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AL KENNICKELL
President, The Kennickell Group



Business Profile

The Kennickell Group is a privately owned company that provides print, international fulfillment, signage, point-of-purchase materials, direct mail, and other marketing services for clients throughout the United States. The company operates out of two locations in Savannah, Georgia and specializes in delivering and fulfilling high-performing marketing content by utilizing the most advanced marketing tools today to help their clients sell more.

Industry

Service Provider

Locations

Savannah, GA, USA

Business Solution

- Data Indexing
- Document Re-engineering
- Workflow Automation

Solimar Products

- Rubika®
- SOLfusion™
- Solimar® Indexing Tools

Benefits

- Reduced labor costs by utilizing temporary employees and redeploying skilled labor to more value-added tasks
- Improved mail sorting accuracy and speed through automated insertion of separator pages to indicate tray starts and stops
- Maximized print throughput by dynamically splitting jobs to take advantage of the cutter's maximum stack height
- Improved the return on investment (ROI) and value derived from acquiring the high-speed inkjet equipment
- Automated processes expanded capacity and allowed for onboarding more work and larger direct mail clients

Confidence to Sell More with Solimar System Solutions at Kennickell Group

Introduction

For over 130 years, the Kennickell Group has been a company of firsts. Located in Savannah, Georgia, the company was the first in the area to switch from letterpress printing using metal type to offset lithography. Decades later, the company became the first in the area to install a four-color offset press, receive ISO 9000 certification, expand into wide format printing with the purchase of a UV digital flatbed printer, and extend services across a fulfillment network that spans the globe.

The same forward-thinking propelled the company to make investments amidst the uncertainty of 2020 to stay at the forefront of print technology. The Kennickell Group added a high-speed inkjet cut-sheet press and equipment for digital embellishment. These additions allowed their clients to differentiate their offerings through higher visual impact and faster turnaround times based on digital processes. Even with these technology improvements, one area remained challenging — the sorting required for inserting outbound jobs into the mailstream.

One part of the Kennickell Group's diverse operations is direct mail. Direct mail requires precision timing for production since clients are targeting specific dates to coincide with their marketing activities or campaigns. Direct mail can also have peak periods based on the seasonality of the client, like before end-of-year holidays or during a political season. The technology investments meant Kennickell could easily print tens of thousands of oversized mailers, often using a combination of offset for the shells and digital printing for the side requiring variable content and addressing. However, the manual processes in place for sorting and mailing were taking up to three times longer than the printing. Until the sorting was completed, no other work could be printed, sorted, and mailed.

The existing processes were time-consuming, stressful for staff, and caused anxiety for the sales team. The company needed a solution to optimize sorting and mailing operations to ensure quick turnaround, expand capacity, and reinforce client satisfaction. They found the answer to their production challenges with Solimar Systems. Company President Al Kennickell reaffirmed the value by saying, *“Solimar software made my 7-figure-plus investment in high-speed inkjet significantly more valuable. Our business is now far more efficient and competitive.”*

Solimar Solutions Optimize Bindery and Mailing Processes

Direct mail work at the Kennickell Group used a combination of offset lithography and high-speed digital inkjet for the variable printed side. The sheets were then cut and manually sorted by two or three experienced staff members. The existing process required skill and diligence to ensure the separated mailers were in the correct order and mail trays.

Solimar's SOLindexer and Rubika software optimized the process, resulting in significant time savings and requiring fewer skilled staff. Mail cleansing and optimization processes were already in place using BCC Software. That allowed SOLindexer to index the work to set the sort order and identify mail tray starts and stops. Operators can now visualize the different tray sorts from bleed tabs and separator pages added using Rubika, which improved mail sorting accuracy and speed. Each job is also split into smaller sections using Rubika and passed to the imposition software to create the layouts for printing. Rubika calculates each section for the cutter's maximum stack height based on the substrate's thickness or caliper. Each stack loaded by the cutter operator is predefined and contains the highest number of sheets that can be cut in one pass, resulting in maximum throughput.

The new workflow empowered by Solimar solutions meant time in the mailing department was cut in half. Al Kennickell enthusiastically shared, *"The processes and efficiencies gained from Solimar was the best single operational and business improvement we made this year."*

De-skilling Labor Requirements

Sorting had been a time-consuming and laborious process entrusted to only a few skilled employees. The new, software-driven approach lowered the level of skill needed to ensure the mail pieces were delivered in the correct mail trays. Operators simply needed to find the visual breaks created by the separator pages indicating the start of one tray and the end of the previous. The Kennickell Group is now so confident in the process that temporary employees can be used and the skilled labor redeployed to more value-added tasks.

Confidence to Increase Production

Meeting client deadlines, particularly for direct mail, can be stressful. The countdown clock sometimes starts before the client submits their data and files. Every second saved in production is time that can offset delays by the customer or production and still make the mailing deadline. Inefficient processes only add to the stress and reduce sales and management teams' confidence in taking on more work.

With the new workflow from Solimar, everyone at the Kennickell Group knows they can exceed customer expectations and their demanding timelines. Where staff were previously challenged with sorting direct mail runs of 70,000, they are now confident and capable of producing hundreds of thousands of pieces for clients under the most demanding conditions.

"Solimar automated our mail sortation, cutting the time to complete jobs in half. I'm now very comfortable going after big, big direct mail business," shared Al Kennickell.

The impact on the company's operations has been considerable just six months after implementing the Solimar solutions. The mailing department can now scale to meet peak production demand using fewer skilled and, in some cases, temporary employees due to the simplicity of the process. The return on investment and value derived from acquiring the high-speed inkjet equipment has dramatically improved. Most importantly, management and sales are confident in the company's ability to execute the quantities and demands of larger direct mail clients and are excited to significantly grow the direct mail business at the Kennickell Group.

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SOLFUSION™
SOLfusion™

Automates production tasks such as external processes & scripts, indexing PDF documents, and executing Rubika® configurations.



RUBIKA
Rubika®

Post-composition re-engineering solution to automate manual processes, enable postal savings, add value to documents, and modifies print data.

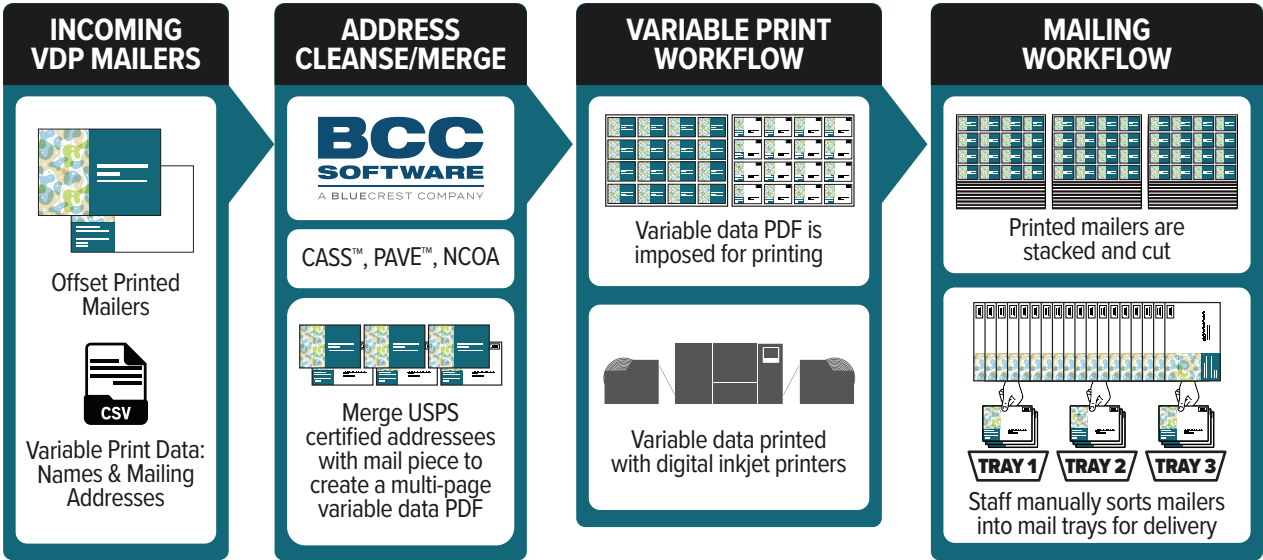


SOLIMAR™
INDEXING
TOOLS

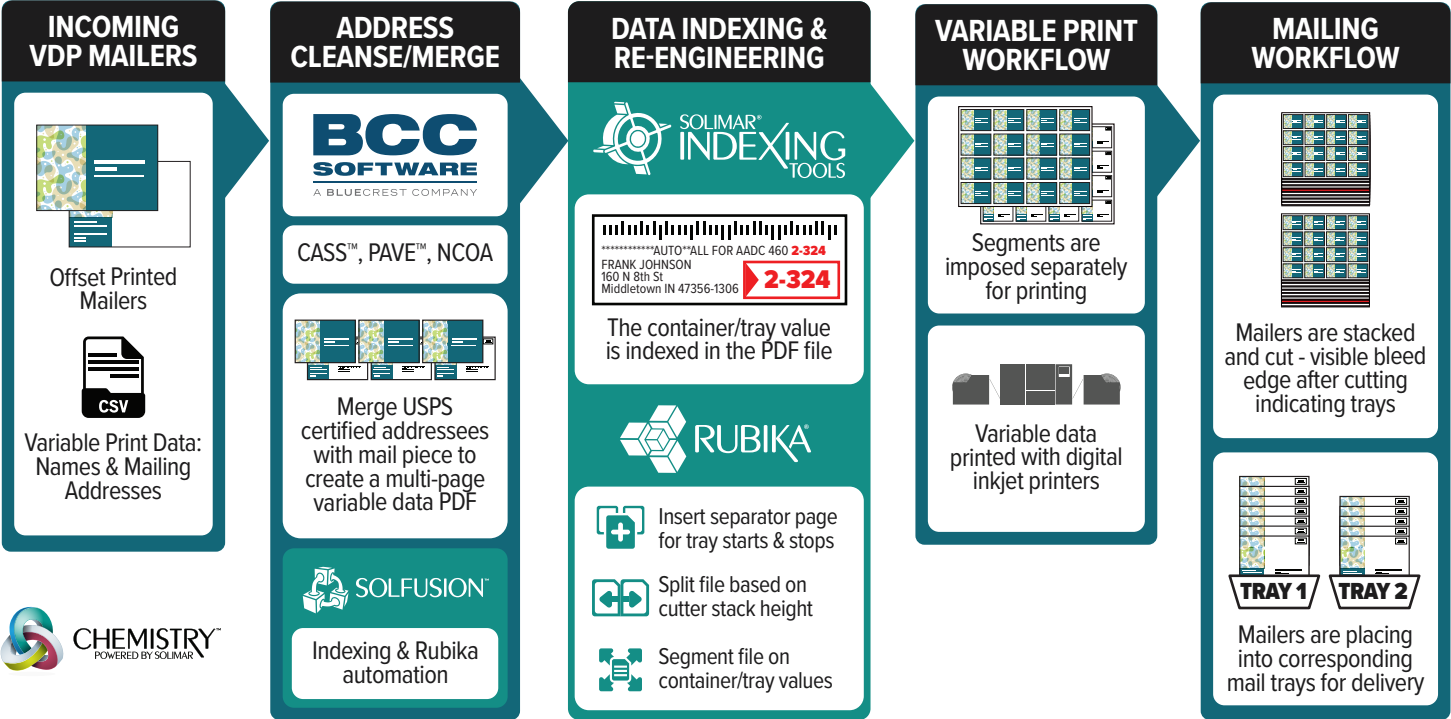
Solimar® Indexing Tools

Powerful PDF indexing tools to design, test and manage dynamic indexing templates for data extraction.

BEFORE: Laborious Manual Workflow Processes



AFTER: Automated Workflow Processes with Solimar

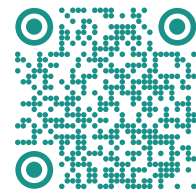


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AL KENNICKELL, President, The Kennickell Group

Additional Solimar Success Stories

For more examples of how Solimar helps organizations lower IT costs, modernize print capabilities, maximize technology investments, and gain control of their printing environment, please scan the QR code or visit www.solimarsystems.com/case-studies/.



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