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**Ashford Colour Press optimises production efficiency with Fujifilm’s PLATESENSE solution**

*Major UK book printer signs up to PLATESENSE on a four year agreement, also investing in Fujifilm’s XMF Workflow and two new plate processors.*

Since 1980, Hampshire-based Ashford Colour Press has been providing printing and binding services to a diverse range of publishers, including large educational and academic brands like Pearson and Oxford University Press. In response to the rapidly changing book printing industry, Ashford is developing its Gosport facilities to further improve its services to customers. It has a new factory set-up, including a revamped pre-press department which, following a successful assessment in March 2019, now includes Fujifilm’s XMF Workflow Solution, two new ZAC processors, low chemistry Superia LH-PLE plates and Fujifilm’s flagship pre-press programme, PLATESENSE.

“Our ability to produce large volumes, at speed, through our many different printing platforms, is key to our business success, so we are constantly innovating and looking for the most effective way to provide high levels of quality and productivity in this competitive market place,” says Eddi Oliver, Operations Director at Ashford. “In order for us to adapt to industry changes and provide the most efficient service to our customers, the shape of the Ashford Colour Press factory has undergone dramatic change over the last 18 months.”

Ashford’s investment in XMF, Superia plates and PLATESENSE came despite a long-standing and positive relationship with its previous plate supplier. An assessment of Fujifilm’s plate management programme convinced Oliver and his pre-press team that there was a way to improve their services even further: “We had known about Fujifilm’s PLATESENSE programme and XMF Workflow solution for some time, but moving pre-press systems is a big risk – getting it wrong would have been disastrous – so in order to ascertain whether a change from the previous supplier would have been beneficial, we did a thorough investigation into Fujifilm’s service offering.

“We very quickly saw the advantages of XMF Workflow; it has a lot of flexibility and can automate large volumes of work at high speed – vital to the industry we work in – and PLATESENSE has made our plate production not only cheaper, but even more efficient.”

Oliver is left in no doubt as to how Fujifilm’s plate solutions will help his business to deliver moving forward: “Being able to handle work quickly and efficiently, plus taking advantage of post-press technologies, were key drivers for our investment in XMF, but overall, the quality of output is everything. Investing in PLATESENSE, XMF and the two Superia plate processors has improved everything we do on our litho equipment – we see a cleaner impression and there is less ink usage than before, which is a big bonus from a cost saving point of view.

“Given our business requirements, all of these factors were essential to us moving from our long-standing provider, and we now use Fujifilm plates for all of our litho presses.”

Ashford’s desire to produce more personalised products has also received a boost: “We have moved to a ‘Zero Inventory’ model for the publishing market, which means we can produce either a book of one, or a larger volume directly to the end user. In this regard, personalisation of the product is key and with Fujifilm’s solutions we are very confident that this is something we can achieve.”

Oliver also notes the high standard of the support Ashford has received from Fujifilm: “Since day one, the service from Fujifilm has been excellent. I don’t want to recommend them as we want to keep them for ourselves!”

Andy Kent, Divisional Manager at Fujifilm Graphic Systems UK says: “Ashford is a clear example of a business that decided to make a positive change after many years with another plate supplier. Now they are reaping the benefits of Fujifilm’s PLATESENSE programme and workflow software, which are both helping them to maintain an excellent service to their customers, while improving the potential for the business to grow.

“It’s been a pleasure working with Ashford and we’re looking forward to continuing to provide them with the highest quality plate-based products the market has to offer.”

**About XMF**

One of the most comprehensive workflow platforms for managing integrated production, XMF has been designed to meet the production demands of a wide variety of print service providers. Able to improve speed, efficiency, automation and flexibility, XMF optimises turnaround times for sheet-fed, web and digital print work.

**About PLATESENSE**

Providing an invaluable helping hand in boosting profitability in a highly competitive market, PLATESENSE, which can incorporate XMF Workflow, is a radical new business process from Fujifilm which streamlines the pre-press process, enabling offset printers to concentrate on running their businesses with maximum efficiency.

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**About FUJIFILM Corporation**

FUJIFILM Corporation is one of the major operating companies of FUJIFILM Holdings. Since its founding in 1934, the company has built up a wealth of advanced technologies in the field of photo imaging, and in line with its efforts to become a comprehensive healthcare company, Fujifilm is now applying these technologies to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases in the Medical and Life Science fields. Fujifilm is also expanding growth in the highly functional materials business, including flat panel display materials, and in the graphic systems and optical devices businesses.

**About Fujifilm Graphic Systems**

Fujifilm Graphic Systems is a stable, long term partner focussed on delivering high quality, technically advanced print solutions that help printers develop competitive advantage and grow their businesses. The company’s financial stability and unprecedented investment in R&D enable it to develop proprietary technologies for best-in-class printing.  These include pre-press and pressroom solutions for offset, wide-format and digital print, as well as workflow software for print production management. Fujifilm is committed to minimising the environmental impact of its products and operations, proactively working to preserve the environment, and strives to educate printers about environmental best practice. For more information, visit [www.fujifilm.eu/eu/products/graphic-systems/](http://www.fujifilm.eu/eu/products/graphic-systems/), or [www.youtube.com/FujifilmGSEurope](http://www.youtube.com/FujifilmGSEurope) or follow us on @FujifilmPrint

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