



The Thrill of The Perfect Finish

By Kym Conis

Like a great thriller whose plot unfolds with unsuspecting twists and turns, *The Perfect Finish* capabilities brochure hooks onlookers with its sleek, jet black exterior, then explodes onto the scene with intriguing nuances and splendid detail. From piercing effects and edgy designs to more traditional finishing solutions, each turn of the page sparks a flash of excitement and a sense of “Wow, how did they do that?” And that’s exactly the type of response that FastKit Corp. of Doral, Fla., along with its ‘perfect partners,’ Pinpoint Communications and Mohawk Fine Papers, set out to achieve.

With the intent of turning heads on a national magnitude, FastKit’s elaborate collection unfolds an impressive suite of finishing capabilities. From foil stamping/embossing, die-cutting, film lamination, and UV coating to silk screening, PUR perfect binding, wire-o and spiral binding, and a host of complementary services such as mounting/gluing, collating, drilling sewing, hand assembly, and more, each process is showcased in a unique, awe-inspiring way.

As the book simply states, “The perfect finish requires a great start.” From design to materials to the final production process, FastKit created its own great thriller – weaving clients through an exciting world of finishing possibilities where even the most challenging of ideas can come to life.

Driving Imagery through Finishing

Originally starting as a postcard campaign, the self-promotion project soon developed into a collaborative effort that

combined texture, color, and dimension to create something really unique. Conceived, written, and partially designed by James Kluetz, creative director, and Paul Cooper, art director, at Pinpoint Communications, Deerfield Beach, Fla., the goal of the book was to burst onto the printing and finishing scene with something that just could not be ignored. According to Kluetz, “We knew that because marketing dollars continue to move online, we were going to need to really promote the power of print to be tactile and engaging in a way that the web just can’t be.”

The first step was to define what is meant by ‘perfect.’ “Perfect obviously is an ideal and it definitely puts a lot of pressure on the supplier,” said Kluetz. But FastKit was ready to stand behind its reputation for great quality and superior customer service. Six months went into the meticulous pre-planning/pre-production stages where makereadies and samples were tested and re-made until the results were...well...perfect. Anything less would just not do.

Each of the pages is based on a finish and the image or graphic was chosen to complement and showcase that finish. “Old and new, modern Victorian, fashion and retro – it’s the diversity of each page that makes the piece feel honest and respectful of all of the various design movements and sensibilities of male and female, young and old,” said Kluetz. “The choices are extremely inclusive. From light bondage to Victorian paper dolls, we ran the spectrum.” Creating some sort of continuity on such a diverse project was a challenge,



but through the use of a strict typographic grid, Cooper was able to pull all the elements together. “What makes the piece so cool is that the concept is really nonlinear,” said Kluetz. “Some of the images are edgy but for print to stand out in this day and age, it’s got to say something.”

Working closely with the FastKit production and art teams, Kluetz and Cooper worked through many of the production challenges that naturally would present themselves on such a complicated piece. “When we got toward the end when dies were being made, we definitely had some issues,” said Kluetz. “But we just reinvented certain parts of the project and moved on. A couple of these challenges actually made the piece even better from a design perspective!”

For instance, the design team originally specified a rule on most of the pages that was to be made of mini perforations that would show through to the flood-coated color on the inside of the French folds. However, the holes in the perf were much too small for traditional diecutting. So instead, the rules were foil stamped, which turned out to be a great alternative.

Meeting the Challenge Head-On

To the last detail, each phase of the production process was mapped out, tested, and sampled to ensure exact registration and execution of each finishing process used in the elaborate concealed wire-o-bound book. Perfectly finished, the entire book encompasses over 65 passes of finishing and bindery processes ranging across almost the entire gamut of high-end specialty effects. Additionally, digital, silk screen, and UV coating effects (including gloss, glitter, matte, and raised) – all provided by FastKit – were utilized to add to the book’s stunning imagery.

“We’ve always done binders and custom work,” said FastKit CEO Jose Fernandez, Jr. “We wanted to branch out beyond southern Florida to show printers and ad agencies across the nation that they can count on FastKit to bring their most challenging ideas to life – on time and on budget.”

FastKit Corporation started out as a corporate kit and filing process company. “My parents, Lidia and Jose Sr., and I launched the company initially. My mother and I ran FastKit (then called Fast Corp. Agents, Inc.) while my father continued with his computer business,” Fernandez explained. The company soon saw a need to control quality and cost, and began to manufacture its own binders. Today, FastKit manufactures corporate kits, presentation binders, boxes, packages, hard cover books, POP displays, and a host of custom, specialty products that stand in a class all their own. The filing process segment remains today as one of the largest in the U.S.

Located in a state-of-the-art 50,000-square-foot facility, FastKit operates the latest manufacturing equipment to meet the needs of its customers. To produce the 20+ page



Edgy

Embossed frame and dot pattern; black metallic foil stamped on typography; metallic silver foil stamped on gear; affixed pre-finished sheet; scuff-free matte lamination; register raised spot UV on sunglasses; metallic gun-metal foil stamped dot pattern; register diecut; scored; and registered back-printed French fold.

book, FastKit called upon its Saroglia foil stamper, Sakurai spot UV coater, Brausse clam shell, D&K film laminator, Emmeci casemaker, Kensol foil stamper, Gantenbein PUR perfect binder, M&R silk screen press, Hang riveter, Ledco laminator, Hermite puncher, James Burn wire-o machine, and Singer sewing machine.

All stock utilized for *The Perfect Finish* was provided by Mohawk Fine Papers. The sleek outer cover was foil stamped in silver and gunmetal metallic foils with a logo created specifically for the project – three silver gears representing the mechanics of converting. The Mohawk Carnival Vertical New Black 80# cover stock was then laminated to the inner

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cover (made of 8pt. Kromekote, double hit with PMS 307, and matte scuff-free laminated), diecut, scored, blue stitched, and French folded. And that's the least intricate of all the pages!

The book's inner pages, which all utilize Mohawk's Superfine Smooth Ultra White 100# cover, showcase FastKit's vast repertoire of finishing and bindery services, as well as some unique, head-turning effects such as large grommets for earrings and magnetized, perfect bound notebooks that are actually meant to be used. Each finished page links to a corresponding page of copy, matching it in color and flow. Additionally, complete technical notes are included for each page at the back of the book, detailing production notes and materials – no secrets but lots of surprises.

For instance, Perfect page 6 titled "Real Solid" depicts a seemingly 'simple' retro robot with glimmers of UV spot glitter. Highlighting FastKit's silk screening capabilities,



production on this two-page spread was anything but simple in order to reproduce this centuries-old technique in ultra-tight registration. Silk screened in three PMS colors on Kromekote with matte lamination, the sheets were then spot matte UV coated to bring down the shine of the blue and red, thereby creating the retro feel while matching the adjoining page. Next the stars were spot UV glitter coated and mounted to the base stock. The adjoining page was printed in 4-color process, foil stamped in black, silver, and gunmetal metallic foil, register embossed, blind embossed, diecut, scored,



Reflective

Embossed frame and dot pattern; black metallic foil on typography; metallic silver foil stamped on gear; blind, hand-sculpted multi-level register embossed on chair; registered metallic gunmetal foil stamped on wallpaper; metallic gunmetal foil stamped dot pattern; registered diecut; scored, and registered back-printed French fold.

and French folded. As the copy perfectly reads, "Danger Will Robinson!"

Throughout the production run, each step of the way had to meet with exact approval before continuing to the next step. "We were calling it *The Perfect Finish*. We had no choice but to be perfect, which made it all the more difficult," admitted Fernandez. Registration was critical: foil to foil, foil to print, embossing to print, embossing to foil, and so on. "We were using multiple dies, especially on the front cover. Registering the foil against the diecutting was a huge challenge as well," said Fernandez. "We had to foil stamp, then go to the diecutter, and then foil stamp again. We took this much care with the entire production run – all 7,500 pieces... and still producing!"

Choosing the right foils (supplied by Nakai, Infinity Foils – A UEI Group Company, and Crown Roll Leaf) and creating the artwork for all the dies (copper and brass dies supplied by Metal Magic) for the project was no small feat. Fernandez gives full credit to FastKit's Production Manager George Acosta, who oversaw each detail of every stage of the

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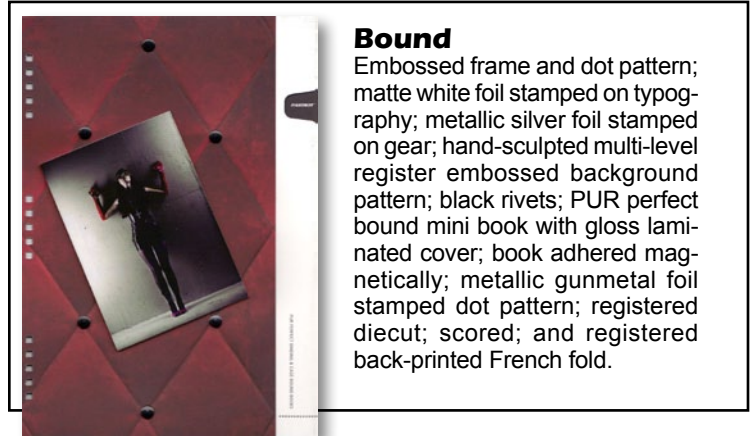
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project, and Operations Director David Barjun, who made all the mechanical drawings, dielines, foil selections, etc. “They are the ones who made the production of this piece possible,” said Fernandez, “along with our talented team of press operators and top-of-the-line equipment.”

The Perfect Response

Truly a group effort, *The Perfect Finish* is only the tip of the iceberg for FastKit, as the company already is in the design stages of its next project, *The Perfect Presentation*. “We are all so proud of what we have accomplished with this piece,” said Fernandez. “We get a ‘wow’ every single time it is shown.” And apparently, the industry agrees, as the book has received national recognition and many accolades including Gold ADDY® awards in both Miami and Ft. Lauderdale competitions, a Gold ADDY® at the district conference including a Charlie Award (best of show), two gold awards with the Binding Industry Association’s Product of Excellence Awards (including the best of show), and a Gold Award in the Foil & Specialty Effects Association’s Gold Leaf Awards Competition, also earning the prestigious Best of Show Award.

To date, *The Perfect Finish* is accomplishing what it set out to do – turning heads across the board. As James Kluetz



Bound

Embossed frame and dot pattern; matte white foil stamped on typography; metallic silver foil stamped on gear; hand-sculpted multi-level register embossed background pattern; black rivets; PUR perfect bound mini book with gloss laminated cover; book adhered magnetically; metallic gunmetal foil stamped dot pattern; registered diecut; scored; and registered back-printed French fold.

succinctly concluded, “In a time of environmental focus, no one likes throwing things away. So when you do execute something for print, it should stand out and have a shelf life. Now that magazines, newspapers, and other types of traditionally printed content continue to migrate online, what remains for print should be engaging, endearing, and relevant to a brand experience. Print’s not really dead, it’s just taking on a new role as a reminder that we all still live in a physical world.” And FastKit’s *The Perfect Finish*, rich in imagery and tactile effects, is the perfect reminder. ■



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