

# FLEXO

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Partnering With Flexo Concepts:

## Prestige-Pak Brings Anilox Cleaning In House

by Greg Kishbaugh

**F**orty years ago the capabilities of flexo printing were nearly non-existent. The printing process was used for simple one-color work, best exemplified perhaps by the famous "This End Up." One thing is certain, flexo posed absolutely no threat to any other printing processes and was seen by most as a simply utilitarian form of printing with little room for growth.

And yet, in 1967, James and Marie Kuber saw a future in which flexo printing was not only competitive with offset and gravure, but in many areas would gain dominance.

And so, the forward-thinking couple started Prestige-Pak in Fond du lac, Wisconsin, and while the company has expanded three times (its latest addition being completed in 2005) it still occupies the same building in which it was founded. The company prints on a wide array of substrates, including polypropylene, mylar and acrylic and caters to a large degree to the food market.

The company currently operates four flexo printing presses, and it was when Prestige-Pak installed a press with doctor blades that a new necessity made itself quickly apparent. "We saw an immediate need to improve the way we cleaned our anilox rolls. They were plugging up," said Plant Manager Gregg Leisten. "Fortunately, one of our vendors told us about Flexo Concepts and we quickly formed a relationship that has added a great deal of benefit to Prestige-Pak."

### Forming A Partnership

Flexo Concepts, Plymouth, Massachusetts, a company founded when it first introduced its TruPoint™

doctor blade to the printing industry in 1989, came to the attention of Prestige-Pak due to its MicroClean™ anilox roll technology. To demonstrate



**Prestige-Pak has expanded several times but has remained in the same facility in which it launched in 1967.**

its product in a live manufacturing environment, Flexo Concepts invited members of Prestige-Pak to visit a local printer that was currently utilizing the MicroClean™ technology. "We ordered it as soon as we got back to our plant," said Leisten.

The MicroClean™ system is an off-press, enclosed anilox roll cleaning system that uses specially designed plastic pellets to gently remove dried inks and coatings. Fine polymer beads are applied under air pressure to pick the dried matter from the anilox engraving, restoring cells to their original volume. The MicroClean™ Media, according to Flexo Concepts, are

non-abrasive and do not damage the delicate anilox cell walls.

Being environmentally conscious, Prestige-Pak based part of its decision to implement the Micro-Clean™ system because it cleans ink from the company's anilox rolls without using harsh chemicals, consuming fresh water or generating hazardous waste. In addition, MicroClean™ plastic media is recyclable. These "green" benefits fit perfectly with Prestige-Pak's environmental philosophy.



**Prestige-Pak currently operates four flexo presses, but has its sights set on expanding.**

“We recycle absolutely everything we can here,” said Leisten. “We throw hardly anything away, even if it is an extra cost to us.”

Since purchasing the MicroClean equipment, Prestige-Pak has gained all the benefits associated with bringing a manufacturing process in house. “Previously, we sent our rolls out to our vendor for cleaning,” said Leisten. “Bringing it in house offers a lot of efficiencies, not least of which is that we have a creed of quality at Prestige-Pak and every employee follows it. That means we will always take better care of our rolls in house than we could expect from anyone else doing the job.”

Being a company clearly focused on quality, Prestige-Pak has much to respect in the way Flexo Concepts engineers its machines. “These machines are not commodity products,” said Leisten. “They are not just sitting on a shelf. And when the machine was installed a representative from Flexo Concepts came to our facility to provide us with very comprehensive training. They have given us excellent customer service, which, of course, is something we pride ourselves on, as well.”

Prestige-Pak is proud of many of its accomplishments, from its far-sighted approach to flexo printing to its environmental sensibilities but one of its most

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gratifying distinctions is that, because Marie Kuber is now the Chairman of the Board, the company is considered a Minority Owned business.

As the new year begins, Prestige-Pak again looks toward the future. The simple line work with which the company first made a name is gone. “New designs are more involved with four and six color process printing,” said Leisten. “We need to utilize 8 and 10-color presses to compete in a changing market.”