

Japan's First System G38 Web Press with H-UV L (LED) Curing and In-line Folder

Japan, U-media Co., Ltd. | System G38



Based in Sendai City, U-media Co., Ltd. develops a wide range of businesses centered on printing and publishing, including advertising and promotion, public relations support, web and video production, in-house media operations, and event planning and management. In November 2024, with the goal of achieving sustainable printing, the company introduced the System G38 -- 38-inch Double-sided Web Offset Printing Press featuring the H-UV L (LED) curing system. While delivering the high productivity of a web press, the System G38 also achieves print quality comparable to that of sheetfed presses. We spoke with Hitoshi Konno, President & CEO, Hideki Abe, Executive Officer of the Printing Manufacturing Department, Kenji Suzuki, Production Team Manager, and Shinya Omura, Senior Staff, Press Group, Production Team, about the background behind this investment and the results achieved.

"I am truly delighted that, through the introduction of state-of-the-art equipment, I have been able to share the excellence of printing both within and beyond our company." Hitoshi Konno, President & CEO

Contributing to the Local Community through Diversified Businesses Built on Printing

Founded in 1960, U-media Co., Ltd. has expanded its business across a wide range of fields centered on printing, publishing, web, video, and events. "Today, we are transforming our business beyond printing and evolving into a regional communication design company," says President Hitoshi Konno.

The company engages in diverse activities, including the publication and operation of in-house media such as the Sendai-based information magazine S-style as well as the planning and managing regional events such as the Sendai Oktoberfest.

"Our strength lies in our ability to undertake printing, publishing, web, and events in a one-stop manner. In addition, we are actively engaged in initiatives to communicate the value of printing, such as summer festivals where we interact with local residents and factory tours that invite local elementary school students." President Konno explains.

Investment in Printing and the Challenge of Energy-Saving Subsidies

The introduction of the System G38 had two major objectives.

"One was to clearly demonstrate internally our strong commitment to investing in printing, even as our diversified businesses grow, through a major capital investment in printing equipment. The other was to realize sustainable printing with a strong focus on energy efficiency and environmental performance," President Konno says. To achieve this, U-media applied for a government energy-saving subsidy with stringent environmental requirements. "We aimed to be selected for the Advanced Energy Saving Investment Promotion Support Project. Thanks to Komori's extensive support--such as helping us develop a detailed roadmap toward installation--we were successfully approved. This selection represented strong government endorsement, and it helped our employees clearly recognize that our corporate direction aligns with national policies and initiatives," he adds.

A Flexible Production System Enabled by the System G38



The first major benefit of the installation is increased production flexibility.

President Konno explains: "With the addition of the System G38 equipped with H-UV L (LED) curing alongside our existing H-UV-equipped double-sided sheetfed presses, we have established a production system that delivers equivalent print quality on both sheetfed and web presses. This allows us to optimize press utilization according to peak and off-peak periods. Jobs that were previously handled on sheetfed presses can now be produced quickly on the web press, significantly enhancing production flexibility. In addition, by equipping the press with an in-line folder, folding processes that were previously outsourced for have now been brought in-house."

Executive Officer Hideki Abe adds, "Digitalization has improved operability, making it easier to assign younger operators to this press and further promote multi-skilled staffing. We aim to enhance workforce flexibility and achieve overall optimization and planned production across our entire production site."

Sheetfed Print Quality with Dramatically Improved Productivity

The second major benefit is enhanced print quality and productivity.

"With conventional heat-dryer web presses, paper waviness -- known as 'cockling' -- caused by the dryer heat was an issue. Because this press uses H-UV L (LED) curing, such cockling does not occur. This is a significant advantage in terms of print quality," emphasizes Abe.

Production Team Manager Kenji Suzuki also notes, "Compared with conventional web presses, there are no issues with surface gloss, and we can maintain print quality equivalent to sheetfed printing." President Konno adds, "Customers have also praised the print quality."

One particularly notable improvement in productivity is fast makeready. "From start-up, at 500 rpm, color consistency, registration, and folding accuracy are all stable, allowing us to achieve OK sheets," Suzuki explains. He continues, "The System G38 operates constantly at its maximum speed of 500 rpm, enabling production of 30,000 copies per hour. This rotational speed delivers overwhelmingly higher productivity even compared with high-speed sheetfed presses." Regarding waste reduction, Abe summarizes, "Our goal is to limit waste sheets to fewer than 700 per job. Compared with conventional web presses, this represents a significant reduction and clearly contributes to higher productivity."

Significant Improvements in the Work Environment and Energy Savings Beyond Target Levels

The third benefit is a substantial improvement in the work environment and energy efficiency. "With conventional web presses, heat from dryers sometimes pushed room temperatures above 38°C in summer. Now, temperatures no longer exceed 30°C and noise levels have also been significantly reduced, providing a much more comfortable working environment for on-site staff," says Shinya Omura, Senior Staff of the Production Team.

With no dryer required, the press footprint was reduced, making it possible this time to install an A1 sheeter in addition to the in-line folder.

President Konno expresses satisfaction with the energy-saving performance, noting, "The results have surpassed our expectations."

U-media is leading the industry as a pioneer in environmental initiatives such as certification as a carbon-zero print factory and the adoption of non-VOC inks.

President Konno outlines his future vision, saying, "We will actively communicate that this environmentally advantageous facility is located in the Tohoku region, and by collaborating with local companies and industry peers, we aim to create new markets." Through the renovation of its former plant, the company is also developing a hub for value creation beyond printing and for collaboration with the local community, advancing initiatives that contribute to regional revitalization.

He added, "We look forward to long-term, hands-on support from Komori to further stabilize production quality."



From left: Hideki Abe, Executive Officer, Printing Manufacturing Department; Kenji Suzuki, Production Team Manager, Printing Manufacturing Department; Shinya Omura, Senior Staff, Press Group, Production Team, Printing Manufacturing Department

"Our greatest strength lies in consistent high quality. By advancing color matching with sheetfed presses, we maintain what we call 'U-media Quality.'"

Hideki Abe, Executive Officer, Printing Manufacturing Department

"We utilize AI-Link. Because we handle many recurring jobs, we leverage data from previous runs for subsequent jobs, helping to reduce paper waste."

Kenji Suzuki, Production Team Manager, Printing Manufacturing Department

"Processes that were previously handled based on experience can now be adjusted using numerical data, making them easier to explain to younger operators."

Shinya Omura, Senior Staff, Press Group, Production Team, Printing Manufacturing Department



In-line folder equipped on the System G38



"At the 'Summer Festival,' which we have been holding since last year, we were able to deepen engagement with local residents through factory tour programs that combine learning with hands-on enjoyment, such as paper stacking experiences on sheetfed presses and cushion-making activities using paper trimmings."

--President Konno



System G38 and the U-media team

"The company has obtained certification as a carbon-zero print factory, and this new press is a leading example of our environmental initiatives."

-- Executive Officer Abe



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