

# Standardization generates cost savings for Paragon

**AFTER 18 MONTHS** of tests and measurements across its entire printing operation, Paragon Print and Packaging has settled on a new anilox-ink combination which has generated significant cost savings. Andy Thomas reports

As a leading European manufacturer of packaging for the retail food industry, standardization of the label printing process is a key issue for UK-based Paragon Print and Packaging.

Paragon Labels produces more than one and a half billion labels a month on 52 flexographic label presses across six plants. With extremely high demands on print quality, the company has a strong focus on process control and stability.

Some 18 months ago, Paragon set out on a project to more consistently achieve customer-specified digital color targets, reduce spitting problems to zero, control the print process and achieve outstanding results on HD flexo.

Understanding the variables in the flexographic print process and establishing controls is paramount to achieving a total color management system. Paragon tested and measured a range of different anilox rolls using Troika's Anicam and press side tests, all using the same inputs. Apex GTT anilox rolls were selected after showing a variation of less than one percent.

The next stage was to standardize the other components of the flexo printing process.

Paragon chose to measure the ink directly on the press itself rather than off-line. 'We know that the whole process does not work if the ink does not match,' said Michael Marshall, operations manager at Paragon. 'Issuing Ink Right First Time (RFT) to press is critical to delivery, quality and consistency. Apex GTT has allowed us to control one of the critical inputs when achieving customer demands of less than 2.00 delta e 2000.'

As part of the standardization project, Paragon switched to INX inks, finding them to work well in combination with the Apex GTT rolls. Step-by-step Paragon changed its whole printing process and gained clear benefits – particularly the elimination of spitting problems with UV inks.

Cost savings were significant: ink waste decreased by 55 percent and doctor blade usage showed a reduction of 50 percent. Ink changeover time was reduced by 46 percent reduction and makeready waste reduced by 15 percent.

'Understanding your process means being aware that there are points that might be small, but nevertheless are of crucial importance,' said Dennis Patterson, group operations director at Paragon. 'For us it became very clear that the ink transfer is one of the key issues a printer needs to have control of in his job on a daily basis. Otherwise standardization remains challenging if not impossible.'

Continued Patterson, 'With Apex GTT we selected a high-tech tool that gives us the highest degree of control around the ink transfer. At the same time we were able to reduce our anilox inventory, thus saving a significant number of set up anilox roll changes across the business on a daily basis.'

All of Paragon's more than 50 presses, from seven different suppliers, are now under control with a delta e value of less than two. Paragon maintains these high quality and control standards through regular, very precise and critical volume measurements of its GTT rolls.



FAST changeover Apex GTT anilox roll



MARK Chapman, production co-ordinator at Paragon Print and Packaging, measuring an Apex GTT anilox roll