

Better Feeding of Thin 4pp Signatures on Your Inserter or Gatherer

\$100.00 goes out to 2 Bindery Success readers for their tips on improved feeding on saddle stitcher inserters.

Our anonymous friend, known as the Bindery Doctor submitted this idea which recently went out in our weekly email newsletter. (To sign up for this, go to www.technifoldusa.com)

In response to that we got some variations on this theme from Dave Lungerich, Bindery Supervisor for RR Donnelley, a Tri-Creaser customer in Houston.

The Problem

When running a thin 4pp signature in a saddle stitcher feeder pocket (or any feeder pocket for that matter,) it can be hard to control the vacuum so that you don't pull double signatures, especially on light, uncoated stocks.

Too little vacuum and you don't pull a signature at all...increase it just a touch and suddenly you're pulling doubles again.

Most of the doubled sigs will just fall on the floor under the chain. Even though it's just a housekeeping problem, it **does** take time, especially if running a big job at high speeds, and you'll waste some of those signatures as well.

Bigger problems arise two other ways:

- Static or plain old friction can keep the double stuck together. One will open correctly on the chain and the double will sort of hang on, only to fall off later, causing a jam at subsequent



Figure 2: a variation

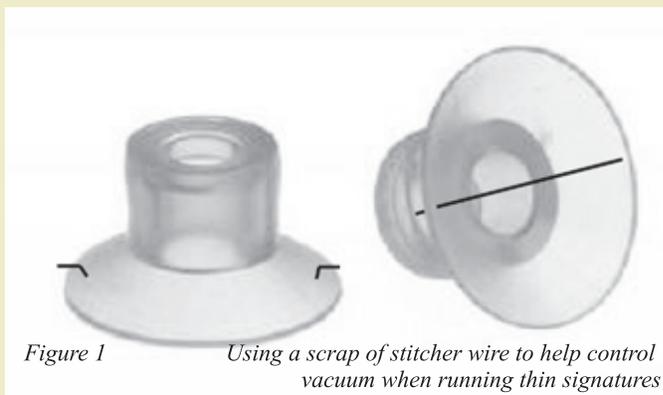


Figure 1 Using a scrap of stitcher wire to help control vacuum when running thin signatures

pockets or at the stitcher heads;

- The double will curl under and jam in the pocket itself before it has a chance to fall on the floor.

Remember, the key to maximum production is continuous running, so every machine stop you eliminate brings you closer to that goal.

A Solution

Take a small piece of stitcher wire and run it through and across the suction cup as shown in Figure 1.

According to our Bindery Doctor, this works like a charm.

David from RR Donnelley has a variation on this theme. Says David, "I have found it easier to run the wire thru the neck of the sucker, just below the cup, and I also use two pieces in a cross-pattern." (Fig. 2)

David will also try cutting off one or two sides of the sucker cup to reduce the vacuum. I've seen that trick successfully used on sheetfed printing presses as well.

Other readers wrote to suggest removing the sucker cup altogether. Although I have seen that work in the sheetfed press environment, I've never been able to make it work with signatures.

That's not to say that it won't work. The great thing is it will only take a few seconds to try.

Boosting Productivity

Keep in mind that results will vary; there are simply too many variables to say that there's one set of black and white rules for everything. The idea here is to boost your productivity with tips that

have worked for lots of people in many shops.

A Simple Strategy

Yes, it can take a bit of time to work with some of these tricks. So if you're busy now, add this to your **Downtime Task List**.

Then take time to experiment. When you run across a technique that works, add it to your arsenal, refine it, and share it with all the operators.

Lots of little improvements in many areas adds up to major improvement overall.



Figure 3: Trimming one or two edges for more positive control

Equipment Finance Tip...What's Old is New Again

This "new" tip for financing printing equipment is really hundreds of years old. The garment and textile industry use this method as a normal way of doing business today and it's been used in international trade since the Middle Ages. It's called factoring.

Not a Bank Loan

Normally when you finance new equipment, you get a loan which gets paid back over time with interest. In factoring, you are selling accounts receivable at a discount in exchange for the money today.

A bank loan is based on the company's creditworthiness. Factoring is based on the value of the receivables. Either way, you get a lump sum of money to operate or finance growth.

Yes, this is a greatly simplified version of how it works, but you get the idea. It can be especially useful for newer compa-

nies whose credit history is young, or for companies with big swings in sales volume.

So get creative and explore the alternatives, especially in turbulent economic times. If you're interested in learning more about this, contact Bob Rose at American Equipment Finance. Phone 800-785-3060 x209 or email bobrose@aefllc.com.

Or talk to your leasing company about using this option.

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Got a Bindery Tip, Trick or Technique you can share?

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5 Ways to Thrive in a Recession

Business Week recently gave these 5 suggestions for navigating your business through the current economic storm:

1-**Don't panic.** Cycles happen. Sometimes they happen hard, but we'll come back around eventually.

2-**Keep marketing.** Slowdowns are an ideal time to snatch up market share.

3-**Stick to your focus.** Don't water down your message in a misguided attempt to widen your market appeal.

4-**Don't go "discount crazy."** If you keep offering "special deals," eventually the deals are no longer special... and customers learn to wait for the next deal instead of buying right now.

5-**Have a plan.** You can't wish the crisis away by ignoring it.

Source: *The Copywriter's Roundtable*, #398.