



**Laballery steps up its book production capacity with Kodak's new prepress tools**



# Laballery, a pioneer in France in the installation of the KODAK MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter equipped with MPL (Multi-Pallet Loader) technology, a mobile control app and KODAK SONORA X Plates, has both optimised its production process and made life easier for its operators



**Based in Clamecy (Nièvre) in the Burgundy region, Laballery stands out in many ways.**

This family printing company, founded in 1924, became a worker cooperative (SCOP, société coopérative ouvrière de production) in 1993, enabling its employees to own 98% of the company. Called Nouvelle Imprimerie Laballery, the company run by Hubert Pédurand since 2015 acquired the Floch printing company in 2016. This acquisition made Laballery one of France's leading producers of "black books." In 2018, Laballery continued its expansion by acquiring La Source d'Or, a printing company specialising in black-and-white and two-colour books. The resulting Laballery group (Laballery in Clamecy, Floch in Mayenne and La Source d'Or in Clermont-Ferrand) has an annual production capacity of 40 million books and a customer base that includes large publishers, such as Editis, Hachette, Madrigal, Nathan, PUF and many more. The group employs a total of 182 people and generates a combined turnover of nearly €20 million.

To remain competitive in a sector that has had to cut back on print runs in response to unsold copies, Nouvelle Imprimerie Laballery has streamlined production while remaining true to the human and social values embodied in its worker cooperative model. Already boasting impressive printing and finishing capabilities, Laballery recently updated all its prepress tools with the latest technologies from Kodak, of which it has been a loyal customer for 20 years. Prepress Manager Virginie Chaussard, says: "At Laballery, everything comes from Kodak, from the workflow and the platesetter to the plates. Not only have we been satisfied with the Kodak equipment and teams since the start of our collaboration, we've also decided to work with one single supplier to ensure the very best responsiveness."

## **Enhanced automation delivers increased output**

In production at Laballery since mid-2019, the new W-speed KODAK MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter, connected to the KODAK PRINERGY Workflow already in place, provides exceptional productivity and efficiency. Equipped with the Multi-Pallet Loader (MPL) – which can accommodate one pallet of 1,200 plates – the new MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter has increased Laballery's plate production from 40 to an impressive 70 plates per hour.

In addition to significantly optimising platesetting, the MPL saves valuable time while making its operators' work much easier: "We used to need two people to lift the 1-metre plates and fill the five drawers with 100 plates each. With the MPL option, you just have to load the 1,200-plate pallet in the MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter and the loader starts to remove the slip sheets and automatically load



Virginie Chaussard

each plate in the platesetter," says Virginie Chaussard, adding that even if humidity drops in the room, the venting system in the KODAK MAGNUS Platesetter protects it from any interruption. "Thanks to the KODAK MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter, a job that used to take 8 hours can now be done in 6 and a half hours, plus the working conditions for our operators



have been completely transformed,” she continues. It now takes just three people instead of four to manage the platesetter, the two digital presses and the glossing unit. The time saved means that Laballery’s employees can work on other more value-added tasks, as well as “handle more orders,” notes Virginie Chaussard.

Besides making it faster to load plates, the automatic pallet loader also reduces the risk of handling errors. With an output stacker that can accommodate 300 plates, the MAGNUS Platesetter increases unattended production periods:

“Because the slip sheets pile up nicely on top of each other, you don’t have to check every five minutes that they haven’t fallen off the cart,” comments Virginie Chaussard. This ease of use is highly valued by Laballery’s Prepress Manager, who also makes use of the recent KODAK Mobile CTP Control App.

“Far from being a gadget, this app lets you check on the platesetter just by glancing at your smartphone wherever you are, either at work or at home. I can launch a job before leaving in the evening and make sure that everything is going as it should when I’m at home!” says Virginie Chaussard, who is delighted not only with her department’s productivity but also with the ease of use the app has provided on a personal level.

#### **Productivity, print quality and robustness**

Imprim’Vert® and FSC certified, Laballery’s commitment to operate in a more environmentally friendly way dates back to 2009 with the integration of the first KODAK THERMAL DIRECT Plates. “This new plate production technology meant that the processor was no longer necessary and also brought a whole host of savings: the use of chemical products was eliminated, less energy and water were

used, there was less waste, more space and most importantly the plates were available more quickly for printing,” adds Virginie Chaussard. To continue this drive towards a “chemical-free” system, the KODAK MAGNUS Q800 Platesetter also images the latest KODAK SONORA X Process Free Plates, which deliver the performance of wet processing systems. As Virginie Chaussard explains: “As a result of the processes introduced by Laballery to avoid handling the plates and the scratch resistance provided by the KODAK SONORA X Plate, we’ve regained the stability we used to have with gummed plates from the processor.” The plates are more robust, as well as more consistent in terms of repeatability: “In large print runs, we can split the work in two and resume it later on without the slightest variation in the colours,” says Virginie Chaussard, who is also pleased with how easy it was for Laballery to switch from the previous KODAK SONORA Plate to the new KODAK SONORA X Plate.

**A decisive asset in staying competitive**

Advanced process automation at Laballery means that everyday work has been made easier by offloading the most repetitive and physically demanding tasks for the employees. It also forms part of a drive to achieve productivity gains by focusing its teams' work on essential activities that require their expertise.

Laballery has successfully used the benefits of automation to win market share in a segment where business is in decline, having achieved around 12% growth in revenue during the first nine months of 2019.



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Kodak France : Maisons-Alfort, France

T. +33 (0)1 53 99 30 00

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