



Press Release

Asahi Photoproducts to Present at EskoWorld 2022

Sustainable Automation in Platemaking with CrystalCleanConnect

Tokyo, Japan & Brussels, Belgium, May 30, 2022. Asahi Photoproducts, a pioneer in flexographic photopolymer plate development, will be attending [EskoWorld 2022](#), scheduled for 7-9 June at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Dallas, Texas. Experts from the company will be available to discuss all of Asahi's flexographic platemaking solutions that enable printers/converters to produce flexographic plates in harmony with the environment. Specific focus will be placed on [CrystalCleanConnect](#), a first-in-the-world breakthrough solution that reduces flexographic platemaking from 12 steps to one and uses no VOC-based washout solvents, delivering high-quality press-ready plates in 1 hour and 10 minutes, reducing operator handling time by 90%. Created through a partnership between Esko, Kongsberg and Asahi Photoproducts, it represents a migration to Industry 4.0 and positions flexography even more favorably against offset and gravure. With three units already installed in the field, CrystalCleanConnect also represents the first time plate cutting has been completely integrated into the platemaking process.

About CrystalCleanConnect

The name CrystalCleanConnect is derived from Esko's Crystal product range, Asahi's CleanPrint product range, and the Connection to subsequent devices such as the Kongsberg cutting table in the print production workflow. The joint development is a sustainable process, an industry first, with no VOC-based washout solvents due to the use of Asahi's AWP™ CleanPrint water-washable plates, with never-before-seen levels of automation, generating a cut plate that is ready for mounting. CleanPrint ensures a significant [print efficiency improvement](#), up to 40% in many cases. And ink usage can be reduced by as much as 20% due to Crystal Screening technologies. Key to the CleanPrint technology is the fact that plates are designed to easily release ink, resulting in few, if any, press stops for plate cleaning, keeping a consistent print quality from beginning to end of

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the run. The close nesting of digital files enables precise plate cutting by the Kongsberg table and results in an additional 10% plate waste reduction.

CrystalCleanConnect is comprised of several highly integrated components to deliver a complete system:

- System includes intelligent plate handling robots, Esko's CDI Crystal XPS, Asahi's AWP CCC plate processor and an inline Kongsberg cutting table.
- Integrated imager and exposure unit delivers full control over plate floor and printing dots with simultaneous main and back UV LED exposure
- Operator simply loads AWP CleanPrint water-wash plate material on CDI Crystal to start the process and retrieves plates from exit table that are ready to mount on press with just one single operator touch point
- [Asahi AWP™ water-washable plates](#) deliver an environmentally sound platemaking process AND result in up to 40% higher press efficiency!

The system is tied together with a central communications hub that integrates the process from end to end.

During the conference, Dieter Niederstadt, Asahi's Technical Marketing Manager, will present a session on [8 June at 3:30: "Automation in Platemaking with CrystalCleanConnect"](#). He will explain how the AWP™ plate technology and the automated system work, why it is a world's first revolutionary solution for flexo platemaking, and share real-world customer experiences with this 1-step flexo platemaking solution. Niederstadt and other experts from Asahi will be present at the show to meet with journalists and attendees who are interested in learning more about this innovative solution, as well as other flexographic products and solutions from Asahi.

Voice of the Customer

[Nabe Process Co., Ltd.](#), a major Japanese printing company, compared Asahi's AWP™ CleanPrint water-washable flexographic plates to conventional solvent-based plates to measure differences in quality and productivity between the two. After using the AWP™ plates for more than a year, the company reports that they demonstrated a significant improvement in print quality and productivity compared to the conventional solvent-developed flexographic plate. This includes cost savings and faster cycle time due to make-ready time reduction, fewer press stops for plate cleaning, and reduced substrate waste. "The AWP plates feature high dimensional plate accuracy and stable print repeatability. Plus, since no solvents are used, there is no odor, and the platemaking and press rooms are comfortable with a perfect ambient environment for the staff," said Mr. Yasuo Naka,

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Flexo Division Manager, Nabe Process Co., Ltd. He added, “In March of 2021, we installed CrystalCleanConnect, a fully automatic plate-making device jointly developed by Asahi and ESKO. That has added to our overall quality and productivity, getting plates to press much faster, with less operator engagement time and with less opportunity for error. Based on these results, we are converting all of our flexographic plates to Asahi AWP™ water-washable CleanPrint plates and producing them using CrystalCleanConnect. We know our customers will be more delighted than ever with the quality and turnaround they receive from us. We are very satisfied with CrystalCleanConnect. Nabe Process Co. was the first in the world to install CrystalCleanConnect.”

The second CrystalCleanConnect was installed at [Shanghai Hengze Printing Company](#). “Since we implemented the Asahi AWP™ CleanPrint water-washable plates eight years ago, we have seen excellent quality improvement results,” said Mr. Li Xiaocheng, founder of Hengze. “When we learned about the added value CrystalCleanConnect could bring to our operation, we could hardly wait to get started. We are also very pleased to be an early adopter of this unique, highly productive and innovative solution.”

For more information about flexographic solutions from Asahi Photoproducts that are in harmony with the environment, visit www.asahi-photoproducts.com.

Note to Journalists: To schedule a one-on-one meeting with Asahi experts before, during or after the show, please contact monika.d@duomedia.com.

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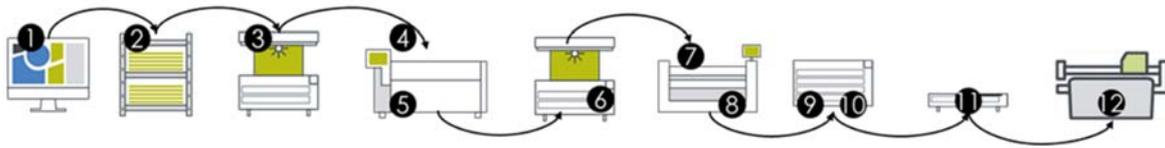
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Today's conventional platemaking process without automation:



CrystalCleanConnect is comprised of several highly integrated components to deliver a complete system:



Caption: With CrystalCleanConnect, tomorrow's technology is available today.

About Asahi Photoproducts

Asahi Photoproducts was founded in 1973 and is a subsidiary of the Asahi Kasei Corporation. Asahi Photoproducts is a leading pioneer in the development of photopolymer flexo printing plates. By creating high quality flexographic solutions and through continued innovation, the company aims at driving print forward in harmony with the environment.

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More information is available at www.asahi-photoproducts.com and at:

Monika Dürr
duomedia
monika.d@duomedia.com
+49(0)6104 944895

Dr. Dieter Niederstadt
Asahi Photoproducts Europe n.v. /s.a.
dieter.niederstadt@asahi-photoproducts.com
+49(0)2301 946743

