



CASE STUDY

ZAHARA® XP

Subject:
Plastic Resource
Cottage Grove, MN

Profile:
Plastic Resource Inc.'s core business is gift and rewards card manufacturing, with expertise in printing on plastic.

Challenge:
Reduce cost, raise efficiency and accelerate production

Solution:
Zahara plates for waterless printing; upgraded recently to Zahara XP

Results:

- Chemistry-free platemaking
- Elimination of time consuming, wasteful steps in prepress production
- Lower platemaking costs and higher profitability
- Fewer plate remakes
- Able to store and reuse plates
- Excellent pressroom performance

A Faster, More Reliable and Lower Cost Stream of Plates for Their Genius 52 Waterless Press

Plastic Resource Inc. of Cottage Grove, MN, offers comprehensive manufacturing of plastic rewards and gift cards. Services include design, printing, magstripe encoding, barcoding and fulfillment. In addition to rewards cards, gift cards, membership cards, and key tags, the company produces a variety of other small printed plastic products and paper stock card carriers for in-store displays. Founded in 1996, the company's client base has grown to encompass retailers, dealers and brokers throughout North America.

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Change to Zahara Plates

The company prints the vast majority of its orders on a KBA Genius 52 waterless press with UV inks. According to Production Manager Jarrod Zaccard, the company changed from using a competing waterless CTP plate to using Zahara waterless plates in 2014, moved to Zahara XP when the product upgrade was introduced, and has not looked back. “Its durability, the opportunity to process without chemistry, no protective film to contend with, and faster burn times were all factors in changing plate brands,” says Zaccard. These and other factors have led to higher efficiency and profitability both in prepress and the pressroom, ultimately resulting in better service and more competitive pricing for customers.

Going Chemistry-free

When Plastic Resource began using Zahara plates, it used what was then its current developer chemistry as a washout solution. This was not uncommon among early adopters of the new waterless plate. About two years later, the company changed to washing with just water, eliminating all the chemistry in their platemaking operation. The company continued to use its existing processor for the water wash. “It was easy to change over. We just flushed the tanks really well,” Zaccard recalls.

Continued on reverse

Now, Zaccard declares, “No chemicals is huge.” In addition to eliminating all the costs associated with chemistry-based processing and significantly raising prepress efficiency, Zaccard says there have been other benefits realized with the chemistry-free plate. “No cleaning before mounting the plates is an amazing improvement in our efficiency, and without chemical residue they can be stored for later use,” he explains.

Many Benefits

In addition to the chemistry-free benefits, Zaccard offers a list of other advantages over competing plates. “Pulling the film off of the other plates was such a drag. And, if you missed a tiny piece of that film in your image area the plate had to be re-burned.” There is no protective film to remove with Zahara XP. “That feature alone has saved us a ton of time, and plates,” he notes. That, and faster burn times, he points out, contribute to an accelerated prepress operation. Superior durability and scratch resistance are on the list, as well. “The pressroom needs far fewer plate remakes. Also, now we can reuse plates,” he says. “The durability of Zahara XP makes that possible. We could never do that with the other plates.”

Zahara XP offers other pressroom benefits. “The pressmen don’t have to go over plates with alcohol and PC2, they just hang them and start printing,” Zaccard says. “And it only takes about 15 sheets to get up to color.” As for inking, he rates the compatibility of the plates with UV inks as excellent. “There are no issues. There’s great chemistry with our inks,” he remarks.

Zaccard says changing to Zahara plates was “one of the best decisions that I have made.” Asked to summarize, he declares that had they not changed to Zahara, Plastic Resource’s production would be “much more expensive, painful and slow.” As for customer service from the Zahara team, Zaccard says, “They made our changeover extremely easy. Those guys are fantastic. We had them out recently to help with our RIP upgrade, but, honestly, short of that we never need any assistance with Zahara.” ■

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*Currently undergoing name change to Verico Technology



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