OEC graphics

WHAT'S INSIDE

dedication to innovation

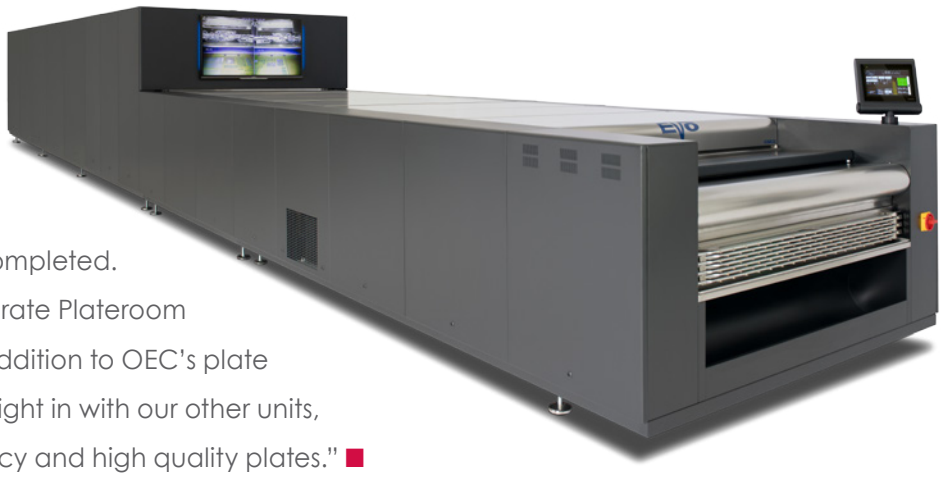
visual INSIGHTS

Volume 21 : No. 53 : SUMMER 2017

OEC NEW PLATE PROCESSOR IN OSHKOSH CONTINUES LEGACY

We are excited to announce that as of the end of July, OEC Oshkosh's installation of a new Vianord EVO5 BP-I plate processing unit will be complete. The addition of the EVO5 is an effort to build redundancy with our platemaking capabilities and continue OEC's commitment to automatic plate processing.

OEC's experience with automatic plate processing began almost 20 years ago in Oshkosh with the installation of the DuPont 3002-I Inline processor, also known affectionately as the "car wash." After expansion into the Chicago market occurred in the early 2000's, OEC added a second Dupont 3002-I to improve automated plate manufacturing in that facility as well. Growth in the West Coast market prompted the purchase of a Flint Automated Plate Processor (APP) in 2015 for our location in Vancouver, British Columbia. After many years of service we replaced our Chicago DuPont 3002-I with an additional Flint APP. The new EVO5 will run alongside our existing 3002-I in Oshkosh, rounding out OEC's arsenal of plate processors.

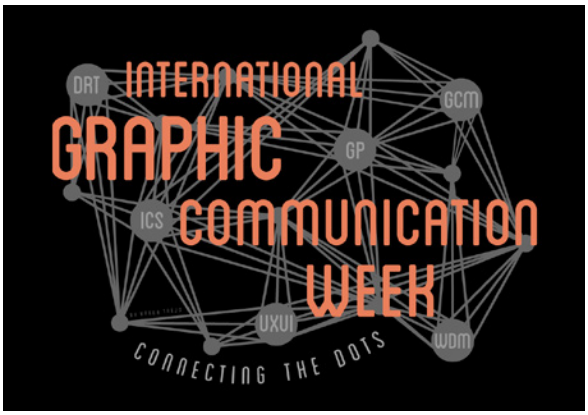


The EVO5 features the latest plate technology with a 52 x 80 format and advanced processing technology. Plate washing, drying and light finishing occur inside the automated unit after ablation and exposure has been completed. According to Nathan Rank, OEC's Corporate Plateroom and ITR Manager, "The EVO5 is a great addition to OEC's plate processing capabilities. The EVO5 will fit right in with our other units, providing increased capacity, redundancy and high quality plates." ■

OEC'S BRAD VETTE SPEAKS AT CAL-POLY EVENT

Brad Vette, OEC's Corporate Director of Business Development, was asked to speak at Cal-Poly's International Graphic Communication Week, held January 25-29th on their campus in San Luis Obispo, CA. A gathering of students, faculty and industry experts, International Graphic Communication Week consists of a lecture series, banquet and career fair. It is held to promote the importance of the printing, publishing and digital media industry as well as to commemorate Benjamin Franklin and his contributions to society.

The theme of this year's event, "Connecting the Dots" focused on new and innovative technologies. Vette was tapped to speak about packaging trends, print technologies, and the role of premedia in the supply chain with the importance of packaging as the last opportunity to impact retail sales. Vette explains "I appreciated the opportunity to speak to this next generation of future leaders. My goal was to educate as well as present them with the many career paths that are available to them within the printing industry."



According to Colleen Larkin Twomey, Associate Professor at Cal-Poly, the audience was riveted by Brad's presentation. "His talk about trends in packaging was not only engaging to the students and faculty, it inspired many of the students to declare their academic concentration in packaging. His "lecture" was a very effective storytelling platform that was relevant to everyone - how brands capture the attention of consumers through graphics, color, imagery, and structure," she explained.

Brad's discussion about what OEC Graphics does for brands in the packaging industry also resulted in many students inquiring about internships and careers at OEC Graphics. Colleen went on to say that the former Cal-Poly students OEC employs enjoy working for the company and she looks forward to more placements of grads in the future. OEC values this relationship with Cal-Poly and will continue to participate in the growth of their program. ■

OEC IN PREPRESS SUPPORT ROLE FOR FTA AWARD WINNERS

OEC Graphics was an exhibitor at the recent FTA Forum & INFO*FLEX in Phoenix, AZ, April 30 – May 3. As is tradition, the FTA held their Excellence in Flexography award banquet, where OEC was honored to be the prepress and plate supplier to numerous flexographic printing awards. Our customer's won gold, silver and bronze awards in a number of categories. The show itself was also a great opportunity for OEC to meet with current and prospective customers, as well as talk about Seamex In-the-Round sleeves and our Fusion Custom Workflow Management Systems. ■

OEC'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

OEC Graphics has been offering internships to qualifying students for over a decade. Although most OEC interns participate in our Prepress Operations program, we have offered internships in Accounting, IT, Programming and Brand Design as well. OEC hires for several internship positions throughout our facilities each year.

Participating in the primary internship program at OEC, our Prepress Operations Intern is exposed to three key areas within the prepress department. They spend time in Proofing/Profiling where they learn about OEC's color management workflow and standard operating procedures, as well as assist in producing proofs. A significant amount of time is spent in the Prepress department working on customer supplied art. They are also exposed to working in Account Coordination, taking orders from customers, processing the jobs and assisting OEC managers with the job workflow.

OEC's training program has proven to be successful in preparing students for future positions in the prepress industry. A typical intern will work either a spring semester/summer session or a summer/fall session, taking classes while earning their internship credits. Often, an intern at OEC ends up as a full-time employee.

> **"Interning at OEC gave me the perspective of what my future career was going to be like. It was a great learning opportunity in a friendly work environment."**

Ashley Dietrich, an Oshkosh employee, started out as an intern from Fox Valley Technical College a couple of years ago. She shares, "Interning at OEC gave me the perspective of what my future career was going to be like. It was a great learning opportunity in a friendly work environment." She continues, "I chose to come back because the flexible hours allowed me to work part-time while I was finishing classes. Now I work with the same team I did as an intern in an account management/prepress role."

OEC will continue to seek out potential interns through colleges with graphic communications programs such as UW Stout, Clemson, Cal-Poly and NE WI Technical College. Michelle Hammett, OEC's Human Resources Manager, states, "OEC's internship program is an ongoing, reciprocal partnership with colleges, students, and our employees. Students receive hands-on learning and are viewed critically as potential future employees with the hope that they share feedback with their peers about their internship. We share our knowledge and mentorship as a way of giving back to schools who continue to provide skilled future professionals for our industry. Our goal is to have students consider OEC as an employer of choice because of a great internship experience." ■

CAMILA SALAZAR VILLEGAS: AN INTERN WITH A BIG FUTURE

Camila Salazar Villegas is not your ordinary intern. A native of Pereira, Colombia, Camila's family owns a flexographic printing company in Colombia. With plans to get involved in the family business, she wanted to continue her education in prepress and printing. In Colombia, however, there are no programs that expose students to both prepress design and flexo printing techniques so her dad suggested she look outside of South America. After exploring schools associated with the FTA, she chose to attend Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton, primarily because it was the only school with printing equipment on campus. Camila moved to the US in September of 2014 to enroll in the Package and Label Printing program for an Applied Science Degree – Package and Label Printing Technician.

Camila's upbringing helped prepare her for the culture shock of moving to the US. She grew up attending a French school and even spent a year of high school abroad in France. Soon after she arrived in Wisconsin to begin school she was informed that FVTC would be eliminating their printing program. Fortunately, they were going to accommodate students enrolled in the program, offering summer courses for the students to be able to complete their requirements.

While she focused on her studies, including taking an English class (which she is now pretty fluent in), she had the opportunity to attend the annual FFTA INFO*FLEX and Forum in Fort Worth, TX in April of 2016. There she met Brad Vette from OEC Graphics who introduced her to OEC's internship program. Camila gave Brad her resume and was contacted for a fall internship.

Camila started working three full and two half days a week at OEC in September of 2016. Her time was spent working on corrugated prepress jobs. She finished her internship and received her degree in December of 2016. OEC invited Camila to continue on as a full-time employee for as long as she could. Right after graduation, she obtained an Optional Practical Training Card, which allows her to temporarily work in the US in a full-time position. Camila has been able to advance into offset and narrow-web prepress work. She has even had the opportunity to work in customer service, filling in for an employee on maternity leave.

Camila Salazar

This September, Camila will head back to Colombia to work at her family business, Eticolor. A printer for the narrow-web flexo industry with an emphasis on shrink sleeves and coffee bags, Eticolor employs 70 people. Camila plans to return as the Production Manager and share her knowledge with the group. She wants to implement OEC's workflow organization and checks and balances at the company among their group of designers. She shared, "I found great value in learning how to design and come up with checklists and final reviews to make sure the work is done correctly."

When asked what distinct differences there were between Eticolor and OEC, she added, "It is more of a manufacturing environment where you can look down and view the entire production floor. We don't make our own printing plates. And it's definitely hot and humid compared to OEC!" Regardless of weather, Camila believes her internship was worth being 3,000 miles from home. ■

TO USE ILLUSTRATION OR NOT? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

BY LORI JEPSON, BRAND SERVICES MANAGER

AMPHORA BRAND DESIGN

Lori Jepson

Yes! Yes! Yes! That is the answer.

Billions of dollars are spent on packaging each year. And since packaging is the very first thing consumers see, it must catch the consumers' eyes and make a great first impression. Packaging needs to draw them in, engage them, and play on their tastes, lifestyles, and aspirations so ultimately, they reach for the item on the shelf.

Illustration can do that. Illustration offers a limitless scope of creativity. It can transcend reality and has the ability to illustrate (literally) abstract concepts and ideas. With a creative mind and a computer – or a sketchbook and pencil if the illustrator prefers to work old school – an illustration can tell a story bright in color, rich in content, and emotive in spirit that will have consumers desiring what's in that package.

AMPHORA Brand Design is unique in that it has its very own illustrator on staff, Jen Schloesser. With 25 years of experience and an imagination that holds no bars, Jen brings fresh, inspiring and intelligent design to the illustration table.

"I love connecting a brand to the consumer through original and impactful illustration," Jen says. "Engaging people not only with design, color and pattern, but also creating a mood that tells a story is especially rewarding, helping my clients connect to their audiences in a unique and imaginative way before they (consumers) even experience the actual product."

Examples of Jen's Illustrations

Illustration styles evolve as consumers evolve. 2017 is seeing the following:

Simplicity: Simple, functional graphics that communicate a clear, concise message. The quicker the message can be read and understood, the sooner it can be grabbed off the shelf.

Color: Strong, vibrant colors are being used to help products jump off the shelves at consumers, as well as to differentiate product ranges within one brand.

To Use Illustration continues...

Custom Lettering:
A custom script or hand-created letter not only makes the label one-of-a-kind, but also offers an organic effect that demonstrates personality, wholesomeness and a sense of nostalgia.

Vintage Looks: A vintage look exudes a feeling of nostalgia. It brings back memories, and for the younger generation is just "cool." The design and feel of the past is now elevated with today's advanced printing technologies – a "modernized nostalgia" so to speak.

Pattern Repetition: Patterns are excellent for drawing attention. Even though the concept of repetitive shapes seems simple, the technique can create packaging that is both unique and memorable.

Narratives: A good narrative illustration creates the appropriate atmosphere and mood the brand represents. It takes a moment in time and transports the audience to a place and makes them feel joyful, comforted or whatever feeling the brand wishes upon them.

To learn more about our illustration capabilities, please contact Lori Jepson, ljepson@weareamphora.com or call 920.560.4512. ▲

THE ORIGINAL SEAMEX SLEEVE RETIRES

The original Seamex sleeve manufacturing process, begun in 1990, has been officially retired. Production of the original Seamex sleeve included a grinding step that was eliminated with the Seamex2 manufacturing process in 2005. OEC continued to manufacture the original Seamex sleeve over the years as customers gradually transitioned over to the new sleeve technology. The more streamlined Seamex2 process proved to be superior. It manufactured a finer dot which translates into better color and text as well as improved ink release from the plate.

To commemorate the original Seamex sleeve, OEC's Seamex department produced a final, special sleeve engraved with "Proudly celebrating over 25 years of an OEC original. Every end is just a new beginning. 1990-2017." This was presented to OEC CEO, Jack Schloesser, by the group in a special glass enclosure. "I really appreciate this gesture by our talented Seamex crew. OEC overcame a lot of obstacles to manufacture the first seamless Seamex sleeve and bring it to market. It was a testament to OEC's dedication to technical innovation and pushing the industry forward. We look forward to the next 25 years of Seamex production," Jack said. ■

CONSTRUCTING SEAMEX 2

BY BRUCE PAGEL, TECHNICAL SALES MANAGER

TECH TIPS

Bruce Pagel

OEC Graphics pioneered in-the-round photopolymer sleeve technology over 25 years ago. This first generation was known as Seamex 1. Seamex 1 involved a process of wrapping photopolymer around a sleeve and vulcanizing it until the polymer melted and flowed together.

Polymers that melt and flow for the Seamex 1 process were very limited. The polymer applied was thicker than needed for the repeat. The sleeve then had to cool for at least 12 hours and be ground down to size. This grinding process had its problems and production challenges, most notably:

- Waiting for the polymer to cool added to the process time
- Extra polymer was consumed because it was built over-sized, then ground to correct repeat
- More time and care was needed in the grinding process to ensure the surface finish was fine enough that it would not show up in print

The reuse of bases had issues as well. The polymer had to be ground off to reuse the base. This grinding cut into the sleeve surface so the new polymer would stick to it. This reduced the thickness of the base and the number of times the sleeve could be used.

Because of the high heat needed to melt the polymer, cushion tape choice when used was limited.

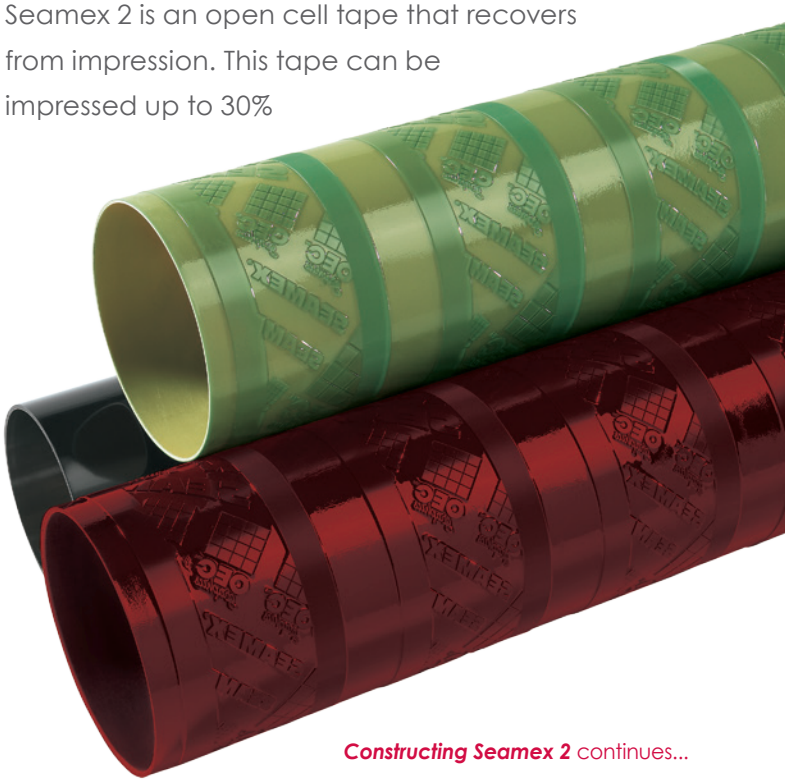
The quality of the graphics that could be applied were also limited. The technology behind Seamex 1 was being surpassed as flat plate technology continued to expand and improve what could be accomplished with flexographic printing.

OEC knew that there was a better way of making a high quality in-the–round sleeve. OEC's innovation involved new processes, creating an improved product.

SEAMEX 2 IS BORN!

Seamex 2 was an improved manufacturing and printing solution to Seamex 1. Introduced in 2005, it uses a Flint .067" flat plate material. This specialized plate material has the same finish as other sheet materials because it does not go through the grinding process. As a result, the plate screens reproduced are the same as a normal processed flat plate. This material also carries the ink the same as any other flat plate that may be used in conjunction with the Seamex 2 sleeve.

The next advantage is that cushion mounting tape can be used to hold the plate to the sleeve rather than the chemical adhesives. This again becomes a predictable print quality and can be matched to other tapes. The mounting tape we use on Seamex 2 is an open cell tape that recovers from impression. This tape can be impressed up to 30%



Constructing Seamex 2 continues...

over diameter and still recover. This helps reduce bounce on designs and often allows for faster press speeds.

Most mounting tapes used for mounting flat plates are closed cell tape that crushes down and will not recover when over-impressed (often called taking "set"). If on set up, the deck gets over-impressed the normal closed cell tape will crush down and the advantage of the tape is lost. In the same way, if a design has a bounce in it the tape will break down causing an increase in plate wear. The open cell tape will return to original thickness when not on impression.

Another advantage of being able to use similar gauged sheet material with mounting tape is that the polymer is not being over built in thickness, vulcanized and ground. It is less stressful on the photopolymer.

Unlike normal .067" plate material, Seamex 2 polymer does not have the .010" Mylar backing on the plate material. In the Seamex 2 merge process, the plate material is seamed together with much less pressure and heat than vulcanizing. This results in a seam which is straight across the sleeve that can sometimes be seen when first setting the impression on the sleeve. Impression needs to be added to get this seam to fill in all the way across the sleeve. With the accuracy of the sleeves there is less impression needed, giving a smaller footprint on the cushion tape and plate. This impression is still less than what is applied to a more traditional flat plate or any other in-the-round product.

All photopolymer plates and sleeves will swell with the chemicals in the inks and the friction heat that builds up during a run. To get the most life out of your Seamex 2 sleeve, as it is for flat plates, it is very important that after the first 20 to 30 minutes of run time, you must go back over the deck settings and back any anilox and plate impression off that you can. This will greatly improve the life of your plates.

With Seamex 2, our HD screens are produced as flat top dots using a 4000 ppi laser. This laser and flat top dot give us the ability to produce any HD screening the industry has to offer.

The on press characterizations we do for which HD screening should be used or not is done when we make the one color profile sleeve. These HD screenings have a lot of variations depending on the design, press, substrate and ink systems you use. The use of HD screening can greatly improve solid color density and ink lay on film and paper. Therefore, it is important that we always take the time to do this one color test.

After the sleeve has been produced, we proof each sleeve with a lighter kiss impression than you would normally use on the press to look for any low spots or design problems. A sample of this proof is always sent along with the sleeve. We encourage you to hold onto the sample until the end of life for

Constructing Seamex 2 continues...

...Constructing Seamex 2 continued

the sleeve. If you have any problems during the run, this proof is one more tool you will have for troubleshooting.

With Seamex 2 being produced on mounting tape, the plate is stripped just like any mounted flat plate when it reaches end of life, keeping the sleeve undamaged.

In today's Seamex 2 sleeve there are many new technologies that can't be matched with the old way of making sleeves. Today's sleeves are not just used for continuous colors and backgrounds. Screens are used with excellent results. The life of OEC ITR sleeves can be two to three times the life of a flat plate and likely more.

More and more printers use Seamex 2 sleeves for short runs that are printed often. Seamex 2 is used for dirty printing stocks like napkin stock where the plates have to be cleaned often and high quality poly print with excellent results. We have also found that the Seamex 2 plate runs cleaner reducing the amount of cleaning, improving press up time.

Other benefits to Seamex2 sleeves include:

- Washing the plates often will not cause plate lift
- High line process and screen with better register
- No more plate lift or the need for the mounting time
- Higher press speeds with no plate lift

Most printers find that when all the numbers are pulled together Seamex 2 sleeves have a better total value and cost savings than what flat plates can offer.

If you'd like to learn more about the Seamex 2, please contact Bruce Pagel at 920-420-7550. ■

visual INSIGHTS

a biannual publication of

OEC graphics

555 W. Waukau Avenue
PO Box 2443, Oshkosh WI 54903-2443
920-235-7770 / 800-388-7770 / Fax 920-235-2252
www.oecgraphics.com

EDITOR
Jennifer Navin – jennifer.navin@oecgraphics.com

HUMAN RESOURCES
Michelle Hammett – michelle.hammett@oecgraphics.com