

More Than a Printer

Fineline Growing as it Meets Customer Needs

By Rebecca Patrick

Change agents. That may not be what springs to mind when thinking of a printing company. But it embodies Fineline Printing Group and is a key reason for its continued growth after more than three decades in Indianapolis.

“Either you resist change or you roll with it. I think we can roll with it pretty well. Printing in general has declined from the old days with the advent of digital technology, but (owner) Richard (Miller) and the team here have had the foresight to invest in technology,” stresses Rafael Sanchez, who came on board in February as the vice president of business development.

“Our success is tied to our clients’ success. Our days of being (strictly) a vendor are over. We want to be a partner that clients can go to for advice.”

That means staying on top of what’s happening in their clients’ industries and preparing internally for those changing dynamics, as well as being an innovator in the printing market.

Finelink effect

One prime example of that and perhaps the biggest competitive advantage for the company is Finelink™, its online document management and print-on-demand software. To clients, it represents a custom

COO Lisa Young says Fineline is “highly engaged” with its employees and invests in their personal and professional development, resulting in many long-tenured employees of 10 years or more.



‘Indy Welcomes All’ Connection



In the immediate aftermath of the state passing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, Fineline was tapped to execute the “Indy Welcomes All” campaign designed

to alleviate any concerns from visitors to the city for the NCAA Men’s Final Four.

Fineline was able to step up because the company handles promotional product pieces for their clients as another value-added service.

Fineline produced 10,000 T-shirts, 20,000 buttons and the 500 window stickers that emphasized local businesses serve everyone.



“When I landed in New York at 16 years old, I see that everybody is rich in America. I wanted to be one of those too. That gave me a penchant to have a business, be more entrepreneurial, if you will.”

– Richard Miller
Owner and president
Fineline Printing Group

digital storefront to use to order and manage resources, including for rebranding efforts.

“With Finelink, we play at a national level and we’re helping large organizations change the way they buy printing and the way they manage their printing communications. We are changing the way it’s fulfilled to their clients, to their internal users, distributorships and more,” explains chief operating officer Lisa Young.

“We’ve had a tremendous amount of clients utilize the technology in the last five years. Currently it’s anywhere from 45 to 50 clients.”

Adds Ric Miller, vice president of manufacturing, “We’re the only ones who have a completely automated workflow; it’s not touched by humans until it comes in the back. Finelink is fully automated (through) to the shipping aspect.”

Owner and president Richard Miller succinctly sums up the value of Finelink: “We were an early adopter with that technology, but now it allows us to really be sharper than the competition.”

And Fineline is building on its success with the rollout of the Finelink 2.0 platform, which is slated for the start of the fourth quarter this year.

“We are marrying a couple of different technologies in the area of document editing and design, as well as just overall print management. So, it is an evolution,” Young describes.

Leadership matters

Sanchez believes a key factor in Fineline’s prosperity is Richard Miller’s approach. “He’s not afraid to turn down businesses if it’s not the right fit, instead of just trying to force it. I think it’s a smart way to do business. We know where our strengths are.”

And Miller, who emigrated from Argentina to New York City as a teenager, has also set another tone for the company and its employees.

“I’m not one of those who went to Harvard. ... I started this company at the very bottom. As you are adding people around you, they see that you are like them. So it creates its own kind of culture. The owner’s not afraid to fill a Coke machine or take out the trash.”

He’s also not afraid to shake things up a bit.

Earlier this year, Miller brought in Sanchez to join his son, Ric, and COO Young on the leadership team.

“We were, I guess, the three musketeers. Rafael brings a (fresh)

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set of eyes that adds to the logic of how we should address the future and what the future looks like. At times, he challenges why we are doing something this way.

“He also has a very good ability in the corporate development space to talk to the potential client about what they need and to see their needs five years from now.”

Sanchez’s background as an attorney also comes in handy, according to Ric Miller.

“We work with a couple of industries in the area of health care and educational testing which deal daily with complex regulatory issues. So the legal knowledge serves our clients (including IU Health, Pearson and McGraw Hill) better and just adds more value to them.”

Looking ahead

The company’s financial health puts it in a great position for the

future, Richard Miller notes.

“We are extremely solvent. Our debt to equity ratio is virtually non-existent. We feel at this stage to be balanced and have a good opportunity to grow. We’re expanding our building by about 20,000 square feet (or 25%) and adding equipment to do more and better of exactly what we’re doing now.

“It’s always been my intention for the company to pass to the next generation. Those are the things I’m working on now, shaping the next generation from a financial point to absolutely everything,” he shares.

As for that next generation, “I’m real positive about us right now,” Ric Miller enthuses.

“We want to grow the company by 50% by 2020. We want to be a \$22.5 million company by then. We want to add 30 or 40 people over the next five years, and I think we can do that because we’re growing with our clients, we’re partnering with the right types of companies.”

RESOURCE: Fineline Printing Group at www.finelineprintinggroup.com