

# Heeter's end-to-end workflow creates opportunities to double throughput and grow revenue by 36%

Eight years ago, when EFI™ announced at its annual Connect conference that MIS systems PSI and Logic would be end-of-lifed, Heeter chose to make the move from PSI to Pace™. In the spirit of continued innovation, the company regularly invests in new workflow upgrades. Heeter also invests in making sure its staff learns the best solutions from EFI and from its peers in the industry with the educational and networking opportunities the EFI Connect users' conference provides. All in all, the EFI tech offerings, along with the training and development available through Connect, help Heeter achieve its goals of improving productivity, increasing throughput, reducing costs, and providing exceptional customer service.

Since implementing EFI Pace MIS/ERP software, Heeter has also implemented EFI's Digital StoreFront®, Auto-Count®, Process Shipper, PrintStream® Fulfillment, and Metrix components into its EFI Midmarket Print Suite. The company also has six Fiery Driven™ digital printers, including an EFI H1625 LED wide-format inkjet printer. Heeter is also implementing EFI PrintFlow® for dynamic scheduling.

## ***Workflow efficiency is key to growth***

"We've been very pleased with the results delivered by our suite of EFI solutions," said Kirk Schlecker, Vice President of Operations for Heeter. "The support has been excellent, and the solutions have lived up to EFI's promises."

"We have grown 36% in the last four years with 20 fewer employees, and we can attribute a significant portion of that to our portfolio of EFI solutions," he adds. In the offset press room, for example, the number of sheets per labor hour has grown from an average of 4,000 to over 7,000, nearly doubling productivity.



## **Challenge:**

“We wanted all our applications to talk to each other without having to do the integration ourselves.”

- Kirk Schlecker,  
Vice President Of Operations



**heeter**



Heeter is a general commercial printer with 100 employees and annual revenues of about \$26 million. The company has delivered year-over-year growth for the past decade, attributing that growth to its problem-solving approach and a combination of program solutions and one-off print jobs. G7 Master Color Qualified and recently achieving SOC 2 Type II status, the company offers a full range of services, including print, direct mail, fulfillment, and interactive services for the insurance, pharma, gaming, retail, and education industries. The company has two Heidelberg offset presses, a fleet of seven digital presses, and a Ricoh VC60000 production inkjet press as well as an EFI H1625 wide format printer.

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*Heeter operates six EFI Fiery Driven digital printers that are able to provide production directly into the company's Midmarket Print Suite for more automated tracking and management of production jobs.*

### **Real-time data management advantages**

“In line with our strategy of ‘simplify and automate,’ we look to add a new component to our EFI Midmarket Print Suite of solutions every 12 to 18 months,” Schlecker says. In addition to the core Pace MIS/ERP system, the company also has implemented EFI’s Auto-Count shop floor automation component into its Suite. The software provides real-time production visibility, giving Heeter the ability to collect accurate, up-to-the-minute production data to make informed strategic business decisions that improve workflow and production capabilities. Schlecker attributes the near doubling of output in the press room to the reporting Auto-Count provides, which helps operators better track production and identify opportunities for process improvement.

### **Solution:**

“We sell quality and the efficiencies that our EFI solution set brings to existing and potential customers. Our strategy is ‘simplify and automate,’ and EFI is a central part of that — and a very big player in our work place.”

Schlecker and his team gain full-plant visibility with a patented measurement technology that provides detailed, data-driven reports. As a result, Heeter executives can proactively plan in ways that improve production processes, decrease waste, and reduce downtime. The company has been especially successful in increasing output with a workflow that allows for accurate and effective management across the plant.

Because of the fast-turn nature and high level of personalized print in Heeter's digital department, the company manually enters data into the Pace data collection module. The data capture process, however, will allow for even greater efficiency following a planned upgrade at Heeter that will add the Suite's PrintFlow dynamic scheduling component to the workflow.

Heeter recently added EFI's PrintStream Fulfillment and Process Shipper components to the company's Suite. "Our previous fulfillment solution was a standalone cloud-based offering that we couldn't easily customize or integrate with anything else, and it couldn't efficiently handle print-on-demand orders," Schlecker explains. "It simply didn't give us the flexibility and integration we were looking for. Now with PrintStream Fulfillment, orders come in a variety of formats and are managed as programs by our newly formed Fulfillment Coordinator role.

"Before," he adds, "CSRs would write up job tickets when orders came in, and they were treated as individual jobs. Now we can treat them programmatically, with one job number per month encompassing all the different individual orders that took place during the month. That has really helped."

PrintStream Fulfillment also serves as the company's centralized inventory management tool. "One of the biggest advantages is the ability to allocate parts to a kit, whether they are print-on-demand, off the shelf, or highly customized just-in-time books," Schlecker says. "It helps us more effectively manage a wide range of storefront and programmatic offerings."


Heeter employees are especially pleased with how fulfillment is handled in the company's workflow. "All our shipping staff has to do to close out a job or order is scan a barcode and click ship," Schlecker says. "The system looks up the job or order, whether it originated in Pace, PrintStream Fulfillment, or Digital StoreFront; captures the necessary data; looks up the most effective shipment method; and interfaces with the shipping companies. This makes it easy for our shipping staff to get jobs out the door fast."



*The EFI Midmarket Print Suite has helped Heeter manage tremendous growth in offset direct mail production volumes in ways where its offset and bindery floors can handle increased throughput while keeping labor costs in check.*



The overarching Midmarket Print Suite architecture simplifies the company's ability to manage and continue improving. "That's another key reason we continue to add to our EFI solution set," Schlecker says. "The Suite gives us certified workflows. We wanted all our applications to talk to each other without having to do the integration ourselves, and the Midmarket Print Suite has lived up to that promise." In addition, Heeter has the Pace API toolkit, which allows the company to do further additional integrations without paying for custom development.

**Result: 36%**  growth

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## Making the connection

Another critical element of the Heeter/EFI relationship is the annual EFI Connect conference. "We always take four people to this event," Schlecker says. "It's important to invest in employees, getting them an education and getting them out there to talk to other folks in the industry. Many of our employees have been at Heeter their entire career; at Connect, they have the opportunity to get out and talk to others with similar challenges."

"We encourage our people to think and to challenge normal business practices — to not be a victim of established processes," he adds. "Get out there, figure things out, come up with better ways to do things, and get ahead of the game on new software releases. We also ask employees to look for ways we might be underutilizing the solutions we have, and Connect is a great venue for this. When they return, we work together to create best practices documentation and act on those for the remainder of the year."

"EFI Connect is a huge value for us. For me, the executive interaction is very important, and I always come back with people I can potentially partner with. It's a great way for us to find out who is doing what or who might have similar needs that we have already figured out."



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