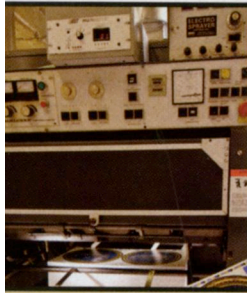


Case Study

Datalizer Plastic Graphics Printing: Slide Charts, Wheel Charts, Disks, Templates

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PRODUCTS 'THAT MOVE'

By Roger Ynostroza Editorial Director

Spinning disks, sliding charts, POP displays: This print plant is also a product factory.



>> Bobst diecutting is an essential step in the process to convert plastic sheets into Planispheres.

Printers investigating printing on plastic and gaining some know-how of the process should be interested in the diverse experiences of John Robertson, president of Datalizer Slide Charts, Addison, IL. The shop is one of just two in the nation specializing in producing measurement wheels, custom slide and wheel charts, and an array of point-of-purchase displays ("Anything that moves," he observes).

Datalizer typically prints the items on lightweight and heavy paperboard, plus rigid vinyl. The non-absorptive vinyl requires UV printing.

In its 20,000-sq.ft facility, Datalizer employs 35 people, including members of an analysis department, creative-development unit and six-person graphic design department. The company serves customers throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Production equipment includes Akiyama Bestech presses (a BT228 2-color and a BT428 4-color) for printing paperboard, a 2-color Heidelberg fitted with interstation curing specifically for UV printing vinyl, and Bobst and Kluge diecutters. Datalizer has been producing a popular diecut wheel chart, an astronomy guide available in 5½" and 10½" sizes called the Miller Planisphere, for nearly

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30 years. (The company itself is almost a half-century old.) It markets the items in gift stores and museums, and to camping organizations and astronomy buffs.

"Last year we began using a special high-gloss, high-clarity print-grade vinyl film," says Robertson, referring to Pentaprint Dynox from Klöckner Pentaplast. "A unique coating changes the surface chemistry," he says, "which we

At present, vinyl films, which Robertson says feature lot-to-lot consistency, gauge control, dimensional stability, and a smooth surface, comprise about 10% of Datalizer's projects. Robertson believes that printing on vinyl is a better way to print today, especially now that better UV inks are available, along with improved substrates.

Any business or individual can go to Datalizer

food firm helps vets find a dog's proper weight; ● a slide chart distributed to automobile salespersons provides specific model features.

In general, customers pay a one-time fixed set-up and prep cost of about \$1,500 for artwork, printing plates, cutting dies, etc. After that, the unit prices range from \$0.30 to \$5.00 depending on the complexity and quantity.

As an example, the total cost (including the



A two-unit Heidelberg found new life with inter-station curing and printing with UV inks on plastics for a variety of products produced by Datalizer at its plant in Addison, IL, near Chicago.



Datalizer prides itself on inventing solutions, working early with the client in developing slide charts, disks and wheels that quickly make calculations and impart information.

find provides superior ink adhesion for use with UV ink systems in a variety of print and folding carton applications."

Both films are commercially available with one- or two-sided treatment with a gloss/gloss surface, available in rolls or precision-cut sheets. The products are designed to be printed by offset, flexography or screen printing.

For Datalizer, the vinyl films allow it to get durable coverage on the Heidelberg press, applying and curing UV inks with just two units, rather than using the 4-color press that for some substrates would have been required to apply an ink-receptive primer coat, and a protective varnish top coating.

Some idiosyncracies

"While tighter OSHA rules for solvent recovery and emission controls have driven printers toward the use of UV inks over the past few years, these inks have their own idiosyncracies—especially where a vinyl substrate is involved," says Robertson. "Many years ago, the only way we could dry some conventionally printed sheets was to place them on a rack. Later, some shops bought vinyl sheets that were pretreated with a static charge to improve ink adhesion."

By contrast, he notes, newer UV inks can be used as is on an assortment of plastics without the need for additives or catalysts to aid the drying process. Datalizer uses a custom blended UV ink formulation created for it by Kolorcure Corp., a Batavia, IL screen print market supplier.

with a concept to be turned into an easy-to-use, easy-to-understand slide chart or wheel chart. Because of their unique format and useful information, the products serve as effective promotional tools and "top-of-mind" reminders to customers and prospects, especially when distributed at trade shows and business meetings.

"We're always coming up with ideas for certain industries, such as small and large companies in the pharmaceutical field," says Robertson. "Our plastic charts are best for medical or industrial applications, and where the slide chart needs to last in a workplace environment." The items are available in folded, eyeletted and wheel-chart formats.

He adds that many options are available for customers' special uses, saying, "We offer individual packaging with product information sheets, hole punching for binders or hooks and plastic pouches for an upscale look. For moisture protection for their product, customers should consider a high-gloss UV coating or film lamination."

The range of "products that move" is both interesting and varied:

- a chart for US Gypsum at Home Depot stores, indicates how much dry wall is necessary based on building calculations;
- a wheel chart for a dog

one time prep charges) for a 2-color, 4x9" eye-letted paperboard product might be \$3.75 each for 1,000 units, and drops to around \$1.20 for a 10,000 unit order; larger quantities, smaller sizes or folded paperboard styles reduce this cost by 20% to 40% or more.

Online: www.akiyama.com, bobstgroup.com, brandtjenandkluge.com, kpaifilms.com, slidecharts.com and us.heidelberg.com

Klöckner Pentaplast vinyl films feature surface energy of 45 dyne/cm., a measure of surface tension that relates to ink adhesion. This rating means ink will adhere well.

