

CASE STUDY: Accurate Plastic Printers—Making the Change to Zahara™



Subject

Accurate Plastic Printers, LLC
Clifton, New Jersey

Profile

Specializing in UV printing on plastic substrates, Accurate Plastic Printers offers a full range of services from printing to finishing, with 20+ years of service to the industry.

Challenge

Implement an alternative waterless offset plate strategy

Solution

Presstek Zahara™ plates for waterless printing

Results

- Superior imaging and on-press performance
- No change in cost
- Chemistry-free platemaking with no chemistry costs or disposal issues
- Easier EPA compliance

Based on Experience in the Pressroom, the Switch is Made to Presstek Zahara Waterless Plates

Accurate Plastic Printers' success comes from combining a high level of customer service with its owner's 40+ years experience in printing on plastic substrates. Carlos Agudelo started the business in Clifton, NJ, 20 years ago after gaining a previous 20 years of expertise and experience in the industry.

"We were very pleased with how the Zahara plates imaged and ran on press. We have been using them ever since."

Today, still in the same location in which it was founded, Accurate Plastic Printers offers "a complete manufacturing process for anything printed on plastic," according to Agudelo, who is still at the helm. The company's national client base includes brokers, as well as printers who outsource to Accurate Plastic Printers for the plastic products they cannot produce themselves. Accurate Plastic Printers is capable of printing on all types of plastic substrates from acrylic and Mylar® to polyester, polyethylene, PVC, vinyl, and more.

The company produces a wide range of products that includes I.D. and membership cards, gift cards, hotel keys, parking tags, labels, rulers, circular calculator wheels, and a variety of point-of-purchase and promotional items.

A Waterless Offset Platform

In addition to offering digital and screen printing, Accurate Plastic Printers employs waterless offset printing with UV inks to produce a large quantity of its orders. To do so, it operates a five-color KBA Genius press. "Waterless offset has less dot gain, better color, and faster makeready. When printing on plastic, fast makeready is important because of the cost of substrates," Agudelo explains. It also helps the company achieve one of its competitive advantages in the market, which is fast turnaround.

Recently, the company replaced the waterless offset CTP plates it had been using with Presstek's Zahara thermal plates.

Switching to Zahara

Immediately after a trial run, Accurate Plastic Printers made the decision to switch completely to Presstek Zahara plates. "Presstek sent us plates to test, and we were very pleased with how the Zahara plates imaged and ran on press," Agudelo says. "We have been using them ever since."

Continued on reverse



Accurate Plastic Printers uses a KBA Genius waterless offset press and Presstek Zahara plates to UV print on plastic substrates. It offers "a complete manufacturing process for anything printed on plastic," says the company's owner, Carlos Agudelo.

"Zahara is the same cost as the previous plates we used, it images better with a sharper dot, there's less gain, and it helps us achieve faster makeready."

"Zahara allows prepress operators the choice to process the plates as they had been—keeping the same dyes and chemical baths in their processors. But with some recalibrations, they can move to chemistry-free and run just water."

"Chemistry-free platemaking is important to us. Zahara is going to make our business a lot easier going forward."

"We will be using Zahara with just plain water...no chemistry at all."

Case Study:

Accurate Plastic Printers—Making the Change to Zahara Continued

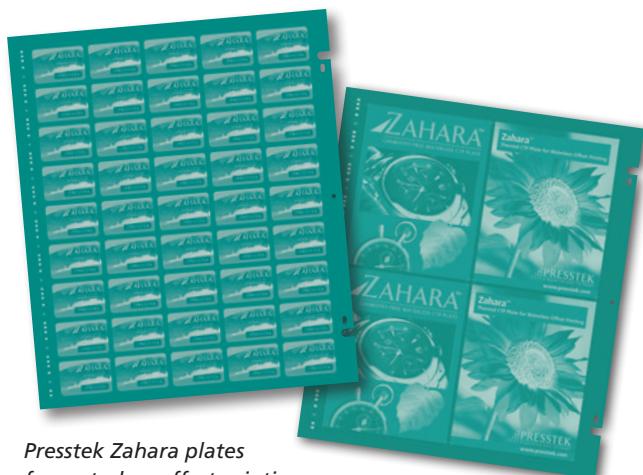
Overall, Agudelo reports, "Zahara is the same cost as the previous plates we used, it images better with a sharper dot, there's less gain, and it helps us achieve faster makeready." Other than Presstek service adjusting their platesetter's curves, Accurate Plastic Printers did not need any changes to its prepress equipment or procedures.

A Chemistry-free Advantage

Agudelo points to their ability to run Zahara plates chemistry-free as a major plus for his company. "The EPA is very strict here in New Jersey. We have to report and account for every bit of chemistry we use and its disposal," he says. "So, chemistry-free platemaking is important to us. Zahara is going to make our business a lot easier going forward." In addition, the chemistry-free use of Zahara compliments the environmental benefits of waterless printing. "We had greatly reduced our VOCs and eliminated fountain solutions and wastewater," he notes. "Now, we get rid of plate chemistry, as well."

Zahara is designed to be a direct, drop-in alternative to the competing waterless plate on the market. Ron Donovan, Presstek's Sales Manager, Specialty Printing Plates, explains that "Zahara allows prepress operators the choice to process the plates as they had been—keeping the same dyes and chemical baths in their processors as they did with the competing plate. But with some recalibrations, they can move to chemistry-free and run just water in their processors." Donovan recounts Accurate Plastic Printers' changeover: "At first we eliminated the dyes, then recalibrated again to replace chemistry with nothing but water for the plate wash."

"We will be using Zahara with just plain water...no chemistry at all," Agudelo says gladly. "After testing it, there was no change in the image we produce." ■



Presstek Zahara plates
for waterless offset printing