

TRICKS of the TRADE

Press Side Tips You Need to Know

In the 1980's anilox roll technology was starting to become what it is today. I remember the first 600 and 800 line anilox rolls I ever saw. They were chrome and very hard to clean. There were some cleaning solvents around but none really worked that well and ultrasonic was not available and I don't think you could use them on chrome anyway. After a day of running my anilox rolls were stained so bad nothing seemed to clean them at all. This is when, like many others, I discovered that oven cleaner works wonders on chrome anilox rolls. It was by far the best cleaner I had come across at the time. Now the vendors thought it could hurt the rolls and they did not recommend using oven cleaner, instead they had their own products they recommended. I have to tell you I never saw any damage to any anilox roll that was cleaned with oven cleaner, but we stopped using it once we got better cleaning solutions to do the job with, still when we had a bad stain that needed to be cleaned fast we would turn to the trusty oven cleaner.

I do not still use oven cleaner simply because we now run ceramic anilox rolls and they can go in an ultrasonic cleaner. There are a couple of types out there, the first by Sonic Solutions is a continuous sonic vibration that will clean your anilox roll very evenly and when done right they will do no damage to the roll at all. The trick is how long you run the sonic vibrations. This should be no more than 3 minutes at a time, let soak and run again if need be. I personally have cleaned thousands of rolls with an ultrasonic cleaner from Sonic Solutions and never damaged a roll. I would highly recommend this system in your plant.

The next type of sonic cleaner is one that cleans with sonic waves, but they are continuously changing the sonic wave. This type we have found that there are several issues, the one we had extensive testing with was Caresonic. In our experience the rolls were never cleaned evenly, the rolls that were heavily stained were never completely cleaned. We also found that the Caresonic cleaner did damage the rolls, in some cases destroying them. The Caresonic cleaner we tested broke down weekly and became an issue for the press room. I do not recommend this type of cleaner in your plant.

We all know that as pressmen there are many times we are on press and need to clean a stained anilox roll and need to clean it now and fast. We have the product for you and it is right down the street from you. Before I tell you what it is you need to know that we have cleaned our rolls with this product for over a year with no issues at all. We also told some of our members about it so they too could try it and their pressman love it. It works great and it works quick, the product I am talking about can be found in any Home Depot, Lowes or Walmart for that matter, just go to the paint area and look for a product called "GOOF OFF" pro strength "GRAFFITI" remover, it is in an aerosol spray can and your pressman are going to love it. It will remove ink stains quick and better than any other product I have seen.

Production many times is about the tricks you know; this is one that will pay off in a big way.

Look for Tricks of the Trade, coming to you monthly, brought to you from Flexographic Trade Services, Spartanburg, SC.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact us at 864-707-5443 or at my email address: art@flexotradeservices.com

Thanks for your time,

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