

SUCCESS STORY

MPS and KODAK ELECTRA MAX Plates: no baking, no compromise

When packaging printer MPS switched to low-chemistry KODAK ELECTRA MAX Plates, the savings in time and money were substantial. MPS Pre-press Manager Mark Graham tells how ELECTRA MAX Plates have enabled MPS to get longer unbaked runs from each plate and make huge energy savings.

Anecdotally, one third of consumer decision-making is based on packaging; first impressions matter and so persuasive packaging is front-of-mind amongst retailers. This puts a renowned, multi-site enterprise like MPS—Multi Packaging Solutions—right in the front line as advocates for their big brand clients, providing specialist packaging solutions for those brands and the healthcare markets.

Mark Graham, Pre-Press Manager with MPS said: “Straightforward printing for packaging is no longer enough. We work with our clients to explore innovative ways to give their packaging graphics an extra dimension—a flash of foil, say, or an unexpected texture. But at the same time, we are committed to earth-friendly products, technologies and manufacturing processes. Sustainability is important to us, and to a lot of our clients.”

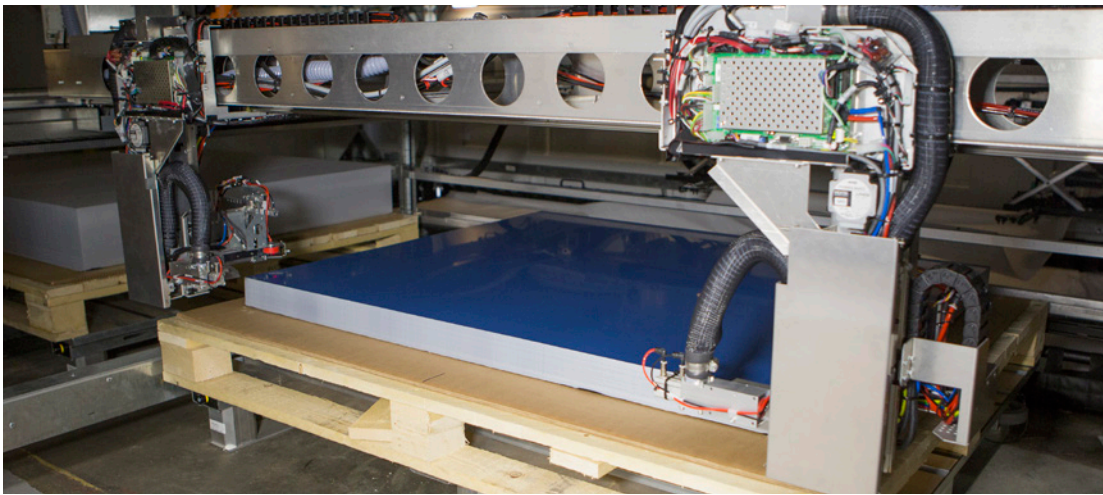
Working for customers that include major retailers, national supermarkets and small niche suppliers is demanding in numerous ways, particularly with greater competition for shelf space, the variegation in brand presentation and the mushrooming of SKUs from a single brand line.

“There are always new challenges,” said Mr Graham. “The jobs we are taking on are becoming increasingly complex. Packaging design is more sophisticated and we use more colours, foil, embossing or unusual shapes. But we still need to be able to get the artwork transformed for the press – and this is where the versatility of Kodak’s ELECTRA MAX Plates comes into play.”

New market forces, new pressures

Not only have jobs become more complex in recent years, but lead times have diminished hugely as clients expect rapid time-to-market despite this flurry of diversity. Explains Mr Graham, “ELECTRA MAX Plates, in combination with our MAGNUS VLF Platesetter with pallet load automation, allow us to react quickly to whatever demands are put upon us. I might need to get 100 plates out in a day to keep up with the workload, and with the MAGNUS Platesetter and ELECTRA MAX Plates, I can do that. Not having to bake the plates makes our turnaround so much quicker. We can move a job through, from receiving digital files to printing, in 24 to 48 hours. When I started with MPS 15 years ago, that simply wouldn’t have been possible. “The Automatic Pallet Loader enables quick and efficient plate loading of up to 600 plates online, reducing downtime and minimizing labour, streamlining the process.





The fact that the plates don't need to be baked makes a big difference. Their previous plate had to be preheated and also postbaked before going to press. Mark explains: "Now that we're using ELECTRA MAX Plates, there's no more baking, so the savings in time and energy usage are enormous." ELECTRA MAX Plates allow MPS to get extremely long run lengths without postbaking, even in harsh, UV print environments. The press chemicals used in UV print environments, are very harsh on plates. Traditionally printers had to bake the plate to achieve long runs, but the technology behind ELECTRA MAX Plates combines the durability of a baked plate with the cost, energy and time savings of a non-bake plate.

"We can now achieve run lengths of between 70,000 and 120,000 impressions with the plates for our UV applications, depending on the inks we're using," says Mark. "And given the high-end products we produce, the screening and screen rulings MPS is using, halftone range/resolution etc, it's crucial that we don't lose the quality and print capability of our plates. ELECTRA MAX Plates retain these vital elements."

MPS and Kodak—an off-the-shelf match

MPS and Kodak have a relationship that spans more than a decade, and for Mark it's a supplier relationship that really stands out. He feels that his face-to-face relationship with them is better than with other suppliers. "The Kodak team are such a great help," he says. "One time, I needed an urgent plate delivery. I rang my contact, only to discover he was on holiday in the Dominican Republic. But he still picked up the call and got the plates to me by the next day—that's when you know you have a good relationship with someone. Kodak can always be relied upon to create technology to makes its clients' lives easier—and this is certainly the case with the introduction of ELECTRA MAX Plates".

A change that's paid off

Using ELECTRA MAX Plates has changed the way MPS can work with its clients and react to customer demand. "Last minute customer pass-on-press alterations can be dealt with in a fraction of the time as before," explains Mr Graham, "because we can use the plates straight off with no baking." Switching plates has led to appreciable cost and time savings across the board.

After an initial trial, MPS is now running 100 percent ELECTRA MAX Plates, and it's a decision that they're delighted they made. Mark outlines how they came to make the change. "We started by looking at energy savings across the site and what we could do to make reductions. Running an oven 24/7 had huge cost implications. Our energy bills were sky high, so we started to talk to Kodak about how they could help."

ELECTRA MAX Plates also use less chemistry and have longer developer bath cycles, resulting in reduced cleaning for the plate processors and less environmental impact. "It's really noticeable that we can put more plates through the processor before we have to clean it," adds Mr Graham. "The processes are more stable."

ELECTRA MAX Plates tick all the boxes for what MPS needs and the Kodak team made the transition easy. "Kodak have helped us along the way with the crossover to ELECTRA MAX Plates. It was definitely the right move for us."

Eastman Kodak Company 343 State Street Rochester, NY 14650 USA
+1-866-563-2533 in North America. Produced using Kodak Technology.
©Kodak, 2017. Kodak, Electra, Magnus and the Kodak Logo are trademarks of
Kodak. Subject to technical change without notice.
E.PSD.235.0317.en.02

[KODAK.COM/GO/ELECTRAMAX](https://www.kodak.com/go/electramax)

