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HOW IT WORKS

STAFF REPORT

# Lean on Paper in Lean Production

## Higher-priced stock may result in running leaner, due to lower waste factors.

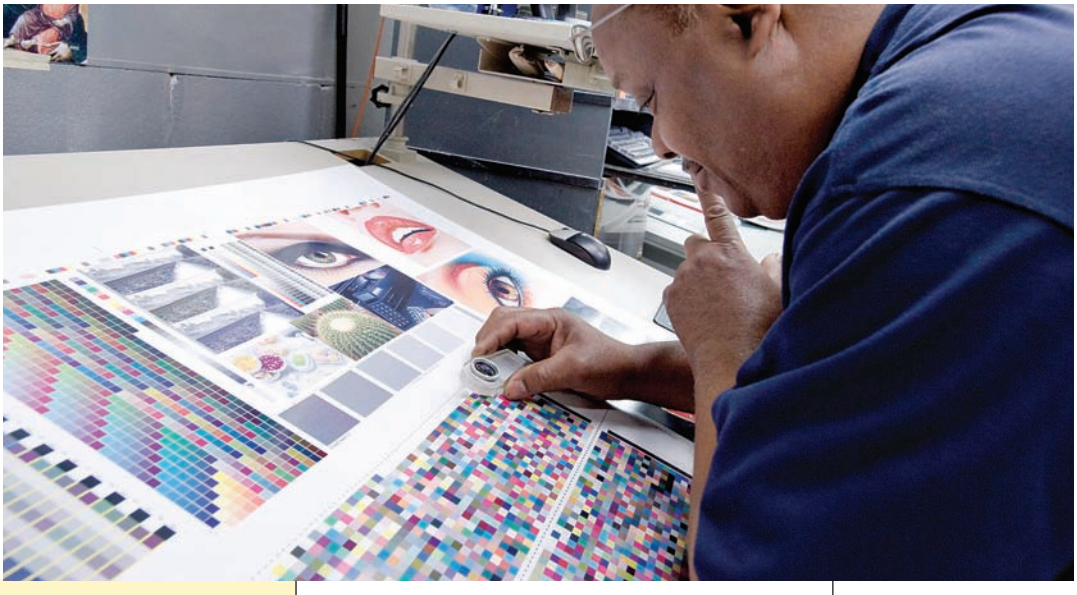

*Image courtesy MeadWestVaco*

**MWV MeadWestVaco has a benchmarking test program for its Tango Advantage C1S and C2S cover stocks. A test form is run as a control on Tango Advantage, then rerun on competitive stocks. A video online shows one such test.**

The economic downturn is forcing printers to look for ways to reduce production costs. But sourcing less expensive paper is not always the best practice, contends MWV MeadWestVaco. While it may seem counterintuitive, a bigger impact on production cost savings may be derived from selecting a premium stock—if the choice increases throughput and reduces waste. Applying the principles of lean manufacturing to paper selection can drive productivity improvements equal to $5 to $8 per hundred weight (cwt) in paper prices, points out MWV, enabling more expensive grades to become cost competitive.

How does a printer apply lean manufacturing principles in a work environment that's not traditionally conducive to benchmarking? A common definition of lean states it is "a manufacturing improvement approach based on the premise that waste or non-value-added effort should be minimized or eliminated."

The process involves identifying processes that have room for efficiency improvement and then applying small changes in an effort to minimize or eliminate waste. In printing, key opportunities arise in identifying factors that reduce makeready time. MWV is quick to point out that switching paper stock can improve runnability, printability, consistency and ink holdout, which can optimize productivity. Beyond the technological prowess of today's printing presses, says MWV, paper is a cornerstone of on-press performance. To quantify paper's impact, MWV contracted with an independent graphical technical foundation printing laboratory to test its Tango Advantage C1S and C2S cover products, benchmarking these two stocks against a number of competitive offerings. The test findings indicated to MWV that Tango Advantage could improve print performance and press productivity.

For example, in repeat tests of competitive 10 pt. C1S cover where all variables were controlled other than the paper used, Tango Advantage achieved solid ink density using 70 to 225 fewer sheets than the competitive grades. Assuming a typical average of five additional adjustments to match to a proof, the makeready reduction equates to more than $100 in paper and press time savings for a single 4,200-sheet cover job.

Paper variables that were found to play a role in press productivity included: dynamic tonal response (ability for the printer to make color adjustments quickly and precisely), dot gain, dot gain consistency, side-to-side uniformity and resistance to mottle.

The company launched a marketing promotion around its benchmarking test, and has invited printers around the country to produce controlled runs of Tango C1S and C2S against their existing house stocks. MWV facilitates sourcing the Tango paper for the tests. The program applies to regular Tango Advantage and 10 and 12 pt Tango Advantage Recycled C1S and C2S. ■

**VIDEO ONLINE: at graphicartsonline.com/MWVchallenge**



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