

Press Release

Asahi Photoproducts Launches Esko Quartz-Certified AWP™-CLFQ Plate

Esko Quartz certified at AWP Days on October 27th, the new AWP™-CLFQ combines Quartz precision with CleanPrint productivity to deliver gravure-level quality in a solventless flexo plate.

Tokyo, Japan – November 4, 2025 – Asahi Photoproducts today announced the official launch of its new AWP™-CLFQ water-wash plate. The certification handover by Esko took place on October 27th during AWP Days 2025 in Japan, officially confirming AWP™-CLFQ as the first solventless plate certified for Esko Quartz imaging. The new plate combines pixel-level precision with CleanPrint productivity and sustainability benefits to help converters achieve gravure-type quality in flexographic printing.

AWP™-CLFQ marks a milestone in high-end flexography. The plate is designed for Esko Quartz screening and is also compatible with Esko Crystal MCWSI workflows. Its certification confirms the ability of AWP™-CLFQ to hold Esko's finest pixel structures on the plate, which merge into a single stable printed dot on press, delivering sharp highlights, smooth transitions to zero, and dense solids. All within the familiar AWP™ water-wash platemaking process with CleanPrint.

"AWP™-CLFQ gives converters a decisive reason to switch from gravure to flexo," said Aki Kato, Senior General Manager of the Photoproducts Division. "By combining the precision of Esko Quartz with the productivity of Asahi's CleanPrint, we deliver a level of quality and process consistency previously exclusive to gravure, now with a sustainable solventless workflow."

Unveiling at the AWP Days in Japan

The new AWP™-CLFQ plate was unveiled and certified in front of Asahi's partners and customers during the AWP Days 2025 in Japan, a technology event showcasing Asahi's Solvent ZERO roadmap. Print samples were also previewed at Allstein's Automation Open House earlier this month, where the plate impressed with high-density whites, strong solids and outstanding fades to zero on complex substrates. Following the certification, Asahi Photoproducts has initiated a controlled commercial roll-out of AWP™-CLFQ for quality-driven converters worldwide, supported by Esko and local Asahi distribution partners. Broader availability will follow as production capacity scales.

Technical highlights overview:

- Plate type: AWP™-CLFQ - water-wash plate



- Thickness: 1.14 mm available; 1.7 mm under development
- Certification: Officially Esko Quartz certified (October 27th, 2025)
- Compatible screenings: Esko Quartz, Esko Crystal MCWSI and other stochastic screens.
- Performance: Gravure-type quality: sharp highlight dots, smooth vignettes to zero, dense solids
- Target applications: Flexible packaging; also strong in narrow web UV flexo
- Productivity: CleanPrint technology reduces press stops and enhances OEE. It also applies to the latest ink developments in flexible packaging, including PU-resin-based solvent inks and water-based inks.

The AWP™-CLFQ plate is specifically engineered for flexible packaging and film substrates, where gravure printing has long been dominant. With its Quartz-driven pixel-precise dot formation and clean ink transfer, the new plate delivers exceptional print density and tonal range even on demanding films. This launch supports Asahi's broader Solvent ZERO strategy — replacing solvent-based platemaking with sustainable, high-performance water-wash alternatives — with a primary focus on flexible packaging to replace rotogravure with flexo; the plate also performs strongly in narrow-web UV flexo printing. AWP™-CLFQ shows outstanding performance with the latest polyurethane (PU) solvent and water-based ink developments in the industry. The slightly stickier ink binder leaves no ink residues on the plate, thanks to Asahi's legacy CleanPrint surface energy technology.

For further information about Asahi Photoproducts and its sustainable flexographic solutions, please contact hello@asahi-photoproducts.com or visit www.asahi-photoproducts.com

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About Asahi Photoproducts

Founded in 1973, Asahi Photoproducts is a subsidiary of the Asahi Kasei Corporation, established in Japan in 1922. Asahi Photoproducts is a pioneer in the development of photopolymer flexo printing plates, committed to advancing flexographic printing through high-quality solutions and cutting-edge technologies.

Our flexo plates are engineered to deliver outstanding print quality while reducing waste in production and enabling faster press speeds for higher overall efficiency. These advancements are driven by our long-term sustainability strategy, focused on reducing solvent use and promoting a complete switch to water-wash technology.

We believe that sustainable innovation is key to the future of print — and we support our customers in being trailblazers in achieving both environmental and production goals.

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More information is available at www.asahi-photoproducts.com.

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Images & Captions

1) CLFQ Quartz Certification group photo

The official handover of the Esko Quartz certification for the AWP™-CLFQ plate was celebrated at Asahi Kasei's Tokyo Headquarters on October 27th 2025, during the AWP Days in Japan. From left to right: Eddy Fadel, General Manager Flexo Business Unit, Esko; Aki Kato, Senior General Manager, Photoproducts Division, Asahi Kasei; Ryo Ichihashi, Asahi Kasei Photoproducts Division, Solid Plate/Liquid Material Development Group; Akira Nishizawa, Senior Executive Officer, Material Sector, Asahi Kasei; Nobuhiro Anzai, Head of R&D, Asahi Kasei Photoproducts Division; and Pascal Thomas, Director Global Product Management, Esko.



2) CLFQ Quartz Certification

During the AWP Days in Japan on October 27th, 2025, Eddy Fadel, General Manager Flexo Business Unit, Esko, and Aki Kato, Senior General Manager, Photoproducts Division, Asahi Kasei, marked the Esko Quartz certification of the AWP™-CLFQ plate in a symbolic moment at Asahi Kasei's Tokyo Headquarters.



3) AWP™-CLFQ Plate: set of print samples during AWP Days

AWP™-CLFQ Plate print samples produced during AWP Days



4) Esko Quartz certificate for AWP™-CLFQ:

The Esko Quartz Quality Certificate officially awarded to Asahi Kasei for the AWP™-CLFQ plate in October 2025.

