

CASE STUDY:

Madison Gas and Electric—Green Power, Green Goals

Company

Madison Gas and Electric, Madison, Wisconsin

Profile

Madison Gas and Electric supplies electricity to 136,000 customers in Dane County, Wisconsin, and natural gas to 140,000 customers in seven Wisconsin counties. Madison Gas and Electric's print shop has seven employees.

Challenge

Faced with growing demand for four-color work, the print shop needed to upgrade its platemaking process in order to improve both quality and throughput. The shop wanted to make an investment that would meet these goals and provide a platform for growth.

Solution

A Presstek Dimension Excel CTP system with Presstek's chemistry-free Anthem Pro plates

Results

- Reduced time to prepare plates for a four-color job by 75 percent
- Eliminated platemaking chemistry and the costs associated with managing and disposing of them
- Improved print quality and overall pressroom performance
- Leveraged improved productivity to expand range of services to end users

In-plant Print Shop Increases Value, Shrinks Environmental Footprint with Presstek Chemistry-free CTP

A key goal of Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) in serving its customers and stakeholders is to preserve and protect the environment while providing affordable, reliable energy. Chris Hrubes, supervisor of the utility's print shop, had that goal in mind as he was considering how best to upgrade his platemaking capability to support the growing demand for four-color work. "About 80 percent of the work we produce on our two-color presses is four-color process," says Hrubes. "Because it could take up to two hours to process, mask film and burn conventional plates, our staff was becoming overburdened and we were not able to offer all of the services to our end users that we wanted to provide."

"The decision was easy. Eliminating the chemistry was a huge internal selling point for us."

Hrubes was seeking a metal computer-to-plate system that could streamline workflow for the shop. In line with MGE's environmental focus, he was interested in finding a chemistry-free solution. "We looked at two systems," he says.

Continued on reverse

Madison Gas and Electric is taking steps toward a cleaner future. Currently, its wind farms deliver approximately 15,000 mega-watt hours of energy per year. In keeping with the company's green goals, the print shop installed Presstek chemistry-free CTP.

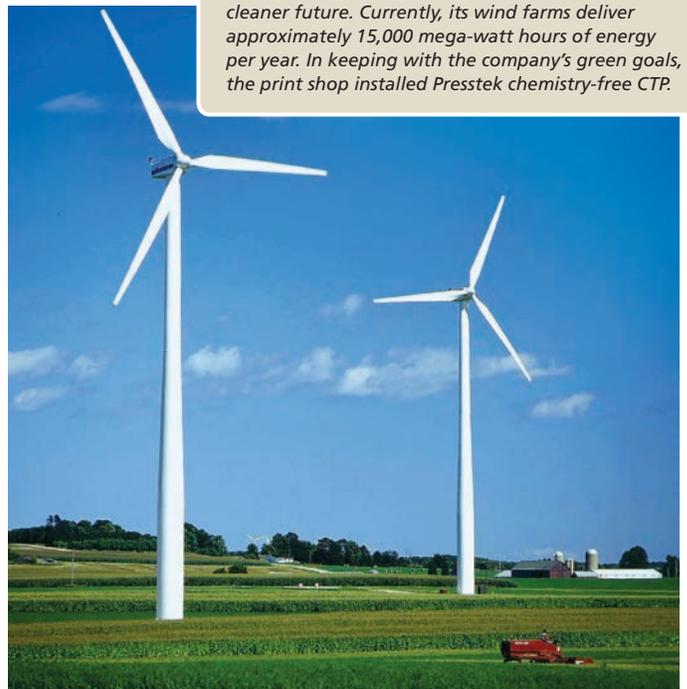


PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON GAS AND ELECTRIC



After installing a Presstek Dimension Excel, shop supervisor Chris Hrubes (left) and his staff have increased their productivity so much they can offer higher service to their in-house customers, increasing the shop's value to MGE.

"We are now more of a full-service print shop, thanks to the Dimension Excel and our talented staff."

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Continued

"One was a violet system that the supplier advertised would be chemistry-free in the future; the other was the Presstek Dimension Excel, a thermal system that was always chemistry-free." While Hrubes was seeking a CTP solution to make plates for his two-up press, he also wanted a platform that would be able to support a larger format press in the future.

"We had each of the vendors run plates for us to print," comments Hrubes. "Since the Dimension Excel and Anthem Pro plates are a chemistry-free system, and the platform allows for a format upgrade, the decision was easy. Eliminating the chemistry was a huge internal selling point for us in acquiring the system, since MGE has a strong environmental focus."

Improving Overall Performance and Quality

Not only was the shop able to reduce plate preparation time on a typical job by 75 percent (from two hours to 30 minutes) and eliminate chemistry from the platemaking process, but the quality of the work produced improved significantly. "We have been able to move to a finer line screen on our printed pieces, and when the plates are mounted on press, the initial registration is much better, requiring minimal adjustments," he states. "This precise registration is particularly important when producing four-color printing using a two-color press."

In addition to printing dozens of full-color brochures, fact sheets, shareholder mailings and other materials for the utility, Hrubes' shop produces inserts and mails utility bills. "Inserts are usually run in quantities of 160,000 to 200,000," says Hrubes. "The Presstek Anthem Pro plates are rated for 100,000 impressions, and even for our long run lengths, we haven't had to remake plates. We even save some of them for future use." Because Anthem Pro plates are daylight safe, they can easily be stored for later use, and the shop was not required to set up special lighting conditions for platemaking.

For Hrubes and his staff, the benefits don't stop there. "In the past, our prepress operator was spending so much time on plate preparation that he didn't have time to offer the level of graphic design services we wanted to provide to our customers," explains Hrubes. "Now he has more bandwidth and is able to do more for the company. This has allowed us to bring other projects in-house that may have been created out-of-house in the past. We are now more of a full-service print shop, thanks to the Dimension Excel and our talented staff." ■

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