



# Kärcher maintains uncompromising quality and saves dramatically on cost and time

Kärcher, the world's leading provider of resource-conserving cleaning solutions, followed their product packager's, LIC Packaging, advice and moved to digital printing.

This enabled LIC to replace a cumbersome multi-step and expensive routine with a quick, cost-effective and flexible process, which also saved money for both parties. LIC Packaging fulfilled Kärcher's packaging needs using the HP PageWide C500 Digital Press. Moving to digital yielded additional, unexpected benefits too.

**KÄRCHER**



**Industry sectors:** Corrugated packaging

**Brand name:** Kärcher

**Testimonial from:** Daniele Vertuani, Sourcing & Procurement, Kärcher;  
Piero Bertoldo, CEO, LIC Packaging

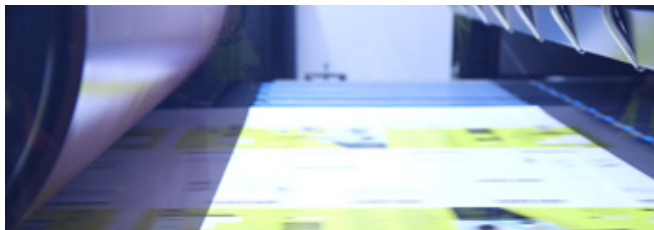
**Print Service Provider:** LIC Packaging

**HP equipment:** HP PageWide C500 Press

**Website:** [kaercher.com](http://kaercher.com), [licpackaging.com](http://licpackaging.com)







## Challenge

“Printing Kärcher’s packaging in offset was a very long process which resulted in a very expensive box.”

– Piero Bertoldo, LIC CEO

### Does high-quality always have to mean high-cost?

Founded in Germany with manufacturing plants globally, Kärcher is the world’s leading provider of powerful, efficient and resource-conserving cleaning solutions. Self-proclaimed perfectionists, the 85-year old company is meticulous about producing the highest-quality products, constantly innovating to ensure they maintain their standards. The same insistence on quality extends to their packaging - the face Kärcher presents to potential customers on retailers’ shelves.

Already a LIC Packaging customer, Kärcher’s needs and standards were well-known to them. Their initial use of flexo printing did not meet Kärcher’s quality demands and thus, LIC moved to printing their packaging in an offset process. Offset printing was long and complicated and involved several steps. First, plates had to be prepared. Then, owing to size limitations, the 1.2Mx1.6M box was printed and laminated in two separate pieces. The boards were then die cut to the required sizes and stitched together by hand to make the final package. As LIC CEO Piero Bertoldo related, this resulted in “a very long process and a very expensive box,” due to the fact that every single box was just about custom-made.

Offset produced a very high-quality package, satisfying Kärcher’s demand for quality and precision, especially in reproducing their brand’s unique visual identity, with its bold yellow color. But, another drawback of offset printing was that several thousand pieces needed to be printed when actually, only several hundred were needed. In addition, Kärcher required different versions of the same box for different regions and purposes; this meant engaging in the same offset process from start to finish for each version. For LIC, it meant storing quantities of the unused printed boards at their warehouse.

This was a process calling out for a simpler method.

**For more information on HP’s Corrugated Packaging Solutions:**  
[hp.com/go/corrugatedpackaging](http://hp.com/go/corrugatedpackaging)

## Solution

“A lot of customers are curious about digital. In fact, digital gives us more tools to meet the customers’ needs.”

– Piero Bertoldo, LIC CEO

### Discovering a process that simplifies and saves

In mid-2018, LIC Packaging acquired the HP PageWide C500 Press and soon learned its capabilities and the wide range of applications it can serve. They realized the multiple levels on which Kärcher would benefit from switching to digital printing.

Central to any business is cost and here, Kärcher would save substantially. Time, too, was a big factor contributing to the expense of the boxes and played an outsize role in planning and logistics. The offset process for Kärcher took three weeks. The C500 Press would shave off the lion’s share of that time. It could print directly on laminated thick media and could accommodate the large-format board size needed, thus eliminating several steps from the offset process.

Furthermore, Kärcher needed versioning capabilities for diverse promotions and for the products they ship to many different countries. They also wanted to gain control over print quantities. With digital they could print the exact amount needed per job and eliminate waste; there would be no inventory to store and no risk of the printed boards becoming obsolete.

Finally, the C500 Press could meet Kärcher’s well-known demand for uncompromising quality and hopefully, also match their yellow brand color – a factor that was very important to them.

Making the decision to shift to digital printing for their packaging was the simpler and more cost-effective solution they sought.

## Results

“There’s high variability in the layout of the boxes. With digital, LIC can change the graphics in two minutes and I print only what I need.”

– Daniele Vertuani, Sourcing & Procurement, Kärcher

### Persuaded by the results, Kärcher commits to digital

For Kärcher, moving from offset to digital printing was a complete win. The company’s key concerns were met, and then some.

Printing costs, one of Kärcher’s main considerations, dropped significantly as a function of cutting many steps out of the process, reducing print time by an average of 66%.

The C500 Press’s flexibility also helped Kärcher save. Their Italian plant has about 100 different SKUs, so their packaging needed different text and graphics. Easily changing these parameters and doing short print-runs was a tremendous improvement, as was the new agility in planning and launching quick campaigns. And, the C500 Press’s sharp text, images and barcodes as well as vivid, true-to-brand color continued to unflinchingly meet Kärcher’s standards for high-quality packaging.

At Kärcher, care for the environment is a core component of every business decision. The C500 Press’s true water-based ink reduces the environmental impact of printing processes with bio-degradable inks and satisfies market requirements for odorless inks.

A surprise benefit: At the same time that Kärcher Italy was moving to digital printing, Kärcher’s German headquarters embarked on a project to ensure that the distinct yellow color, used extensively on their packaging and in their logo, was consistent worldwide. After testing and comparing the colors produced in flexo, offset and digital printing globally, they discovered that only the yellow produced by LIC’s C500 Press was faithful to the true Kärcher yellow!

Both LIC and Kärcher point to the move to digital printing as a resounding success on all fronts, convincing Kärcher to dedicate significant budget towards printing their packaging digitally. With the HP PageWide C500 Press, Kärcher can count on consistent color accuracy and quality of every printing detail every time. LIC Packaging is delighted with the results which help them deliver the packages faster, using much more efficient production processes.

