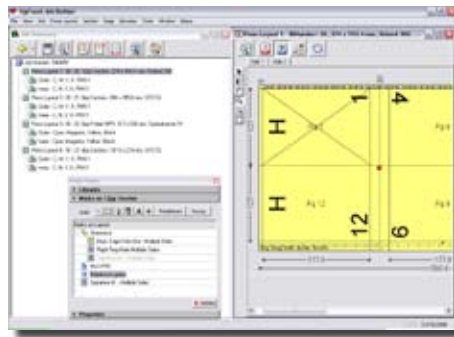
## UpFront software has resulted in significant savings

“Switching to **UpFront** software has resulted in significant savings in a number of areas,” reports Bastian, “Less wasted plates (from 3% to 1.4%), a streamlined workflow that lets us reuse layouts and minimize data re-entry, fewer staff with more productivity, and far fewer delays on-press due to missing or incorrect information.”

“Cutting programs that used to take 12 to 15 minutes to draw out by hand now take 20 seconds.”

The success of **UpFront** software has exceeded all expectations at Action Printing. Explains Bastian, “Our original goal was to make better layouts, but **UpFront** software has also impacted workflow in the planning department.”

As Bastian describes, job parameters entered by CSRs are exported to the bindery as a JDF file. The operator of the **Muller Martini** saddle stitcher downloads the JDF bindery instructions and uses the stitcher’s **AMRYS** software to perform



CSRs at Action Printing use the **UpFront Job Builder** client to create job plans from standardized layouts plans.

make-ready tasks and all machine adjustments in less than five minutes.

“The integration between the **Kodak** and **Müller Martini** systems lets us slash our saddle stitching setup time from 65 minutes to 24,” she says. “We were fortunate that both solutions were from the **Networked Graphic Production** program. The level of cooperation between both companies is excellent.”

“In addition to the saddle stitching integration, we have also expanded our JDF workflow to include our **MBO** Automated High Speed Buckle Folder and our **Polar 115** programmable 48” guillotine cutter. Cutting programs that used to take 12 to 15 minutes to draw out by hand now take 20 seconds

when downloaded from the JDF files exported by **UpFront** software.”

## International recognition for achievements with UpFront software

Action Printing’s relationship with Kodak has not only been profitable, but also brought them international recognition. In 2005, the International Cooperation for the Integration of Processes in Prepress, Press, and Postpress (CIP4) selected Action Printing and its **UpFront** integration as its first winner of the CIP4 International Print Production Innovation (CIPPI) award in the category of Best Cost/Benefit Realization as a Result of Process Automation Implementation.

“Action Printing has won six national awards for quality and seven state-level awards, but this is the first time that we’ve been recognized by an international organization,” says Bastian. “The CIPPI Award helps our reputation in the industry as a quality printer and internally smooths the way for future automation and additional projects with Kodak.”



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Eastman Kodak Company  
343 State Street  
Rochester, NY 14650 USA

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