

CASE STUDY: SB Printing—Profiting from Chemistry-free CTP

Company

SB Printing Co., Linton, Cambridgeshire, UK

Profile

Commercial printer with a large base of trade customers, supplying finishing services in addition to one-, two- and four-color printing

Challenge

Acquire in-house platemaking capabilities without investing in additional space and labor, and without the expense of chemical processing and disposal

Solution

Presstek Vector TX52 computer-to-plate system and chemistry-free Freedom plates

Results

- A streamline platemaking process with no waste and no chemistry maintenance or disposal
- Faster job turnaround
- Aluminum plates that meet the needs of the company and its customers for high quality printing
- Lower costs and more competitive pricing

“We chose the Vector TX52 because it is easy to use and environmentally friendly. We didn’t want the hassle of buying and disposing of chemistry.”

UK Printer Streamlines Platemaking with a Presstek Vector TX52

Established in 1997, SB Printing is located in the scenic village of Linton, Cambridgeshire, UK, approximately 20 miles southeast of the city of Cambridge. Steve Burgess founded the company primarily as a printing company, but the firm also specializes in finishing techniques.

SB Printing produces one-, two-, and four-color printing using a combination of small-format presses—a GTO 52 two-color press, a GTO 46 one-color press, and a SRA3 Ryobi perfecter. By offering finishing techniques, including foil stamping, cutting, scoring and folding, the company has attracted a nationwide client base. A significant portion of their work is for the trade.

In turn, SB Printing relied on tradeshops for nearly all of their platemaking. “We were outsourcing most of our film and platemaking and the rest was being produced in-house, conventionally from film,” Steve recounts. While it was inefficient, the arrangement met SB Printing’s needs—until the unexpected happened. “We had to make a quick decision because our local trade supplier told us that they



**Vector TX52
thermal CTP system**

were closing down,” explains Steve. “We didn’t want to travel 30 kilometers or more to have our plates made in Cambridge, which meant that we would have to make all of them in-house. In order to do this cost effectively, we needed an automated system. CTP was the only solution.”

An Easy Choice

After exploring their options, SB Printing elected to install a Presstek Vector TX52 platesetter in the spring of 2006.

“We chose the Vector TX52 because it is easy to use and environmentally friendly. We didn’t want the hassle of buying and disposing of chemistry. It’s quite difficult to get rid of small quantities, which means that you have to store them until you have an adequate quantity for collection,” Steve says. Space was

Continued on reverse

"I can recommend the Vector TX52 to any small- or medium-size printer producing short-run, high quality work...I wonder how we ever managed without it."

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also an issue. "If you have enough space for a photocopier, then you can install a Vector TX52," he adds.

SB Printing looked at one polyester plate system and three ultra-violet CTP systems but they weren't 'green.' The ultra-violet CTP systems require a processor and a dark room with yellow safe lighting, which take up valuable space and add costs. The Presstek Vector TX52 is completely chemistry-free and has a built-in plate washer. "All we do is drain the water out of the washer on Friday night and fill it up again on Monday morning. It takes about ten minutes and is very simple to do," Steve remarks.

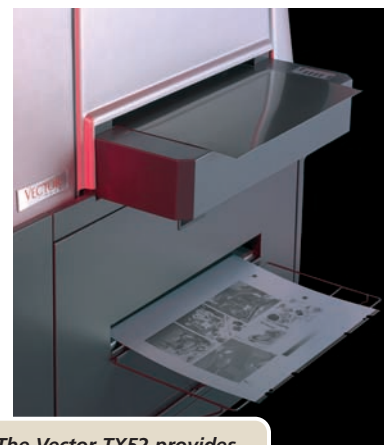
A Practical Metal Platemaking Solution

The Vector TX52 is a thermal platesetter that images Presstek Freedom plates. The system provides small format (52 cm and under) printers with a chemistry-free metal platemaking solution for high productivity, cleaner operation and lower costs than most other platemaking systems can offer. Designed for maximum ease-of-use and high output, the system is capable of producing up to 20 plates per hour. "It's so easy to use," Steve notes, "we showed a young employee on two week's work experience how to use it and the next day she made 89 plates without asking for help." SB Printing uses the Vector TX52 to produce plates for all three of its presses.

"The Vector TX52 saves us an enormous amount of time.

We can produce a plate in less than 5 minutes. If somebody emails us a job in the morning, we can get it plated, printed and finished by lunch time," Steve reckons. "It's also giving us a lot more flexibility to discount jobs to get new business because, in the past, it was costing us £14 to have a plate made by a tradeshop." Now, Steve finds that situation reversed. "Other printers are now asking us to do their platemaking," he reports.

"I can recommend the Vector TX52 to any small- or medium-size printer producing short-run, high quality work," Steve offers. "Presstek says that you can get 25,000 impressions off a Freedom plate but we have run 32,000 without a problem, although our average run is about 5,000. As the system has only a water washer, there is no risk of chemistry going bad, which is an expensive problem for small printers, who may not use a platesetter every day." Steve concludes, "Now, I wonder how we ever managed without it." ■



The Vector TX52 provides maximum ease-of-use and a compact size