

# DATA CENTER

## Blue Bird Corporation



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### Setting Industry Standards

Located in Fort Valley, Georgia Blue Bird Corporation is one of the world's leading bus manufacturers, delivering thousands of school and activity buses to the market each year. For more than 80 years, Blue Bird Corporation has continued to set industry standards with its innovative design and manufacturing capabilities.

This includes ensuring the company follows best practices from the front office to the back. So it's no surprise that when Blue Bird decided to enhance the company's overall IT production workflow, it turned to Ricoh's Print Production Business Group (PPBG) for help.

#### Creating the plan

"I came from another company where I had a great experience working with Ricoh, so I knew whatever solution we decided on, Ricoh would be a part of it," said Rodney Snider, IT director for Blue Bird Corporation. "We had a several initiatives from an IT perspective. The systems were good, but they were legacy systems and we wanted to move to more automated processes."

The IT team, led by Snider, looked at everything, from its legacy applications, to its leasing procedures, to the functionality of its line printers. When it came to analyzing the production printing environment, Snider understood the importance of streamlining this sector of business. He wanted to find the most current technology available to handle the volume and the complexity of the documents that were a part of the current workflow, as

well as prepare for what would be expected going forward. Snider asked Ricoh's PPBG to help set up a production environment for the variety of tasks charged to that department.

PPBG's discovery phase showed that Blue Bird Corporation needed a new comprehensive print job manager tool to control workflow, route jobs, and manage print destinations across the entire enterprise, based on the migration from an IBM OS/390 Mainframe to a new Client/Server environment with implementation of a new ERP System.

#### Putting the plan into action

The company decided to install two Ricoh color printers, the MP C6000 and the MP C7500 and two 1356 black and white printers, as well as an MP9000 and MP C6000 for two remote locations.

#### PPBG

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Additionally, it implemented Solimar® Print Director™ Enterprise (SPDE), a client-server-based enterprise output management solution to enable host-to-printer connectivity, data stream transforms, and job queue management. PlanetPress software by Objectif Lune was also deployed to enhance the printing of time sensitive mission critical documents.

With the new workflow solutions in place, it became easy for Snider to find ways to enhance productivity. The Solimar Print Director system enables device compatibility by connecting host computers with production printers that under normal circumstances would not interface with each other. The system also allows for incoming data streams and other resources to automatically convert into compatible printer languages so they can be accepted by the target printers and other output destinations.

The PlanetPress Suite adds to this workflow by enabling easy creation, printing, and distribution of time sensitive mission-critical documents. This includes transactional documents and business forms that integrate variable data, as well as support for advanced automated workflow management capabilities.

Combined with the upfront solutions, the high-speed print engines and robust finishing capabilities of the Ricoh digital printers make it possible to easily meet mass-quantity, high quality production demands.

“One of the biggest benefits of the Ricoh equipment is the way it is engineered. We are able to do a number of things differently and more cost effectively,” notes Snider.

“For example, we have been able to redesign our invoices to eliminate the need to buy pre-printed three-part forms. With the Ricoh digital printers, we can now produce and print three-part forms with colored logos, shading, and other graphic elements using plain white paper.”

### The cost savings continues

Additionally, Snider was so impressed with the color quality of the Ricoh color digital printers and their ability to actually do bleeds, he offered his department's services to the marketing department.

“Because the output quality of these machines are so good, we offered to print the color brochures for our marketing and financial services departments. The ability to print near-press quality makes it possible for us to literally cut our company's print costs in half,” notes Snider.

### Satisfaction all around

Snider is equally impressed with the responsiveness of the PPBG services team to help meet the company's aggressive business objectives. “From a service perspective, I have dealt with many printing manufacturers. Ricoh, by far, has the best quality of service and that is the primary reason we selected them,” said Snider. Ricoh helped us construct a solution that truly meets the needs of our business. We could not have accomplished this initiative as successfully without them.”

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