Teaching Tomorrow's Flexographers with APR's SpotOn! Flexo Software

Education and training center Flexo Tech uses SpotOn! Flexo software to teach program participants about the importance of matching color to achieve highest job-to-job repeatability performance rates

Founded in 2015, Minneapolis-based Flexo Tech is a non-profit hands-on training center dedicated to working with industry personnel and teaching them how to become knowledgeable press operators. Instructor Shawn Oetjen is a nationally recognized thought leader in the principles of flexography and how to apply the most advanced technologies and best practices to the pressroom.

All Printing Resources (APR) and SpotOn! Press recently announced the donation of SpotOn! Flexo pressroom software to Flexo Tech in order to help the center provide color matching training to flexible packaging and label converters throughout the U.S. and Canada. The software works in conjunction with a Techkon, or other spectrophotometers, giving trainees a fast and convenient way to measure color and density.

Shawn Oetjen, Flexo Trainer at Flexographic Tech, Minneapolis Minnesota

Oetjen comments, *"I love the SpotOn! Flexo software and so do my students. It's easy to use and easy to understand. With students we run the color up first and I take away all of the press specifications so they don't necessarily know which anilox rolls to use for certain colors. They should have a good idea but they run it up and then we do a sign off. Students go through the typical sign-off process and they have to make sure the colors match. If you are just doing color inspection with the naked eye, you might not see small color fluctuations. If they can tell the color is slightly off, the students have to ask themselves – "Can we hit the color we need by changing anilox rolls?" It's a crap shoot. Sometimes you can but often times you can't. SpotOn! Flexo allows us to get the Delta-E readings so we know what we need to do to get closer to the color match. **From a press operator standpoint, they can just scan the color with the software and know if they are on spec or not, and if not, what they need to do. SpotOn! Flexo is like an automated color sign-off tool. It's an insurance policy that every flexo shop needs to have."***

In today's competitive flexo landscape, brand owners and packaging buyers are making more demands on label and flexible packaging printers than ever before. Industry research indicates that one of the top reasons packaging buyers seek new print vendors is due to job-to-job repeatability issues and companies not delivering consistent print results time after time. Oetjen continues, "As a press operator, you are
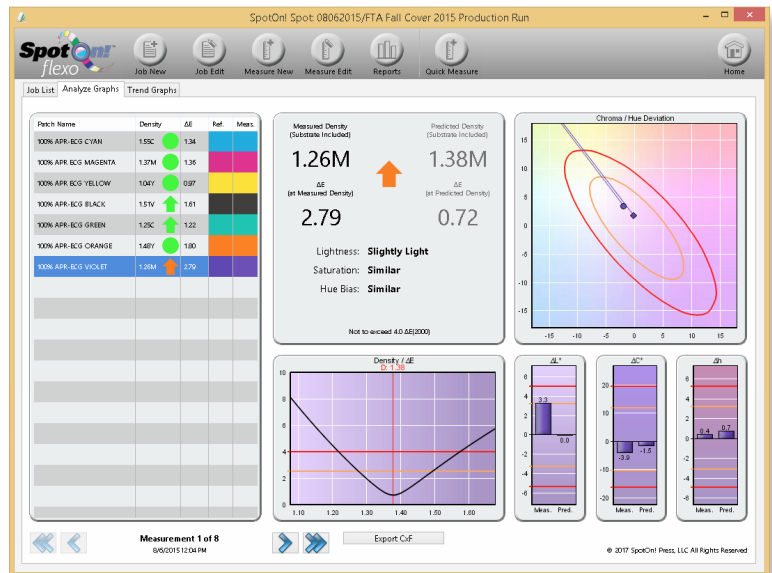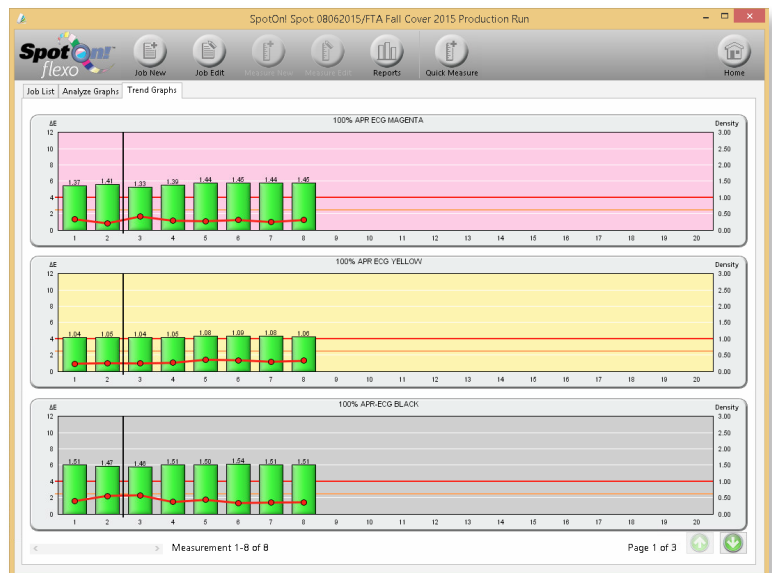
liable for the printed product coming off your press. With SpotOn! Flexo the operator has run data to prove color consistency throughout the job. Alternatively, if things start to go badly with color on press, the naked eye isn't going to be able to catch it until it reaches a certain point. Let's say your ink is thickening up. As an operator you're not going to notice a .5 Delta-E change but the software will. The operator can color correct before thousands and thousands of feet of material is wasted."

One of the central features of the new version of SpotOn! Flexo software is that it allows CxF files to be imported and exported. CxF is currently an ISO standard in exchanging color data. With the newest version of SpotOn! Flexo, converters can import CxF files directly from ink databases keeping the same color information and naming conventions. Users can also now export CxF files when they encounter a measurement with a red icon indicating the ink cannot meet the desired Delta-E color match. The CxF files can be imported directly into formulation software to reformulate the ink.

SpotOn! Main screen

Trending screen

The software gives press operators a way to match color that they have never been given before. One of the biggest pain points in the flexo industry is flawless job-to-job repeatability and SpotOn! Flexo gives the operator a high-precision color matching tool that will help label and flexible packaging converters meet, and exceed, their customers' expectations.

apr All Printing Resources, Inc.

140 W. Lake Drive
Glendale Heights, IL 60139
630-784-3115
www.teamflexo.com