

Enhanced Profitability Delivered by KP-Connect and Lithrone GX40RP advance

Japan, Koyo Media Co., Ltd. | Lithrone GX40RP advance [GLX-840RP-A]



Founded in 1950, Koyo Media Co., Ltd. has grown its business around printing and bookbinding, while also offering public relations support and video production services. Its Kashiwa Plant handles a wide range of jobs, from publishing to commercial printing, and provides one-stop solutions including printing, bookbinding, shipping, and inventory management. This comprehensive setup allows the company to flexibly respond to diverse customer needs. Aiming to boost productivity and increase in-house output, the company introduced production management based on KP-Connect and launched full-scale operation of the Lithrone GX40RP advance, a 40" dedicated two-sided multi-color offset printing press, in October 2024. We spoke with President Yasunori Akashi, Director, Head of Production, and Plant Manager Kazuhiko Funaki, Deputy General Manager of the Production Division Yoshiaki Yukitake, and Printing Section Manager Satoru Ishii about the effects of the introduction and the outlook.

"We're seeing a synergistic effect from the high specs of the Lithrone GX40RP advance combined with Komori's support and the improved skills of our operators." -- President Yasunori Akashi

Revamping Production with KP-Connect Pro

Koyo Media's efforts to improve productivity and increase in-house output began in 2019 with the introduction of KP-Connect Basic, which visualizes the operating status of Komori printing presses. President Akashi explains, "We introduced it to accurately track and analyze performance so we could apply the insights to future initiatives and order acquisition activities."

The company later transitioned to KP-Connect Pro, which manages workflows across the entire factory. "We faced the challenge of coordinating the prepress department at our Tokyo headquarters with the print management department at the Kashiwa Plant. That's why we implemented KP-Connect Pro and established a system for sharing schedules. Because we can now view schedules in real time, the need for phone call confirmations has decreased, allowing for smoother communication," explains President Akashi.

Deputy General Manager of the Production Division Yukitake adds, "In the past, we had to call the site every time to check print progress, and the schedule created by production management often didn't reflect the actual situation. Now, with KP-Connect Pro, anyone can instantly understand the job status by simply checking the scheduler screen, and scheduling on the production management side has become significantly more efficient. In addition, awareness of job progress has improved. We're seeing fewer missed opportunities, and sales are growing as a result."

Currently, information from three presses -- the Lithrone GX40RP advance, the UV-compatible Lithrone G40, and a third-party one-color two-sided press -- along with postpress equipment is shared via KP-Connect Pro, enabling centralized scheduling and progress tracking all the way through to postpress.



With the installation of large monitors, progress can now be checked in real time. "In the past, we had to make multiple phone calls to the production floor, but now we can see the status just by looking at the screen," says Deputy General Manager Yukitake. The accuracy of scheduling has greatly improved thanks to KP-Connect Pro.

Company-wide efforts to strengthen production and introduce the new press



Lithrone GX40RP advance

The Lithrone GX40RP advance, a state-of-the-art press, began full-scale operation in October 2024. As part of a downsizing plan, two aging presses were retired, reducing the total number from four to three. Based on analysis using KP-Connect Pro, Koyo Media was confident that it could maintain both job volume and quality with one fewer press.

President Akashi explains, "One of our key projects last year was the introduction of this new press. The goal wasn't just to replace equipment -- it was to enhance productivity and increase output across the entire Kashiwa Plant, including both upstream and downstream processes. Thanks to a company-wide effort to strengthen both production and management functions and reorganize our structure, we achieved unprecedented results in the first half of the year. I think that the operation of the new press has really given us momentum."

Why the Lithrone GX40RP advance was chosen -- and the benefits

Plant Manager Kazuhiko Funaki explains, "Many of our clients are publishers, especially of educational materials, which are often supplied on custom-size paper. These sheets are usually 12-13 mm shorter than standard size in the vertical direction, so choosing a press that could handle this efficiently was crucial. We needed to choose a press with single-edge gripping."



"The registration accuracy of the Fully Automatic Plate Changer for all colors has improved. It now reaches the OK sheet faster, reducing the amount of waste paper used." (Plant Manager Funaki)

He continues, "Our previous third-party two-sided 4/4 press had issues with front-back register accuracy and fan-out, placing a heavy burden on operators. For that reason, we chose Komori's RP press, which allows stress-free operation," he says. This press was particularly impressive in terms of its digital capabilities. In particular, the PDF Comparator System detects issues such as defective characters by comparing the printed material with the prepress data. The numbering system helps identify defective sheets, significantly reducing the mental load on operators by automating inspection tasks that were previously done manually. Color patches can be placed on the custom-sized sheets, and compact automatic registration marks can also be added. Automation and improved register accuracy have also stabilized product quality and reduced waste paper."

Printing Section Manager Ishii adds, "If there are no alerts from the PQA-S (Print Quality Assessment System for Sheetfed) or the PDF Comparator System, we proceed without inspection. This helps meet tight deadlines and reduces costs. KID (Komori Information Display) shows color density changes during printing, so we've also reduced the number of sampling inspections needed."

Plant Manager Funaki notes, "We went from four presses with six operators to three presses with five operators -- and still achieved nearly the same annual sales. As operators get more accustomed, we expect even greater profitability. The personnel who became available for reassignment were assigned to operate the automatic paper stacking machine introduced at the same time. Setup processes have been further optimized, leading to improved production efficiency."



From left: Kazuhiko Funaki, Director, Head of Production, and Plant Manager, Kashiwa Plant; Yoshiaki Yukitake, Deputy General Manager, Production Division; Satoru Ishii, Printing Section Manager

"With the introduction of the Lithrone GX40RP advance, there's still plenty of room for growth in productivity and output."

Kazuhiko Funaki, Director, Head of Production, and Plant Manager

"With large monitors and iPads, we can now check overall progress and make informed scheduling decisions."

Yoshiaki Yukitake, Deputy General Manager, Production Division

"The feeder has many air nozzles, so even thin coated paper doesn't stick, and delivery is fast and stable."

Satoru Ishii, Printing Section Manager



Printing section staff

Visualizing improvements across the entire process with KP-Connect Pro

Looking ahead, the company plans to extend its production management system based on KP-Connect Pro beyond postpress processes to include the shipping stage, aiming to unify scheduling across the entire factory. Yukitake explains, "We want to visualize the lead time from completion to shipment, clarifying the 'idle time' and identifying efficiency improvements. Shortening the lead time from prepress to shipment will reduce losses and improve cost performance. Effectively utilizing KP-Connect Pro will also serve as a powerful tool to enhance competitiveness in sales and order acquisition activities."

President Akashi stated, "In order to achieve both goals -- maintaining a production system centered on printing and bookbinding, and establishing and expanding revenue structures

beyond printing and bookbinding -- we are engaging all employees in in-depth discussions on how our organization and talent should evolve. We aim to reach our targets within three to five years."

