

Flying the (Paper) Airplane

Less paper provides positive change for Delta Airlines

By Michael Sherman

Enter the south end of Delta Airlines' Atlanta corporate campus, listen closely and you'll hear the hum and whir of non-stop high-speed printing and copying. All in-house printing and document management is now piloted by Standard Register. Operating a Stanfast digital print center on-site at Delta's corporate campus, Standard Register transformed the airline's former 10,000 square-foot print shop into a 4,000 square-foot state-of-the-art digital color, high-speed document production facility. Known as the Delta Document Center, the operation serves the airline exclusively, printing 18 to 20 million pages per month. The center operates 24 hours a day, five days a week and is capable of operating nonstop to serve all of Delta's 30,000 Atlanta-based employees and 73,000 employees worldwide.

According to Terri Glaze, general manager, Corporate Services for Delta Air Lines, several factors influenced Delta's decision to outsource the document center. "From a sourcing perspective, we resolved to rationalize our supplier base and leverage the related spend to achieve cost savings," states Glaze. "More importantly, there were customer service issues and operational efficiencies that would help to improve our internal productivity."

Delta had operated its internal print shop for more than 40 years. The airline's existing production equipment could not meet the short lead times required by the company's internal operations. Additionally, demand for after-hours support increased due to critical project needs. Employees began seeking external assistance for color copies

and expert advice on production methods to meet deadlines and budgetary constraints.

Backed by Standard Register's nationwide network of more than 30 Stanfast centers, the Delta Document Center enables the electronic distribution of files for local production and delivery of customized documents to Delta operations coast to coast.

Digital production enables documents to be printed directly from a computer screen without using a pre-printed master document, or cut sheet, as a basis for reproduction. As a result, print jobs are programmed into copiers and high-speed printers, produced and then stored in computer archives for future production or re-design. Digital capability allows for truly high speeds, as there are no cut-sheets feeding through equipment to be scanned or photocopied. Design and information changes are easily made to the original document files when multiple printed versions are needed.

Standard Register has a comprehensive plan to migrate Delta's aviation manuals to a digital distribute-then-print environment by the first of the year. "The electronic distribution of our manuals by Standard Register to the Stanfast center closest to our many outlying operations will ensure local production for timely, cost-effective document delivery," states Glaze. "Our savings will be derived from removal of distribution costs and tracking of lost shipments. Time gained through this process will allow more dedicated preparation review and quality production checks prior to distribution."

To meet critical demand for production of important documents, Standard Register relies on the Océ 8090DI DemandStream to help get the job done swiftly. At a speed of 744 pages per minute, it prints, slits, cuts and assembles the printed sheets in order. Standard Register easily produces documents ranging from 1,612 11-page pilot information packages to larger two-sided aviation training manuals ranging from 150 to 250 pages.

Glaze emphasizes that future plans include investigating creation of a centralized digital library on Delta's corporate intranet to store forms and documents for employee use. "As part of our supplier performance program, we will be tracking customer satisfaction and project success over the coming months," adds Glaze.

Michael Sherman is with Standard Register. He can be reached at michael.sherman@standardregister.com.

