

High-Quality Branded Pizza Boxes And How The Smurfit Kappa Yate Team Overcame All Challenges

In 2020, our Smurfit Kappa Yate site was asked to work on an exciting project for their long-standing client, Papa John's (GB) Limited, (Papa John's). The pizza giant was in need of exclusive packaging for their limited time offer, in collaboration with Call Of Duty. This packaging project went on to win Gold at the FIA Awards 2021 in the 'Corrugated Post-Print Uncoated Process' category.

It isn't the only time the Smurfit Kappa Yate team worked on award-winning solutions for Papa John's, as another recent, limited time packaging creation for a Godzilla vs Kong collaboration won Silver at the same awards. This unique project posed some intricate print and artwork challenges, however, we were able to overcome the challenges and deliver award-winning pizza box packaging for one of our long-standing customers. Our team takes pride in being accommodating and supportive, no matter the challenges we are faced with and this attitude has helped us overcome many problems in this project.

About Papa John's Limited Time Offer Packaging

Smurfit Kappa Yate have been long term collaborative suppliers of Papa John's for more than 10 years, and their sole supplier for pizza boxes since August 2019. Our team produces more than 35 million pizza boxes for the brand every year and every so often their creative teams come to us with a new challenge.

Papa John's works with limited time offers throughout the year, collaborating with gaming, film, and charity partners around the globe. In 2020, Papa John's partnered with the launch of Call Of Duty: Cold War. Our client wanted pizza boxes with amazing, striking imagery, which made a lasting impression on their customers. Their aim was to create pizza boxes which differentiated and disrupted the marketplace. This project came with various complications, but at Smurfit Kappa Yate we've got many years of experience working with unique artwork and packaging colours, so we were up for this tasty task.

The Artwork Challenge

The key challenge with the brief provided from Papa John's and Cygnus, their creative agency, was with the reprographics. Artwork for this Call Of Duty collaboration was supplied as untagged CMYK, which brings a unique set of challenges. When artwork is untagged, there is no colour profile or target on how the imagery should appear. Printing onto an uncoated board for pizza boxes will always deliver a different result than printing onto coated bright white paper.

The CMYK artwork provided did not take into account the total ink coverage limits of a preprint flexo process, which is 260%. This meant our team had to re-separate the artwork in order to reduce ink coverage to a usable limit. Not only that, but the artwork did not allow for the mis-register movement of a flexo process, which could have left the text on the design unreadable. Their creative agency worked hard to create the striking imagery for these pizza boxes, but the artwork files left our specialists with many challenges to overcome.

The Smurfit Kappa Solution

We enjoy a good challenge at Smurfit Kappa, and we put our heads together to come up with a solution to these problems. Our team was able to overcome many of these reprographic challenges by working closely with the external supplier converting the supplied CMYK artwork to spot colours. With this approach, large areas of colour were created from single spot colours.



This eliminated the total ink coverage problems, as well as the issues with mis-registering. Our design team then worked to manually retouch the images so elements such as text and details would appear correctly. We are always happy to deliver this extra level of support and care for our client projects to ensure the best possible results are achieved.

The result of these creative solutions from our expert team was Papa John's biggest limited time offer in 2020 by more than 30%. Not only that, but this pizza box packaging was awarded Gold thanks to the hard work, effort, and expertise that went into it. This clearly demonstrates that high quality printed packaging in the food industry is extremely effective and can be achieved with the right expertise and knowledge. Papa John's Senior Director of Marketing, Giles Codd, said "We have been working with Smurfit Kappa for more than ten years, and once again they have produced incredible pizza box packaging for our latest limited time offer. This collaboration with Call Of Duty: Cold War is one of our most successful yet, and we are over the moon to have boxes which leave a lasting impression on our customers."

Smurfit Kappa Yate site's Key Account Director, Lee Gammon, who worked very closely with Giles and his team at Papa John's and Laura at Cygnus said "Our client had high demands for this project, and we were confident we could meet their high expectations and overcome the challenges. Going on to win Gold at the FIA Print Awards 2021 is a great achievement for the whole Smurfit Kappa Yate team." Dave Whittle, Print Manager added "the detailed imagery and artwork for this project was a huge roadblock for our print team. We had to think outside the box and come up with a solution to deliver packaging which was striking and bold."

“It's great working with a print partner that doesn't use the phrase "we can't do that!". As a creative agency that likes to push the boundaries with every project we work on, we knew we were asking a lot from Smurfit with our Call of Duty designs. The outcome was a pizza box more complex in print than many you'll see, and something we're all really proud of!

Jamie Rayner,
Cygnus Creative Director.

For more information, visit smurfitkappa.com