



Printing by Innovation president and chief executive officer Len Larose making a point during a recent interview with Canadian Packaging at the company's Beamsville facility.

THE FINER PRINT

Print shop moves into the higher gear of production capacity and product quality by investing in state-of-the-art package converting machinery

BY ALANNA FAIREY, ASSISTANT EDITOR
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Len Larose, president and chief executive officer of **Printing by Innovation Inc. (PBI)**, has come a long way since purchasing a 20-year-old GTO press and a used pile feed folder to get his fledgling business up and running.

Founded 15 years ago as a brokering business in Beamsville, Ont., PBI quickly evolved into a small but profitable direct mail service provider under Larose's astute direction, initially seven people at a tiny 3,000-square-foot print shop.

Over a decade later, PBI's corporate headquarters now boasts some 40,000 square of production and of-

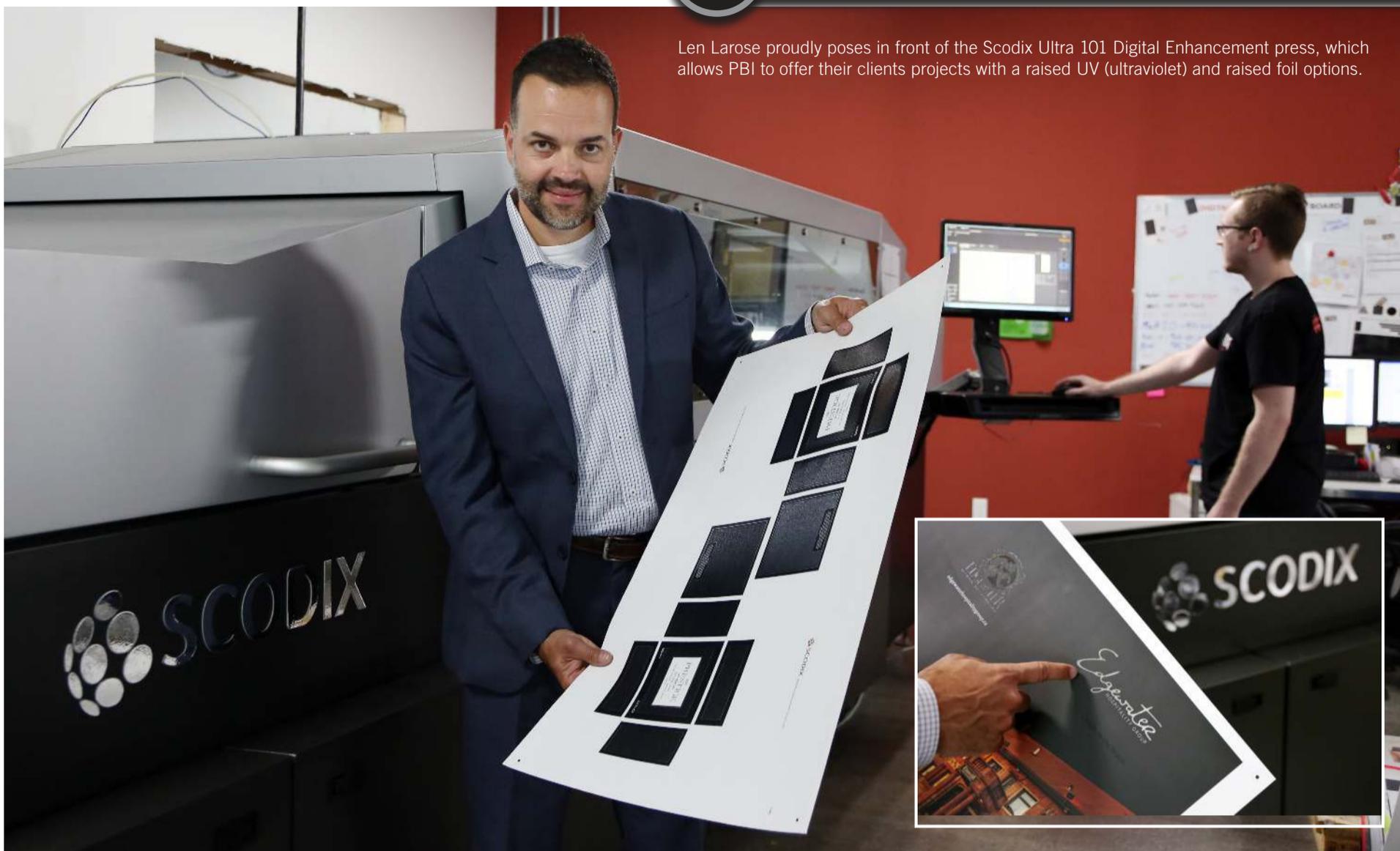
fice space, with the hard-working company emerging as a prominent local food-service provider of printing services for a growing client base.

"Being more traditionally direct mail-based, finding new customers as a commercial printer is not always the easiest, because there are so many out there," Larose told *Canadian Packaging* during a recent visit to the lively, 65-employee facility working on a two-shift, five-days-a-week throughout the year.

"But offering packaging services helps to make us a little more unique than the average printing company," he states.

PBI helped local candy apple company Moyers Apple Products to design an eye-catching two-pack carton (right) printed and converted on the Beamsville plant's state-of-the-art Heidelberg equipment.





Len Larose proudly poses in front of the Scodix Ultra 101 Digital Enhancement press, which allows PBI to offer their clients projects with a raised UV (ultraviolet) and raised foil options.

“We just saw packaging as an opportunity.”

Maintaining the necessary **FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)** and **G7 Master** certifications, PBI is a firm believer in the merits of JIT (just-in-time) approach to customer service, promising its clients a quick turn-around of just 10 days.

According to Larose, such confidence is capably backed up by the company’s formidable product equipment arsenal that boasts some of the most advanced, cutting-edge, state-of-the-art printing press and converting equipment manufactured by the famed venerable German printing press technologies giant **Heidelberg Druckmaschinen AG**.

Says Larose: “When you’re quoting print, it’s all about time and materials, and if you know you can quote certain rates and speeds with confidence then you’re able to get the price at where it needs to be.

“If you’re running older machines that are breaking down or having problems with quality and you have to rework jobs,” he adds, “then that becomes an issue and makes it difficult to make a purchase.”

When it came to investing in quality machines that would satisfy PBI’s just-in-time delivery guarantee, as well as customer satisfaction, purchasing from Heidelberg was a no-brainer for Larose.

The partnership between PBI and Heidelberg goes way back, with the GTO press and pile feed folder being the first two pieces of equipment PBI bought from Heidelberg.

To further emphasize the close business relationship, when PBI opened their Surrey, B.C.-based location three years ago, Heidelberg provided them the equipment and aftercare service that they required.

Since then, Larose has made it a point of pride to be a loyal Heidelberg customer.

“From what I knew about Heidelberg in the industry when I first started out was that they were the Cadillac of the presses,” Larose relates.

“I went to them initially to learn from them, and find out what it is that I needed.

“Throughout our growth, from seven employees to over 80 employees today, Heidelberg has been there to support me through thick and thin, and have been a great partner of ours.”

Specifically, PBI’s recent investments in high-performance Heidelberg equipment include:

- a contemporary high-speed **Speedmaster XL 106** printing press;
- a model **MK Promatrix 106 CS** die-cutter;
- a model **MK Diana Easy** folder-gluer.
- To leverage the new Heidelberg equipment for maximum high-quality output, PBI also invested in a model **Ultra 101 Digital Enhancement** press manufactured by **Scodix Ltd. in Israel**.

With lightning-fast printing speeds of 15,000 impressions per hour, the Heidelberg **Speedmaster XL 106** is

capable of handling both short runs with quick turn-around and longer-run work, while offering the benefits remarkably short changeover and make-ready times.

According to Larose, the addition of the Heidelberg **Speedmaster XL 106** has garnered plenty of praise from his operators, who are reaping the benefits of the state-of-the-art machine.

“If you’ve been a press operator for 25 years and now you’re running a brand new Heidelberg Speedmaster XL, that’s a real treat for them because it’s like driving a Ferrari,” Larose relates.

“My team enjoys coming to work because they’re the ones driving that Ferrari.”

Boasting output capacity of approximately 8,000 sheets per hour, the **MK Promatrix 106 CS** die-cutter is a highly reliable, fully-automated workhorse outfitted with many high-performance features such as a non-



Reaching speeds of 16,500 impressions per hour, longer runs are not an issue for the Heidelberg Speedmaster CX 102-6+L.



Len Larose holding up a crisply-printed and perfectly die-cut folding carton just coming off the high-speed Heidelberg MK Easymatrix XL 106 die-cutter behind him, which can process various grades and thicknesses of paper stock at throughput speeds of up to 7,700 sheets per hour.



Len Larose joins director of business development Serge Trajkovich (left) near the outside entrance to PBI's busy 40,000-square-foot facility in Beamsville, Ont.

stop feeder; a belt table with suction tapes and central roller and brush adjustment; precision register system up to the stripping station; quick-lock chase and cutting plate fine adjustment in the cutting station; and a quick-lock frame with fine adjustment in the stripping station to facilitate short set-up times.

For its part, the Heidelberg *MK Diana* folder-gluer is designed to expedite user-friendly operation and fast and easy changeover processes, while achieving robust throughput speeds of 300 meters across a broad range of paperboard grades and weights—up to an *E*-flute of corrugated material—with maximum product lengths of 600-mm.

As PBI develops its packaging and production side of the business, Larose believes that investing in the Scodix *Ultra 101* systems was one the most exciting purchases that now enables PBI to take on projects with raised UV (ultraviolet) and raised foil options.

According to Larose, the Scodix *Ultra 101* offers

PBI a strong competitive advantage as the company begins prepping up for the demanding Christmas season.

“It offers us a really a unique opportunity, coming into the Christmas season, to be able to offer variable printed packaging,” Larose explains.

“For high-end clients that want to give a gift to their customers, we can produce a box that has personalization on every box as a raised foil, which you simply can not do with traditional processes.”

It is not just Larose and his team who are reaping the benefits of the efficiency of Heidelberg equipment.

When Niagara Falls, Ont.-based **Moyers Apple Products Ltd.**—which appeared on the popular *Dragon's Den* television program on the **CBC (Canadian Broadcast Corporation)**—were offered shelf space by Big Box retail giant **Costco** back in 2017, they turned to PBI to help them create an eye-catching two-pack carton for their candy apples.

Through trial and error, PBI designed not just the creative packaging itself, but also assisted in designing the actual template and the die-line that would work well for their needs, while meeting their cost restrictions.

Thanks to the speediness and accuracy of the Heidelberg equipment, Larose and his team had the project done in about two weeks, and have since been supplying Moyers with packaging for the last two years.

“We’ve always strived to be able to offer quality service and good quality print products at a good price,” Larose says about the experience.

“I think in the packaging world, with the turn-around time that some of the bigger packaging houses are quoting these days, that we definitely shine in that area.”

Looking forward, Larose believes that the direct mail industry will continue to stay strong and PBI will continue to grow their online presence, while continuing to support itsexisting clients and breaking into new markets.

As for the packing side of his business, Larose says he fully expects it to become one of his company's core strengths and competencies.

“If something is being sold, it needs a package to go into it,” he states. “Packaging is going to continue to grow and that is what PBI is keenly focusing on.”

In fact, the company's packaging output is expected to grow so much that Larose suggests it may ultimately evolve to be a separate corporate entity with its own building and dedicated staff.

“At the end of the day, we have the quality equipment that we know will deliver,” he concludes, “and we have the capacity to deliver on very quick timelines above industry standards.

“It's all about getting the word out there that we're in the business, and that we are here to service and partner with our clients for our full mutual benefit.” 🍁

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