

Puerto Rico's Collazo Group Installs the First EFI Nozomi Digital Printer in the Caribbean



New single-pass inkjet direct-to-board printer to replace litho lamination while generating new application opportunities

FREMONT, Calif., October 05, 2022 – Las Piedras, Puerto Rico-based [Collazo Group](#) is transforming its business, adding the award-winning capabilities of the EFI™ [Nozomi C18000 Plus](#) ultra-high-speed, direct-to-board corrugated packaging printer to make a significant impact in its local market. The company is the first Caribbean packaging converter to adopt single-pass inkjet technology, giving Collazo Group an important competitive advantage in addressing longstanding market gaps for high graphics corrugated work.

Founded 30 years ago, Collazo Group began as a commercial print business. The company has also added wide-format digital print, with an in-house design department for creative POP displays, and entered the packaging market with the acquisition of a flexographic printing company. Corrugated packaging has become a significant growth area, which the company supported with the acquisition of a 5 ply corrugator and, most recently, its new four-color Nozomi UV LED inkjet printer.

Better turnaround and lower costs

By printing high-quality packaging and displays on the Nozomi C18000 Plus printer being installed this month, Collazo Group Owner Christian Collazo anticipates being able to replace nearly all his company's litho lamination work with more-efficient digital production. "Just a couple of years ago, we had three litho presses," said Collazo. "We sold them and began outsourcing the lithography we needed for packaging. We expect that the Nozomi will enable us to bring 90% of those outsourced jobs back in house.

"In fact," he added, "we believe the Nozomi C18000 Plus will allow us to double our capacity for high graphics work compared to what we have been producing with litho lamination. Plus, we can provide a better price and faster turn time for our customers by printing directly on the board."

The Nozomi printer creates opportunities for businesses on the island that buy flexo printing as well. Puerto Rico has little in the way of full-color flexo printing capacity. That is a barrier for local flexo packaging buyers, businesses that cannot drive greater marketing appeal with high graphics designs because of litho lamination's added cost, time and quantity requirements. Now with Collazo

Group, those companies have a better, digital high graphics option that is more cost-effective than litho lamination at the quantities they need.

Collazo Group uses white top liner for much of its work, and when comparing technologies found that the Nozomi C18000 Plus delivered higher quality than comparable aqueous inkjet single-pass products. “Had we chosen a solution with water-based inks, we would have been more limited,” according to Christian Collazo. “We would not have the quality we need to migrate our display work to digital.”

Driving sustainability with more value to customers

For Collazo Group customers, there are additional advantages to this introduction of the corrugated packaging industry’s leading single-pass inkjet technology. Given that most of Collazo Group’s work is produced for clients within Puerto Rico, the economics of analog flexo and litho lamination can require costly minimum order quantities above those clients’ actual needs. Waste is an especially big challenge, with analog make-readies accounting for a significant percentage of an average medium-run job.

On top of that, analog corrugated converting has required importing and storing larger quantities of single-face corrugated rolls. This inevitably leads to high rates of spoilage in Puerto Rico’s humid climate with anything stored for too long. The more-sustainable, lower-inventory EFI Nozomi production line “will be another cost savings for our customers,” said Collazo, “since we will no longer have to account for all that waste in our pricing.”

Collazo Group is retaining its litho lamination equipment for the occasional 100,000-plus quantity jobs it produces. That said, company executives expect some larger-quantity jobs will migrate to digital once clients and prospects see the versioning advantages the new printer creates.

“Because it is a digital printing process and we are largely producing on demand, our customers can easily change their artwork based on seasonality, promotions and more,” Christian Collazo explained. “This is a huge selling point that no one else on the island can accommodate the way we can. When I explain this capability to new prospects, I almost always get a meeting with them!”

Industry leading digital corrugated production capabilities

Designed to deliver superior productivity and reliable uptime, the EFI Nozomi C18000 Plus provides consistent, high-quality throughput with fewer interruptions. It leverages EFI’s proven, high-productivity UV LED imaging know-how and state-of-the-art board path technologies, such as a patented vacuum table system that eliminates warping. The 71-inch (1.8-meter) wide printer also features an improved inspection system to help users monitor quality and quickly identify inkjet nozzle issues or other defects.

Operating at speeds up to 246 linear feet (75 linear meters) per minute – producing up to 10,000 35x35-inch (890x890-mm) boards per hour two-up – the printer also features advanced coater options, including a quick-change anilox coater for improved performance.

The latest version of the EFI Fiery® NZ 1000 digital front end (DFE) blade server used to drive the printer handles even the most complex data-rich jobs at or above printer-rated speeds. Plus, it includes exceptional color management capabilities, a Smart Ink Estimator for more-precise ink cost control, and integration with a powerful [EFI IQ™](#) suite of cloud-based business intelligence and management tools.

“We are excited to be able to work with Collazo Group to bring these new capabilities to Puerto Rico,” said Evandro Matteucci, vice president, Packaging and Building Materials, EFI Inkjet. “Even before this month’s installation, the company has client work lined up for its Nozomi C18000 Plus printer, so we expect volumes to grow quickly. Collazo Group can be a leading example of what the corrugated converting industry gains in the transition to a more-efficient, more sustainable, premium-quality, and proven single-pass inkjet solution.”

For more information about EFI Nozomi solutions for ultra-high-speed corrugated packaging production, visit nozomi.efi.com.

About EFI

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