

# Computer-to-Polyester Plate

By William Shields

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*As seen in Graphic Monthly*

The observation that polyester is luring small and quick printers away from paper is certainly true in the case of one Canadian printer—BCT Ontario. The Itek silvermaster camera has become BCT has been a quaint relic of a bygone era. That's when the digital platesetter arrived. President Keith Allison says the \$100,000CDN poly platesetter puts him back about \$2,000CDN a month in lease payments but he says it's worth every penny. "I purchased it because of our short press runs," Allison says, adding that roughly 90 percent of BCT's jobs are 1,000 impressions and under, mostly business cards and letterhead with spot colour. This translates into annual revenue of about \$2 millionCDN and a well-exercised prepress department for the Mississauga [Ontario] printer. BCT outputs about 200 plates daily. The plates are then fed to BCT's fleet of seven A.B. Dick and Ryobi duplicator presses, six of which are equipped with a thermographic line.

Under the old regime, the Itek camera was in operation about five hours a day. The new PlateStream® platesetter, complete with puncher and dryer, does the same amount of work in about one hour—a 400 percent time savings. Consequently, the presses are never idle for want of a plate. "It comes down to press productivity," Allison says when explaining how he justified the platesetter purchase. The camera was causing bottlenecks in the front end because plates had to be cut to size and punched manually. Drying and human error often encountered under the old regime have been all but eliminated since the new platesetter cuts, dries and punches inline. Acquiring the platesetter also offers Allison a marketing opportunity, "It has given us the right to call ourselves a digital shop."

Allison purchased his platesetter from St. Paul, Minn.-based Printware.



*Printware's PlateStream platesetter gets the thumbs up from BCT employees.*

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