



Kodak's packaging push

Armed with the latest platemaking and workflow technology, Kodak has set its sights on the region's packaging industry, which is forming a pivotal part of the company's global strategy. Carlos Martinez speaks with Oscar Planas, vice president of Kodak's packaging division on his plans.

AT drupa, Kodak's stand featured extensive packaging solutions designed to help package printers and brand owners preserve brand equity, enhance shelf appeal and drive efficiencies from design through print production.

Kodak's portfolio of packaging technologies spotlighted flexographic printing solutions, offset plates, workflow systems, brand protection solutions and digital printing presses. In addition, Kodak's K-Zone helped visitors learn how customers could utilise these solutions to diversify capabilities, differentiate offerings and increase business profitability.

Planas, vice president worldwide sales and business development – packaging at Kodak says, “I don't know if it was intended to be a packaging drupa, but the show certainly went that way, and we managed to hit 30 per cent above our sales target.” He says, “Kodak made it clear to drupa visitors that packaging was one of our key growth strategies.”

Push into packaging:

ALSO at drupa, Kodak featured the award-winning Flexcel NX system, the

company's flagship solution for high definition flexo printing. The company says enabling quality that can rival offset and gravure, printers also can expect to drive significant production efficiencies in the press room with the use of Flexcel NX Plates.

Planas says the NX Plates offer printers a wider colour gamut, higher densities and greater print stability than traditional digital flexo plates. He adds, “With the use of the Flexcel NX System, brand owners will see impactful product packaging with impressive brand colour consistency.”

Kodak adds that the combination of the Flexcel NX System and the company's Spotless Flexographic Solution, packaging printers can “revolutionise” the way they plan production, and deliver a product and service to their brand clients.

Planas says the award-winning Kodak Flexcel NX System is a key element in Kodak's flexographic product line, which addresses a variety of needs—from narrow to wide formats—in the very diverse package printing market.

He says, “Regardless of the design or line screen, Flexcel NX digital plates

with InterTech Digicap NX Screening enable higher print densities, better print contrast, and cleaner tones for a broad range of applications, while improving production efficiencies and helping reduce costs.”

Meanwhile, the newly launched Flexcel Direct System, joins the Flexcel NX System in an impressive line-up of flexographic solutions from Kodak that are designed to increase shelf impact while driving production efficiency.

The system – which Planas expects to make a significant impact in the Asia Pacific market – demonstrated how innovative, energy efficient, high power laser engraving produces superior quality press-ready elastomer sleeves with increased production throughput.

Planas says the imager and consumables are designed to work as an optimised solution, an advancement that enables more affordable production of high-quality, continuous sleeves for package printing. He adds that with the addition of the Flexcel Direct System to the portfolio Kodak can now make affordable, high-quality ITR flexo sleeve production a reality and demonstrate Kodak's ongoing commitment to deliver truly differentiated solutions into the packaging segment.

He says, “Flexo offers a lot of opportunities to be cost effective and as a result, companies in the region are moving away from gravure. To cater to this growing trend, Kodak has brought the Flexcel NX and Flexcel Direct system to the table.” He says, “Both Flexcel systems are well suited to quicker make-ready as well as returning



Cover photo: (l-r) Oscar Planas with Andy Molnar, managing director of Ideal Solution Kodak's packaging distributor, and Robert Mollee, business development manager, Prepress Solutions, Kodak Australasia

profit on short run, tight margin jobs."

Meanwhile, commenting on Kodak's push into the packaging market, John Anderson, director of the company's packaging segment says Kodak understands the challenges faced by both brand owners and retailers in today's competitive market.

"Our products and services are specifically tailored to help package printers deliver high-quality results to these clients." He says, "Our solutions focus on helping printers achieve brand intent and consistent imaging for packages that really stand out in the minds of consumers."

"Through Kodak's solutions, printers can better satisfy their customers' dynamic packaging needs, boost productivity, ensure product security, and most importantly, grow their businesses and bottom lines."

Local challenges:

PLANAS says following drupa, 50 per cent of his time will be focused on the Asia Pacific with the aim of getting Kodak's digital and flexo packaging message across to an industry which has largely been dominated by gravure.

He says, "Our aim is to not only build on our existing relationships with trade service providers in the region, but to increase our dialogue with brand owners who are now expecting more imaging quality than ever before."

"One of our main challenges for Kodak in the region is to get its flexo and workflow technologies into the markets which are entrenched with gravure and offset technology. But in our experience, once the printers and brand owners see our solutions, the uptake of the technology really snowballs."

Planas adds, "Brandowners always want better shelf marketability and shorter time to market, so this is what we aim to cater for. We believe we can compete with gravure and offset."

Another hurdle for Kodak in the region is overcoming the stigma surrounding the company's decision to apply for Chapter 11 protection in the US. Six months after the decision, Kodak is continuing to develop its solutions and invest in R&D.

Planas says, "When we moved into chapter 11 it caused some concern and questions from consumers and customers throughout the Asia Pacific so we are working hard to re-educate the market." He says, "We have found that once we reassured them that we are continuing our business as usual and they see the new products we have available, that is generally the end of the discussion."

Working with workflow:

KODAK'S core workflow product portfolio consists of Prinergy Powerpack, PLA (Packaging Layout Automation), Pandora, Colorflow, and Preps along with a long list of associated options and add-ons. Michael Smedley, business services and solutions group manager, Kodak commercial ANZ says workflow solutions play an important role in ensuring the success of a packaging business.

"If a packaging company looks at the many steps needed to take a job to press and puts the cost to these processes you can quickly discover that automation can cut these costs and reduce error whilst speeding up this complex process." Smedley says, "The Kodak products – such as Prinergy Powerpack – have a pedigree in print and we take cost out of our customers businesses by making all of these elements just work together. Many of our customers not only have Packaging customers but they also cross commercial and digital printers. Kodak's workflow products can drive these devices."

"The solution can deliver automation from the placement of the order through a web portal, the checking of a proof online, the management of a brands assets, the refinement of files for error free reproduction, and consistent and predictable colour across many print mediums."

Kodak claims its workflow suite showcase at drupa, which included the release of the sixth version of Prinergy, was one of the best attended at the

show, reaffirming the company's commitment to the packaging market. When asked what future held for Kodak's workflow portfolio Smedley replied, "More automation."

He says, "At present I see alot of focus on the MIS of workflow integration driving many now manual processes to be fully automated just by making a quote in an MIS system. Kodak is well positioned and is the only workflow vendor with such a broad product portfolio."

"This focus on automation increases will continue to be valuable moving forward. Kodak can manage a brand and its digital asset in Kodak software, whilst managing the screening algorithm in the same workflow; this drives productivity, speed to market and reduced costs."

Completing the portfolio

Catering for the offset market at drupa, Kodak showcased the Trillian SP Thermal Plate, which the company says delivers a combination of productivity, reduced chemistry and efficient on-press performance. With a long unbaked run length capability, including UV and strong chemical resistance, and fast processing speeds, Trillian SP Plates can help offset package printers deliver faster turnaround times for better customer satisfaction.

For those offset printers and brand owners looking for even more sustainability features, Kodak says its Sonora

XP Plate takes process-free thermal technology to a whole new level. Offering high-quality thermal imaging and the complete elimination of plate processing, the Sonora Plates can help increase productivity, simplify operations and remove costs by reducing the number of steps required for platemaking.

Meanwhile, Printers looking for short-run digital solutions for their packaging needs were shown the NexPress Digital Color Press, which prints on more than 700 standard offset substrates and comes equipped with Print Genius, a suite of productivity and quality control tools. With the Kodak NexPress Fifth Imaging Unit Solution, printers can achieve spot color, high-quality gloss, in-line watermarking, or coating in a single pass, according to Kodak.

Kodak adds that package printers considering value-added services for their businesses will benefit from demonstrations of Kodak's Brand Protection Services and Solutions. Featured products at drupa 2012 included Kodak Traceless Ad System for Antidiversion.

Kodak adds its growing technology portfolio of brand and packaging protection applications help brand owners defend their products against black market counterfeiting and gray market diversion, the illegitimate reselling and distribution of products.

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