



The team at BookBaby with their new Standard Horizon BQ-500 Perfect Binder. L to R: Gerard Caruso, Michael Dixon, Kyle Kopp (Northern Machine Works), Joel Maxey, Tony van Veen



BookBaby increases capacity 50% with latest printing/binding investments.

BookBaby was founded a decade ago as an eBook publishing and distribution platform. According to CEO Tony van Veen, about a year into its operation, authors began asking if they could print books as well. By 2016, it made sense to bring printing in-house to meet growing demand.

“We already did printing with our sister company, Disc Makers,” van Veen explains, “but we really didn’t know anything about book binding. We worked with our dealer, Northern Machine Works, to determine the best configurations for us.”

“We have also visited a lot of shops over the years,” adds Joel Maxey, VP of Operations, “and just about every one of them had Horizon equipment from Standard Finishing, with many units that had been reliably operating for years. That, combined with what looked to be the best value for the investment and the excellent ability and willingness for both Northern Machine Works and Standard Finishing to educate us, tipped the decision in their favor. Honestly, we didn’t know anything about binding, glue types, etc.”

BookBaby acquired its first book printing configuration in 2016, consisting of a Horizon BQ-280PUR Perfect Binder and an HT-80 Three-Knife Trimmer, along with sheet-fed digital printing. As the company grew, it added two more binding lines: a Horizon BQ-480PUR Perfect Binder with an HT-1000V Three-Knife Trimmer and, most recently, another HT-1000V Trimmer in-line with Horizon’s newest perfect binder, the BQ-500. The new binder can reach speeds up to 800 books/hour and is a game changer for book-of-one production. The company also has four HP Indigo digital presses as well as three Xerox Nuvera monochrome printers.

Today, BookBaby, which has 109 employees in its book division, is unique in the range of services it offers for independent authors. “We are one of the largest self-publishing platforms in the U.S.,” van Veen states, “the only mid-sized self-publishing platform that offers a full suite

of services including editing, graphic design, book layout, hard cover and soft cover book printing, eBook conversion on-demand fulfillment, global distribution, and a suite of marketing services geared to independent authors.”

BookBaby generates about 7,000 books per day at its Pennsauken, NJ, based operation, comprised of hundreds of orders from both new titles and its on-demand fulfillment operation. “It turns out that the pandemic not only had

more people reading books,” van Veen notes, “but was also a good time to write a book, driving significant growth for us, especially in the second half of 2020. To meet that demand, we converted 10,000 square feet of office space to book manufacturing, and our latest Standard Horizon investment will increase our capacity by about 50%.”

BookBaby also takes advantage of the automation that is central to Standard Horizon equipment, including barcodes that match covers to book blocks and adjust the binder for spine width, a conveyor system that moves bound books to the trimmer and iCE LiNK, Standard Horizon’s robust workflow management system that provides detailed reporting on production volumes and equipment performance.

“We have been extremely pleased with the outstanding support from Standard Finishing,” van Veen concludes, “as well as

the reliability of the equipment, all of which is operating at least two shifts. It is also important to us that the company provides backward compatibility where possible. Many of the new features in the BQ-500 can be retrofitted to our BQ-480 for added redundancy. Standard, along with Northern Machine Works, have been good partners that listen, are there for us, deliver exceptional training, and are very responsive with technical support as needed. Buying our third binding/trimming solution from them indicates how confident we are in the equipment!”



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