



PAWI Group

KODAK SONORA X Process Free Plate has several benefits for PAWI's packaging offset operations



Renowned packaging producer becomes a pioneer user of process-free plates in packaging offset in April 2017 in Winterthur (Switzerland) and in May 2018 in Singen (Germany)



Andreas Keller, CEO, PAWI Group



Alexander Honsel, Strategic Project Manager, PAWI Group

The PAWI Group is a leading Swiss producer of high quality carton and paper packaging. Among its flagship products are folding boxes for the food sector, especially chocolate, pastries and confectionery. Three companies currently make up the PAWI Group: PAWI Verpackungen AG and the full-service design agency gleis 1 AG (both at home in Winterthur, Switzerland) as well as PAWI Packaging GmbH in Singen, Germany. At the production sites at the Winterthur headquarters and 34 miles away in Singen, 250 people provide a comprehensive range of packaging related services.

The company continuously invests in advanced technology to meet its offset, flexo and digital production needs. Earlier this year, for instance, a new and highly automated, eight-colour sheetfed offset press in 3B format with eight imaging units and two coaters was installed in Winterthur and

equipped for printing with conventional and UV cured inks. Offset production at the Singen site, which opened in late 2015, takes place on a six-colour 3B press with one coater for conventional drying, low-migration inks.

Doing more with less: process-free plates help optimise manufacturing processes

PAWI is making vigorous efforts to streamline its production processes in all areas and make them more flexible. One element of this strategy is that, starting in the early summer of 2017, offset platemaking was adapted for automated CTP technology. This coincided with the abandonment of thermal plates requiring wet chemistry processing in favor of KODAK SONORA Process Free Plates. "It all began when we set out to radically shorten the platemaking cycle with the aim of optimising our processes as far as

possible and securing sustainable market advantages," says Alexander Honsel, Strategic Project Manager. "We were convinced that process-free plates would steer us to success in the offset carton printing segment with UV and low migration inks. That's why we decided to play a pioneering role here."

Before the optimisation project, led by Honsel, was implemented, platemaking was invariably a time-consuming process. All plates had to be manually staged at the CTP platesetter in Winterthur, then loaded into the plate processor by hand after imaging and taken to the post-bake oven. The idea was that by automating the various steps and slimming them down so that only imaging of the process-free plates remained, a whole series of benefits and cost savings would result: the elimination of the plate processor, post-bake oven and related consumption of chemicals, energy and water, less waste,



no more measurements, checks or maintenance, more rapid availability of the plates for printing, fewer production stoppages because remakes owing to plate processing variations would become a thing of the past – and so the list goes on.

Lean processes and automation enable high platemaking productivity and stability

The old platemaking technology in Winterthur made way for a new, fully automatic CTP system. In Singen, the existing KODAK MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter, purchased two and a half years previously, was upgraded in March 2018 by investing in a Single Cassette Unit (SCU) that loads plates automatically. The benchmark for process-free plates was Winterthur because production also takes place there in UV offset.

The KODAK SONORA UV Process Free Plate, with which PAWI achieved run lengths of up to 40,000 sheets, was chosen for the entry into process-free. The transition to this leaner plate type was completed without any changes to the inks, the fountain solution or the press chemicals. Yet it was the new KODAK SONORA X Process Free Plate with its significantly improved run lengths, higher speed imaging and more robust handling that provided the crucial breakthrough.

KODAK SONORA X Process Free Plate prompts breakthrough for process-free

PAWI became a beta user of the SONORA X Process Free Plate in Fall 2017. "More than 90% of all jobs we handle are for less than 50,000 sheets. We've noticed a definite trend toward shorter runs and more frequent artwork changes. However, thanks to

the SONORA X Plate, we can manage up to 70,000 with low migration inks on either carton or paper in both UV and conventional environments. In Winterthur, for instance, we use a brown with difficult pigmentation yet still achieve runs of 70,000, which we find very encouraging," reports Remo Fehr, Manager Sheetfed Printing.

Now, both PAWI sites print everything with the SONORA X Process Free Plate, and the vision of radically leaner platemaking has matured. With automated, unattended plate production established close to the presses at both sites, the printers are able to image their plates themselves. "Our printers get on wonderfully well with it. They're now masters of their own plates and can decide independently when to image them," confirms Robert Schmid, Plant Manager in Winterthur. "We have absolutely no problems with process-free plates."



Ralf Kautzmann, Managing Director of PAWI Packaging GmbH in Singen, adds: "The automation of the plate imaging process and the introduction of the SONORA X Process Free Plate were important steps in our company's endeavors to expand industrial production and strengthen PAWI's position as a leading packaging producer."

The space PAWI saved by migrating to the process-free plate from Kodak proved to be a further advantage. "By dismantling the plate processor, the post-bake oven and the plate handling

areas between the various stations, we gained 200 square meters in Winterthur. That's space we can now convert into offices and rent out as an added dividend," Andreas Keller, CEO of the PAWI Group, explains.

At the same time, automated CTP platemaking in combination with the SONORA X Process Free Plate and the investment in new offset technology has paved the way for PAWI to realize a standardised, cost cutting, multicolor printing concept for packaging offset in the near future.

Front cover: PAWI uses a fully automated KODAK MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter with Single Cassette Unit (SCU).

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