

# The Two Lay Flat Solutions from Unibind to use with Kiosks and Minilabs. History and future requirements of the Photo Books

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## Abstract

Until 2006 the PhotoBook was called the Photo Album, which was a luxury book with pages, where the developed photographic paper was attached in different modalities. The introduction of the digital camera has entirely changed this market. The evolution of the Photo Book began around 2006 and is fluctuating so rapidly that it is becoming a real revolution. Before 2006 the pictures were mostly digitally, but more people wanted to print the images to show them to family and friends in a convenient way, but also in varying sizes, such as 8x 10 in full color.

The introduction of enhanced software tools have created the chance to manipulate the digital pictures, adding some features like trees, beaches, sun, etc. with the possibility to zoom, rotate the pictures on photo paper. This new software was mainly used by the online printers, because of the technical features of the newly developed digital printers. The software became more sophisticated with auxiliary possibilities. In fact, the software industry has changed the Photo Album into the 'PhotoBook' as we know today.

In the early stages, this possibility of creation was a marvelous tool to assemble beautiful PhotoBooks, but had limited users who were familiar with the software programs. Some consumers spent hours to improve the image and composition of their Photo Book, and the results were great for special occasions. More than two-thirds of the people that started the composition of a Photo Book never finished the book. Only for these special occasions are they ready to spend so much time to create a unique presentation.

In our times, consumers are looking for fast solutions and want to have it "now". Consumers are looking to local places to make their PhotoBooks. Some stores have recognized this desire of consumers for instant solutions: the PhotoBook produced while shopping in the store. To give the consumer a simple immediate solution, the kiosk was introduced in the store. The kiosk may have different forms from a classic printer to a specially designed machine including payment systems. The Photo Book for the kiosk and minilabs must meet different requirements, because the result must compete with the PhotoBooks produced in the industrial environment of the online digital printers. These digital printers have the advantage by the capability to print the content and also produce the cover for the binding. It is obviously very simple for the industrial printers to offer a full color cover with a picture of an event. The digital printing industry has invested millions of dollars per production unit. The solution for many thousands shops must be very cost effective in the thousands of dollars, not the millions. Very important is the low investment per kiosk, but also the binding operation must be very simple and the result must be perfect. The stores may employ temporary people, whose tasks include

making a PhotoBook. Motivation to deliver a perfect product is a challenge, where failure of possibility must be reduced to nearly zero.

The tool for the making the full color cover and binding must be very economical as the footprint is very small in the shop. The step in creating a PhotoBook must be limited and done with specific guides. The make of the full color cover must be very simple and very fast. The binding must be very solid and secure. Different companies supply partial solutions for these requirements. Unibind has several complete solutions for all these requirements. All the solutions of Unibind are based on Hard-Covers with a channel in steel, which can be crimped in an automated crimping tool to the exact thickness of the bound photo paper.

Unibind has the honor to present during this conference, the evolution of the PhotoBook with 2 new innovations: One innovation for the inside of the PhotoBook with the lay flat paper solution called 'UniPaper' and a second innovation for the full color outside of the PhotoBook called the 'CaseCover'.

The solution for the full color outside is called the CaseCover. This new product of Unibind brings our solution to produce a full color hardcover. The first PhotoBooks were the evolution from the albums, where the outside hardcover of the album was manufactured in a factory in many different colors and many standard logos and slogans. The first PhotoBooks were done with the same way of thinking: many colors, many logos and slogans, but all standard from the factory, not adaptable at the specific request of the customer. The onliner printers offered the solution where the imitation leather was replaced by a panorama printed picture selected by the customer. This was a wrap around cover then glued on the hardcover produced in their factory.

For the PhotoBooks made outside the factory in the stores with kiosks or other print solutions, there was no satisfying solution until recently Unibind created a new solution.

The Unibind solution, the CaseCover, offers 3 different possible solutions: a printed picture on the front side of the hardcover, a printed picture on the front and the back side of the hardcover and the third solution is the complete panorama printed picture glued around the hardcover. To transform the blank CaseCover into a full color Cover, Unibind has developed, the CaseMaker 350, which Walgreens has installed 4,198 CaseMaker 350 to date. Many other retailers outside the USA are ordering the CaseMaker 350, which can produce in the store a personalized PhotoBook with a customer cover in only a few minutes. To make this personalized panorama PhotoBook, the operator must first cut the outside print to size, and use the positioning guide, fix the outside print to the CaseCover, fix the front side of the outside print and finally fix the back side to the CaseCover. Once the blank CaseCover is transformed into a full

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color CaseCover, the operator can bind the printed photo paper in the binding machine to realize a perfect PhotoBook that will be delivered to the customer in minutes after loading their pictures in the kiosk. This high quality PhotoBook will compete with the PhotoBooks made in a factory and delivered after a few days at home or at a pick up place.

Another innovation from Unibind is 'UniPaper' which is a lay flat paper solution.

This solution to produce PhotoBooks with the lay flat binding is called the UniPaper.

The first PhotoBook albums were pictures affixed with glue or with other attachments. These albums were made with heavy paper and lay flat was not offered for these albums as there were no "panorama" cameras or panorama pictures. Recently there were cameras developed with the very wide angle or with a movie application, both resulting in pictures with a double landscape view. Then the industry of PhotoBooks must also develop PhotoBooks with these double landscape printed paper.

Unibind has developed this solution, the UniPaper, with the special folding technique to be used with the system of binding based on the channel in steel. The UniPaper can be printed with single images or with the panorama view. Of course for the panorama view, the printer must be programmed to have the exact distance from the edge of the paper. Once the program is installed, the printing and the binding is exactly the same as with normal paper. The results are extremely simple, fast and beautiful PhotoBook.

The combined solution of the CaseCover with the UniPaper gives every store the possibility to instantly produce extremely professional and customized PhotoBooks with an investment as low as but less than two thousand dollars. No delay, no transport, no disappointment. This is the quality solution for the present generation of "NOW".