



KODAK SONORA XTRA Process Free Plate Technology Is Good News for Westamerica Communications

CHALLENGE

How does a printer become environmentally conscious with sustainable printing practices without sacrificing performance or cost to its customers?

SOLUTION

KODAK SONORA XTRA Process Free Plates enable maximum cost savings and efficiency combining the sustainability, quality, and performance of Kodak's field-proven process free plate technology with faster imaging speeds, superior image resolutions, and long-run durability.

RESULTS

- Tangible water, chemistry, and energy savings—huge wins in California
- Unmatched plate performance including visibility of minute image details, enhanced development on press, and significantly reduced remakes
- Streamlined and simplified plate production
- Improved staffing efficiencies

This Southern California provider of print and marketing services has found a powerful combination of cost efficiency and sustainable benefits in Kodak's award-winning alternative to conventional platemaking.

Westamerica Communications has prospered by adapting, evolving, and improving.

A case in point is the Lake Forest, CA, company's step up from conventional platemaking with the help of KODAK SONORA Process Free Plates. In use there for only about a year, SONORA Plates now support 70% of Westamerica's offset lithographic production. The goal is to transition almost all offset work to SONORA Plates—an outcome that the company believes will pay dividends in more ways than one.

Printing with SONORA Plates allows Westamerica to be perceived by its customers as both environmentally responsible and cost-conscious, according to Mark DeBellis, Corporate Vice President, Marketing and Business Development.





"Customers want both—they want sustainability, and they want value," he explains. "The beauty about this solution is that with process-free plates, we actually do see cost savings. It really allows us to deliver two things which aren't always together: a sustainability win, and a pricing or value win." It's a combination, he notes, that often doesn't come with other sustainability solutions for the pressroom because of the costs they add.

"This is where Kodak really differentiates itself, and that's going to play well in our marketplace," DeBellis says. "We'll get to a solution faster with this than we would otherwise."

SONORA Plate technology—recognized in 2021 with a Pinnacle InterTech Award for innovation—replaces conventional platemaking with a solution that enables the laser-imaged plate to become fully print-ready once it is mounted on press. This eliminates the need for wet plate processors and the large quantities of chemistry, water, and energy that the devices consume. With their fast imaging speeds, high resolutions, long-run durability, and compatibility with UV inks, SONORA Plates are suitable for most offset print environments.

"Because it bypasses traditional processing, there is no water involved, so there is a tangible water savings, which is huge in California, where we have been in a severe drought situation," says Doug Grant, President and CEO. "Anything we can do to save water is good—that's a major benefit."

As for SONORA Plates print quality, Grant thinks the everyday results speak for themselves. "The plate performs equally well to a traditional plate in every respect, for at least 70% of our jobs," he declares. "It performs down to the minute details. It holds the image well, it develops well on press. It's like a no-brainer for us to use on the press. There are no limitations on it."

Streamlined plate production with SONORA Plates has even delivered a welcome gain in terms of staffing efficiency. "We frequently run a lot of overtime," Grant explains. "Some of that overtime is on weekends. In the past, we would always have to have a prepress person on site during the press run in order to be there to help remake a plate if needed. Or sometimes, we would literally make multiple sets of plates on the off chance that we had a plate go bad over the course of the weekend run."

But now, Grant continues, in the unlikely event of a plate remake, the simplicity of SONORA Plates means that "all we need to do is to give the press operator a key code, and he can reimage his own plate with no prepress person needing to be there. That's a huge contingency benefit for us."

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Optimizing whatever can be optimized has taken Westamerica Communications from its origins as a family-owned quick print shop to its present status as one of Southern California's most multi-capable providers of print and marketing services.

The company offers commercial lithographic and digital printing, custom packaging, direct mail and online marketing, strategy and branding, and distribution and fulfillment.

Kodak has been one of Westamerica's primary technology partners for 14 years, according to Grant. In addition to SONORA Plates, Kodak-branded products on the equipment list include a KODAK TRENDSETTER Thermal Platesetter; a KODAK NEXPRESS SX3300 Digital Press featuring 14" x 26" sheet size and fifth color station; the KODAK INSITE Prepress Portal; and KODAK PRINERGY Workflow to tie it all together.

"We've found that they're really at the forefront of changes in technology as it relates to what we implement here," says Grant of the ongoing relationship with Kodak. "Their service and response time has been great in our market...it's just a win-win to use the Kodak solution," DeBellis concludes.

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