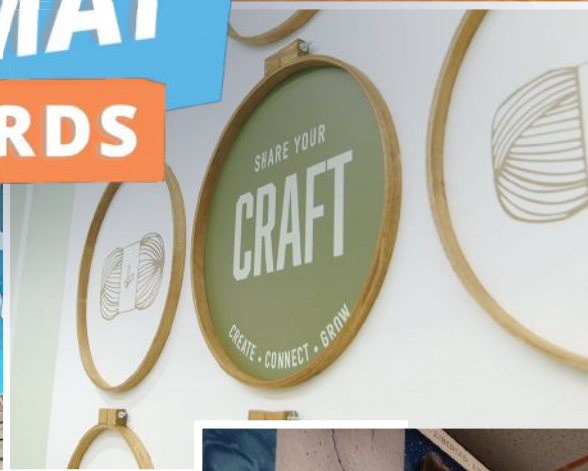
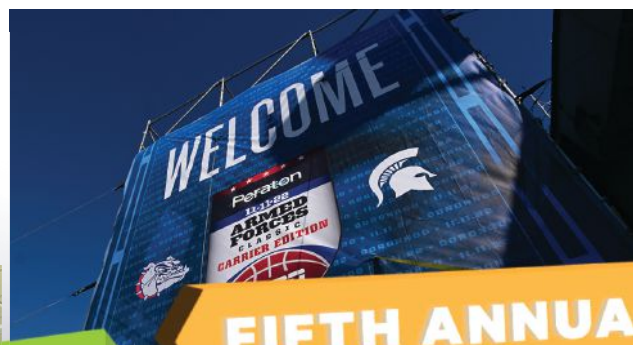


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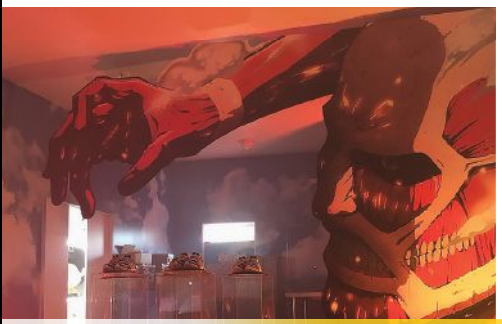
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EDITOR'S NOTE

SMART TIPS FROM THIS ISSUE

- 1. Utilize a third party's expertise to gain a competitive advantage. (Special Feature, 26)
2. Provide value by diversifying your application offerings. (Brain Squad, 36)
3. Need inspiration for diversifying your application offerings? Grab ideas from the 2023 Best of Wide Format Award winners. (The Big Story, 42)
4. Reduce color shifts by minimizing temperature and humidity fluctuations. (Big Business, 63)

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

'You can plan a pretty picnic, but you can't predict the weather.'

'Expect the unexpected.' This is what my husband said the night before my first half marathon. He repeated it the next morning when my Garmin watch decided to reboot as we were walking out the door. I repeated it to myself when I rammed my toe into a grate around mile 9, and again when exhausted runners stopped running right in front of me.

I completed the Miami Half Marathon holding hands with my sister. We ran the 13.1 miles (well, 13.4 due to the crowd - expect the unexpected) together. The smiles on our faces as we crossed the finish line say it all. Afterward, we recovered by the pool with our family in the Florida sun. What could be better?

Well, I'll tell you. I could have eaten closer to the race start. Drank less Gatorade. Poured water on my wrists, not my entire body, to cool down. Instead of focusing on the good, I started leaning into what I could have done differently.

When reflecting on big events like vacations, celebrations, or industry tradeshows, I tend to focus on the 'woulda, coulda, shouldas.' If I would have said that, or we could have gone there, or we should have done this... It's the perfectionist in me always wanting the best possible experience.

I started to go down this rabbit hole when I received my copy of the January/

February issue. In last month's Editor's Note, I mentioned our bigger, bolder, better book. The book was indeed bigger (and bolder and better), but due to a miscommunication with our printer, we ended up with saddle stitch binding vs. the planned perfect binding. I wasn't expecting that.

I opened the January Brain Squad survey results, anticipating reflections of the negative thoughts swirling in my head. Instead, I saw Kristi Duvall's response: 'This is my favorite issue yet!' See other reactions in our new Inbox section on page 9.

The binding of the book doesn't matter to Kristi. Yes, it's important to me, but what matters most is the expert advice on topics that will help you succeed. Just like my race finish time would never negate the incredible experience I had with my sister, the presentation of the magazine could never outshine the content inside.

For me, 'expect the unexpected' isn't about focusing only on the positives. It's about being mentally agile and overcoming unforeseen circumstances.

Adrienne Palmer

adrienne.palmer@smartworkmedia.com @Adrienne_BigPic

BIG PICTURE 28 VALLEY RD, STE 1 MONTCLAIR, NJ 07042 P 212-981-9625 F 212-981-0247 E info@smartworkmedia.com

SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS?

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THE TEAM

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Adrienne Palmer adrienne.palmer@smartworkmedia.com

MANAGING EDITOR

Matt Danford

INTERN

Chase Martin

COLUMNISTS:

Brian Adam, Kristin Lanzarone, Rachel Nunziata, Dan Reid, Kathryn Sanders, James Swanson

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD:

Brian Adam, Barbara Chandler Allen, Ryan Clark, Kristi Duvall, Diana Herrera, Brian Hite, Robert Kissel, Chris Laniak, Kristin Lanzarone, Morgen Masciana, Carmen Rad, Michael Sanders, Gary Schellerer, Elaine Scrima, Jon Sherman, James Swanson, Christine Walsh, Carol Yeager

SALES

SALES EXECUTIVE

Lou Arneberg lou.arneberg@smartworkmedia.com, 847-708-5628

DIRECTORY & CLASSIFIEDS ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Vernita Johnson vernita.johnson@smartworkmedia.com, 513-263-9313

CREATIVE

ART DIRECTOR

Danielle Sy

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Wim Nutakhom

DESIGNERS

Anton Lin, Sunee Taweekitrunpaiboon

WEB DESIGN EDITOR

Turquil Lambo

CONTENT STUDIO

CONTENT STUDIO DIRECTOR

Barbara Moss barbara@smartworkmedia.com

CONTENT STUDIO MANAGER

Jeff Russ

MARKETING MANAGER

Christine Yancey

DESIGNER

Mars Legarde

OPERATIONS

BUSINESS MANAGER

Suttinee Saenrak

EXECUTIVE

PUBLISHER

Matthijs Braakman mb@smartworkmedia.com, 212-981-0242

VP, GROUP BRAND DIRECTOR

Murray Kasmenn murray.kasmenn@smartworkmedia.com

GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

David Squires dsquires@smartworkmedia.com

GROUP ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Ralf Kircher ralf@smartworkmedia.com

FOUNDER

Fred Mouawad fred@smartworkmedia.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dan Kisch dan@smartworkmedia.com

VP MARKETING OPERATIONS

Christine Baloga christine.baloga@smartworkmedia.com

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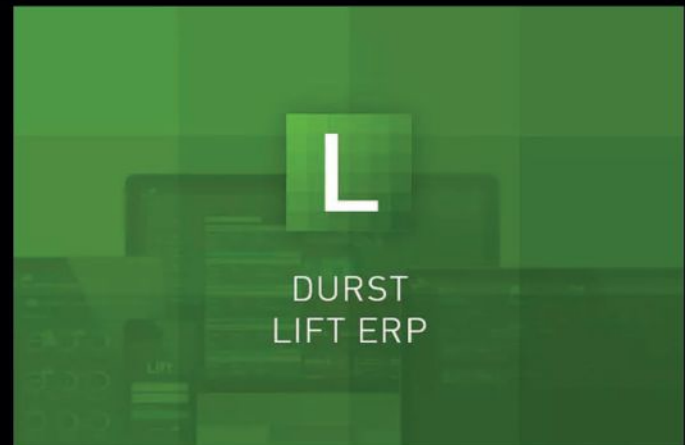
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PRINTING PROVES ITS POWER AT EPS CONNECT

1. An attendee becomes a partner in efforts to “empower, evolve, and excite” at the annual conference.

2. Trends from the Wallcoverings Association Annual Meeting

Workforce development, sustainability, and positive economic forecasts drove discussion among speakers and attendees.



Digital Textile Printing 2022 Event Recap

3. Sustainability, print-on-demand, and how to work with designers were hot topics of the two-day seminar.



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➤ “Lean into Lean” from Lukas at Fastcap made lean so approachable with simple ideas to make it part of the culture. At its core, this article is about making the people

who do the work part of the process of implementation. That’s the key to successful culture, especially as a business scales. This is my favorite issue yet! The

in-depth articles on lean, luck, and “From the Ground Up” are my favorites. So much to think about and implement small changes to grow into something big and help transform company culture.
Kristi Duvall, The BoxMaker

➤ Lean manufacturing is the key to sustainability for business and the environment. It should be a natural survival instinct not to waste anything.
Jason Roberts, Futura Color

➤ I loved the Jan/Feb issue! The manager’s to-do list was great. I put that on our company’s calendar already. We practice lean and the article was perfect timing as we move to 5s in the “front of the house.”
Linda Fong, Fastsigns

Oakland; Fastsigns Hayward

➤ LED lighting on exterior signage, especially a halo light or glow, is something we are seeing a lot more of and really find as an attractive option.
Tami Napolitano, Awesome Graphics

➤ We’re beyond thrilled at being included in these issues and articles. The sense of pride in our staff’s eyes is great when they see an article about us.
Derek Atchley, Atchley Graphics

✉ **REACH OUT!** We always love to hear from you. Send your letters to us at editor@bigpicturemag.com or join the Brain Squad at bigpicturemag.com/brainsquad.



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MARCH-APRIL

MARCH/APRIL BIG DATES



- 1** On **Plan a Solo Vacation Day**, book a trip for “me, myself, and I.” You’ll learn new things about yourself and wherever you choose to visit.
- 3** Don’t just thank your sales team on **National Salesperson**

Day, but also consider looking into specialized training opportunities that could help them finetune their skills.

12 **ISA Sign Expo** starts today in

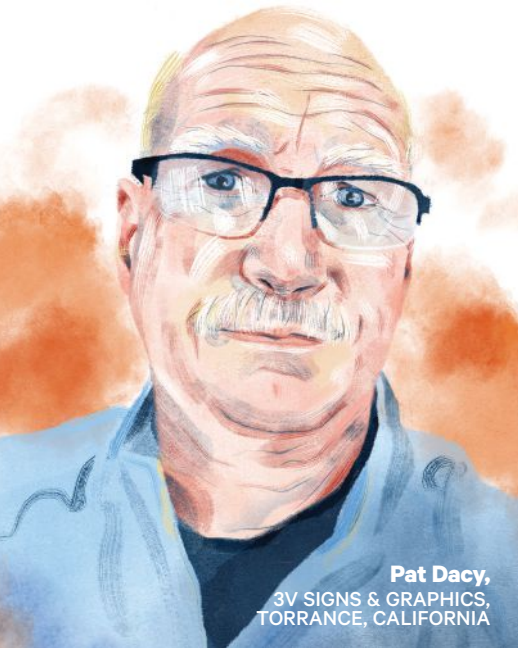
Las Vegas. Don’t miss three days of learning, networking, and possibly purchasing.

13 Celebrate the **2023 Best of Wide Format Award**

winners at 4 p.m. in our booth #1653. (Beer and wine provided!) Head to page 42 to read about the 12 winning projects.

MANAGER’S TO-DO LIST FOR MARCH/APRIL

“We are updating our vendor and key contacts list for quick reference by the team.”



Pat Dacy,
3V SIGNS & GRAPHICS,
TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

WEEK 1

FEB. 26-MAR. 4

SEO Run some tests to see how your shop ranks when someone asks their phone: “Siri, where can I get wide-format print service?” As the stunning release of ChatGPT showed, the future is upon us – the chatbots are coming to take over.

WEEK 2

MAR. 5-11

SELF-CARE Catch your breath. You’ve likely been working non-stop since the end-of-year holidays. “Take more time off,” says Diana Herrera of AP Imaging.

WEEK 3

MAR. 12-18

MARKETING Your best customers are your current customers. Identify your “top 20 percent” clients. Draft a plan to cater to them over the next nine months.

WEEK 4

MAR. 19 - 25

STORE Get in touch with your electric utility. Many offer free energy audits, which can spur ideas for how to reduce your electric bill. Some water utilities do the same.

WEEK 5

MAR. 26-APR. 1

CRM Send flowers to everyone who referred customers over the past three months. For a big sale, perhaps send a gift certificate to a local restaurant.

WEEK 6

APRIL 2-8

MARKETING LinkedIn has many of the same micro-targeting capabilities as the other major social media sites, but it is less crowded and more focused, so your message is likely to gain more traction. Build a quick profile and ask your staff and customers to connect. Then, target specific demographics – say, “professional women over the age of 35.”



WEEK 7

APRIL 9-15

TEAM Set a learning goal for your team members. It could be sales skills, social media practices, or production efficiency. Just make sure the knowledge is *new* to them. Research shows

workers thrive when they experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning. They also are healthier and less susceptible to stress and burnout.

WEEK 8

APRIL 16-22

SEO The notion of creating a sea of content in the form of a company blog that Google can’t ignore may seem daunting, but it’s actually not so hard. List the 100 most common customer questions. These are the titles of your first 100 blog posts. If you answer two per week in writing, that’s a whole year’s worth of fresh content across all your channels.

WEEK 9

APRIL 23-29

STAFF Ask team members for their summer vacation requests.



MONTHLY PROJECT

Claim Your Domain

We’re always surprised by how many readers tell us they don’t have a website... more shocking? That they don’t *need* one.

We do *not* agree. Even

if you’re a well-established business with two months of work booked and no reason to prioritize SEO ranking, you have good reason to invest in a basic site.

As a small business, it’s important to make the most

of your resources. An effective website eliminates the need to call for directions or hours of operation. Freeing your phone lines from simple questions also can alleviate an already spread thin workforce.

If you do not already have

one, this month your project is to create a URL for your business. (**GoDaddy.com** is a great place to start.) Keep it as close to the business name your customers are already familiar with and stick with a “.com” extension whenever possible.

You might be surprised by how many domains are no longer available. If your preferred name is not available, try adding the name of your town or another distinguishing descriptor, like GraphicsonMainATL.com or ABCImagingPDX.com.

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PRISM FROM TVF: THE MULTIFACETED LIGHTBOX FABRIC YOU'VE ASKED FOR IS HERE

FROM IN-DEMAND TO IN YOUR HANDS: Prism from TVF is a new and versatile, 100-percent woven polyester fabric that is engineered for an extensive range of lightbox uses. While backlit applications are Prism's wheelhouse, graphics and colors printed on the 5.2-ounce fabric will also radiate from frontlits, frame systems, point-of-purchase displays, and banners.

Prism is easy to handle, bright white, and features a specialty light diffusion coating for digital printing that makes inconsistencies like pinholes and hot spots a thing of the past. Available in a 3-meter-width and a 5-meter-width, Prism's

no-fraying construction offers the performance print shops deserve to help hit tight turnaround times and cut down on reprints.

As demand rises for lightbox applications, Prism checks in for a range of uses from tradeshow to retail to endless display, advertising, and informational opportunities. Prism is flame retardant and features a light diffusion coating. When it comes to printability, Prism is engineered for UV, eco-solvent, and latex ink compatibility.

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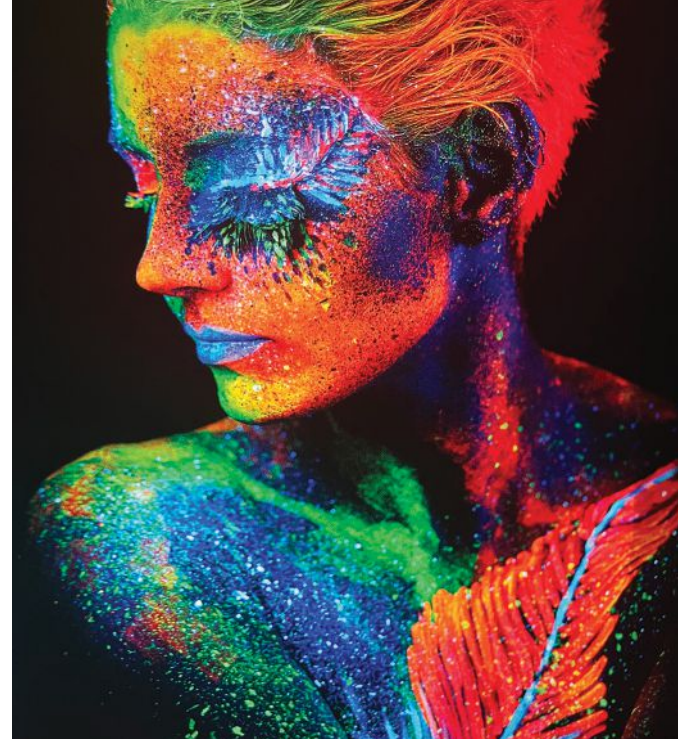
and product expertise, combined with unmatched in-stock availability, global supply reach, and textile consistency help your business grow.

In addition to Prism, TVF has released a refreshed slate of print media fabrics, including the cotton-like 9.2-ounce Heavy Canvas 7956GFS durable polyester, the UV printing-friendly 5.75-ounce FrameTex 7188GUF, and the supremely crease resistant, 7.5-ounce Flash 8087PGFS lightbox textile.

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CONSIDERATIONS TO STAY A CUT ABOVE THE COMPETITION



Dissect all the details when in the market for a flatbed digital cutter.

Any way you slice it, finishing plays a pivotal role in the long-term success of print service providers (PSPs).

In a dynamic large-format marketplace where in-house printers are rapidly producing rigid stocks and roll-to-roll flexible media, production gridlock has entered the finishing department, creating a distinct urgency to manage reduced lead times and gain market share by merging the profitability of the print-and-cut process.

This traffic jam of tasks can feel a bit overwhelming to most. After all, the most prominent asset in finishing is the ability to efficiently cut 95 percent-plus of all prints, adding additional value to an already marketable product.

Whether it's standard options like contour or perpendicular cutting or more intricate advancements, cutting manufacturers have made significant breakthroughs in the past few years, enabling users to adapt to industry demands for effective and profitable cutting. These have included upgrades in

knife cutting speeds, router efficiencies, and table formats to fit various widths of printers and media.

But in a market brimming with seemingly endless options, where does one begin to meet in-house cutting requirements? By considering several key components surrounding a cutting system, PSPs can make adept purchasing decisions – beginning with the basics of determining a shop's print dimension capabilities.

Whether 64, 80, or 126 inches, the efficiency of a cutting device and how it will convey the media is determined by the full width of the table. For example, a 5 by 10-foot table is a sound fit for both 4 by 8-foot and 5 by 10-foot rigid stock cutting and 64-inch flexible media. A 10 by 5-foot or 10 by 10-foot table could be considered an acceptable option for 4 by 8-foot rigid stock and both 80-inch and 126-inch wide-plus roll media cutting.

Next, it's important to examine the intricacies of knife cutting compared to routing of rigid materials, such as acrylics, aluminum, aluminum composite material (ACM), and more, along with overall versatility. While many flatbed

cutters equipped with knife cutting capabilities tend to keep pace with the printing of roll-to-roll stocks, a shop utilizing a fleet of high-speed roll-to-roll printers must consider agility.

"We chose the conveyor option on our Colex cutting device, as half of what we produce and cut comes from our Canon Colorado 1650 printer in roll form," says Eric Watson, Document Services Group Manager, Copiers Northwest. "While we cut and rout display graphics on rigid

media every day, we also produce dozens of rolls of printed output on various roll media every month. The conveyor has allowed us to be very efficient finishing all this output."

As it relates to routing, horsepower (HP) also plays a critical role. It's best to focus on a router that utilizes at least 3.0 HP-plus for efficiency and to consider a table width that generates the least amount of frequency when cutting a substrate. Additionally, the width of the gantry – the bridge-like structure of the cutter – should be considered. A shorter gantry has less frequency than a longer one due to the vibration wavelength having less distance to travel. This helps to produce a smoother finish to the routed, completed piece.

Additionally, the build of the frame is important. A steel-welded frame will absorb vibration that is established when routing rigid media and will not necessitate polishing bits that may be required on an extruded aluminum frame or honeycomb frames for acceptable edge quality.

But what about operator efficiency? How can you implement the cutter on large-scale jobs with minimal interaction

from operators? This is where workflow integration is key.

"Switching easily between tools has also been a key to our success," says Watson. "Whether we are cutting a large roll of banners or routing custom aluminum composite signs, we can always be ready for the next project. With the variety of printed materials we produce, the cutter is easily one of the most important pieces of equipment in the shop."

By partnering with a vendor who provides plenty of options for integration and expansion, PSPs can establish a productive print-and-cut workflow with the potential to produce cut pieces that can be profitable in areas like interior décor and the display and non-graphics markets.

"The thing we noticed very soon after the installation of our Colex cutter was that we were able to attract new business more easily," says Watson. "Being able to easily operate the device has allowed us to spend more time on consulting with our customers, creating custom projects, and helping support the integrity of their brand."

And while efficiency is essential, a cutting systems' revenue-driving capabilities opens endless doors for business growth and penetration – providing a prime way for PSPs to stay a cut above the competition.

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WideAngle

RESTRIPE THAT TIGER

Elevated food meets an elevated new look.

BY MATT DANFORD

Locally made brews pair with locally made (and sustainable) wallcoverings at Tiger's Milk, a restaurant at the VA Waterfront in Capetown, South Africa, where virtually every surface – including floors and ceilings – is covered in vivid, digitally printed ink.

Along with beers, including its namesake Tiger's Milk lager, the restaurant advertises “dude food made real good” – a handcrafted menu that takes burgers, pizza, and other common fare “to the next level.” Fittingly, partner Cara Saven Wall Design (CSWD, carasaven.com) touts its capability to elevate “the art of wallcoverings,” both in terms of conceptual design and the substrates themselves. Working together with the client's marketing team and interior design firm KT Interiors, CSWD applied illustrations throughout the location's entrance.

Perhaps more striking than any of the individual graphics is the extent to which the coverings contribute to a cohesive whole. Thanks to wallpaper substrate designed for large-format printing without breaks or joints, the graphics flow seamlessly across the floors, the walls, and the multi-tiered ceiling.

The material covering the walls, VividTex, is a dye-sublimated wallpaper with graphics printed on a Yotta YD-T1804SG direct-to-textile printer with Epson printheads. The material on the floors and ceiling, CSWD's similar LiteTex substrate, came off a Yotta YD-F2513KJ flatbed UV LED printer with Kyocera printheads.



DURABLE

Scratch proof, reusable, and easy to clean, VividTex and LiteTex are particularly useful for high-traffic spaces. Laminate protection adds to the materials' longevity.



VIVID

Dye sublimation contributes not only to durability, but also the quality of the illustrations.



SEAMLESS

According to CSWD, high-density wall vinyl that can be applied to any surface facilitated the design's flow.

Getting into Magnet Signage



The idea of feeding a big magnet through a printer sounds a little strange on its face. When thinking of magnets, you might imagine the hard, U-shaped, or bar magnets from high school science class, which I'm sure wouldn't feed through your printer. Fortunately, we're talking about printing flexible magnets, also called rubber magnets, like the kind you've probably seen on refrigerator doors.

People have printed sports schedules or local business ads on magnets for years, hoping they'll end up in customers' kitchens. Recently, though, magnets have exploded into many new industrial, office, retail, and marketing spaces. Today, many businesses use printed magnets as interchangeable point-of-purchase signage, removable signs for cars and other company vehicles, and even large outdoor graphics on the sides of buildings. Businesses are catching on that magnetic signage is easy to use, durable, and easy to change frequently.

As requests from these end users have increased over time, printers and sign shops that serve many diverse markets have caught on, too – offering printed magnets can drive lucrative, repeat business. It's a specialty media that not all shops offer. **But here's a little secret:** With a bit of know-how, most printers can add printed magnets to their product offerings without adding special equipment or processes. If you've avoided offering magnets because they sounded too foreign, too complicated, or plain and didn't know where to begin, you've been missing out.

GETTING STARTED

Where to start? For a printer or sign shop new to printing magnets, it makes sense to begin by choosing a market to sell into and focus on satisfying the

magnet needs of that particular niche. If you already serve that market with non-magnetic products, so much the better – you can target your existing customer base with a new, “attractive” product offering. This way, you can get by only stocking one or two kinds of magnetic media as you test the waters.

HOW TO CHOOSE A MAGNETIC MEDIA SUPPLIER

→ **Request samples and test print.** Call your supplier and talk with them about the intended application for the material. Request a sample to test print beforehand. It's a good idea to sample magnetic material from multiple sources, especially if you've never printed a magnet before. Unfortunately, not all magnets are created equal, but you'll be able to tell on a test print run whether the material you've sampled will turn out the way you want. Check for ink adhesion and image quality, and ensure the printable surface doesn't scuff or peel easily, as these are signs of inferior material.

→ **Safety check.** Ask whether the material is tested to be free from lead and other heavy metals. US manufacturers are held to a very high standard in this regard because of industry regulations. Some, such as Magnum's products, even meet the strict US toy safety standards for heavy metals content, which gives customers peace of mind.

→ **Get the exact size of material you need for your graphics.** Good magnet is a terrible thing to waste. If the space for your graphic is 45 inches wide, think twice before purchasing a stock roll of the 48-inch wide magnet. There's not much you can do with a leftover strip of magnet that's 50 feet long and

three inches wide, so these odd offcuts tend to be pure waste. It's often worth getting a quote on custom sheeting that matches the exact size you need so you can get maximum yield from the material.

→ **It's not just another commodity.** When you purchase a roll of printable magnet, you're not just buying blank media to print onto – you're investing in a specialty product line that offers you the potential for immediate profits and a renewable revenue stream. Flexible magnet manufacturers are in the business of making the magnets, sure, but they also double as educators, customer service, and tech support for their products. You should expect nothing less from your magnet supplier; any magnet source that wants to sell you material at a cheap price and never talk to you again is not providing you with real value for your dollar. Avoid fly-by-night third-party resellers online and stick to your favorite local sign supply distributor.

If you're ready to try printing magnets, we'll be more than happy to help. Please call 1-800-258-0991 to speak to one of our product specialists today, or visit magnummagnetics.com for more information and resources to help get you started.



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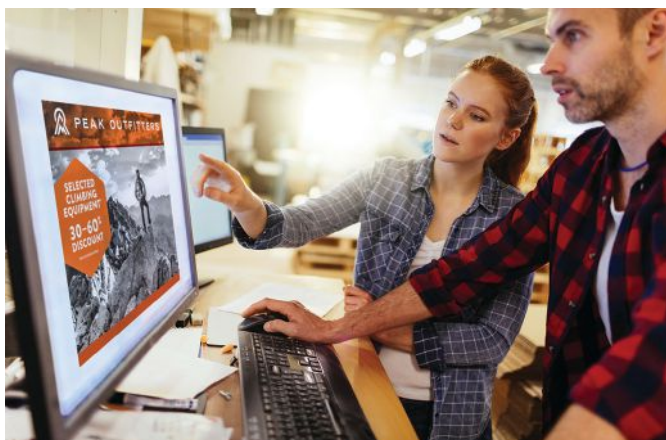
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The Time to Automate With Wide Format Is Now

By Steven R. Webster, *Director, Wide Format Professional Services, Ricoh USA, Inc.*

There has never been greater opportunity for commercial and sign and graphics printers to cultivate business in wide-format technology and services – a market estimated to reach \$1.4B globally between 2022-2027. As the versatility of this market continues to expand, there are more innovative wide-format-produced graphic communications applications than ever before. Today, surfaces of all sizes and substrates are becoming canvases for the next big “thing” in wide format – from cars and curtains to murals and mosaics.

Research shows that wide-format print providers want to diversify their offerings, and many who have invested in wide-format technology and services are prioritizing cost savings and waste reduction to optimize their growth, and customer value. Let’s look at how advanced automation technologies can impact your strategy – from delivering a superior product in faster time to market, to freeing up hours to focus on business expansion.

→ Advances in Automation

You’ve heard about automation and JDF for several years, but ask yourself why you haven’t fully deployed those capabilities. Most vendors avoid the conversation because of the challenges associated with automation and JDF across disparate devices and software. JDF functions as a standard for our industry, yet

each manufacturer creates their own version of JDF written within that standard. These variances create interoperability challenges unless, of course, your shop has only one OEM’s hardware and software. The answer is to partner with solutions that can address these variances – allowing your business to realize full or near-full automation within your current infrastructure.

→ Automation Helps Expand Business

It’s easy to presume automating processes will negatively impact human resources, but this misnomer couldn’t be further from the truth. The additional bandwidth automation provides presents an opportunity to focus on activities that grow business – such as customer communication and business development. And with skilled labor at a premium, your team can spend less time on repetitive tasks and focus on more profitable endeavors. Consider a Chicago-area printer that was producing low-margin wide-format jobs requiring pre-press modifications for larger size and the addition of pockets and grommets. The files were problematic to work with, time consuming, and difficult to repeat. After evaluating how to better streamline the file preparation and processing operation, Ricoh was able to help the printer consolidate what initially took four hours into a mere 30 minutes, freeing up the designer to focus her efforts on more creative, higher-margin jobs.

→ Automation Helps Increase Efficiency

Due to the unique complexities involved, wide-format printing is more labor-intensive than other types of print production, requiring advanced skill and training to successfully produce. Add to this the fact that in-line finishing for wide format is essentially nonexistent, putting an even greater onus on human operators to complete jobs. In fact, many wide-format finishing tasks are more a form of art than a process, requiring the delicate attention of a human being to minimize defects associated with the finishing process. The more automation incorporated into wide-format print production at the front end, the more time and energy operators have to focus on finishing and other tasks demanding the advanced skills for which they are trained.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

For printers looking to expand their reach with wide-format devices to reap the rewards of today’s most advanced automation technology, the growth opportunities are unmatched. Want to produce a wider range of jobs at less cost for more customers faster? Don’t wait.

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ALL-ENCOMPASSING

**Nutec NVC-Free
UV LED Ink**
Nutec Digital Ink

Nutec Digital Ink has launched an expanded range of NVC-free, UV-curable inks for LED lamp curing on rigid and roll-to-roll media. The low-odor Ruby UV LED ink family leverages a cooler curing temperature for energy efficiency and expanded substrate compatibility, according to the company. Available in bottle and cartridge packaging in CMYKcm + white + clear varnish. The ink is covered by the company's Ink Delivery System (IDS) warranty. nutecdigital.com

FINISHING: CUTTERS, ROUTERS, LAMINATORS, + MORE

THINKING PAST THE PRINT

Many shops offer cutting, coating, and other post-print services, but is simply having the necessary capability in-house enough to succeed? Amid advances in digitalization and automation, those who truly stand out are likely to offer higher speeds, greater quality, and a wider range of capabilities for finishing a job. More efficient, intuitive, and ergonomic machinery also benefits employees in terms of productivity or quality of life at work. Whether you're seeking to laminate faster, cut more intricate contours, or accommodate demand for a greater range of materials, products like the ones showcased here can help ensure your business won't be held back by considerations beyond the print itself.

GFP FT48 Finishing Table GFP

Graphic Finishing Partners has announced the FT48 Finishing Table, replacing the FT 60 model. The new feeding table and cutting mat can turn any roll laminator into a signmaking flatbed applicator, the company reports. The table can be folded and rolled out of the way when not mounting or trimming.

gfppartnersllc.com



Mosaica Group Pressroom Cleaner MOSAIC GROUP

The Mosaica Group has added Powerhouse Industrial, an all-purpose cleaner for degreasing and cleaning prepress and pressroom surfaces. The solution is designed to dissolve ink, grease, and other substances on hard surfaces including vinyl, metal, porcelain, fiberglass, rubber, and some plastics on contact. The non-damaging cleaner is VOC, ammonia, and bleach free with no harsh odors.

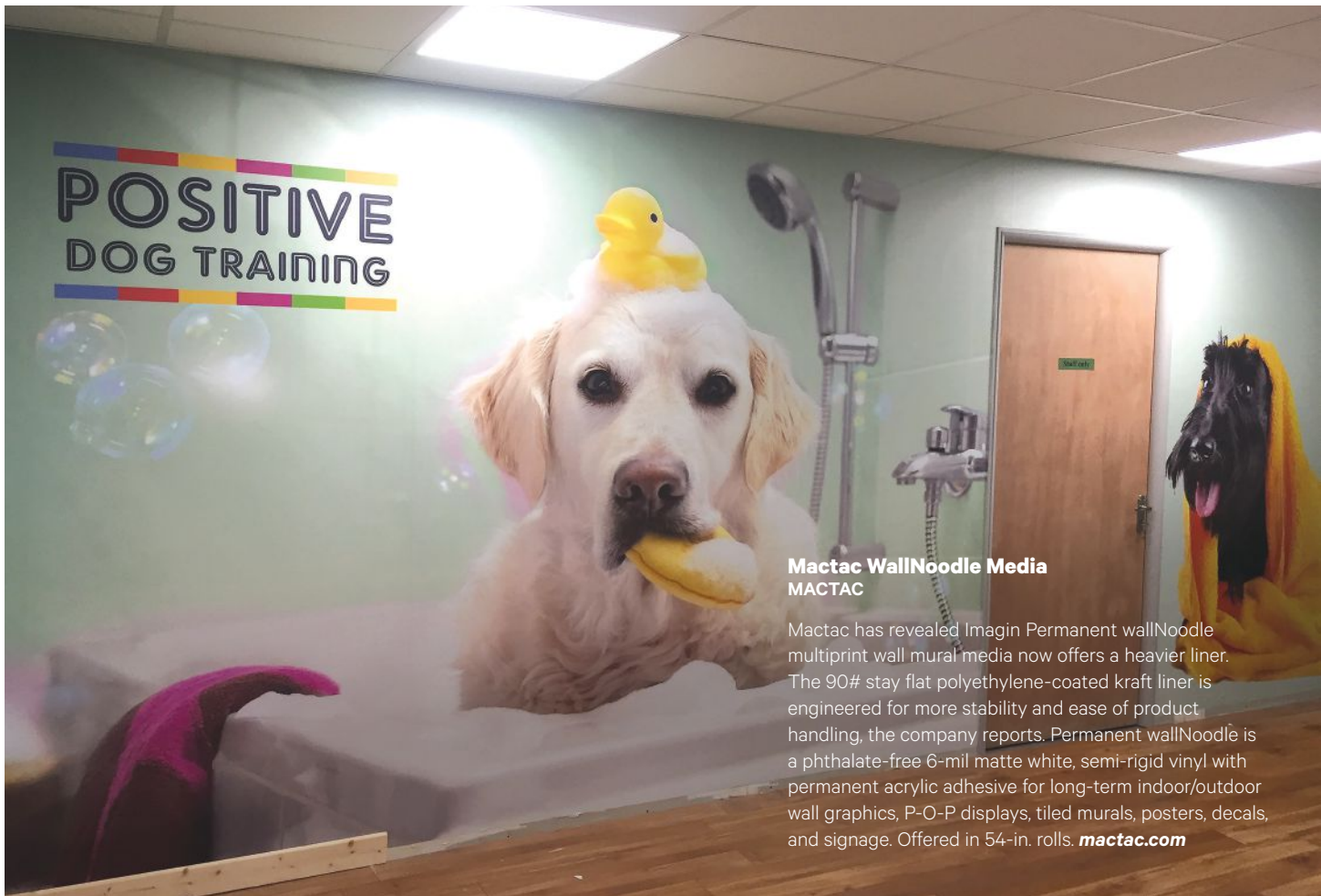
printmosaica.com



Stock and Roll Media Roll System STOCK AND ROLL

Stock and Roll's large-format roll system is engineered for storing and transporting roll media with 2- and 3-in. cores. The reel holding system can hold up to six rolls and features an ergonomic design and one-hand Blocking system. stock-and-roll.com





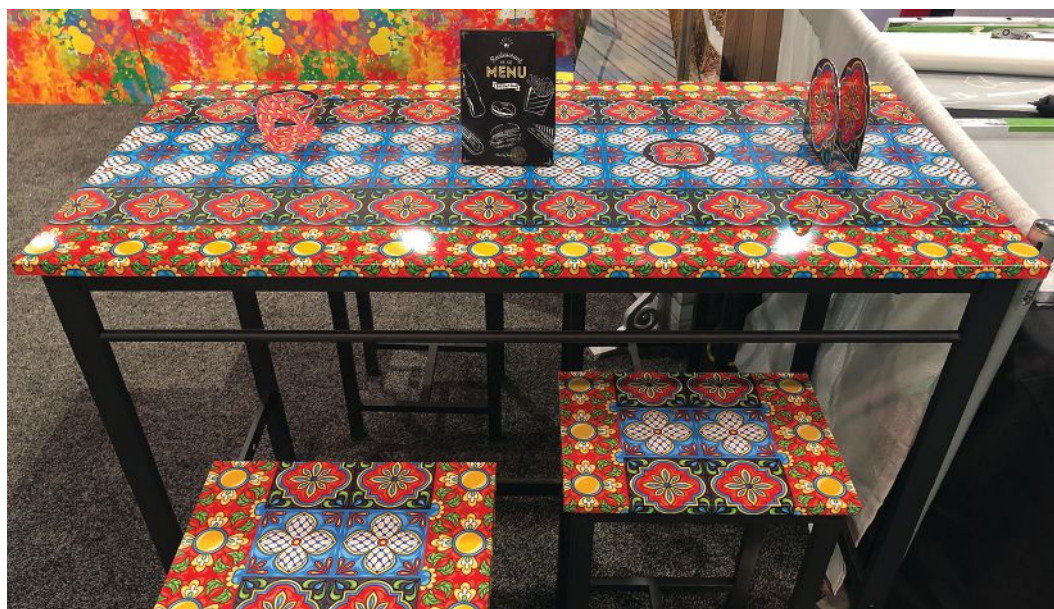
Mactac WallNoodle Media
MACTAC

Mactac has revealed Imagin Permanent wallNoodle multiprint wall mural media now offers a heavier liner. The 90# stay flat polyethylene-coated kraft liner is engineered for more stability and ease of product handling, the company reports. Permanent wallNoodle is a phthalate-free 6-mil matte white, semi-rigid vinyl with permanent acrylic adhesive for long-term indoor/outdoor wall graphics, P-O-P displays, tiled murals, posters, decals, and signage. Offered in 54-in. rolls. mactac.com

Duraluxe DIY Sublimated Products

DURALUXE

Duraluxe has announced its aluminum powder-coated dye sublimation panels can be converted into sublimated products such as bistro tables and stools, desks, wall sconces, shelves, desk accessories, easel frames, phone stands, trays, bookends, kitchen backsplash, elevator cladding, and shower walls by using a shop's CNC router to pre-score and cut the panels. Duraluxe panels offer 5-year outdoor durability and scratch and graffiti resistance, and are available in nine finishes: satin, matte, canvas, glossy, SaltLake, Wallsky, Ice-touch, brushed matte, and glow in the dark; a two-sided glossy option is available for interior applications. Stocked in widths up to 57 in. duraluxeprint.com





Nix Spectro 2 Portable Spectrophotometer
NIX SENSOR

Nix Sensor has unveiled Nix Spectro 2 professional-grade, durable spectrophotometer engineered to capture spectral data across 31 channels. The powder-coated aluminum spectrophotometer is small, portable, easy to use, and compatible with Pantone, RAL, and NCS, the company reports. nixsensor.com

Esko Release 22.11

ESKO

Esko Release version 22.11 software offers new features designed to help users automate and streamline operations with access to data. Features include Dynamic Subscriptions cloud-based licensing model; ArtPro+ GMG OpenColor Connector simplified color management with visualization and automation tools; automated workflow improvements such as new multi-MIS support in Automation Engine SaaS and new configuration tools in WebCenter for improved UX; new FEFCO (European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers) design style standards as parametric tools in ArtiosCAD structural design software; and integrated Tilia Labs AI through Esko Automation Engine with intelligent algorithms for sheet layout, estimating, and planning. esko.com/en



Roland DGA Holographic Prism Film

ROLAND DGA

Roland DGA's 6-mil Holographic Prism Film ESM-HOLO multipurpose media offers a permanent adhesive, durability, eye-catching finish, and simple installation for indoor and short-term outdoor applications such as packaging, P-O-P graphics, window displays, signage, and more. The company reports the film does not require lamination but is compatible with GuardLam gloss overlamine film (ESM-GLGF). Available in widths of 30 in. rolanddga.com

A VIVID PERSPECTIVE ABOUT HOLOGRAPHIC FILMS

TRENDS

There is a rising demand for creative and attention-grabbing labels, decals, lettering, and temporary signage. Industries such as video gaming/virtual reality, music festivals, music artists, special events, cannabis, and alcohol are turning to the psychedelic look of holographic films to accomplish this.

COST

These specialty films are priced higher than solid materials because of the finishes and effects you can't get with a "normal" film, and because they're made with a multiple-step, layered process to accomplish the holographic effect.

PRINTING

Often, only a solid color is printed on holographic films to focus on the cool effect in the back-



Sample decals of Lumina® by FDC 3400 Holographic film shown on a wide-format printer.

ground, drawing attention to the graphics. Equally as effective, certain color schemes can also achieve a more interesting look when printed on the shimmering film, too.

As for color matching on these specialty films, printing can be difficult because inks are translucent, and the color of the ink could change shades due to the special effects and finishes.

One of the best practices in printing on these types of special-effect films is to use white ink as a base layer, then overlay the colored image to help accomplish the colors being sought.

FINISHING

Usually, holographic films can be treated just like any other film. It can be laminated to protect

from scratching and UV, giving the application a longer life. And cutting is also quite simple, it is cut as usual.

FINAL WORD

The sky is the limit when it comes to the beautiful – and effective – results of using holographic films. What a trip indeed!



Lumina®

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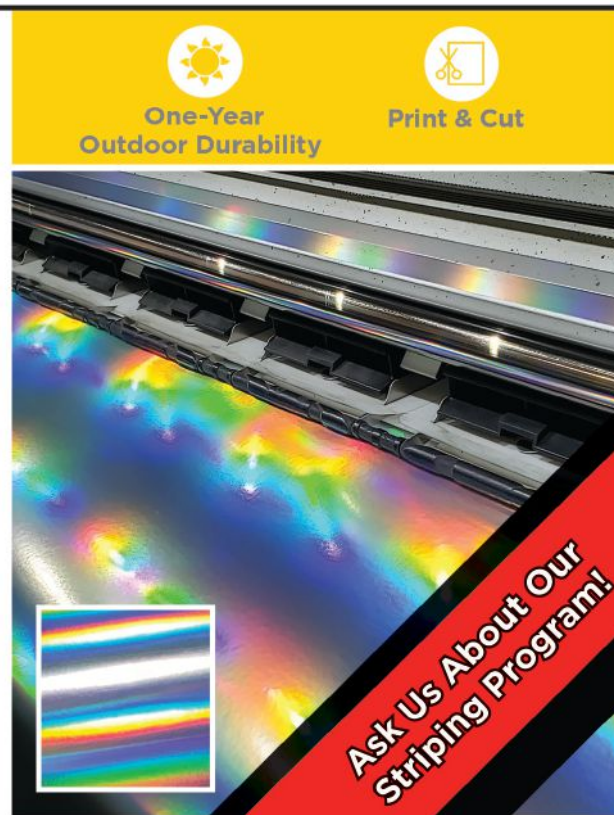
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Ask Us About Our Striping Program!

Mimaki **UFJ-7151 Plus II** Engineered for Industrial Printing Workflows

THE MIMAKI UJF-7151 Plus II UV-LED printer is the next-generation model in the world's best-selling UJF Series line. This state-of-the-art printer is geared for high accuracy, high image quality, and industry-leading productivity and stability, all of which have been improved from the previous model.

Among its many new features, the UJF-7151 Plus II is equipped with a color gloss function, creating glossy textures using color inks alone. A wide range of textures can be achieved with high vs. low ink density hardening to create a mix of glossy and matte finishes. Using this function

allows for sharper details than conventional clear ink printing.

The UJF-7151 Plus II includes eight printheads, enabling configurations that suit any application. The eight ink slots can be configured for a standard four-color setup with doubles of each color, or expanded to include light cyan, light magenta, white, clear, and primer.

Beyond providing prints with striking detail, this printer also supports MDL (Mimaki Device Language), enabling customer production systems and peripheral devices to control the printer. With this feature, you can remotely control and monitor



the position and height of the media setting table, the start of printing, and ink level and error information. This feature opens the door for a variety of fully automated print workflow

options.

For unsurpassed quality, blazing speed, and uncompromising versatility in a UV-LED flatbed printer, look no further than Mimaki's UJF-7151 Plus II.

Discover the New **JFX600-2513**



MIMAKI steps up its robust UV-LED flatbed printer portfolio with the new JFX600-2513. This new product features increased speed and higher productivity and offers print service providers a broader range of applications thanks to a wider range of ink types and increased media flexibility.

The JFX600-2513 builds on the legacy of the JFX500-2131. This new model bears a substantially higher number of printheads, allowing it to

reach speeds more than 300 percent faster than its predecessor. Available in a six-color configuration, the wide variety of ink sets produces vibrant, intense colors, perfect for striking indoor and outdoor signage, graphics, wayfinding, and P-O-P displays. It supports printing on 4 x 8-foot boards, often used in signboard production.

Additionally, Mimaki's UV print technology broadens the range of



media available to the end-user. Compatible with a variety of media, including resin, wood, glass, and metal, the JFX600-2513 is also capable of 2.5D multi-layered printing, creating raised textures for high-value added applications. The UV inks used in this new printer are GREENGUARD Gold certified, meeting environmental safety requirements for both production and installation thanks to its low emission of VOCs.



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UV-LED Technology In Our Fastest Flatbeds to Date

JFX600-2513



JFX600-2513

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Mimaki



SPECIAL
FEATURE

HOW SUBCONTRACTORS BECOME

Picture-
perfect



PARTNERS





Weighing the risks and rewards of outsourcing services beyond the printed graphic.

BY MATT DANFORD

NO

ONE HAD THE slightest inkling of a problem – particularly one that had nothing to do with the application of the

ink – until it was almost too late. The graphics met every expectation of the client, a national athletic company promoting a new product, but print quality wouldn't matter if the vinyl would not adhere to the rigid substrate prior to the promotional display's unveiling the next morning.

Technically, it wasn't the printer's fault that the surface was too dirty. However, David Kaiser, owner of Tualatin, Oregon-based Digitype Design, says he and his team had accepted the responsibility the moment they took the job, along with the risk that comes with relying on a subcontractor for installation. That risk was acceptable not only because the nature of the product – a travel-

ing display – made outsourcing essential, but also because the company trusted its partners to help manage it.

In this case, trust was well-placed. The install team worked through the night to meet the deadline, cleaning the material to prevent the potential catastrophe even before the customer became aware of it. Had things turned out differently, it would have been up to Digitype to “make things right” however it could, Kaiser says. Yet, he's found that such cases are rare. With proper vetting, most subs can be “a great addition” to a wide-format printer's team. “Trying to be all things to my clients costs me in time, health, and finances,” he says about leveraging third-party vendors.

A survey of recent Brain Squad responses reveals many of his peers wholeheartedly agree. They also outsource more than just installation, whether to expand their own capacity or capability

or to gain a competitive advantage through outside expertise. Respondents also had plenty of advice for building and managing vendor relationships. Here's a closer look at what they had to say.

Partnering Is Standard Practice

Most respondents reported outsourcing services for one reason or another. Although Squad members' attitudes differ on how to approach this conversation with customers (see the sidebar at right), virtually everyone agrees on the value of truth and transparency. "There is nothing to be gained by hiding the facts," sums up Jim Dittmer of JDA Creative Color (Gresham, Oregon).

The simplest reason to outsource is because a PSP is unequipped or unqualified for a necessary service. A bucket truck or lift, or specialty equipment for cutting and laminating, can be a significant investment, even without accounting for training, workers' compensation, and other

potential costs. Building capability also takes time. As long as they can be trusted, third-party providers can bridge the gap. "Before we purchased our first digital press, we outsourced all of our digital printing for almost a year," says Gary Schellerer, CEO of ER2 Image Group. "We did the same with braille printing, dye sublimation, and CNC routing and laser cutting."

Although ER2's capabilities have expanded, the company outsources installations that are too far outside their homebase of Chicago. That's just fine with Schellerer. "Experienced buyers understand that subcontractors are a standard component to ensuring project success."

Digitype also relies on a national network of installation partners. However, logistical challenges aren't the only reasons for outsourcing, Kaiser says. Installation best practices have evolved along with technology, he explains, citing advancements in LED lamps, ink systems, and flatbed printing that enable "putting ink on almost any flat surface" (including sidewalks and even tree bark). Meanwhile, increasingly educated customers are demanding a greater variety of ever-more-creative wide-format work. "With



Constructive Conversations

How awkward would it be to tell a customer "My crew will be there at 8 a.m." only to have the actual install crew show up with a different company name on the truck? What if the customer asks for the crew's contact information, only to find it doesn't match your company's data?

Jared Smith of bluemedial says this is the kind of thing that can happen when a wide-format printer gets too sheepish about using subcontractors' essential installation services. The best approach is honesty. "While we do not go out of our way to send a list of every sub we use on a project, we make no effort to hide them either."

He makes a particularly colorful case, but overall, this was a strong consensus emerging from responses to our most recent Brain Squad survey. However, members differed in their approaches to broaching the subject with customers. Here are a few examples:

➔ If the customer doesn't ask if we are subcontracting, we do not necessarily offer this information. The most important condition to our clients, especially since so many are seasoned buyers, is the job is done on time and executed impeccably. How the person

is classified is far less critical to them. No matter what, they're a part of your team, even if you don't W-2 them. **Gary Schellerer, ER2 Image Group**

➔ I am transparent with my clients that our installer is not our employee and does this for a living and is amazing. When discussing finishing that we do not do in house, I simply say I am going to have our finisher complete this part. **Christine Walsh, Alpha Graphics**



Rick Mandel

➔ I don't hide the fact that we have strategic partners. Everyone does. Be proud of who you choose. **Rick Mandel, Mandel Graphics Solutions**

➔ There is one installer we partner with on certain things, and it drives the cost up. I "sell" it by letting clients know our partner is one of the best in the business – so good that he trains others to do what he does. No one has ever said "no" to that. **Gina Kazmerski, Image360 Woodbury**

➔ We view and treat our partners as an extension of ourselves, and we are not ashamed to let our customers know we will use partners we trust to help ensure they get the best product and best service. **Brian Adam, Olympos Group**





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the technology advancing yearly in print and substrates, not one sign or graphics provider can meet all the needs,” Kaiser says.

In short, the industry is becoming so specialized that outsourcing might be the best way to satisfy a customer, even if it isn’t technically necessary.

Everyone Carves a Niche

Other respondents echoed Kaiser’s appreciation for the expertise of specialists. “Finding a source that has unusual talents may be the value you bring to the table,” says Rick Mandel, president of Mandel Graphics Solutions in Glendale, Wisconsin. In his case, a “unique source” for visual P-O-P item enhancements helps ensure an important customer “comes to us when they have projects they can’t figure out how to engineer.”

Mandel also mentions outsourcing vehicle wraps, which he says require “experience and a bit of artistry.” In nearby Milwaukee, Brian Adam of Olympus Group

feels similarly about custom wallpaper hanging, which he says is better left to professionals than an in-house team that’s more familiar with peel-and-stick vinyl. Christine Walsh, president of Alpha Graphics in Baltimore, men-

tions a preferred installer who “does wraps on everything, and has a lot of experience with different material. He tells us what the right material may be, and what bleeds he needs, as well.”

Other common examples of outsourcing include not just installation, but also finishing services ranging from die cutting to foil stamping and letter pressing. Still others include areas of specialty expertise, such as ADA signs (that is, those that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act). At JDA Creative Color, one of Dittmer’s closest partnerships is with a company that specializes in dye sublimation on metal. “It would make no sense for us to compete with them,” he says. “Because that’s all they do, they are the best and we want them on our team.”

However, many examples involved simpler work that PSPs are perfectly comfortable doing themselves but prefer not to. Walsh, for example, says outsourcing mailings during particularly busy periods enables staffers to focus on more impor-

tant tasks. Ann Durso, president of Express Sign & Graphics in Chelmsford, Massachusetts, tells a similar story. Some customers “do not understand what a vector graphic is,” so many logos must be formatted correctly before they can be printed. Rather than doing the work in house, Durso prefers to let her own employees focus on boosting production or sales. “We have a great company who can vectorize a logo in hours and get it back to us at the right price,” she says. “It’s a great service for clients because the vector file is provided for future use, and it saves us time.”

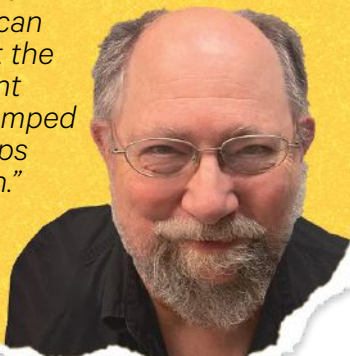
Whatever the reason for the practice, “PSP” stands for print service provider, and Brain Squad members are in this business because they believe they have an edge in providing that service. They also seem to understand the same is true for their partners, however complementary their specialties may be. Finally, they recognize customers generally care only about the final product. The best approach is often to admit, as Walsh puts it, “We may



“

Some [outside providers] we work directly with; some we refer to clients. If we can work out a commission/discount arrangement, we work with the supplier directly. If they can't do that, we generally refer the client to their services. The key is customer cost containment. If we can offer the product at the same price the client would pay if they jumped through all the hoops themselves, we're in.”

**JIM DITTMER,
JDA CREATIVE COLOR**



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORIES

CUTTING WITH PRECISION

HOW THE SP2000 LASER CUTTER HELPED FIT AND FUN PLAYSCAPES IMPROVE THEIR PRODUCT QUALITY AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Fit and Fun Playscapes is a unique business that provides decals, portable play mats, and stencils to encourage play and movement for children at schools, daycares, parks, and within their communities. Before they acquired their Trotec SP2000 laser cutting machines, they were outsourcing their stencils to a company that was using a waterjet to process the material. They eventually realized that the cutting quality of their stencils did not meet their standards, so they began to research other options.

Fit and Fun Playscapes found the Trotec SP2000 large-format laser cutter and quickly discovered that it could improve their cutting quality and provide more intricate, precise

cuts than the waterjet. They were also able to label their stencils and include instructions by engraving directly on the material, which was something they were not able to do previously.

“Our customers have definitely noticed a difference,” says Pamela Gunther, founder and CEO. Gary Gunther, project manager, says that customer satisfaction has increased by 25 percent. “We’ve been able to use that technology in support of our own product offerings and really tailor our products to our customer base to make that customer experience that much better.”

By bringing the two SP2000 lasers in-house, Fit and Fun Playscapes was able to cut labor



costs by 75 percent and improve their order fulfillment and delivery times. The user-friendly software also made it easy to train new staff on the equipment.

Fit and Fun Playscapes sees unlimited possibilities with their

SP2000 laser cutters and are already doing an extensive amount of testing with other materials for new applications they could offer to their customers. Gary says they’re “excited about future possibilities with these two pieces of equipment.”

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SP Series

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SETTING NEW STANDARDS



be able to do it, but not as well as someone else can.”

Reliable Relationships Take Work

With a team of only five, one of whom is part time, Express Sign & Graphics has long relied on vendor partners to stay nimble while providing a comprehensive service. “By not bogging down with fabrication on products that require more space and expensive equipment, it actually saves the customer money,” Durso explains.

Another way to save the client money is by avoiding shipping costs through drop-shipping outsourced products. Nonetheless, “99 percent of what we do” goes to the shop for inspection first, she says. Although some partnerships have been in place for more than a decade, quality control – straight, clean edges, and consistent PMS

(Pantone Matching System) color – deserves particular focus.

Her overall advice for subcontracting? “Definitely get references. Even start with a small project and make sure you’re happy with their quality and service. Then move to larger projects. Make sure your installers are insured.”

These comments echo those of the rest of the Brain Squad. In addition to insurance, others note the importance of carefully reviewing partnership terms (such as indemnification, cancellation, and non-solicitation policies) and ensuring potential partners have the necessary certifications. They also recommend taking note of a potential partner’s size, volume, experience level, and track record. Check the Better Business Bureau and seek out online reviews. A face-to-face interview, whether in person or online, can help evaluate a potential fit.

Vetting begins with finding out

“

I think it’s best to let customers know you can’t be the best at everything. Being a small team, we can adapt to our customers’ needs and get projects done very efficiently. By not bogging down with fabrication on products that require more space and expensive equipment, it saves the customer money.”

ANN DURSO, EXPRESS SIGN & GRAPHICS

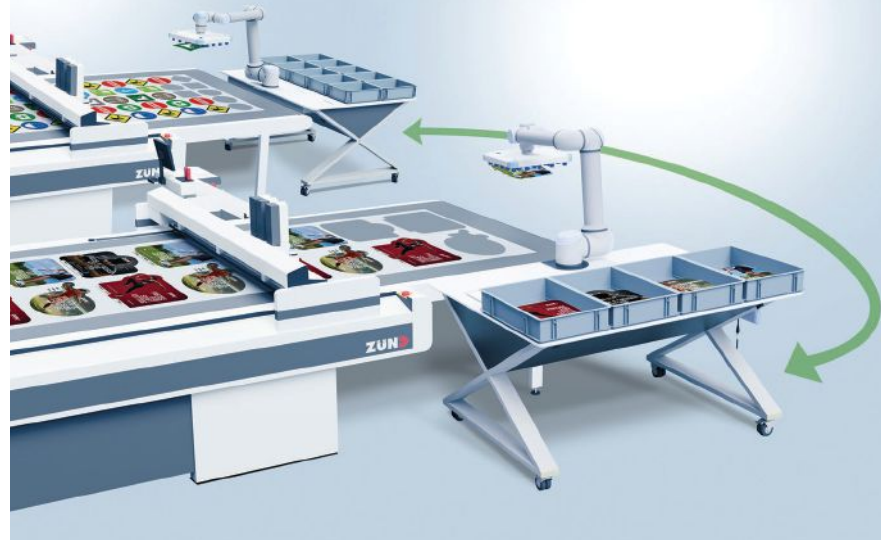


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Visit us at Booth 3939 and let's discuss some automation solutions that are already revolutionizing the way Zünd customers operate:

- The Zünd Print & Cut Workflow lets users combine and nest different jobs in prepress, ensuring efficient printing and maximum material yield.
- Through the use of metadata in PrimeCenter, users can also print tear-off flaps or labels for easy parts identification, tracking and tracing throughout the production process, from prepress to shipping.
- The Zünd Visualizing option with projector is also controlled through metadata and makes picking and sorting quick, easy, and reliable.
- The Zünd Pick&Place interface option controls robotic devices,



Robot PortaTable 130 Automated Handling System

including the brand-new Robot Portatable 130, and fully automates the removal of cut parts and their placement at pre-defined locations.

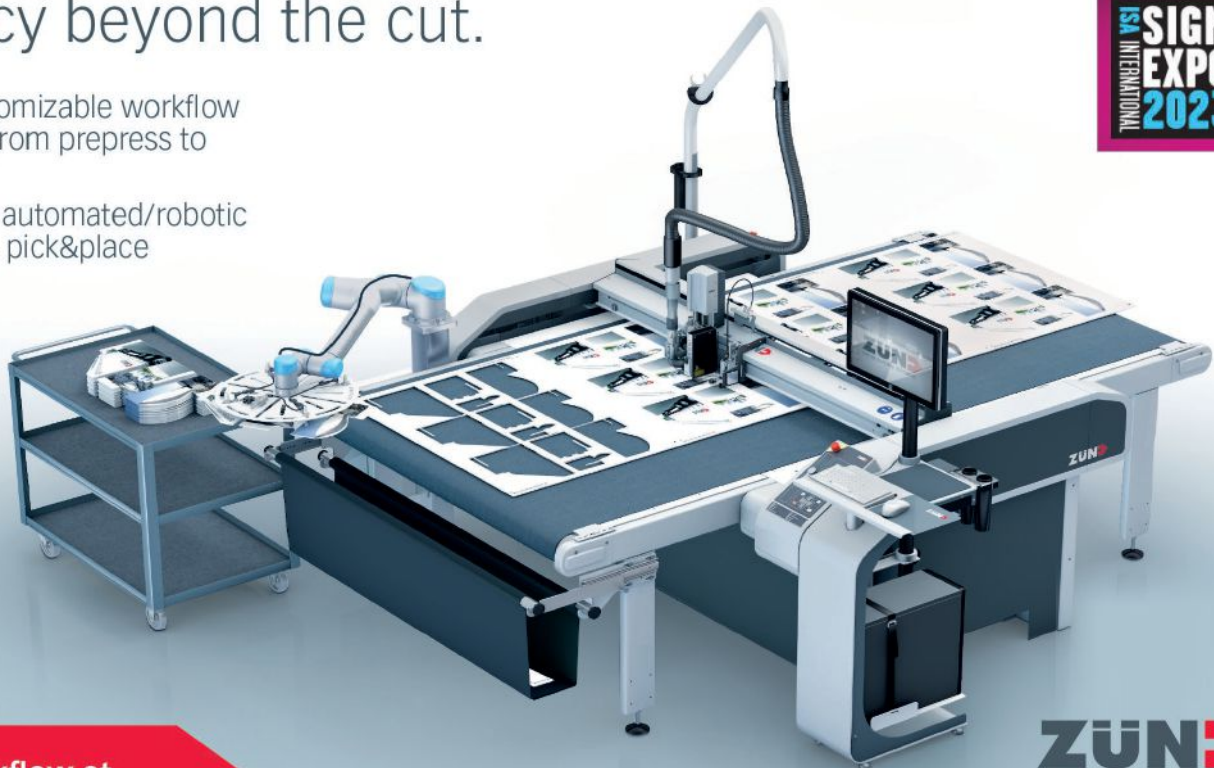
- The Zünd Design Center plug-in provides a full library of structural parametric designs and the ability to generate 3D previews and mockups without the need for time-consuming, costly prototyping.
- For users trying to determine what aspects of their production

workflow may have potential for optimization, Zünd offers the web-based monitoring and analytics software Zünd Connect. It uncovers productivity losses and provides key performance indicators that help users further optimize their digital cutting operations.

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who you're working with in the first place. As secure as you may be in your own printing capabilities, contracting with an installation company owned by another wide-format printer probably isn't the best strategy. Jared Smith of blue-media in Tempe, Arizona, cites the state's corporate commission – a regulatory body for businesses – as a useful initial tool for researching potential partners.

Installers might also decide to get into printing independently, Mandel points out, noting that a roll-to-roll printer and laminator can be had for less than \$50,000.

In these cases, non-disclosure agreements can help protect relationships with customers, he says. Such an agreement might also contain confidentiality language to ensure everyone – particularly observers on social media – understands the contractor is representing you.

From there, Brain Squad members take various approaches to evaluating subcontractors' performance. At ER2 Image Group, Schellerer and his team have developed an online vendor tool used internally to rate partners after jobs on various metrics.

Many respondents review photos of installations, and some insist on overseeing at least one in person before continuing a relationship. Whatever the approach, many respondents emphasized the importance of regular, honest communication. "Pick up the phone and call them if you think it warrants a discussion rather than just giving them the job and seeing how it comes out," Walsh says.

Being Human Pays Off

Smith's way of describing blue-media's approach to contractors perfectly encapsulates attitudes that filter through in many of the responses. "We all make mistakes, and the truth always makes sense," he says. "So be human. Be vulnerable. Be real and be cool. It works like magic."

Being human implies treating others how you want to be treated. For Kaiser, this might mean "extending grace when we can. We realize we are all human and even

in the greatest companies with the best practices, things can go sideways." Durso takes a similar view. "We have worked with many of our vendors for 20-plus years. All have had some ups and downs with pricing and quality and delivery schedules at some point, but they always bounce back," she says.

Brain Squad survey respondents also emphasize the importance of prompt payment. Kaiser says ensuring vendors are paid "as soon as our customer is satisfied" helps keep "a relationship on best terms." Durso uses similar language, noting that paying vendors on time "helps keep the relationship positive. There is nothing worse than doing great work for someone and waiting forever to get paid."

Being human also implies being empathetic and understanding partnership goes both ways. The deeper your understanding of your partners' operations and workflow, the easier you are likely to make life for them, and vice versa. If possible, Dittmer says he prefers to tour the plants of vendors that might work with JDA Creative Color. "Talk to as many people as you can about the process," he says, specifically citing managers, salespeople, customer service representatives, and shop floor personnel. "Don't forget, you need to sell this to your client, too. Your clients come to you because they trust you; they need to extend that trust to the people you partner with."



We produce and install most of what we sell as we are equipped to do that, but having some subcontractors in our tool kit allows us to be flexible as changes in production volumes dictate. I call it leveling our production with our small team. Our subs are true partners to us, and we take care of them just like we take care of our employees. Take care of them, and they take care of clients."

GINA KAZMERSKI, IMAGE360 WOODBURY



SPONSORED CONTENT

GOING GREEN

LINTEC OF AMERICA is launching a wet apply film made of recycled components as part of its corporate mission to raise awareness of sustainable manufacturing practices within the graphic, print, and visual communication industries. Featuring high optical clarity as well as reliable, long term, one-piece removability, ECO-2000 ZC is ideal for use in UV inkjet presses.

Increased awareness of sustainable and environmentally friendly production strategies has recently led companies to re-evaluate their business practices and pursue the development of more ecofriendly products. This awareness also applies to the signage and wide-format industries, where a growing number of customers are seeking substrates with green credentials.

ECO-2000 ZC offers remarkable durability in a film structure that is optically clear, printable, and with 80-percent recycled content. It is backed with a clear film liner to ensure optical clarity. With a high-quality promotional glass

manifestation product that stands out and is also eco-friendly, this film's flexibility and efficiency provide end users with the scope they need to rebrand and refresh their campaigns as often and as quickly as required.

The face stock is manufactured with a minimum of 80 percent recycled PET material. This recycling method diminishes the consumption of petroleum resources, resulting in a 24-percent reduction in CO2 and 40 percent less energy used during the film manufacturing process. For Lintec, this represents a small yet significant step forward toward the preservation of the environment.

Lintec is actively pursuing the development of innovative and environmentally friendly products, and is confident that this new substrate will help open up a host of opportunities in the wide-

format and graphic arts market. It is products like these that are capable of creating profitable new revenue streams and building an exciting niche that we are sure will attract existing and prospective customers.



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BEATING ONLINE COMPETITION

TOP WAYS TO FIGHT
COMMUNITIZED PRICING.

BY THE BRAIN SQUAD

BY THE BRAIN SQUAD

COMMUNITIZED PRICING
TOP WAYS TO FIGHT

BIG PICTURE OFTEN asks the Brain Squad for feedback on the type of content that's shared in the magazine. A few months ago, the editorial team received this message: "I think the industry should evaluate our value. The internet pricing structure has pushed margins very thin on so many items."

So, we asked the **Brain Squad**: How do wide-format printers get back to better margins? Here's what they have to say:

► It's difficult to compete with online sign stores, but we try to offer value-added services such as design and installation that they can't offer. Also, with the high cost of shipping, we can often close the deal because we're local. I would continue to work with your customers, offering them better solutions and services. I don't drop my pricing to match internet companies. At such small margins, I'd rather not have the client. **Ann Durso, Express Sign & Graphics**

► Stand unified and do not undercut each other. Base competition on the service you provide. **Jason Roberts, Futura Color**

► Lowering prices is the easiest sales strategy. Hold the line and keep pricing at a healthy margin level. Ensure quality, solid customer care, and find ways to add value, especially through customization. **Jim White, Go Graphix**

► We will always try to be competitive, including building a web-to-print solution that will compete with any online seller. But when someone does not want to pay for quality and service, then they will get what they get. **Ryan Clark, Direct Edge**

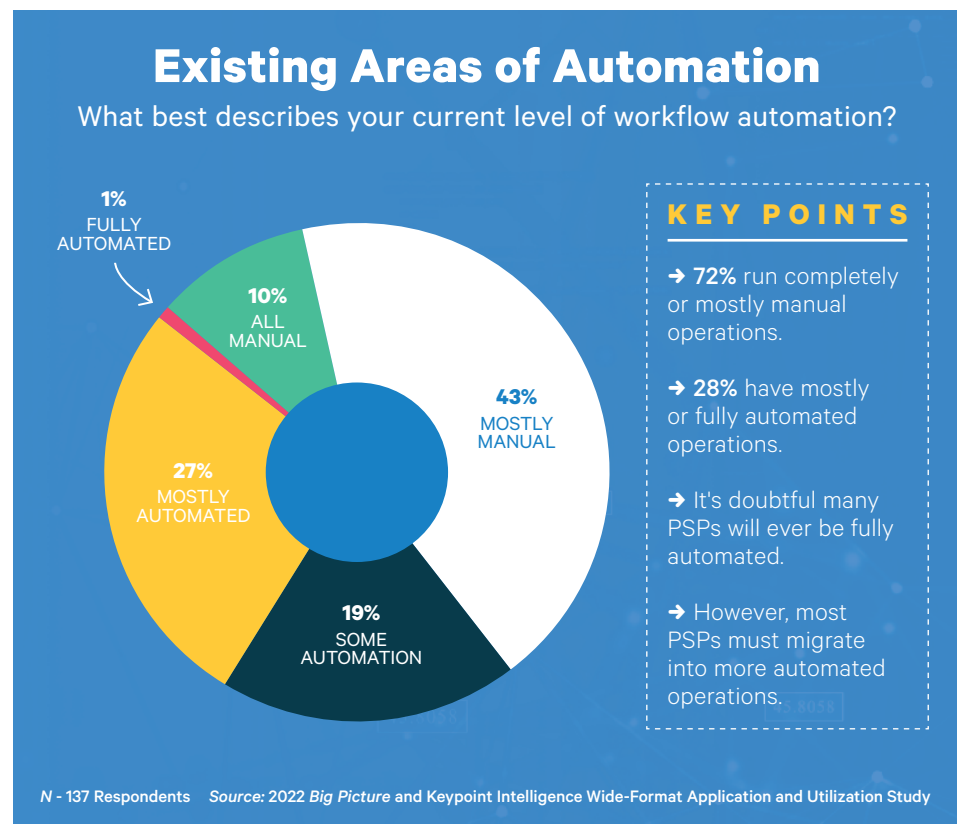
► Evaluate areas to improve efficiency in their operations by procuring

materials and substrates directly from manufacturers, and by implementing new software and automation tools to streamline the process. Basically, pursue continuous improvement in all

areas of manufacturing, from estimating through final production. **Brian Hite, Image Options**

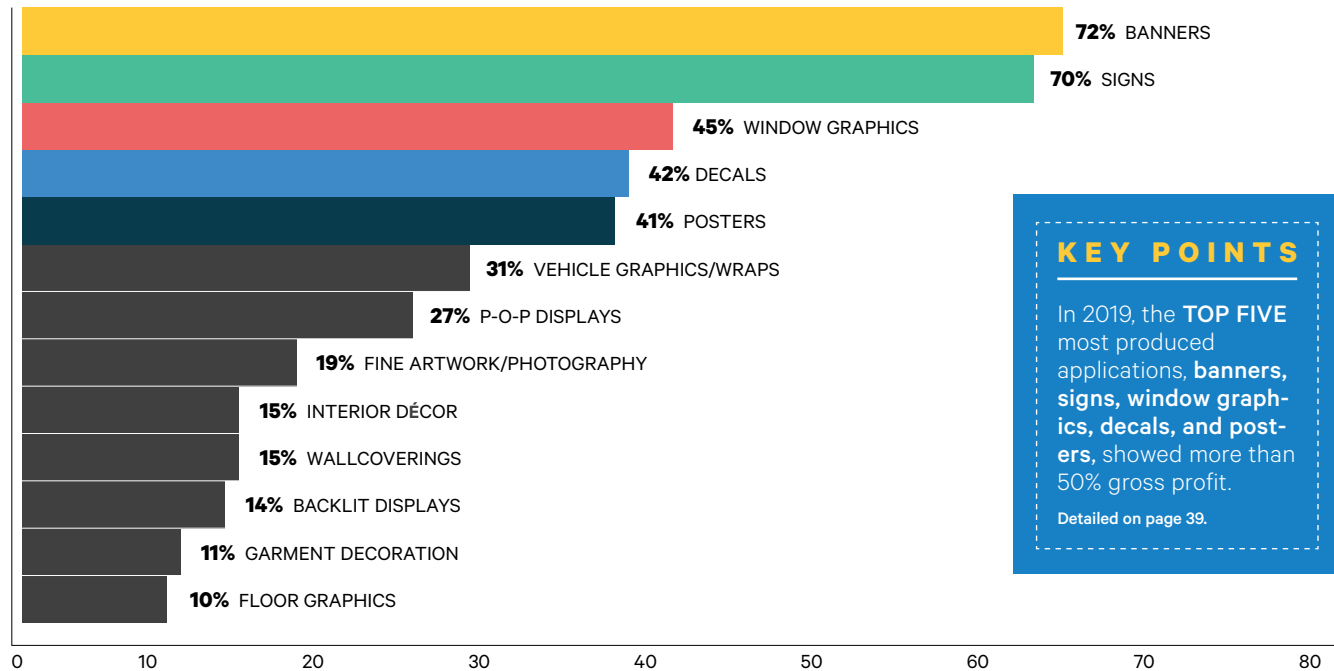
► We are constantly looking for creative ways to be more efficient. We have automated many front-end functions, in prepress specifically, using software and scripts. Not only can we process more work, but we have managed to do so using fewer labor hours and a lower headcount. Customers are not going to quit asking for "better, cheaper, faster," so we have to look to areas we can control within our own operation to try and gain those margins back. **Elaine Scrima, GSP Companies**

► Become more than a printer and compete where the ecommerce companies cannot. It is a losing battle for most companies to gauge their pricing on the cheapest online company they can find. The reality is, to compete with these companies you typically must be very large with super aggressive equipment and find efficiencies that are



2019 Top Wide-Format Applications

What are your **TOP FIVE** wide format printing applications representing the highest average monthly print volumes at your company?



KEY POINTS

In 2019, the **TOP FIVE** most produced applications, **banners, signs, window graphics, decals, and posters**, showed more than 50% gross profit.

Detailed on page 39.

Source: 2019 Big Picture and Keypoint Intelligence Wide-Format Application and Utilization Study

very difficult for brick-and-mortar companies to implement. Plus, who wants to be a “sweat-shop?” Instead, find some products and services that you are good at and become an industry expert. Be the go-to person for your client and offer service that an online company cannot. We offer robust graphic design, 3D design, CAD design, and even have an engineer on staff to create complex environments that our customers will never be able to achieve with online companies. **Gary Scheller, ER2 Image Group**



► Proving our value to the consumer and their needs is paramount. There are many caveats to the web-only-based internet pricing structure that mislead consumers and lead to situations where [online purchasing] may

not provide the best value. If we can show the client they get what they pay for – not just for the actual item, but the overall service and value they receive – margins will be better. **Derek Atchley, Atchley Graphics**

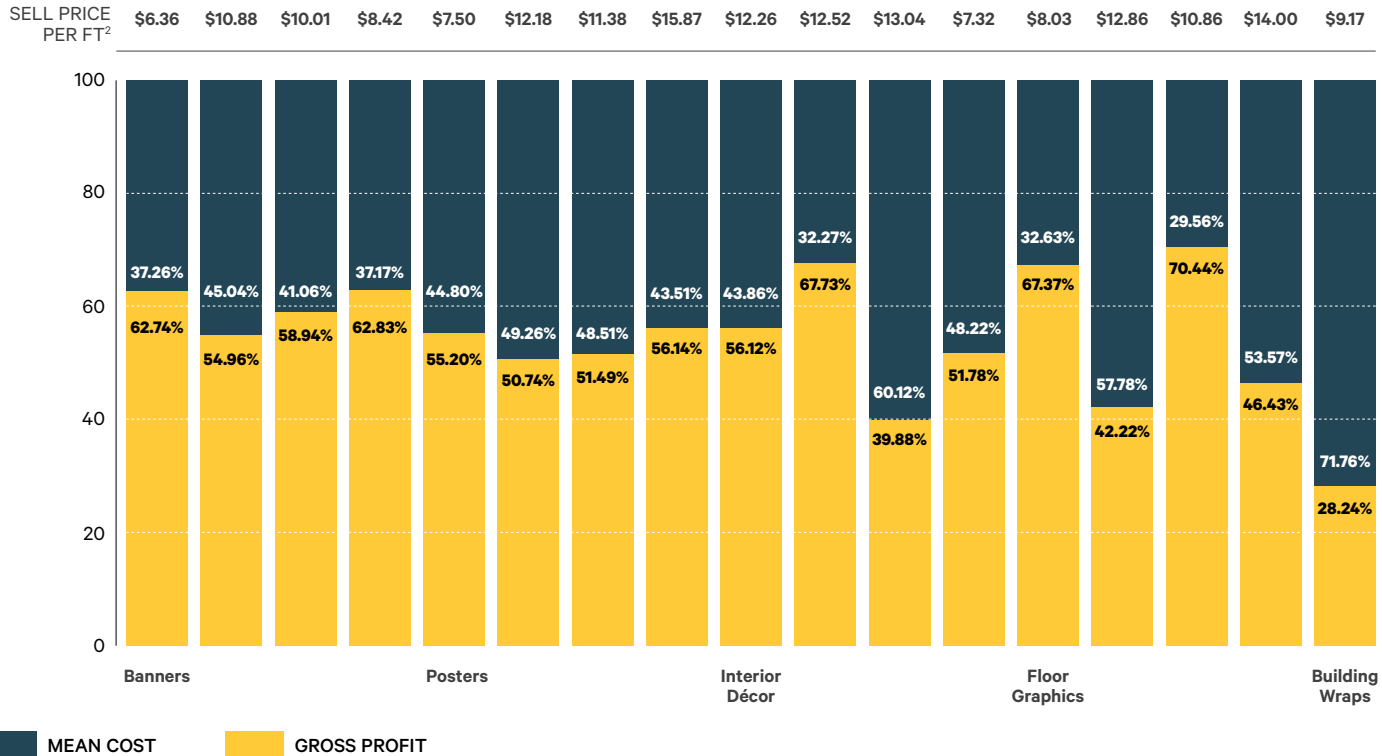
► I feel like if we do our best to control cost and waste (which is a big issue) we should be able to continue a growth curve. Clients are buying; we just need to work hard to get the jobs. **Diana Herrera, APImaging**



Reduced waste and increased accuracy (fewer mistakes) by way of automation, paired with open-loop recycling.

Jacob Meier, SuperGraphics

2019 Top Applications Profit Breakdown



↑ The top five applications are all above 50 percent gross profit.

N - Varies - Base: Respondents who offer digital wide-format applications
Source: 2019 Big Picture and Keypoint Intelligence Wide-Format Application Survey

▶ Find added-value products that differentiate your brand and/or offer exclusive products, and set the margins you want. **Jon Sherman, Flavor Paper**

▶ Customization. **Gina Kazmerski, Image360 Woodbury**

▶ We won't "get back to better margins." I don't believe the print industry has ever had huge margins. Print is a mature, competitive industry with excess capacity, and we've been operating on fairly tight margins for the past 20-plus years. There are certainly things printers can do to add value to their customers that is market specific. If the customer is willing to pay for these value-added services, your margins will be a bit



stronger, but my belief is margins will be tight/compressed for years to come. **Brian Adam, Olympus Group**

▶ In our business, we have separated sales channels to support the online buyer differently than an enterprise client. An enterprise client pays more but receives consulting from a sales professional and personal service from our support teams, such as client services and custom structural design. **Kristi Duvall, The BoxMaker**

▶ High-quality output and service **Pat Dacy, 3V Signs & Graphics**

▶ Adding value, not through commodity items, but through service, timing,



design and/or install. **Rick Mandel, Mandel Graphic Solutions**

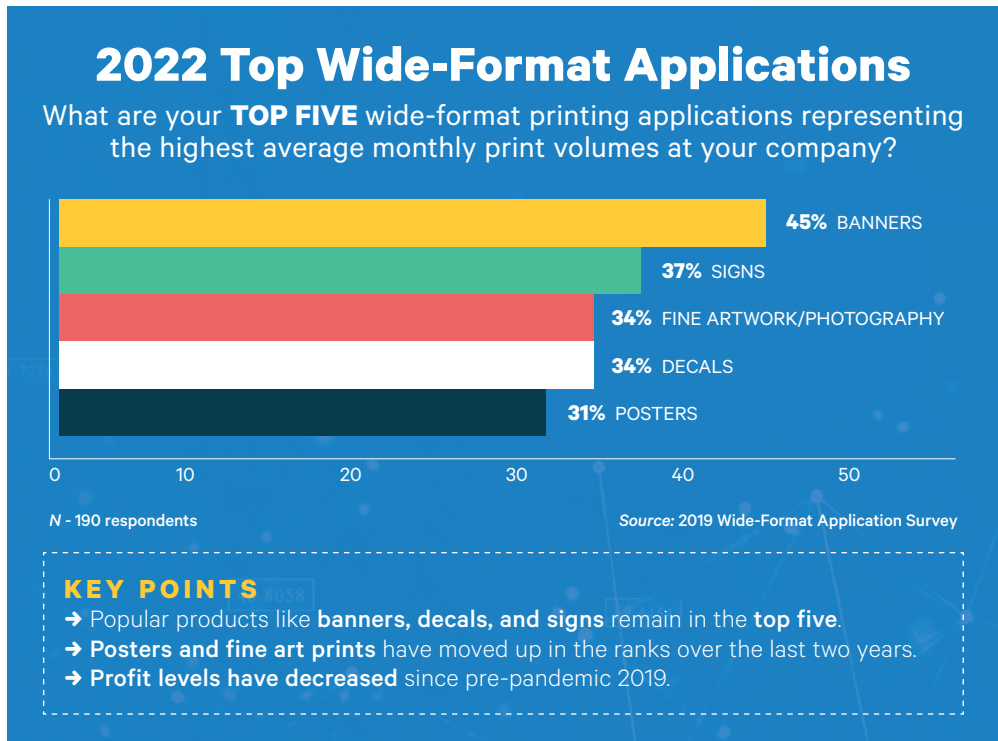
▶ Service, service, service. **Chris Raleigh, Visual FX**

▶ If you're losing to low-price online services, you are selling the wrong product! Your advantages over online suppliers are exactly what the best clients are looking for: in-person service, local knowledge, connections, and the reassurance of the in-person contact when trouble arises and when something special is required. If you and your organization are even moderately plugged into the community, that - when carefully employed - can be of incalculable value to the client. Provide a complete package. What can you provide that the online company can't?

Installation? How about a mention of their tradeshow, gallery opening, or big sale in your newsletter or social media accounts? Presumably, you have well-trained, competent, bright, and enthusiastic staff. Provide opportunities for clients to interact with your people to better understand what you do and how you can assist them. Becoming the team that solves customer challenges and makes them more successful is worth far more than a buck or two per square foot. **Jim Dittmer, JDA Creative Color**

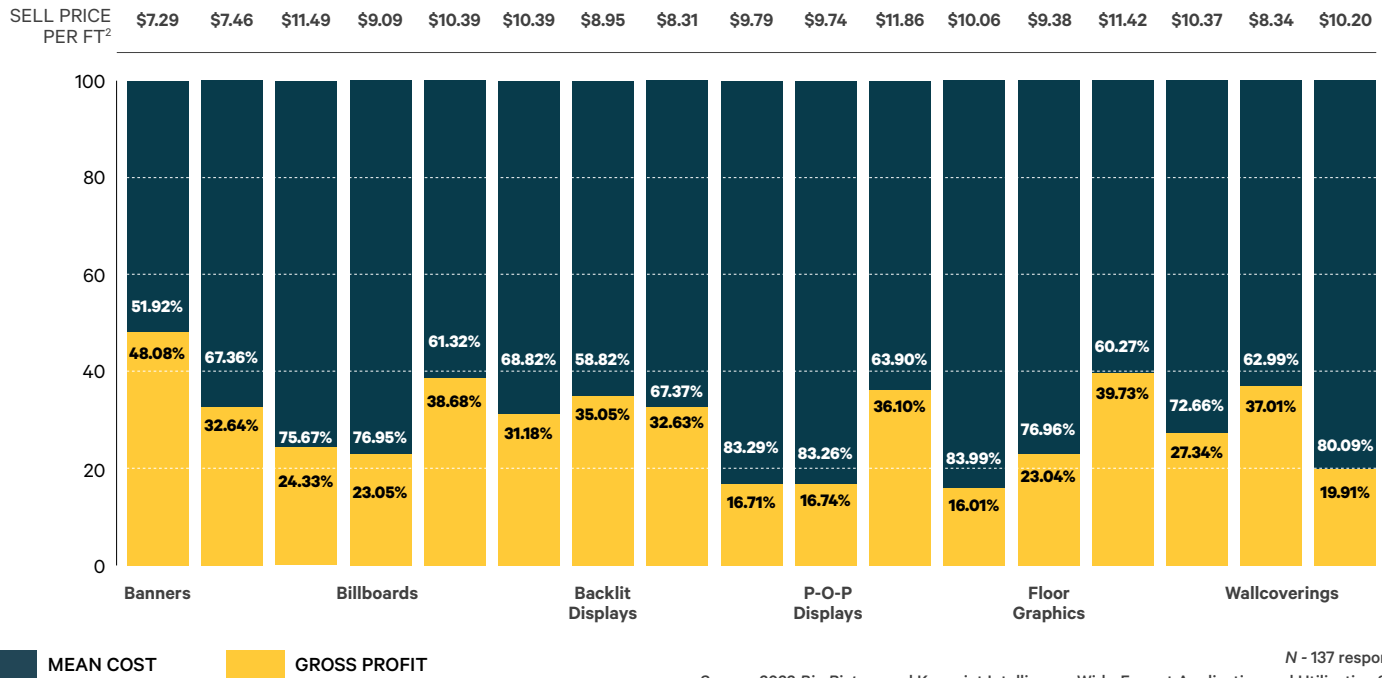
▶ Working with clients that value quality allows shops to be able to afford to do things the right way. Working with your vendors to get great pricing by purchasing in bulk and/or establishing great credit terms can lower your costs. **Jared Smith, bluemedia**

▶ We have never competed with the internet. We have lost customers to the internet, but because of our focus



*Response totals =/ 100 due to statistical rounding

2022 Top Applications Profit Breakdown



↑ While all top six leading applications stayed above 23 percent GPM, other, less frequently produced applications proved more profitable.

2022 Top 5 Most Profitable Applications



KEY POINTS

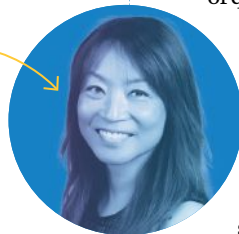
- TOP FIVE most profitable applications are all above 35% gross profit.
- Top application (banners) produces a 48% gross profit.
- PSPs should consider marketing the most profitable applications.

on quality and service, we have seen those customers return within three to nine months. **David Kaiser, Digitype Design**

▶ Stay with custom. If you are competing in commodities, then your only levers are price and speed. **Tim Bezner, Westmount Signs and Printing Co**

▶ Pick a non-commoditized area of expertise and be known for it. People will always price-shop, but they will come back if you meet their deadlines and quality requirements. We cannot be all things to all people. You will die trying. **Linda Fong, Fastsigns Oakland, Fastsigns Hayward**

▶ I have yet to allow pricing of any kind based on the internet or competitors. If I buy at Y, I want X. I've had situations when a potential customer told me I should be aware of my competi-



tion because they have lower pricing. LOL. Really? I don't worry and none of my peers should. **Tommy Melendez, Master Graphics NYC**

▶ Offer installation and design to make the process easier and more predictable by eliminating online guessing of quality and material choice.

Tami Napolitano, Awesome Graphics

▶ By adding value and building relationships with customers. Having a "can-do," customer-focused strategy. **Pete Brunner, Full Sail Graphics & Marketing**

▶ "Value" is a great word to use here. Ultimately, our value is in the service we provide, not in the product we output. We are a solutions provider for our customers, not just an output vehicle. Be their expert. That is where the margin is, not in the product. **Wade Neff, Strategic Factory**

5 WAYS TO PROVIDE VALUE

1. SELL SERVICE

- Bundle offerings to capture more marketing dollars (one-stop shop).
- Offer full service (e.g., installations, maintenance guides, service, repair).

2. CREATE COMMUNITY

- Ask for referrals and testimonials for use on your social media platforms and website.

3. FINE-TUNE YOUR SEO

- Optimize your search words for maximum regional effect.

4. DIVERSIFY APPLICATION OFFERINGS

- Find applications others may not offer.
- Create differentiators.
- Focus marketing efforts on most profitable applications.

5. STREAMLINE/AUTOMATE WORKFLOW

- Doing more with less will increase profit margins.



FIFTH ANNUAL

BEST OF WIDE FORMAT AWARDS

Big Picture honors 12 astounding wide-format digital print projects.

By Kelsey Johnson and Chase Martin

In partnership with the International Sign Association (ISA) and sponsored by Durst, Fujifilm, Roland, and Trotec, *Big Picture* is honored to announce the winners of the fifth annual Best of Wide Format Awards. The awards honor the most creative, innovative, and inspiring large-format digital print projects in our field. Winning projects demonstrate how today's print service providers push the boundaries of wide-format digital print. Congratulations to the 12 winners of the 2023 Best of Wide Format Awards! Join us in person at the ISA Sign Expo, Thursday, April 4, at 4 p.m. in our booth #1653 as we recognize the winning PSPs.

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A3 VISUAL TRANSFORMS A U.S. NAVY SHIP FLIGHT DECK FOR A VETERAN'S DAY BASKETBALL GAME.

“It’s not every day you get to see a basketball game played on the flight deck of a U.S. Navy ship, let alone collaborate with partners like ESPN to visually dress the space for one,” Craig Furst, president and CEO at A3 Visual, says. The Los Angeles-based company faced the unique ask of producing, installing, and removing event graphics for the 2022 Peraton Armed Forces Classic, a Veteran’s Day college basketball game played aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier docked in San Diego.

A3 Visual collaborated with ESPN and the USS Abraham Lincoln crew to create graphics for the nationally televised NCAA showdown between Gonzaga and Michigan State. “Custom-fabricated mesh

banners were the best choice for the outdoor environment,” Furst says. “It was important for our team to consider the strong winds the San Diego harbor could see on game day. Using a breathable material like mesh made it possible for air to flow without compromising the structural integrity of the truss structures and bleachers.”

ESPN and A3 Visual transformed the docking area and flight deck. In addition to installing custom-fabricated mesh banners throughout the stadium bleachers and stands, the team wrapped mesh and vinyl banners around truss structures and temporary frames to establish a perimeter around the court. Other highlights include vinyl decals inside the main court and throughout the event area, custom eight-foot table

PRINT SHOP
A3 VISUAL
a3visual.com

LOCATION
Los Angeles

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES
Duratex 8-ounce mesh banner, 13-ounce vinyl Frontlit 1000x1000 Denier, 3M Controltac 40C-20R, 3/16-inch Gatorfoam foam board, 7.6-ounce Black Back fabric, 3-mm ACM (max metal), Fabric for Retractable (Softimage 240), 36-in. Silverstep Rewinds, A-Frames (Signicade Deluxe in white), shop’s EFI Vutek GS Pro-TF Series printers

covers, and wayfinding Coroplast sheets and A-frame signs throughout the venue. A3 Visual imaged signage on EFI Vutek GS Pro-TF Series printers. The mesh graphics were reinforced and hung with grommets.

Come game day, 3572 ship passengers and millions of at-home viewers saw A3 Visual’s impeccable event branding as they watched Gonzaga scrape past Michigan State in the final seconds of a nail-biter. “A3 Visual has had the privilege of working on some amazing and unique events over 51 years, and the Peraton Armed Forces Classic 2022 was definitely one for the books,” Furst says.

Beer and Buckeyes

ATCHLEY GRAPHICS' FULL-COVERAGE STADIUM WALL WRAPS BROADCAST OSU AND CORONA PARTNERSHIP.

PRINT SHOP

ATCHLEY GRAPHICS
atchleygraphics.com

LOCATION

Columbus, Ohio

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

3M Scotchcal Graphic Film for Textured Surfaces IJ8624, 3M Scotchcal Gloss Overlamine 8518, HP Latex 570 printer, GBC Titan 1264WF laminators, Summa F1832 flatbed cutter

Game day Saturdays have the feeling of national holidays for zealous fans of The Ohio State University (OSU) who flock to the historic Ohio Stadium bright and early to tailgate and get hyped for their team. With a seating capacity of 104,944 and high-profile games selling out months in advance, the horseshoe-shaped stadium is the place to be for Buckeye devotees when fall rolls around in Columbus, Ohio.

Prior to the 2022 season, The Ohio State University partnered

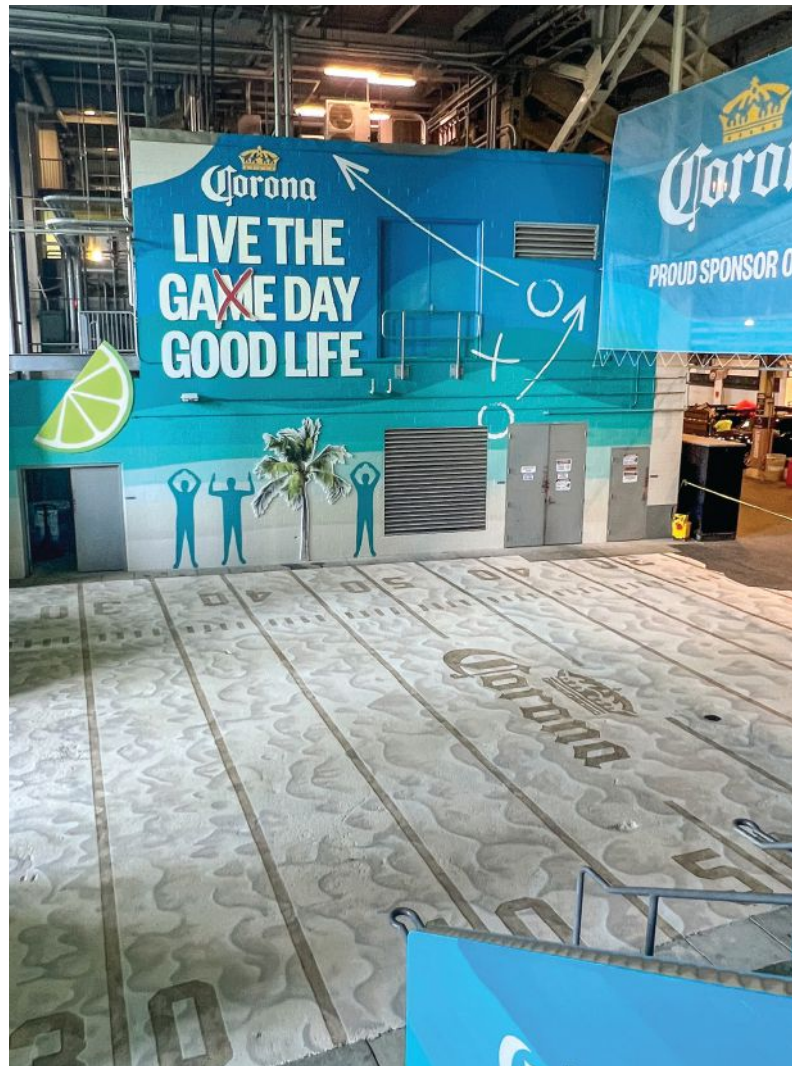
with Corona as the new official beer sponsor. PSP Atchley Graphics was tasked to transform a large gate entrance with full coverage printed wraps of the concrete walls and other surfaces – all in time for the sold-out first home football game.

The shop got to work selecting print and laminate media durable enough for three years' worth of high-traffic game days, opting to image 3M Scotchcal IJ8624 film with multiple HP Latex 570 printers and finishing with 3M Scotchcal Gloss Overlamine 8518 using multiple GBC Titan 1264WF laminators and a Summa F1832 flatbed cutter.

"The overall scope and scale of the installation, as well as the

maneuvering around a flurry of other contractors doing work prior to the first home game, was challenging," says Derek Atchley, Atchley Graphics CEO/founder. "Another challenge we faced was in maintaining the overall look of the graphics as they blended across multiple surfaces and textures. Working in conjunction with our unique partners was an excellent symbiosis of creativity and experiential branding!"

Atchley Graphics output hundreds of square feet of vinyl, sending its entire installation team to mount the large, intricate wrap in time for the influx of 106,594 attendees at OSU's home opener – plus 10.5 million TV viewers!



"The Jeti Tauro systems accelerate our capabilities for unparalleled business growth."

Brian Stone, Vice President of Sales, ColorDynamics



"The most impressive feature on the Jeti Tauro H3300 UHS LED is the seamless double-sided MRTR printing made possible by the onboard camera system."

Jason Rink, Senior Executive,
PAC Bannerworks

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Jeti Tauro H3300 UHS LED

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- Thin Ink technology for lowest ink consumption
- Six configurations: 4 for board, 2 for rolls



BIG PICTURE BEST OF WIDE FORMAT AWARDS

THE 2023 BEST OF WIDE FORMAT AWARD WINNERS HAVE BEEN CHOSEN!

Please join us in celebrating the 12 winning projects at the ISA Sign Expo in Las Vegas, Thursday, April 13 at 4 p.m. in the *Big Picture* booth #1653.

Raise a glass to our winners – beer and wine provided!



SPONSORED BY:



Macro Microsculptures

COLOR REFLECTIONS CREATES LENTICULAR MURALS AND HIGH-RES PHOTO PANELS HIGHLIGHTING THE 'BEAUTY AND INTRICACY OF INSECTS.'

You may think twice about grabbing the fly swatter the next time you find an insect in your home after exploring *Microsculpture: The Insect Portraits* of Levon Biss from the collections of Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Now on display at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University in Philadelphia, the British photographer's stunningly detailed work is the product of a groundbreaking technique that involves capturing nearly 8000 individual images under strobe lights. Local PSP Color Reflections helped bring the work to life by spreading the microscopic insect forms across large-scale, lenticular murals and photos up to nine feet tall.

In this company, the museum found a PSP that could handle the quality, precision, layout, and trimming perfection required for such a detailed job. To achieve the desired lenticular effect, the shop coordinated with the installation's conceptual and graphic designer to survey the custom-built wall and to test and refine file and print settings. The result was "life-like quality, vivid color, and perfect contrast from the jet-black background," Darren LoPrinzi, account manager at Color Reflections, says. "This exhibit was all about quality photography ... [highlighting] the photographer's niche macro work at close range with tiny insects. If our prints were pixelated, soft, or dull, the entire exhibit would be a failure."

Color Reflection's production team imaged nearly 800 square feet of graphics, printing the lenticular murals onto 3M Controltac IJ180Cv3 film with an HP Latex 3600 press and finishing with 3M Scotchcal Matte Overlaminates 8520. Individual print panels of various insects were direct printed with an EFI Vutek H5 flatbed onto 6-mm black



Sintra PVC board with a flood white background. All the graphics were then machine-cut on Zünd cutters and Miller welders, adding z-clips and spacers on the back for install.

"Our team's ability to accurately reproduce the fine pigmented scales, velvet-like surface textures, saw-sharp mandibles, swirling patterns, and iridescent colors of the insects was a true testament to our skill and attention to detail," LoPrinzi says. "The exhibit's photographs ... were brought to life in stunning detail and vibrancy on our lenticular murals and high-resolution photo panels. To walk into this exhibit in person, it is nothing short of stunning."

PRINT SHOP

COLOR REFLECTIONS
colorreflections.com

LOCATION

Philadelphia

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

3M Controltac IJ180Cv3 film, 3M Scotchcal Matte Overlaminates 8520, 6-mm black Sintra PVC board, HP Latex 3600 press, EFI Vutek H5 flatbed, Zünd G3 L-2500 and G3 3XL-1600 digital cutters, Miller Weldmaster T112 hot air welder and Miller Weldmaster T300 Flex Welding Machine

Game Day Graphics

DIRECT EDGE CONSTRUCTS A 'LARGER-THAN-LIFE' RETAIL DISPLAY AHEAD OF SUPERBOWL LVII.

The weeks leading up to Superbowl Sunday are ripe with opportunity for big-name brands like Pepsi and Tostitos to catch your eye with wide-format retail displays that tower above the aisles. For Superbowl LVII, Direct Edge rose to the occasion and teamed up with Gatorade to produce a variety of retail displays that needed more than just printing.

Direct Edge produced hundreds of these displays for retailers across the West Coast. Every piece, from the mirrored silver vinyl of the Lombardi trophy to the lenticular Gatorade bottles, had to be shipped flat, then assembled to provide dimension

PRINT SHOP

DIRECT EDGE
directedgeinc.com

LOCATION

Anaheim, California

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Tango 24-point paper-board, Catalina High Performance Metallic Vinyl, lenticular plastic, E Flute Corrugated Cardboard, Inca Onset X3 digital printer, EFI Vutek 5r+ LED roll-to-roll printer, Epson SureColor S60600 solvent printer, Seal 62 Pro S laminator, Zünd D3 XL-3200 digital cutter, Enimac X-treme Pro automated taping machine

and stability. Three elements set this piece apart. One is movement. Due to the lenticular material of the bottles, the flavors appear to shift as shoppers walk by. The second is interaction. The display also includes a standee cutout for a quick photo op, something not typically found in grocery stores. The final standout element is versatility. Gatorade needed options to accommodate the budget requirements and space constraints of different stores. In a nod to sustainability, Direct Edge opted to “reskin” an existing NFL display featuring JJ Watt rather than

building an entirely new structure.

Direct Edge printed on Catalina metallic adhesive vinyl and lenticular plastic with an Epson SureColor S60600. The lenticular material was printed on an Inca flatbed. Each piece was cut with a Zünd D3 XL-3200 and laminated with a Seal Pro Laminator before being joined together by an Enimac X-treme Pro 63-inch Automated Taping Machine.

It's only fair that the biggest game of the year gets a display that's larger-than-life. Featuring five different stands that can't be missed, this winning entry is just that.



Scan the QR code to watch the lenticular print in motion.





Back to the Future

ER2 IMAGE GROUP CONVEYS OMAHA'S HISTORY THROUGHOUT A NEW HIGH-TECH, DYNAMIC OFFICE BUILDING.

By now, it's old news that cookie-cutter, cubicle-centric offices are relics from the past. Today's office environments lean toward the creative, extravagant, high-tech, Instagrammable, and memorable. LinkedIn's new Omaha headquarters is anything but typical, thanks to ER2 Image Group of Hanover Park, Illinois.

The firm was tasked with reflecting the LinkedIn brand and the history of Omaha throughout two connected, state-of-the-art, five-floor office buildings totaling 400,000 square feet. "From workstations to common areas to cafeterias, music studios, and respite rooms, every part of our design had to tell

that story," says Gary Schellerer, VP and partner, ER2 Image Group. "Each floor is designed with a unique theme that mixes LinkedIn culture with a splash of local flavor and connection."

ER2's Applied Surfaces division meticulously produced a variety of multidimensional custom displays paying homage to corn, nearby Offutt Air Force Base, and Omaha history throughout the massive space, ensuring each floor's design matched its designated color scheme of orange, yellow, green, blue, or red. In total, the team output more than 1.5 miles of DreamScape Terralon Smooth wallcovering and 3000 linear feet of 3M Crystal Glass Finishes 7725SE-314 Dusted Crystal film.

A smattering of projects from the enormous job: The firm direct printed 1/2-inch acrylic; printed, finished, and fabricated reclaimed local wood; designed, engineered, dye-sub printed, and finished a custom parachute wall with house Celtic fabric with grommets, rope, and stitching; printed and mounted various vinyl elements; designed and produced custom illuminated displays and dimensional displays using wood, acrylic, and metal; and custom-made café food stall signage. ER2 used an EFI Vutek H5 flatbed, EFI Vutek 3r+ roll-to-roll press, HP Latex 3600 printer, MultiCam 3000 router, Zünd G3-L3200 digital cutter, and Zünd G3 3XL-1600 digital cutter.

"The LinkedIn Omaha office, without a doubt, represents our most customized project to date, with so many individual elements presenting their unique style practically everywhere you look," Jason Dillas, managing director of Applied Surfaces, ER2 Image Group, says. "We're not talking one room, one department, or one floor. We're talking a level of design that touched every inch of the operation."

PRINT SHOP

ER2 IMAGE GROUP
er2image.com

LOCATION

Hanover Park, Illinois

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Dreamscape Terralon Smooth wallcovering, 1/2-in. acrylic, 1/18-in. recycled aluminum, reclaimed local wood, house Celtic fabric, 3M Crystal Glass Finishes 7725SE-314 Dusted Crystal film, 3M Controltac 180C-10LSE, 3M 8150 Clear, 3M Matte White Cut Vinyl, wheat paste and paper, EFI Vutek H5 flatbed, EFI Vutek 3r+ roll-to-roll press, HP Latex 3600 printer, MultiCam 3000 router, EnRoute software, Zünd G3-L3200 digital cutter, Zünd G3 3XL-1600 digital cutter

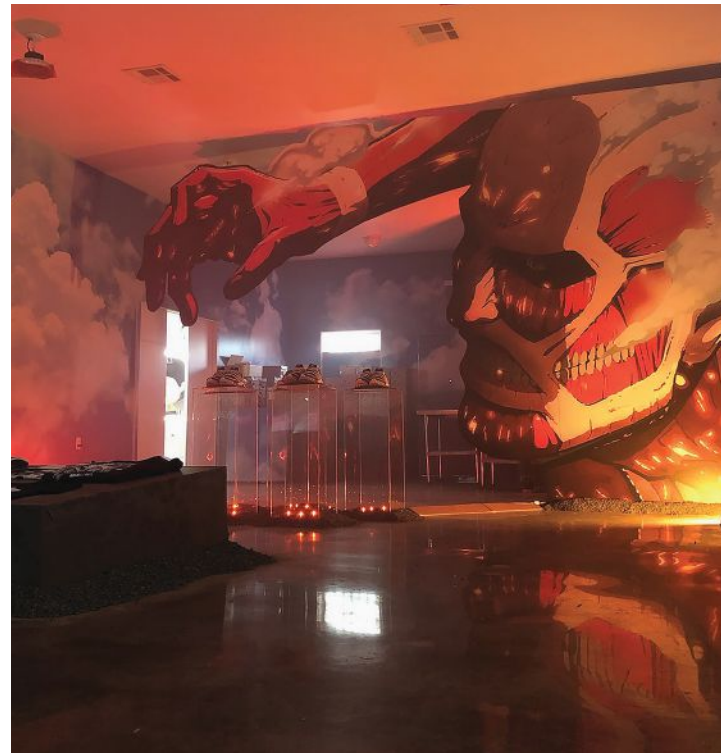
Ba(i)ted Breath

GAMUT MEDIA DESIGNS BACK-TO-BACK IMMERSIVE POP-UPS FOR BAIT BOUTIQUE.

Pop-up shops are an established trend in many major cities across the US, offering deliberately temporary and exclusive experiences for those in the know – the more immersive, the better. Bait, a boutique specializing in sneakers, streetwear, T-shirts, and collectible toys, has locations across the western US, Japan, and Taiwan, with its flagship store in Los Angeles often hosting pop-ups showcasing various collaborations.

Bait called upon Anaheim, California-based Gamut Media with a challenging request: Design, produce, and install graphics for two consecutive pop-ups in just three weeks. Using their knowledge of Bait's style from past projects, the Gamut team got to work designing a backdrop that worked for both pop-ups: Air Jordan sneakers and the animated series "Attack on Titan."

The shop crafted a sky backdrop with fluffy clouds that could be adapted quickly for each collab, outputting 850 square feet of floor graphics and 400 square feet of wall wraps. Gamut Media opted for 3M Controltac Print Film 40C imaged with a Roland DG VersaCamm VS-640i printer/cutter and finished with 3M laminate film. For the "Attack on Titan" collab, the PSP also produced and installed a colossal titan head cutout with an arm extending out, utilizing foam print.



PRINT SHOP
GAMUT MEDIA
gamutmedia.net

LOCATION
Anaheim, California

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES
3M Controltac Print Film 40C, 3M Scotchcal Matte Overlaminant 8510, 5-in. Gatorfoam Gator Board, Roland DG VersaCamm VS-640i printer/cutter



Return of the Bardahl Special

INK MONSTR RESTORES 1960S
RACING PLANE WITH CUSTOM WRAP.

PRINT SHOP
INK MONSTR
inkmonstr.com

LOCATION
Denver

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

3M Wrap Film Series
2080 vinyl, 3M Controltac
IJ180Cv3 film, 3M Scotch-
cal Gloss Overlaminat
8518, HP Latex 800 W
printer, Seal 62 Base
laminator

To pilots and plane racing fans, the late Chuck Lyford and his Bardahl Special

P-51 Mustang are the stuff of legend. Lyford purchased his P-51 at age 19, making a name for himself racing it in remarkable style in the '60s.

Lyford passed away in 2017 but his legacy lives on, in part thanks to an intricate plane wrap produced by Denver-based Ink Monstr.

The current owner of the Bardahl Special, which had been restored to its original World War II paint

schematic, reached out to the shop with a unique request: refurbish Lyford's 1960s paint scheme without damaging the current paint job.

"Over the course of two months, our team painstakingly reviewed old archived records and assets to recreate the legendary scheme via vinyl graphics," Ink Monstr CEO Jon White says. "Because the scheme was from the '60s, there are no readily available vector graphics, so everything was recreated and digitized from historical photographs, articles, and videos."

On top of the technological design gaps and care needed working with an antique WWII aircraft, the shop also faced the challenge of paying homage to Lyford's #8 plane, when the vessel was assigned #3 in the 2022 Reno Air Races. "We created dozens of versions of a #3 that could be converted to a #8 with a die-cut overlay on top. After many proofs, trials, and errors, the 8/3 was born and charmed race enthusiasts in

Reno," White says.

The PSP wrapped the entire plane in a gloss white base, installing overlays to create the final schematic. The production team imaged 2800 square feet of 3M 2080 vinyl and 3M Controltac IJ180Cv3 film on an HP Latex 800 W, finishing with 3M Scotchcal Gloss Overlaminat 8518 and laminating overlays with a Seal 62 Base laminator. The install crew traveled to Chino, California, for a week of 16-hour days, working closely with certified technicians to carefully remove panels and ensure the plane stayed in racing condition.

"The plane was then revealed and later raced ... truly a blast from the past. For some avid hobbyists, watching the Bardahl Special race again was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to relive cherished memories from the 1960s they thought were long gone," White recalls. "Our team is proud to have restored a piece of aviation history to its fans to be enjoyed and relived."



A Head-Turning Fab Wrap

JUST FAB GRAPHICS DECKS OUT THE SHOP'S NEW TRUCK IN EYE-CATCHING VINYL.



Wide-format print shops are in the business of helping clients advertise their companies, branding, events, and campaigns. But when Mt. Pleasant, Michigan-based Just Fab Graphics moved locations and purchased a new truck, the shop turned its design and wrapping skills inward.

Owner Lindsay Theisen collaborated with another designer, Rashel Hubbard, to craft an eye-catching truck wrap to advertise the PSP when it's out on jobs and when it's parked in front of the new shop on a highly trafficked road. The design team began by creating vibrant graphics for the sides of the truck that would stand out against the

area's snowy winter backdrop, eventually opting to wrap the entire vehicle. Theisen designed intricate, colorful graphics for the hood, grille, front bumper, and tailgate that flowed seamlessly with the original design.

The shop output 265 square feet of printed graphics, using a Roland DG TrueVis VG2-540 printer/cutter to image Avery Dennison MPI 1105 wrapping film, finishing with Avery Dennison DOL 1360Z Gloss Overlamine.

The Just Fab Graphics truck was an immediate success, garnering lots of attention and turning heads from passersby (and potential future clients). Theisen says the first time she drove the newly wrapped

truck, she heard plenty of honks and saw people waving their approval. "People really seem to respond to its bright colors and designs. We've received a lot of compliments and lots of messages on social media. It's getting way more response than I ever thought it would. I love seeing that reaction – that's the fun part."



Scan the QR code for a BTS look into the design, wrap, and install of the Just Fab truck.

PRINT SHOP

JUST FAB GRAPHICS
facebook.com/justfabgraphics

LOCATION

Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Avery Dennison MPI 1105 wrapping film, Avery Dennison DOL 1360Z Gloss Overlamine, Roland DG TrueVis VG2-540 printer/cutter



Welcome to the Jungle

PERFORMANCE WRAPS TRANSFORMS A CHEVY BUS INTO THE ULTIMATE TAILGATING MACHINE.

Tailgating is one piece of football culture that is often taken very seriously. Fans are always looking for a chance to up their spirits and stand out from the crowd, whether by painting their faces with team colors or wearing the number of a star player. Performance Wraps provided one Cincinnati Bengals fan a way to do just that by wrapping his Chevy Express 15-passenger bus with a Bengals-themed graffiti wrap.

With the kickoff to the season only 18 days away, Performance Wraps owner Andrew Banks and his team had to find a way to accomplish a “spray paint-like” matte look that would cover 575 square feet of the bus. Typically, Performance Wraps would use the normal 50/50 window perforation, but the optically clear

laminated wrap would have an extremely glossy finish – interrupting the look of the full matte wrap. Instead, they printed the windows separately and ran them through a plotter to create a “homemade” version that would maintain the same matte finish. With the final presentation, the custom window perforation allowed the client and his fan entourage to still look out the windows and display their team spirit from nearly every inch of the Bengals bus.

Initially, the client wanted a style of graffiti found on the sides of train cars. That’s where the matte laminate comes in. Using a Roland DG VersaExpress RF-640 wide-format digital printer, the wrap was printed with Grimco’s 54-inch Briteline WrapCast Film and laminated with Grimco’s 54-inch Briteline WrapCast

matte overlaminates. With nearly two and a half weeks to spare, the designing, printing, and installation was completed right in time for the Bengals’ first game against their all-time rival, the Pittsburgh Steelers.

“This pushes the boundaries of wide-format print by digitally creating what once was a work of art made with cans of spray paint,” Banks says. “We are now able to produce the artwork digitally and then really finish the look with a matte laminate to give it that ‘custom graffiti art look’ at a fraction of the time and cost.”

PRINT SHOP

PERFORMANCE WRAPS

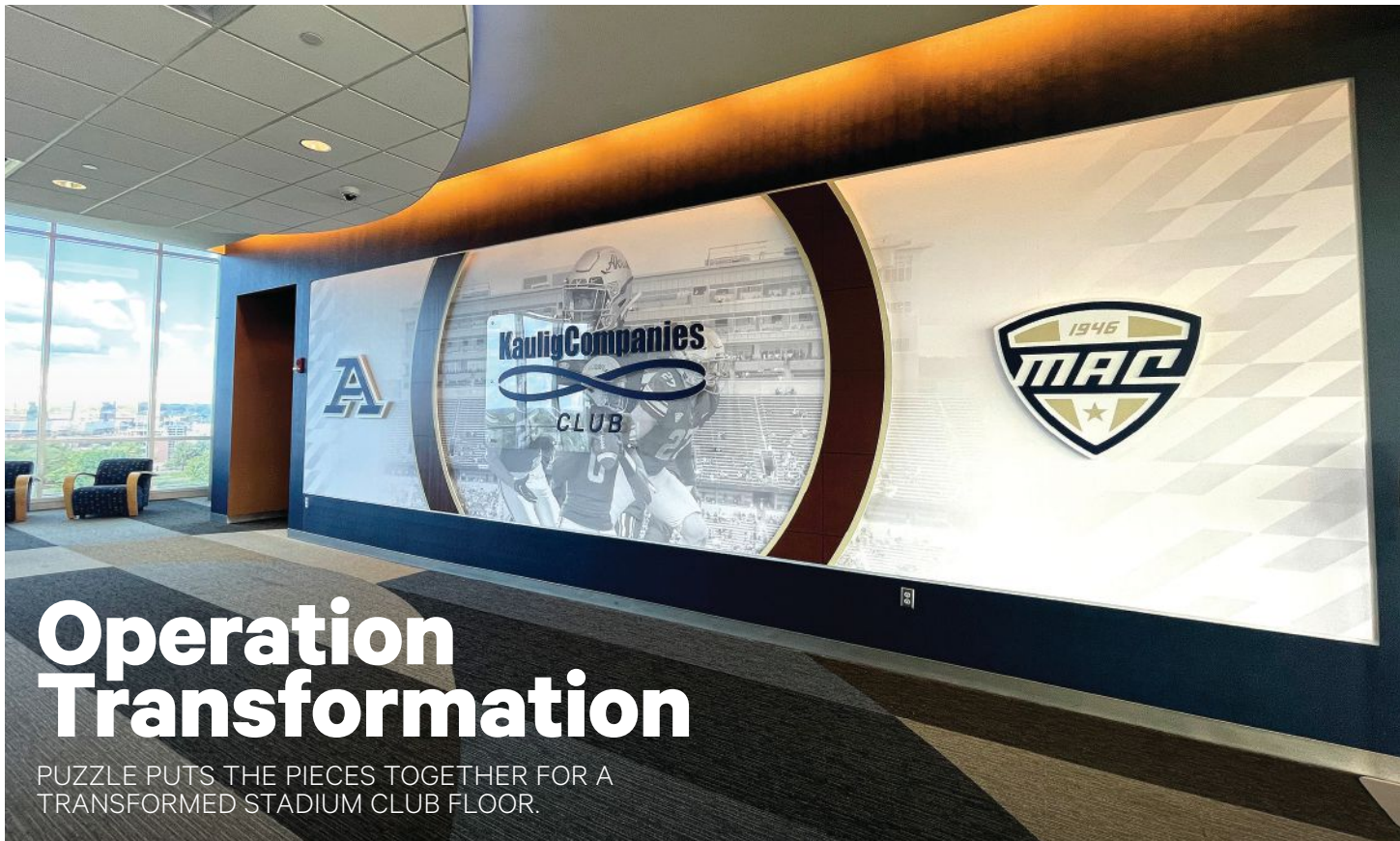
performancewraps.com

LOCATION

Dayton, Ohio

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Grimco 54-in. Briteline WrapCast film, Grimco 54-in. Briteline WrapCast matte overlaminates, Roland DG VersaExpress RF-640 wide-format digital printer



Operation Transformation

PUZZLE PUTS THE PIECES TOGETHER FOR A TRANSFORMED STADIUM CLUB FLOOR.

Anyone who purchases the naming rights of a building can expect to have a huge project on their hands. Not only do signs need replacing, but sometimes there are entire floor plans that need remodeling. This was the case for Kaulig Companies when they bought the naming rights for the club level at University of Akron's InfoCision Stadium. Ahead of the 2022 football season, Kaulig needed the help of its longtime project partner, Puzzle Creative Solutions. Aptly named, Puzzle put together all the pieces of designing, fabricating, and installing an incredible branding package.

Puzzle used multiple substrates and multiple printing and finishing processes to turn what was basically a blank canvas into a club floor, complete with floor-to-ceiling wall murals, woodgrain vinyl-wrapped TV columns, and numerous dimensional graphics. Going back to the basics, the company used Drytac Retac,

PRINT SHOP

PUZZLE
wearepuzzle.com

LOCATION

Akron, Ohio

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Drytac ReTac Textures Canvas, Drytac Re-Tac Textures Woodgrain, 3- and 6-mm Palram Palight Foam PVC Sheet White, 1/4 -in. Optix Clear Acrylic Plastic Sheet, UltraBoard foamcore panel, Avery Dennison MPI 2903 EZ-Apply 3-mil calendared gloss adhesive-backed vinyl, Avery Dennison DOL 1380Z Cast matte laminate, CET 500 flatbed UV printer, HP Latex 365 printer, Mimaki CG-160FXII 63-in. cutter, AXYZ 5 x 10-ft CNC router, Seal Image 600 laminator

a material the team has trusted for 20-plus years. Laminated with a Seal Image 600 laminator and cut with a Mimaki CG-160FXII 63-inch vinyl cutting plotter, the material covered nearly 70 percent of the wall space. The other 30 percent was covered with dimensional elements that consisted of 3- and 6-mm Pal-

ram Palight Foam PVC Sheet White, 1/4-inch Optix Clear Acrylic Plastic Sheet, and UltraBoard foamcore panel (polystyrene face) WBB. Using two printers, CET 500 flatbed UV press and an HP Latex 365, Puzzle had an amazing turnaround, completing a 20,000-square-foot club floor in less than 30 days.



Print to Remember

SIMPSONS PRINTING COMMEMORATES HISTORIC FLOOD WITH INVENTIVE EXHIBIT GRAPHICS.

PRINT SHOP

SIMPSONS PRINTING

simpsonsprinting.com

LOCATION

Rapid City, South Dakota

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

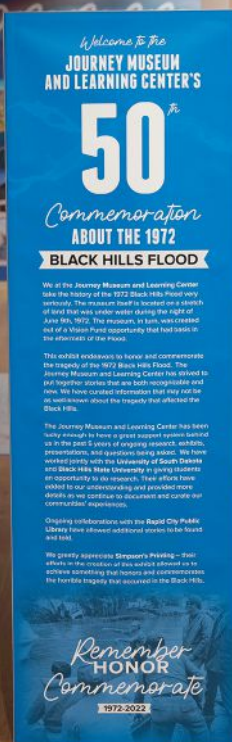
General Formulations 264HTR WallMark Leather vinyl, Arlon DPF 8200 High Tack film, Mactac MacCast 6600 vinyl, Nekoosa Synaps polyester paper, Mactac MacMark Glass Décor 700 Frosted film, white and black Palram PVC, grass turf, carpet, foamcore, Fujifilm Acuity Select HS 36 flatbed, HP Latex 800 W printer, Kongsberg XP 24 cutting table

In June 1972, extreme weather struck the eastern Black Hills of South Dakota, with record flooding leaving hundreds dead, thousands injured, and many homes destroyed. As the 50th anniversary of the Black Hills Flood approached, The Journey Museum and Learning Center in Rapid City, South Dakota, sought to create a free-to-the-public exhibit honoring the lives lost and educating community members about the tragic event. Local PSP Simpsons Printing took on the meaningful job of designing, printing, and installing the 2597-square-foot exhibit in just three months.

Keeping in mind that the non-profit museum hoped to reuse materials in future exhibits, the Simpsons Printing team chose to work with



Scan the QR code to watch a video of the final installation for the Black Hills Flood 50th Commemoration.



foam and PVC boards that could pop on and off the walls for later use. The shop was also challenged with wrapping a wall already covered with wrapping a wall already covered with low-VOC paint and decorating floors that would encounter large crowds and foot traffic for the six- to eight-month span of the exhibit.

The shop created a floor wrap leveraging Arlon DPF 8200 High Tack film and Mactac MacCast 6600 vinyl lamination; a wall wrap with General Formulations 264HTR WallMark Leather vinyl; and additional exhibit graphics with white and black Palram PVC, grass turf, carpet, and foamcore. The team employed heat bending on some pieces of the 3-mm PVC letters for the wall display so they would resemble actual folded letters. For fine-line floor displays, the shop used Nekoosa

Synaps polyester paper and Mactac MacMark Glass Décor 700 Frosted film. The team output graphics on a Fujifilm Acuity Select HS 36 flatbed and HP Latex 800 W printer, cutting with a Kongsberg XP 24 table.

"The unique challenge of this job was telling the story of the 1972 flood in a way that would honor the memories of all who were lost. The goal was to commemorate their memory and to show the resilience of our community over the past 50 years," says Hayley Kaemingk, design team lead, Simpsons Printing. "The wide-format industry has a unique ability to engage and impact audiences. This expansive project allowed people to immerse themselves in the story being told. The community appreciated it as it was very meaningful and beautifully produced."

King of the Football World

SVN DESIGN TURNS ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED PLAYERS INTO THE MOST PRIZED DECORATION.

Breaking records on and off the field, Lionel Messi is one of the most decorated footballers in history. With the help of SVN Designs, the football legend and fellow iconic players of the Argentina national team have been encapsulated in a 30-square-foot multilayer print. Standing from floor to ceiling, this print features vibrant colors and intricate details made possible by using an advanced printing approach and laser cutting to add a multidimensional touch.

Pushing the boundaries of wide-format digital printing, this project incorporated multiple advanced techniques to create a truly unique product. Using a Roland TrueVis VG2-640 64-inch eco-solvent inkjet printer/cutter, the image was printed in mirror mode on Orajet 3620M transparent #000 matte vinyl, then mounted behind an acrylic layer consisting of 3-mm and 6-mm Acrycast acrylic sheets. Separate parts of the acrylic were then cut using a BBM Solutions 35 x 55 CO2 130W laser cutting machine and adhered with 3M 9502 tape to create multilayer effects that produced drop shadows and added a three-dimensional perspective. To enhance the colors, the acrylic was backed with Orajet 3640M white #010 vinyl and was supported by 3-mm black PVC. This 92 x 48-inch multilayer acrylic print was completed with a black PVC frame ensuring a seamless and secure display.

To add to the project's notability, SVN went viral on TikTok with two separate posts that showcased the creative process and hard work of its team. Viewed by 6 million users and generating half a million likes, this project made a huge impact on social media and resonated with printmakers and football fans alike.

PRINT SHOP
SVN DESIGNS
svn-designs.com

LOCATION
Miami

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES
6-mm and 3-mm acrylic sheets from Acrycast, Orajet 3620M transparent #000 matte vinyl, Orajet 3640M white #010 vinyl, 3-mm black PVC, Black PVC frame DPF brand, Roland TrueVis VG2-640 64-in. eco-solvent inkjet printer/cutter



VERSATILE VIRTUOSOS

Diversified expertise lands big retail business for problem-solving PSPs.

BY MATT DANFORD

A jack of all trades is a master of none, unless your business focuses on retail and P-O-P displays. In this space, problem-solvers who specialize in more than just printing graphics can gain an edge in earning expansive, multi-site contracts.

In each of these examples, a PSP wins retail business by leveraging expertise that is not just deep, but also diverse. Every project hinges on the masterful provision of multiple services, from creative engineering and construction to back-end software and databases. Each project also is a case study in earning the trust of – and in some instances, additional work from – a well-known, established brand prone to expansive promotional campaigns for brick-and-mortar locations.



TIP: Perhaps you don't need to go so far as making instruction manuals and videos, but it's worth thinking about whether installation will be intuitive. What can you do to ensure setup is easy, and that your work has the desired effect once onsite?

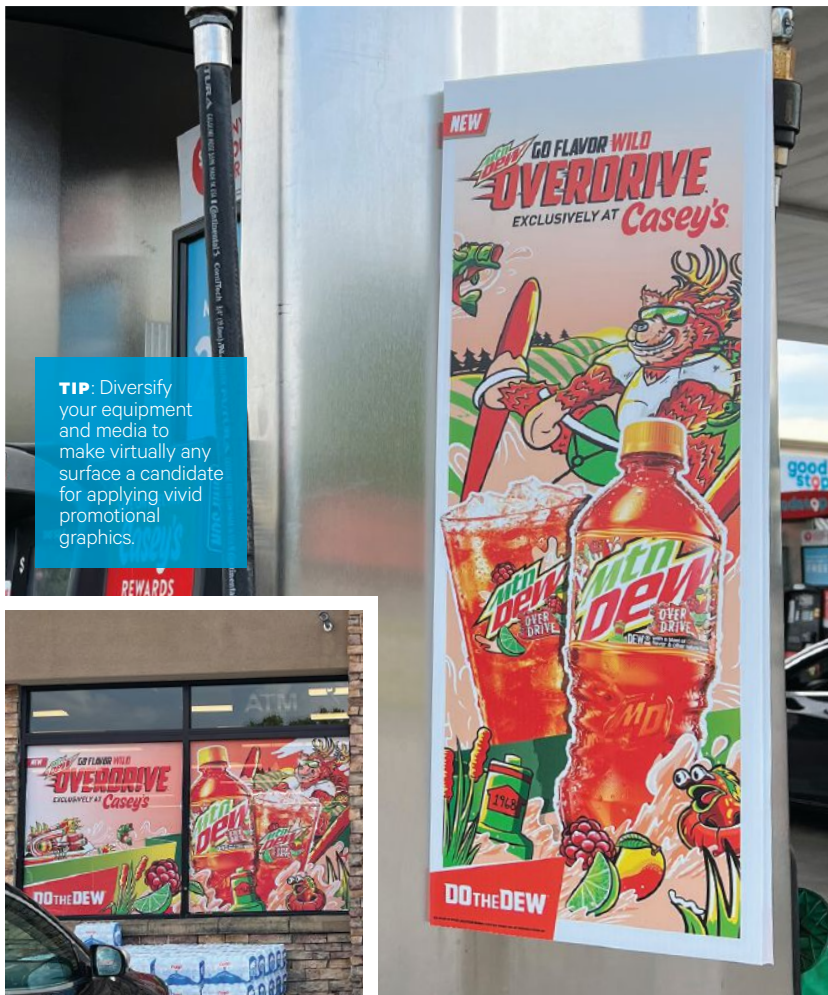
IMAGE OPTIONS

Foothill Ranch, California

For Image Options, “printing” implies more than just the application of ink. Also on the table is 3D printing, a critical capability in fabricating more than 400 snow globe plinths like the ones shown here for Luxottica’s 2022 holiday-themed eyewear promotions. In addition to that equipment and the associated software, this project required the use of the Solidworks CAD system, Adobe Illustrator, and a vinyl cutter, not to mention white-ink printing and the creation of window graphics. Materials

range from brushed chrome vinyl to acrylics to corrugated plastic. Graphics were imaged via an EFI Vutek GS3250LX Pro UV LED flatbed printer.

However, this job involved more than turning the client’s initial 2D renderings to 3D-printed reality. The primary goal was to ensure displays would be easy to pack, ship, and set up at LensCrafters stores throughout California and in Vancouver, Canada. To that end, the company also developed installation manuals, complete with QR-code links to step-by-step building instructions, to accompany each shipment.



TIP: Diversify your equipment and media to make virtually any surface a candidate for applying vivid promotional graphics.



GSP Clearwater, Florida

Any high-quality P-O-P display could be characterized as engaging (otherwise, what's the point?). However, the ask for this Mtn Dew flavor promotion signage, which came from one of one of the largest convenience store chains in the country, contained a different, perhaps more apt descriptor: "disruptive."

GSP delivered, leveraging multiple printers and different media to transform 15 Casey's convenience stores for the rollout of Overdrive, a new flavor of Mtn Dew. Floor graphics, wall graphics, window graphics, graphics on the drink pumps themselves, and graphics in front of the gas pumps – all varieties are strategically positioned to "disrupt" patrons' headspace no matter where they look

or how they move about the store. For this project, GSP leveraged its EFI Vutek H5 wide-format printer, Agfa Jeti Tauro H3300 UV LED wide-format printer, Durst Rho 312R roll-to-roll printer, and swissQprint Karibu 2 roll-to-roll printer. Media included General Formulations GF 270 WindowMark perforated film (70/30), Asphalt Art TexWalk fabric-reinforced, non-slip PVC matte vinyl; Coroplast corrugated plastic sheets; clear Lexan 9034 polycarbonate sheet; and Duratex Dead-White styrene.

The success of the Overdrive promotion led Mtn Dew to collaborate with Casey's and GSP again for the annual Dew Tour, a skateboarding event in Des Moines, Iowa. To help establish an exciting backdrop for the promotion, GSP created multiple versions of a series of window vinyl films to span 12 apertures.

DCG ONE Seattle

DCG One's work with Nordstrom Rack goes well beyond providing floor standing fixtures like the one shown here. In fact, the company provided a single-source antidote to the ails of working with multiple signage and graphic vendors, such as lacking consistent methods for ensuring adherence to brand guidelines, fully understanding product utilization, and even consistent part numbering and shipment tracking systems. Overall, the comprehensive retail signage program includes marketing signage campaigns, environmental graphic production, installation, and a client-specific, online ordering portal to help manage digital assets.

Regularly updated for in-store promotions throughout Nordstrom Rack's network, the sign fixtures feature graphics printed from an EFI Vutek H5 wide-format printer on Transcendia Trasnpaque II, a block-out opaque polyolefin film for both indoor and outdoor banner applications.

TIP: Variability and inconsistency can be the enemies of efficiency. Even if you're a small operation, consider the advantage of a single source when possible.



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BIG BUSINESS

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WORKING OUT WHAT you want to do with your life, or with your business for that matter, seems to be something that should be settled in college or at a young time in your shop's life. But executive director of Stanford's hugely popular design program, Bill Burnett, says it's actually a question you will be asking yourself over and over again, right up until you're in your 60s or older: What do I want for an encore career? What do I want to be doing in 10 years? "Our best advice is don't try to plan your life – prototype," Burnett says, recommending instead that you get out there and start doing things, talking to people in parts of the wide-format digital print industry who interest you, and volunteering to do stuff for people as a way to get a taste of new fields. "Planning doesn't work. Trying stuff does," he says.



YES 41% **NO 59%** **DO YOU OR DON'T YOU** Do you donate used equipment to schools or other print shops? **PAGE 67**

POP QUIZ How well are you using your creative resources? **PAGE 70**

ASK BIG PICTURE As the leader of the company, is it best to know all facets of the business? **PAGE 69**

NEW INDUSTRY EXPERTS

RACHEL NUNZIATA: Why your client focus should be on individualization. **PAGE 62**

DAN REID: Focus on basic checks and balances to minimize color variance. **PAGE 63**

KATHRYN SANDERS: Always start the digitally printed textile process by testing the media. **PAGE 66**



ONE QUICK QUESTION
Which form of advertising gives you the biggest jitters before you pull the trigger?

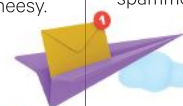
20%
Phone
They're going to curse me for being a pesky telemarketer.

0%
Newspaper
They'll think my ad is cheesy.

50%
Email
They'll think I'm a mad spammer.

3%
Word of mouth
The request to tell their friends will bug them.

27%
Direct mail
I can see it: straight into the trashcan.



MANAGEMENT

ASK THIS QUESTION

According to management guru Peter Drucker, this is the one question that will trigger more improvement than any other in your staff: What do I do that wastes your time without contributing to your effectiveness? “Ask it without coyness,” he urges.



PRODUCTIVITY

Use “Will-Do” Not “To-Do” Lists

When trying a new business venture, always try the wackier, quirkier stuff first, says Jason Fried, founder and CEO of Basecamp and author of the business bestseller *Getting Real*. “The deeper you get into a project, the more conservative it tends to get. Stranger ideas are more at home earlier in the process,” he recently wrote on his Twitter feed.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Plan Ahead for Pinterest

Something most people forget about Pinterest is that it’s essentially a search engine, so if you’re pinning things you want people to see right now, you’ve left it too

late. A better approach is to plan and pin two months ahead of time for holiday graphics, for example. It takes time to build rank and credibility as users search for fashion and style information.

MEETINGS

Hold Your Piece

According to business consultant Simon Sinek, author of *Start With Why*, the typical business meeting follows this pattern: The manager outlines the problem, says what he thinks, and then asks staff for opinions. But by then it’s too late, Sinek says. The direction of the discussion has already been set. The ability to hold your opinions has two benefits, he says. “One, it gives everyone else the feeling they have been heard. And two, you get the benefit of getting to hear what everybody has to think

before you render your opinion. Simply sit there, take it all in. The only thing you’re allowed to do is to ask questions. And at the end, you will get your turn.”

MANAGEMENT

Keep It Positive By 5 To 1

We all know employees are more motivated by positive feedback than by negative comments. But we never knew the proper ratio for parceling out praise and punishment – until Tom Rath and Donald Clifton spelled it out in their book, *How Full Is Your Bucket?* They say the optimum ratio is five positive comments

to every negative one. But don’t overdo it: Increasing the ratio to 13 positive comments to every negative one does more harm than good.

HABITS

Every Day, Getting Better and Better

If you’re still scratching around for a guiding principle for 2023, consider this one from Gretchin Ruhin, author of the bestselling *The Happiness Project*: “What you do every day matters more than what you do once in a while.” That applies not only to the life’s work you build daily, but also how you spend your money. Do you need that huge SUV if you only ever drive to work and home?

TECHNOLOGY

Go Gray

Worried your relationship with your phone is less than healthy? Switch your display from color to grayscale, recommends Catherine Price in her book *How To Break Up With Your Phone*. (This is apparently so threatening to phone makers’ addiction business model, it’s hidden five levels deep on the iPhone: go to Settings > General > Accessibility > Display Accommodations > Color Filters.) Instantly, your phone is vastly duller. Try it for a day.



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BEYOND DÉCOR BY RACHEL NUNZIATA

SHIFTING INTERIORS

Personalization gives way to individualization as a new generation expresses itself.

At the beginning of my career, the industry talked a lot about personalization as a hot selling point for digital versus analogue print methods. Today, personalization is still a great way to build your customer base by converting lookers to buyers. However, I'd like to suggest a more evolved term that better describes the value for an evolved buyer. We've gone from the era of mass personalization to consumers on TikTok exploring new microtrends to express their uniqueness. Focusing on individualization – and leaning into Gen Z – is the sweet spot for our businesses.

We're all familiar with using online web-to-print companies to personalize blank T-shirts and mugs. However, what's exploded in recent years is the creator economy. Also a byproduct of the pandemic, this shift reflects more people seeking ways to leave their nine-to-fives.

According to Shopify, "An estimated 50 million influencers, artists, curators, and community builders make up the creator economy" as of November 2021.

Have you noticed national commercials for Etsy and other online marketplaces? Or how many licensing deals between influencers and manufacturers are popping up across the interiors market? It's hard to keep up with the application possibilities, which range from peel-and-stick wallpaper to digitally printed rugs produced via noncontact color-injection.

Meanwhile, shifts in how we use space and design interiors reflect the impact of the past few years on how we live, work, and rest. Residential builders' latest floor plans suggest the home offices of the future will include Zoom rooms, social media studios, and podcast recording areas. The result could be new oppor-



RACHEL NUNZIATA is a trend expert and business development specialist primarily focusing on the interiors sector for the leading global consumer insight and trend forecasting authority. She is a graduate of Ringling College of Art & Design in Sarasota, Florida, with a background in wide-format print. Connect with her on LinkedIn @ RachelNunziata.

tunities for custom projects: exclusive backdrops, removable wallcovering, and branding in the form of neon lights or channel letters, to name a few examples.

Nonetheless, you might be wondering, "How do I offer a sense of individuality to my customers when I'm printing a job for a commercial space?" Although you might not have control of the design content you're printing, you can still brand your business in a way that reflects your alignment with the current market, where nearly anything can be created on demand. According to a recent *Arch Daily* article on workplace culture and design, Gen Z appreciates "spaces that feel authentic, dynamic, safe, and rooted in a meaningful message or branding. Because they're such an ethnically diverse generation, designers will need to consider the way that people experience communities and how that ties back to different cultures and traditions."

Take stock of your marketing campaigns and come up with creative, cost-effective ways to promote your business to attract new customers. While you're thinking about 2023 being a time of economic uncertainty, remember that if you're able to provide value to your customers, anything is possible while working in a lean environment.

THE COLOR CONUNDRUM BY DAN REID

INVEST, UPGRADE, AUDIT, AND REPLACE

How to set your employees up for success.

Visit a lot of printing companies to assist with managing color. Time and time again, I see very similar issues stemming from the notion that technology solves problems.

Sorry, but it's not the solution. Sure, increasing print production output and attaining better quality or opening an avenue to new markets with technology is always a smart choice, but what gets lost is the need for basic controls to ensure consistent and repeatable print output, regardless of the operator or technology. Some of this has to do with technology, but most has to do with basic checks and balances to minimize color variance.

TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

Many printing companies don't consider how ambient conditions affect color. Having the temperature and humidity gradually change during the day invariably introduces a color shift. It's common for me to see freight doors open while it's raining outside with no HVAC system in

place. The color approved under these conditions slowly changes as the temperature and humidity of the summer sets in. To compensate, more frequent calibrations can bring things back in line, but at the expense of the time required to manage this change. Minimizing temperature and humidity fluctuations helps reduce color shifts.

CONSISTENT AND REPEATABLE COLOR MEASUREMENT

You made the right decision to invest in a color measurement device – a spectrophotometer – but can you trust the data? When was the last time the spectrophotometer was sent back to the factory for calibration and certification? It's recommended to send a spectrophotometer back for recertification every 18 months. Of course, you can still measure, but can you trust the measurements? Sending your device back for certification proves you can trust the data collected.

Handheld color measurement devices are a great starting point to managing color, but you may find you get different data depending on who is measuring. That's not good. Upgrading to an automated color measurement option eliminates the human element.

LIGHTING

Oh boy. No, you can't make your own light booth. Sorry.

Lighting is an absolutely critical element in evaluating color. Many times, a company's chances of failure or success in color matching are directly influenced by the



No, a printer in a tent is not a climate-controlled condition. Fluctuations in humidity and temperature throughout the year affect color balance – an overlooked variable that directly affects product consistency.

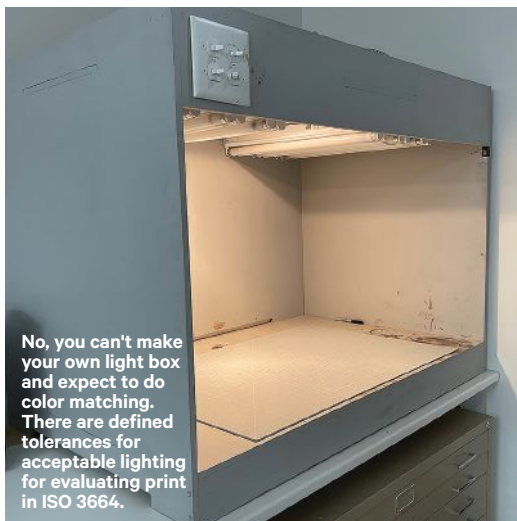
quality of (standardized) lighting. ISO (International Standards Organization) clearly defines the requirement of a light source for printing with ISO 3664. A quick reminder: All color matching in printing assumes you are viewing under Daylight 5000K, or D50. ISO 3664 defines the parameters for meeting the D50 requirement.

When lighting manufacturers have their booths certified for compliance, the certification is for the whole system, not the lamps. Changing the light fixture, ballasts, and distance to viewing plane all will affect color perception. So, you can't just purchase ISO 3664 compliant lamps and expect those lamps to produce the light quality certified, because the ballast in your light fixture may produce more or less energy, skewing the color temperature. The surrounding of the light box reflects that color back onto the object/print. Even the light fixture background color can skew the color temperature.

Set your employees up for success by controlling the variables they can't. Invest in making sure temperature and humidity are managed where the printers are located. Upgrade your color measurement technology to be fully automated to remove the human element so it doesn't matter who measures. Audit how you evaluate color matches to make sure the lighting setup is not imparting a bias. Replace any lighting setup that is not ISO 3664 compliant to eliminate color bias from the lighting. Help your employees be successful!



DAN REID has provided color management consulting services to many leading brands and print service providers for more than 20 years. A G7 Certified Expert since 2006, he has helped numerous businesses achieve the merits of G7 print calibration method. He is currently the president of RP Imaging, helping businesses maximize their profit potentials by decreasing waste and improving efficiency and repeatability for commercial, trade, grand-format, and textile printing clients. rpimaging.com



No, you can't make your own light box and expect to do color matching. There are defined tolerances for acceptable lighting for evaluating print in ISO 3664.

CULTURE + ENGAGEMENT
 BY BRIAN ADAM AND JAMES SWANSON

GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

It's expensive, risky, and a lot of work, but when done right, it can have a profound impact on your business.

For more than 100 years, Olympus Group had one location in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. For more than 20 years, Screaming Images had one location in Las Vegas. We produced 100 percent of our respective products in our single spaces. We each dealt with one set of headaches regarding leaky roofs, parking lot repairs, HVAC upkeep, power outages, and the slew of issues that come along with running a print facility.

Back in 2011, with wide-format lead times compressing from weeks to days to hours, some bozo at Olympus (likely Brian) had a great idea: Let's expand and open a second location in Orlando. Walt Disney World was one of Olympus Group's most important and largest customers, and there was potential in

the Orlando tradeshow market. So, in 2011, Olympus Group took the plunge and opened a second facility. "We did not know what we were getting ourselves into (ignorance is bliss), but we felt geographic expansion was the best path forward for growth and for our team," Brian Adam says. "We conducted some mediocre market research, spent a couple of months finding a facility, invested a couple hundred thousand dollars in equipment, hired a handful of employees, and we were in business (or so we thought). Our move into Orlando was a catalyst for future expansion and in hindsight was one of the best business moves we ever made."

Fast forward 12 years and Olympus Group has quintupled the number of



BRIAN ADAM, president/owner of Olympus Group, and **JAMES SWANSON**, principal of Screaming Images, joined forces in 2021. The merger brought together two print shops, 250 employees, five locations, and countless clients. Check out their work on LinkedIn.

headaches by expanding into Denver and Nashville and merging with Screaming Images in Las Vegas. Scaling to five print locations has led to countless new opportunities, opened new doors in key markets, and has helped support growth. However, it has all come at a cost.

WHY EXPAND GEOGRAPHICALLY?

We believe wide-format printers can be classified in one of two ways – national or regional.

→ National wide-format printers specialize in a certain market (such as retail/point-of-purchase) or have a specialty in one type of application (such as nationwide fleet graphic programs). National providers sell their products anywhere. Location matters (for shipping times and costs) but is not critical, and geographic expansion has less value.

→ Regional suppliers tend to support local accounts (such as local sports teams, restaurants, universities, and events). The majority of business comes from the region, and having a local print facility is often essential.

Olympus Group and Screaming Images

	DEMOGRAPHICS					MARKET OPPORTUNITIES			
	Rank	Score	Population (metro)	Population Growth	Business Friendly States	Tradeshows	Events	Sports Teams	Competitors
Atlanta	1	94	5,949,951	12.55%	6	20	4	4	1
Houston	2	79	6,997,384	18.19%	3		16	4	3
New York	3	76	19,979,477	2.11%	26	13	9	11	3
Las Vegas	4	95	2,231,647	14.37%	21	47	2	2	1
Dallas	5	76	7,539,711	17.33%	3		8	5	2
Austin	6	76	2,168,316	26.34%	3		13	0	5
Orlando	7	86	2,572,692	20.53%	7	21	1	2	4
San Antonio	8	75	2,518,036	17.53%	3		17	1	5
Miami	9	70	6,198,782	11.40%	7		15	4	5
Boston	10	66	4,875,390	7.09%	19	8	20	5	3
DC	11	65	6,249,950	10.89%	30	7	6	5	3
Charlotte	12	66	2,569,213	15.89%	1		31	2	4

are regional suppliers. While we have some national clients, we service trade-shows, events, sports teams, and amusement parks. The vast majority of our customers are in Milwaukee, Orlando, Las Vegas, Denver, and Nashville. For our customers, it was essential we had a local print facility.

ACQUISITION VS. GREENFIELD

There are two ways to expand geographically and there are pros and cons to each.

1. Acquire a Business/Buy an Existing Company

ADVANTAGES: The business is already set up with employees, equipment, a facility, and customers. You hit the ground running.

DISADVANTAGES: It can be very expensive. Integrating two different teams, companies, systems, and cultures is one of the toughest challenges a business will ever face.

2. Greenfield, aka Open a New Facility from Scratch

ADVANTAGES: You control everything from whom you hire to the equipment you purchase to the size of the facility. It typically costs less than an acquisition.

DISADVANTAGES: You're starting from zero and often trying to steal market share. It will take longer to build the business.

TIPS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

1. Do Your Homework

Understanding the potential of a market and how your organization fits in is critical. Be sure to investigate tax incentives – cities and states will often provide a financial incentive or tax break, but you need to line this up before you move. Take the time to speak with customers, suppliers, or even LinkedIn acquaintances about a location.

2. Market Research

Make sure the location is a good fit for your business. A few things to consider: What's the market size? How many

current and potential customers are there? What are the demographics (aka is it a growing market)? What's it like to do business there? What's the tax environment? The regulatory environment? Is the market saturated with competitors? We weighed all variables to Olympus Group and then ranked the top 50 markets in the US (see chart).

3. Plan To Be There – a Lot!

The frequency of visits was far greater than we anticipated. The only way to build relationships and connections is to physically be there. We try to ensure members of our executive team are at every location multiple times per month.

4. Have a Strong Local Leader

View geographic expansion as a start-up. It's going to be a tough job, demanding lots of hours, nights, and weekends while you grow. Invest in a strong general manager, plant manager, or sales lead excited about the opportunity to build something.

5. Identical Equipment and Systems

As much as possible, try to have the same equipment and systems at the new location. This will allow you to share workload, troubleshoot issues, and even share people. For large events, we have flown production staff from one location to another to help support the local team.

6. Culture

We underestimated how hard it is to build culture remotely. You will need to be intentional about this. Communication and providing frequent corporate updates are critical. Newsletters, email updates, and photos (new employees, cool projects, facility/equipment, etc.) are helpful in making everyone feel like they're part of the same team.

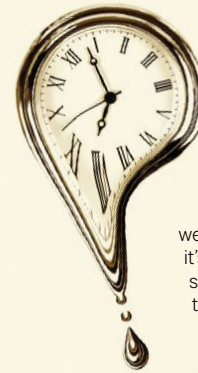
7. It's Kind of Fun!

We've really enjoyed time in a new location, discovering a new market, meeting new people, and learning about the differences at each location. Theme parks in Orlando, casinos in Las Vegas, blue-collar Milwaukee, the music scene in Nashville, and outdoorsy Denver ... our locations, and the people in each, are unique. For us, that's part of the fun.

WOULDA COULDA

Things you wanted to say to frustrating clients, but didn't.

IF IT'S SO IMPORTANT, THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE TWO DAYS BEFORE GRAPHICS ARE NEEDED?



I, TOO, SOMETIMES wait until the last minute – it's the world we live in – but really? You knew two months ago you were opening a business. Now, three weeks before, you decide it's time to look for signage? Procrastination at its finest.

TRUE TALES

RIGHT SIDE UP

WE ALWAYS GET a laugh when customers order a two-sided yard sign with arrows. They almost always have to explain that on one side they want the arrow to point to the left and the other side needs to point to the right. Or, they send us a single file with an arrow pointing one direction and want the sign printed on both sides with the arrows pointing in the same direction. When we ask them where the other side of the artwork is they just pause.



THE FILAMENT BY KATHRYN SANDERS

TESTING 1, 2, 3

Data evidencing what works should be the foundation of your process.

If you're in the digital textile printing game, it's fair to assume you've received some wild, out-of-the-box requests for custom projects. You could even argue it's what our industry was built for and thrives on – we have a penchant for tackling the “impossible.”

Lately, I've had requests ranging from fine-art 3D installations for the Arlington Rodeo to hand-painting textures and details onto already digitally printed wallcoverings. You may never know what your next project is going to entail, but it's critical we remain poised for complexities and steadfast in our commitment to a solution-oriented approach.

When it comes to solutions – and we're talking bonafide solutions, not Band-Aids or quick fixes – we need factual data to back up our processes and technologies. There's no better place to start than with testing. Note that I stated “start with testing,” not “finish with testing” or “test halfway through the process.” Starting with testing is key because it'll influence everything you do moving forward.

Too often I've witnessed print studios test in only one situation: when there's a problem. If that sounds like an all-too-familiar pattern, I'm here to encourage you to adjust your workflow and mindset. Testing at the beginning of a project will reduce errors, reduce liabilities, and help you get a good night's sleep.

Where to Start

Testing might seem overwhelming at first, but rest assured there are tons of pros out there who can help. I suggest researching AATCC and/or ASTM verified labs – they're quite literally in the business of getting you the results you and your client need. (You can always reach out directly to the AATCC Technical Team, too.)

You can find textile testing labs throughout the country, but (not surprisingly) most are in North Carolina. I always recommend starting the process human-to-human with a phone call. I

know that might seem old school (or dare I say too direct) but it's the best way to move your project forward. Get on the phone with a testing expert and share your project parameters and end goals. They might recommend a different testing method than what you originally sought out.

Textile Tests for You

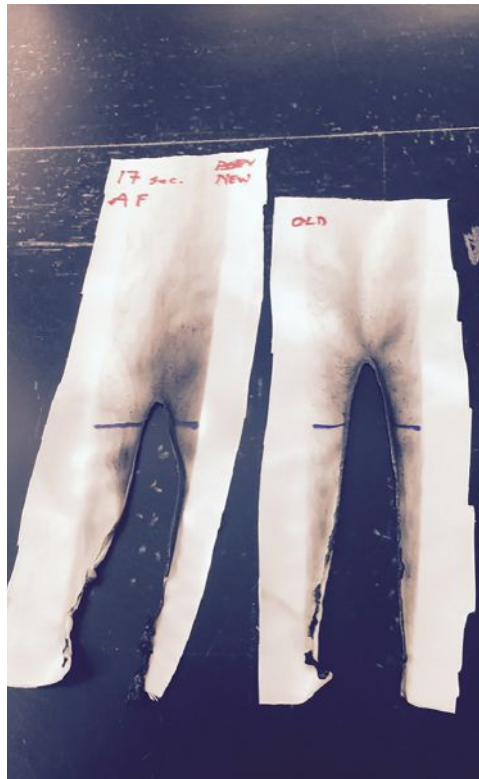
For digital textile printers, some textile tests are more relevant than others. These tests include abrasion, colorfastness, durability, flammability, and strength. It also doesn't hurt to ask your ink and



KATHRYN SANDERS is the founder and CEO of Western Sensibility, a digital textile printing studio on a mission to redefine interior spaces. She's passionate about growing the digital printing community and launched Digital Bias Consulting to help newcomers get started. Connect with her at kathryn@digitalbiasconsulting.com.



A burst strength test, commonly performed on textiles with stretch, measures how the fabric handles pressure.



Example of a vertical flame resistance test that determines if a textile will continue to burn after ignition is removed. Afterflame, afterglow, and char length can be measured.



substrate suppliers if they offer testing certifications.

Implement Testing into your Workflow

Adding a new step to your process may be frustrating in the short term, but the long-term impact strongly outweighs any potential pain points. In addition to elevating the type of service you can offer, you'll be able to train your employees and the next generation on the value of testing. The repercussions of that specific type of focus have the potential to ignite industry-wide progress.

If you're getting anxious thinking about how you're going to build testing costs into your services or contracts, know it's typical to pass this expense along to your customer for custom projects. At the end of the day, they'll be much more satisfied having confidence in how the materials perform, and that's what could set you apart as their PSP.



Examples of wet and dry crock tests performed using a crockmeter. Different than abrasion tests, crock tests measure the amount of ink or dye that can be rubbed off the textile.



Do you donate used equipment to schools or other print shops?

59% NO

▶ Haven't had the opportunity, and our local tech school eliminated the printing program. **Rick Mandel, Mandel Graphic Solutions**

▶ Most times we have redundant pieces of equipment (two of everything), so if something totally dies, it's usually harvested for parts for the remaining machine. **Wade Neff, Strategic Factory**



Wade Neff



David Kaiser

▶ Our equipment is generally still in optimum operational quality. We sell it on the open market, or sometimes the vendor will want to purchase our used equipment to resell themselves.

David Kaiser, Digitype Design

41% YES

▶ I have donated printers and cutting equipment to our local technical center. **Tami Napolitano, Awesome Graphics**

▶ We feel the process was pretty easy and beneficial to all involved. **Derek Atchley, Atchley Graphics**

▶ We try to donate, but sometimes the resources to pick up or the timing of drop off can be a challenge. **Linda Fong, Fastsigns Oakland, Fastsigns Hayward**

▶ We have found robotics clubs can really use some of the parts in our old equipment. We donate end rolls and other materials to schools. They love it! **Jared Smith,**

bluemedia



YOU'RE INVITED! Own or manage a wide-format printing business? Join the Brain Squad to participate in useful surveys on issues important to wide-format printing professionals: bigpicturemag.com/brainsquad

THE COMPETITIVE WRAP INSTALLER BY KRISTIN LANZARONE

MINDSET IS EVERYTHING IN BUSINESS

To be a superior installer, focus on abundance, positivity, and growth.

S Mindset refers to an individual's attitude and approach to their work. It encompasses a focus on growth and improvement, a willingness to take risks and learn from failure, and a determination to persevere despite challenges. It can include a person's beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions about themselves and the world around them, which can influence their actions and reactions. A growth mindset is the belief that abilities can be developed through effort and learning. A fixed mindset is the belief that abilities are set and cannot be changed. A positive mindset can increase motivation and resilience. A negative mindset can demotivate and discourage.

Installers live in a different world from the rest of the graphics industry.



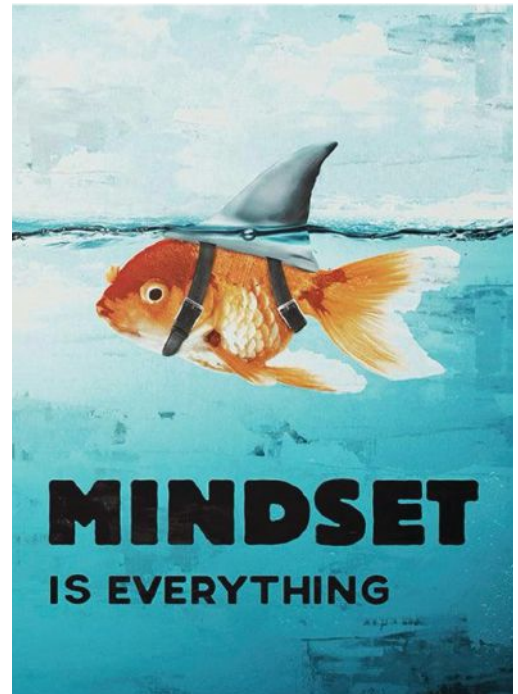
KRISTIN LANZARONE is the CEO of WrapStar Pro – a wide-format printer and installation company – the founder of WrapStar University, and an industry trainer. She educates printers and installers on the process between design/production and install and how to work efficiently.

Providing the finishing touches is mostly solo work, and we must be self-driven. Without the interactions of others to rely on, we have to rely on ourselves to be in the correct mindset – to stay in the game. To do this, installers should focus on three key mindsets: abundance, positivity, and growth.

We need to think large. By thinking in abundance, we attract what we manifest. Making goals – whether they're short-term or long-term – helps keep you on track for growth, focused and determined. It holds you accountable for achieving accomplishments. It's the mental practice

that allows you to take active control over your own life. My favorite saying is "Anything is possible if you put your mind to it!" Think it, manifest it, take action.

We're facing one of the most challeng-



Become a better wrap installer by altering your approach.

ing times in a world heavily influenced by the negativity of social media, the news, fashion magazines, and other media. These sources naturally bring negative energies that hinder our positive mindset. The first thing toward preventing negative energies is to block, redirect, or avoid them. It may be easy to turn off the TV, but it will be hard to avoid social media, especially when social media is a free source of marketing for your brand. Leave

LINE TIME



AVOID NEGATIVES AND ABSOLUTES AS THEY SHUT DOWN COMMUNICATION

Here are a few examples, along with suggested replacements. Negative: "Why can't you ...?" Positive: "What if we ...?" Negative: "I hate it when ...?" Positive: "Wouldn't it be better if ...?" Negative: "You always say ...?" Positive: "I've heard you say..." Absolute: "Nothing ever gets done." Non-absolute: "At times, there have been problems getting things done." Absolute: "We must do it this way." Non-absolute: "Here's a good idea to consider..."

Source: *The Coward's Guide To Conflict* By Dr. Tim Ursiny

BRAIN STORM

FORM AN ADVICE CLUB

FORM AN ADVICE CLUB with a group of professionals who may not necessarily be in the wide-format printing industry, but have similar career goals. You can then reach out to each other whenever you need a sounding board for an idea or when you're looking for tips in certain areas. Actually, that sounds a little like the *Big Picture Brain Squad*.

Sign up here to join bigpicturemag.com/brainsquad.





social media for promoting your printed work. Don't include negative personal agendas like politics or bad news. Waking up each day with a positive mindset will rewire your brain to focus on the good.

I tell myself each morning: "I'm grateful for another day on this earth. I only have one chance at life and today I will kick ass in everything I do. So, Kristin, make the best of it!"

Starting your morning with positive thoughts will make you feel great and motivated. Not every day will be a kick-ass, positive, productive one. We all face trials and tribulations. It's the way of life. We do not live in a perfect world nor is there such an education to a perfect life. Our education in life is facing these moments that build our character. We have the choice to accept it for what it is and make the best of it with a positive outlook. The more we hyper-focus on the storm, the

more energy we waste on the problem vs. focusing on a solution.

Controlling your thoughts, your words, and your actions will naturally lead to a level of growth. If a client decides to take their business elsewhere, don't take it personally; accept their decision. Ask them, for your own personal growth, what you can do to better yourself as an installer. You may find out it was your attitude, the way you communicate, the quality of your instal-

lation, job site cleanliness, etc. Then, shift your thinking. Things happen for a reason. If this door closes another will open, and that open door could be your biggest client yet. Learn to accept the pains of growth. This is how we learn to better our skills and become more successful installers.

Identify the problem. Learn from the mistake. Find the solution. Shift your thinking.

“*A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events, and outcomes. It is a catalyst, and it sparks extraordinary results.*”

Wade Boggs

ASK BIG PICTURE



BRAIN SQUAD

As the leader of the company, is it best to know all facets of the business?

► From low-on-the-totem-pole newbie to press operator, designer, fabricator, and more, “a mashup of all the roles I've held as a signage or branding professional has helped me,” says Derek Atchley of Atchley Graphics. “I've operated in small mom-and-pop shops, corporate franchises and independent company settings. All roles and environments have merged to give me the impetus to be the printer and print company we are today.”

Our team is pretty dysfunctional. Nobody wants to go the extra mile. Petty feuding is constant, and problems just get swept under the carpet. As a result, we're not performing as a business. I don't get it – we pay good salaries.

► “There's a saying that if money can fix a problem, it's not a problem. We suggest buying yourself a copy of *The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team*, the classic management book by business consultant Patrick Lencioni. The issues you describe are reflected in his “dysfunctional pyramid,”

Learn what roles our Brain Squad members have held that best helped them be the wide-format printer they are today at bigpicturemag.com/roles.

which is divided into five sections. From top to bottom, they read:

1. Inattention to results,
2. avoidance of accountability,
3. lack of commitment,
4. fear of conflict, and underpinning it all,
5. absence of trust.

Like the dysfunctions themselves, the solutions to these five failings apply equally to staff and management. At the risk of oversimplifying Lencioni's work, they are :

1. Focus on outcomes,
2. confront difficult issues,
3. focus on clarity and closure,
4. demand debate, and the big one,
5. be human, and treat your staff like humans. To a lot of bosses, a great culture – i.e., the opposite of a dysfunctional one – is one that motivates employees to work hard even when no one

is watching. This requires trust, which underpins not just the last of these principles but



➔ CONTINUED ON PAGE 71



YOUR RESOURCES

1. What resources outside your business do you utilize to think more creatively?

- ___ **a.** I frequently buy business books. I even read most of them.
- ___ **b.** I read the business section of my local newspaper on an almost-daily basis.
- ___ **c.** My cousin Jack and I always have great ideas when we drink beer and watch the Los Angeles Lakers.
- ___ **d.** Business books, podcasts, webinars, and Mark Cuban videos. I'm even part of a board of advisors consisting of other business owners who share ideas for free.

2. How well do you and your staff keep up with trends in wide-format printing and graphics in general?

- ___ **a.** Well, I suppose all that stuff trickles down to us, eventually, right?
- ___ **b.** We don't have a particularly scientific method, but we're all pretty observant and we "talk shop" a lot.
- ___ **c.** My staff and I regularly "shop the competition," looking for new ideas from businesses both inside and outside of wide-format digital print.

___ **d.** Is honesty a trend? Great service? True craftsmanship? Ha! I spit on your "trends!"

3. Do you give your employees "home-work" and encourage them to think about the business outside the shop?

- ___ **a.** Yes, we give home assignments to all staff – like reading *Big Picture* magazine and business books – and help organize other expeditions on a voluntary basis, like shopping the competition, attending industry events, etc.



- ___ **b.** No, that's a waste of time. I don't want people to get all excited about some new idea and then end up hurting their feelings by rejecting it.
- ___ **c.** I get eight hours a day from them. I wouldn't dare ask any more.
- ___ **d.** Sure do. Working for me is a 24-hour-a-day job and everybody better be on board.

CREATIVE SUPPORT

4. How often do you hold creative meetings?

- ___ **a.** In our weekly meetings, we cover general issues, which will frequently include discussing a new project or strategy.
- ___ **b.** Never. Everybody knows my door's open if they want to approach me with an idea that will make us money. But it had better be a good one!
- ___ **c.** We have a big brainstorming meeting every six weeks that we hold off-site, usually at a restaurant or a park. And we also set aside a portion of our weekly staff meetings to talk about new projects.
- ___ **d.** We don't have regular meetings of any kind, but if something big comes up, I'll call my senior staff in for a strategy session.

5. How can your employees get their new ideas to you?

- ___ **a.** Creativity is required for everyone in our business. I put everyone on the spot and drag those great ideas out of them.
- ___ **b.** A suggestion box. Where do we keep that darn thing, anyway?
- ___ **c.** Meetings, open-door policy, suggestion box (with monthly prizes).
- ___ **d.** They can list them in their resignation letters.

6. How would you typically open a creative meeting with staff and/or consultants?

- ___ **a.** "Okay, uh, I want to make this short, so what was that thing we were going to talk about again?"
- ___ **b.** "Folks, grab a doughnut, take a look at the notes on yesterday's wallcovering install I sent you, put your thoughts together, and let's go around the table."
- ___ **c.** "Everybody have a nice weekend? Anybody hop on Insta to see what our competition is up to?"
- ___ **d.** "I want to start this meeting off with a

little story about how my great-grandfather printed his very first billboard..."

7. How do you go about conducting a brainstorming session?

- ___ **a.** A different person runs the meeting each time, making the responsibility of planning for the meeting easier. The only rule we have is to say what's on your mind, no matter how silly.
- ___ **b.** Free form. The floor is opened. Everybody comes up with their best idea.
- ___ **c.** We go around the table and ask everybody, in order, for their best idea. It's great to see them squirm. Plus, we then have a lot of fun making jokes about the really stupid ideas!
- ___ **d.** Everybody comes up with one idea on the topic and submits it to me privately for review.

8. How do you keep track of ideas?

- ___ **a.** In my head. I figure the good ones will rise to the top.
- ___ **b.** I have a notebook. Everything I see or hear that inspires me is written into it.
- ___ **c.** "Sarah, write this down: 'Rosebud.' Remind me of that when I meet Mrs. Smith next week."
- ___ **d.** The old-fashioned way – by not having them.

FOLLOW THROUGH

9. How do you reward new ideas?

- ___ **a.** Use the good ones, throw away the bad ones. Don't acknowledge either.
- ___ **b.** Use the good ones and offer the originators a big pat on the back.
- ___ **c.** Provide cash or other rewards for good ones, encourage people whose ideas we don't use to keep on working at it.
- ___ **d.** Give the people who originated them the ultimate compliment – act like I was the one who thought them up.

10. After a meeting that produces some solid ideas for a new project, what do you do?

- ___ **a.** Forget about the project. It's out of my hands now.
- ___ **b.** Wait a week to let the people on the project get started, then ask for a full report.
- ___ **c.** Immediately follow up with those

concerned to get the project rolling.

- ___ **d.** Have second thoughts about the whole thing and tell those concerned to put the project on hold until we can have another meeting.

SCORING

1. a. 2 points; b. 1 point; c. 0 points; d. 3 points
2. a. 0 points; b. 2 points; c. 3 points; d. 1 point
3. a. 2 points; b. 0 points; c. 1 point; d. 3 points
4. a. 2 points; b. 0 points; c. 3 points; d. 1 point
5. a. 3 points; b. 1 point; c. 2 points; d. 0 points
6. a. 0 points; b. 3 points; c. 2 points; d. 1 point
7. a. 3 points; b. 2 points; c. 1 point; d. 0 points
8. a. 1 point; b. 3 points; c. 2 points; d. 0 points
9. a. 2 points; b. 3 points; c. 0 points; d. 1 point
10. a. 0 points; b. 2 points; c. 3 points; d. 1 point

YOUR SCORE



0-9. At least no one can accuse you of making changes for change's sake. C'mon – surely there are some aspects of your business you could improve. Your staff has ideas, but you make it impossible for them to communicate them to you.



10-18. You're on the right track, but you're often afraid to make use of your creative resources. "Why mess with a good thing?" you might ask. That's a good point but implementing new ideas doesn't necessarily mean recreating your entire business. Start fostering more creativity among your staff and look for outside sources to give yourself ideas, with an eye toward simply improving on what already works for you.



19-26. You've got a great handle on many creative resources available to you to improve your business; you get the most out of them with structured, yet open discussion and work-shopping; and you follow through on good ideas with hard work and rewards. Keep up the good work!



27-30. Your business makes excellent use of its creative resources, but you may be pushing some employees too hard. Some people just naturally want to find ways to improve a business, while others simply want to perform well in a job they know. Cultivate and reward creative people in creative positions, but acknowledge the value of your steady, no-surprises employees as well.

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all of Lencioni's pyramid. Be clear about your goals and standards and demand excellence, but also give your employees the space they need to do their best work.



Can I compensate extra hours with extra time off rather than with overtime pay?

► Federal law and most states allow you to juggle hours with the employee's consent, but you are nearly always required to pay an overtime premium (usually 50 percent, whether in dollars or minutes). If the staff member works 42 hours in a week, you owe three, not two, hours of time in compensation. You can, however, offer them four 10-hour shifts in a week and not break the 40-hour threshold. California, Colorado, Connecticut, and a few other states use an eight-hour daily overtime standard, so your options are more limited. There are numerous exemptions in the laws, so it's a good idea to check the Department of Labor's website at dol.gov (do a search for "overtime") and with your state labor office.

We let an unsatisfactory employee go. Now a prospective employer wants a reference. What can I say without getting sued?

► Employers get in trouble when they blurt out things they believe to be true – the staff mem-

ber kept calling in sick when they weren't, they shirked work, they were stealing – but then can't back them up in court. We advise keeping it brief and sticking to the facts, even if you live in a state that provides "good faith" protection to employers.

What does the law say about conducting a body search on an employee I suspect of company theft?

► It says keep your hands to yourself. The laws regarding searches (body and workplace) all stem from how the Constitution guarantees American citizens a basic right to privacy – and your employee has a very strong privacy interest in his or her own body. If you have a legitimate concern about theft, call the police. For more information on searches, try *The Essential Guide To Workplace Investigations* by attorney Lisa Guerin.

Being part of a family business is terrific but also really challenging at times. How can we enjoy more of the positive and less of the negative?

► Boundaries and well-defined roles that keep family members clear on what is expected of them can go a long way. If you don't have one yet, put in place a formal business plan (agreed on by everyone) that includes detailed descriptions of each family member's roles and responsibilities, as well as the financial expectations of the business. It's also important to have regular meetings to discuss any issues that may be impacting the business. If communication is an issue, an outside mediator or advisor can provide unbiased and objective advice.





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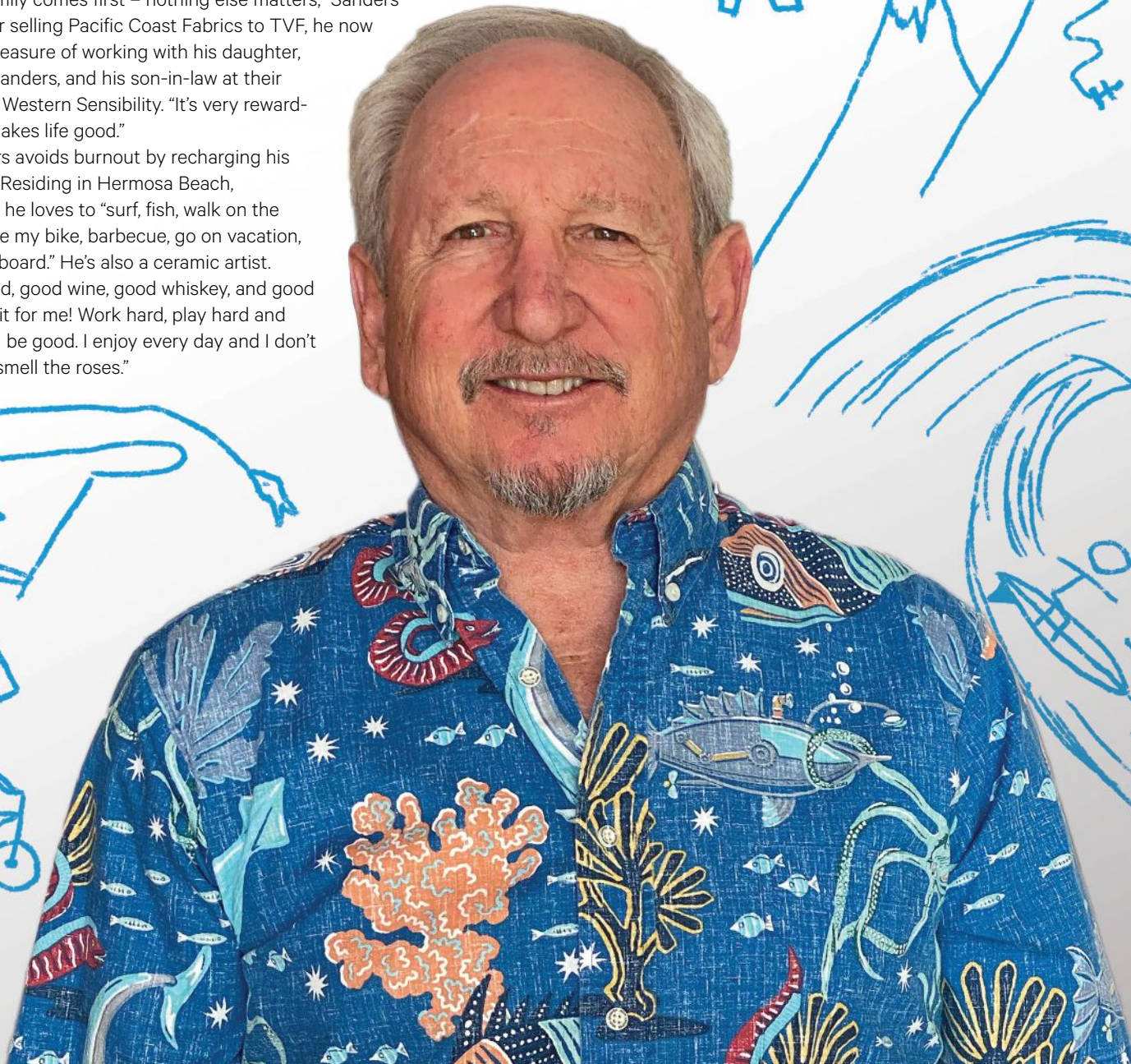
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Michael Sanders' blueprint for a good life is to live by the "Golden Rule," the principle of treating others as you'd like to be treated. His word and his handshake are everything.

At work, his greatest joy is solving problems and making his customers and his business successful. "The relationships come first before the sale," he says. "You need to love what you do and have a passion for it, then you will be successful."

"My family comes first – nothing else matters," Sanders says. After selling Pacific Coast Fabrics to TVF, he now has the pleasure of working with his daughter, Kathryn Sanders, and his son-in-law at their company, Western Sensibility. "It's very rewarding and makes life good."

Sanders avoids burnout by recharging his batteries. Residing in Hermosa Beach, California, he loves to "surf, fish, walk on the beach, ride my bike, barbecue, go on vacation, and snowboard." He's also a ceramic artist. "Good food, good wine, good whiskey, and good music do it for me! Work hard, play hard and things will be good. I enjoy every day and I don't forget to smell the roses."





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