

»The best of both worlds«

Spear improves productivity with flexo solution from Mekrom and JV Imaging Systems

Spear New Hampshire recently installed a complete solvent-based flexo computer-to-plate system in its Milford, NH/USA facility. Although the initial driver for the installation was to improve print quality, productivity quickly became the compelling reason to make the move to CtP. *Spear* along with many other flexo printers has been holding off on the CtP decision for several years. A closer look at the benefits of CtP and the latest technology from *Mekrom* in plate processing, proved to *Spear* that it was time to make the move.

A team of people from *Spear* set out to compare all the elements from three primary vendors. The process proved to be very enlightening and managed to break a few misconceptions about thermal processing and the CtP process along the way. After nearly 12 months of research, demos, press testing and negotiations, *Spear* decided to go with the solution provided by *JV Imaging Systems* of Northborough, MA/USA.

The package included the *Kodak Thermoflex Mid* coupled with *Mekrom's Concept 300* solvent process-

day to the capability of over five times that amount. Now they are able to generate the same weekly production of plates in about two days versus a full five day week.

JEFF BRENT the pre-press manager at *Spear's* NH plant says »Now I can schedule my plate making for the first part of the week and utilize my operators in other areas during the rest of the week«. This system allowed *Spear* to utilize its *Mac* operators as both plate makers and *Mac* operators. This also increased capacity with out adding overhead. **JEFF** also adds »We were able to reduce our overtime by 20% with the addition of this equipment.«

NICK NOYES, Plant Manager for the NH site notes: »By keeping a solvent-based system we were able to make the transition to digital

Left:
Mekrom's Concept 302 EDLF (exposure, drying, light finishing) unit for plate sizes up to 900 x 1200 mm (36" x 48") ...



Right:
... and the Concept 301 automatic flowline processor for solvent washable photopolymer plates.



From left:
Randy Brawley, Jeff Brent and Dawn Deleo take full advantage of the HTD dryer.



Once it was clear that this move was necessary for continued growth and efficiency the decision came down to which imaging device, which plate, which processing method and which vendor will provide the right solution.

ing equipment including the state of the art *HTD* (High Technology Drying) system, and *Asahi* plate material.

The *HTD* dryer gave *Spear* the opportunity to maintain the quality and longevity of a solvent processed plate and gain the productivity and speed of the thermal systems. This was the best of both worlds for *Spear*.

The system was installed in June of this year. Within hours *Spear* was making analog plates with the new processing equipment with less than one hour processing time.

The digital device was installed the following week.

Both the processing equipment and imaging equipment went in with out a hitch. Productivity improvements were immediate and dramatic. With the combination of digital imaging, in-line processing and 25 minute dry times *Spear* went from processing 20-30 plates per

with less waste. We did not have to make adjustments to match existing standards. Also with the *HTD* dryer I was also able to add capacity with out adding labour« with a much wider tonal range.

»The solvent processing system gave us the highest quality plate and with the *HTD* dryer I can get the plate in less than one hour from start to finish«, added **NICK**.

Spear also installed this exact same system in its Mason, OH/USA plant in September of this year.

→ www.spearsystem.com

→ www.jvimaging.com

→ www.mekrom.com