

Capitalising on a niche market for Print on Demand

Askprint is capitalising on the growing market for print on demand books and presentation material printed digitally and finished with a choice of hard or soft back covers using a Fastbind Casematic manually operated table top cover maker and an Elite perfect binder and consumables from Ashgate Automation.

“Until fairly recently, it was impossible to source equipment that would allow us to finish runs of anything from one to a thousand books with printed, hard covers cost effectively and to the quality that previously could only have been achieved by a trade binder. The introduction of the Fastbind equipment has been quite revolutionary because it really adds value to our finishing and has opened up a lot of new and profitable opportunities. It’s very affordable, easy to operate with minimal training. and complements our Konica Minolta digital printers,” said Trevor Elmer, Director of Print.



The cover is printed onto a self-adhesive outer sheet and can be laminated for extra durability. The Casematic is used to mount the cover onto cover and spine boards. The finished cover can then be bound onto the printed pages using the Fastbind Elite hot glue, perfect binder.

“In the past companies probably wouldn’t have thought it possible to personalise and bind their Powerpoint and other sales presentations but it adds that ‘wow factor,” he emphasised. Trevor also cited some interesting self published books including a book on a second World War US Air Force base in East Anglia. *“The author had arranged a tour for some comrades to visit the airfield and we reprinted and personalised each copy as a momento for them,”* he explained. *“Another customer came to us with a very old book. There were only two copies in print and he had one of them. We were able to reproduce hard bound facsimile copies to an excellent standard. We have printed and bound cookery books in Polish and a poetry book, which is to be marketed here and in the United States. Our biggest contract is 1000 books with the customer calling off 100-150 copies per month. Depending upon the order, we can finish them with either a hard or soft cover. I am sure that this is the tip of the iceberg and that there will be a lot more creative opportunities once people realise what we can do.”*

Trevor Elmer previously ran his own independent print company in Bury St Edmunds which was acquired last year by one of his major customers, the ASK Group and rebranded askprint. “It was a marriage made in heaven,” said Trevor. “I was at a crossroad because I had to make a decision to invest in new equipment to take the company forward. ASK, a dynamic, fast growing Group, had the capital to invest in us and realised the benefits of offering an in-house print service alongside their other services. The

Group also provides branding and graphic design, telemarketing, translation and interpreting, website design and optimisation and e-commerce services.

"We are very optimistic that we will grow the printing side of the business very quickly", Trevor continued. "ASK bought a second Konica Minolta immediately I joined the Group. We also re-equipped our finishing department. And turned to Ashgate Automation because we had brought various equipment from their proprietor. Compared with competitive suppliers, their equipment is very affordable and from a service point of view, it is useful to use one company."

Together with the Fastbind equipment, Ashgate supplied a KAS bookletmaker with on-line trimmer, a KAS CreaseMatic semi automatic creasing and perforating machine, an Horizon folder and a Renz wire binder. "Although our new Konica Minolta has on-line finishing and saddle stitching, we need the increased productivity from the stand-alone finishing equipment because we finish a wide range of material from booklets, newsletters and brochures to invitations, menus, cards, calendars and books," commented Trevor. "It's proving very good value for money and the service from Ashgate is excellent."