MAY 2025

GRAPHICS PRO

APPAREL DECORATION • AWARDS & CUSTOMIZATION • SIGNAGE • WIDE-FORMAT PRINTING • WRAPS

GRAPHICS-PRO.COM



What's trending in *womenswear*

From T-shirts to caps, what you can expect to see this year in styles, cuts & colors

+

Ink innovations for sign shops

Embroidery success strategies

Photoshop text style tips

Branch out from engraving


ENTERING
TOMBSTONE
ARIZONA
WANTED
REWARD $ 100
To the Artists of Ye


TOMB
STONE
sterday and Today!
SIGNS 365

CLEAR CARRIER.

Real Ink. Real Fast.



NEW

Goof Proof® Premium Screen Printed Transfers

Now you have one more reason to love the world's best-selling screen printed transfers. Same 4-second application, same soft feel, now available on a CLEAR CARRIER so logo placement is a breeze! Perfect for cotton, polyester, and blends.

- 12.5" x 17.5" sheet size
- 26 vibrant ink colors
- Premium matte finish
- Fast 2-day turnaround
- No setup fees
- Great for bulk orders
- Hot peel & low temp
- 50+ industrial wash & dry tested

See the Difference!

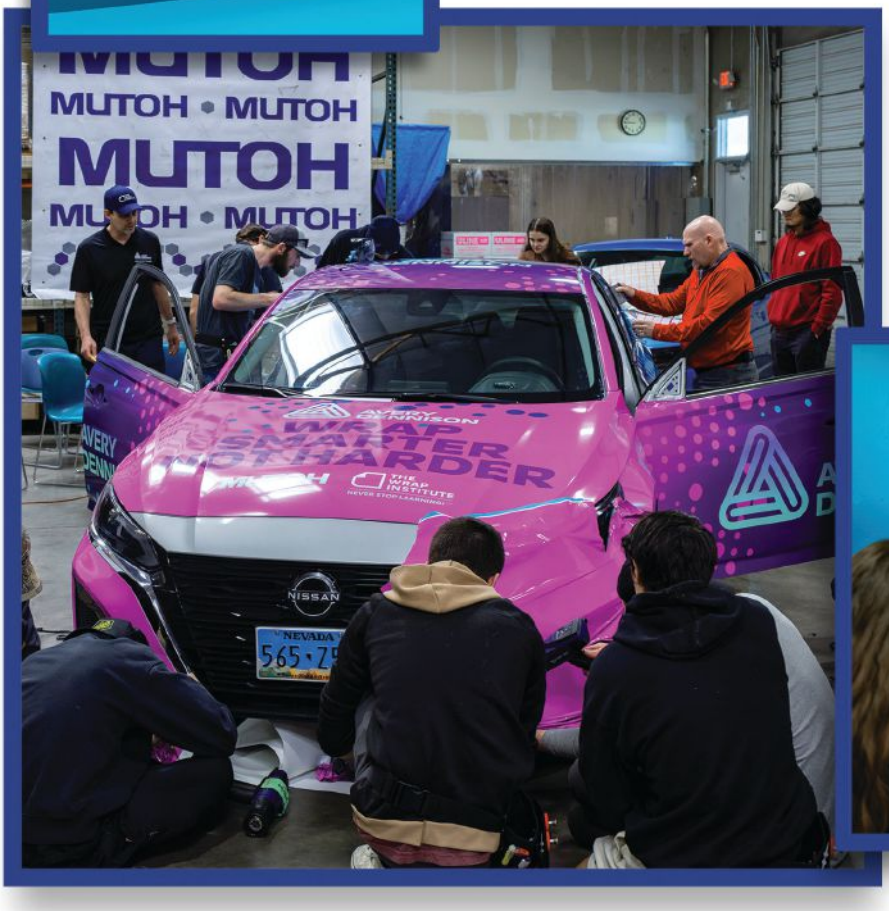
ORDER TODAY

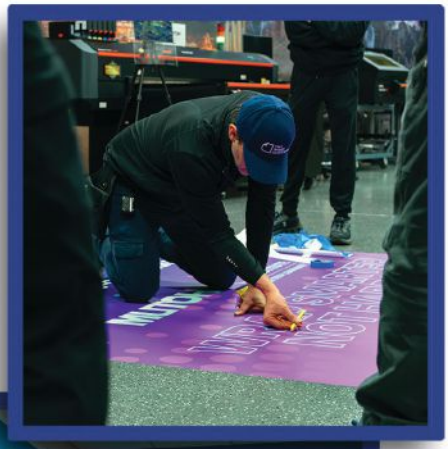
STAHLS' TRANSFER EXPRESS®

800.622.2280 • TRANSFEREXPRESS.COM

BRING YOUR WRAPS TO LIFE
CARS, WALLS & BEYOND









Push boundaries and create stunning designs with the MUTOH XpertJet 1641SR Pro. This reliable, Made in Japan 64" Eco-Solvent printer is built to deliver vibrant, precise results on every wrap, every time. Trusted across the industry and proudly known as "The Wrapper's Choice," MUTOH has also supported the next generation of installers by sponsoring Avery's Full Digital Wrap Training classes for over 12 years.

Take your business to new heights with MUTOH Eco-Solvent printers, packaged with the award-winning Genuine Vertelith RIP Software with FlexiDESIGNER MUTOH Edition 21, valued at $2,199. Explore endless design possibilities and experience the future of printing!

2024 PINNACLE PRODUCT AWARD

"The Wrapper's Choice"
XpertJet 1641SR Pro



XpertJet 1641SR Pro
64" Eco Solvent Printer

ValueCut II 1800
74" Multi-Purpose Cutter

www.MUTOH.com
1.800.99.MUTOH

MUTOH

REQUEST FREE PRINT SAMPLE

GRAPHICS|PRO

CONTENTS

VOLUME 39 | May 2025 | NUMBER 1



17

SIGNAGE & PRINTING

12
Slam dunk: VIVAS Inc. delivers graphics for the NBA All-Star Game
By Ginny Mumm

24
Help realtors maximize signage to market & elevate their businesses
By Caleb & Kendra Price

17
New innovations in ink technology for sign shops
By Bill Schiffner

AWARDS & CUSTOMIZATION

26
A shopkeeper's guide to showcasing crystal awards & gifts
By Natalie Albers

32
The gift of connection: How branded products forge stronger corporate bonds
By Alice McCalla

30
How to branch out from engraving to offer more items
By John Morman



On the Cover:
What's trending in womenswear
(Image courtesy of LAT Apparel)

EDITOR'S NOTE

6
A well-rounded issue
By James Anderson



32

WE HAVE A SOLUTION TO ALL OF YOUR FRAMING NEEDS

GAS PUMP FRAMES
Sell more in your store!™






Eye level mini ads at pump to entice gas pumpers and passengers in the cars to buy in your stores. Easily changeable 5 x 7 and $8^1/_2$ x 11 size ads.

gaspumpframes.com

Pivoting Pole Banner System



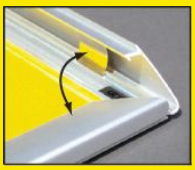
Ban"45" means it pivots 45 degrees to either side to deflect and re-direct the force of high winds off the banner.

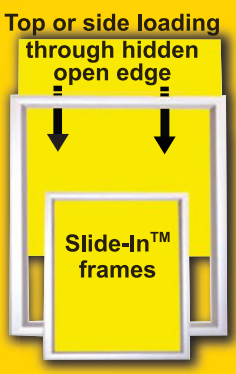
Patents Pending. All Rights Reserved.

ban45.com

FAST CHANGE FRAMES
Easiest way to display graphics!

FlipUp™ front load frame

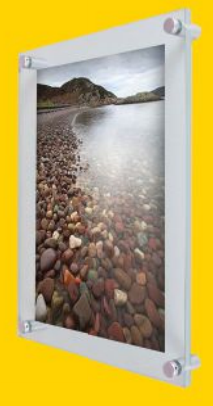




Any Size
1 minimum
Low Cost

NEW LED edge lit frames
Any Size, Any Color
1 Minimum

Acrylic Standoff Frames, any size, any shape.



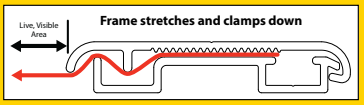
fastchangeframes.com

2 NEW Banner Stretching Frames

Beautiful Banner Display, Wrinkle free, Drum Tight



Only our frame offers perfect linear alignment with our included "Joiner Straps." Longer sections join easily and perfectly for the best results!

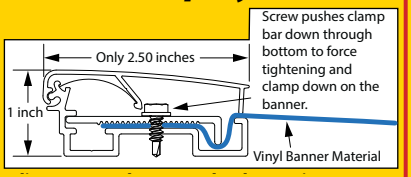






Create large and beautiful, drum-tight stretched vinyl banner displays!

SLIM PROFILE



Flip top snaps down completely covering all screws and stretcher bar. Clean, perfect look!

bannergrip.com **sales@bannergrip.com**



Beautifully display any size banner ! Patented

bannergrip.com

1-800-915-2828 **sales@bannergrip.com**

Easy online ordering 24/7 • Our Intelligent, informed Sales pros answer our phones and respond to your emails. Fast responses!

ALPINA®

Alpina Manufacturing
6460 W. Cortland St. Chicago, IL 60707
ban45.com • gaspumpframes.com • fastchangeframes.com • bannergrip.com

sales@fastchangeframes.com
1-800-915-2828

American Owned
American Made

GRAPHICS|PRO

CONTENTS



58

APPAREL DECORATION

36
What's trending in womenswear
By Paula Aven Gladych

42
Women in screen printing
By Megan Griffith

44
Swing into golf season with headwear
By Jerry Biag

48
Success strategies for embroidery & apparel decoration pros
By Jennifer Cox

52
Fishes with stitches
By Lon Winters

BUSINESS STRATEGIES

54
Finding your fit
By Aaron Montgomery

58
Manipulating type for impact
By Stephen Romaniello

62
The power of the stay interview
By Marshall Atkinson

EXTRAS

8
Industry updates

10
5 questions

16B
GPX news

35
Product picks

FROM OUR PARTNERS

56
Product highlights

64
Marketplace

64
Ad index



36

©2025 Cahaba Media Group Inc., all rights reserved. GRAPHICS PRO (ISSN 2766-953X) is published monthly by Cahaba Media Group Inc., PO Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35223. Periodicals Postage Paid at Birmingham, AL 35223 and additional mailing offices. USPS/Cahaba Media Group Inc. Automatable Poly. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to GRAPHICS PRO, PO Box 460794, Escondido, CA 92046-0794. All items submitted to GRAPHICS PRO become the sole property of GRAPHICS PRO and Cahaba Media Group Inc. and cannot be reproduced without the written consent of the publisher. Advertisers and/or their agencies, jointly and severally, assume all liabilities for printed advertisements in GRAPHICS PRO. Opinions expressed in GRAPHICS PRO not necessarily reflect the opinion of the magazine, its management or its advertisers.
Letters, pictures and manuscripts welcome.

CERTIFIED AUDIENCE PRINTED WITH SOY INK

6Sign

Trade only

We ship from Los Angeles, CA and Boston, MA

Quality, Time, Lowest Price Guarantee

SCAN ME



Adhesive Products

Start from $0.99/sqft



13oz Vinyl Banner

$0.79/sqft



Standard Retractable Banner

Start from $39



DTF Gang Sheet

$1.49/sqft

Sublimation - Rigid signs - Tradeshow displays



James Anderson is the editor-in-chief of GRAPHICS PRO magazine. He can be reached at janderson@cahabamedia.com.

A well-rounded issue

I've said this in past issues, but in our line of work in trade journal publishing, and at GRAPHICS PRO in particular, there's a real sense of accomplishment as a well-rounded issue takes shape. We strive for that feeling every month, but there are times, I'm sure, that we've missed the mark. While most of our readers cross over from one graphics industry vertical to another, others are focused on just one topic and look to this publication for business tips and strategies. With this in mind, we're conscious of serving readers in signage and wide-format printing, apparel decoration, awards and customization, wraps, and more. In my opinion, this issue does a good job of touching on each of the graphics industry categories we cover.

On page 12, Ginny Mumm kicks off our signage and printing section with a project feature on VIVAS Inc., which provided graphics for this year's NBA All-Star Game. Continuing a wide-format printing focus for sign shops, Bill Schiffner, takes an in-depth look at developments in ink systems technologies (p. 17).

Our awards and customization section features an article from Natalie Albers on how to best showcase crystal awards and gifts (p. 26), and recommendations from regular contributor John Mormon on how to expand upon existing engraving business offerings (p. 30).

This month's cover story by Paula Aven Gladych (p. 36) looks at the latest trends in womenswear, and how apparel decorating shops can stay connected to this critical market. And while womenswear is seen as a crucial product category for apparel shops, we need to also acknowledge the contributions of women in our industry, from artists and creators, executives and business owners, and more. Megan Griffith shares her experience as a woman in the screen-printing field on page 42. I appreciate her candid response to our questions and encourage everyone, regardless of which industry you serve, to read her article. Jennifer Cox, of the National Network of Embroidery Professionals, shares success strategies for apparel decoration pros on page 48.

In our business strategies section, Aaron Montgomery continues the womenswear theme and shares tips for building a womenswear niche for your shop (p. 54). On page 58, Stephen Romaniello dives deep into type manipulation tactics for Photoshop, and on page 62, Marshall Atkinson shares how interviewing current employees on why they stay at your company can improve not only employee relationships, but hiring as well.

All in all, I think that's a pretty well-rounded issue. And that's only the articles I've pointed out here. There's plenty more within these pages that I hope you'll find value in. If there's anything we left out, I encourage you to send me an email at janderson@cahabamedia.com.



James Anderson
Editor-in-Chief

GRAPHICS|PRO
GRAPHICS|PRO|EXPO
GRAPHICS-PRO.COM

Editor-in-Chief
James Anderson
janderson@cahabamedia.com

Managing Editor
Marie Fennema
mfennema@cahabamedia.com

Senior Account Executive
Ryan Applebaum
rapplebaum@cahabamedia.com

Account Executive
Seth Messer
smesser@cahabamedia.com

Account Executive – GPX
Katie Ditallo
kditallo@cahabamedia.com

Account Executive – GPX
Leigh Ann Messer
lmesser@cahabamedia.com

Art Director
Iveth Gomez
igomez@cahabamedia.com

Web Designer
Charlie Fox
cfox@cahabamedia.com

Client Services Coordinator (Advertising)
Sonya Crocker
scrocker@cahabamedia.com

Contributing Writers
Ginny Mumm, Bill Schiffner, Caleb & Kendra Price, Natalie Albers, John Morman, Alice McCalla, Paula Aven Gladych, Megan Griffith, Jerry Biag, Jennifer Cox, Lon Winters, Aaron Montgomery, Stephen Romaniello, Marshall Atkinson

Event Operations Manager
Jackie Ramsier
jramsier@cahabamedia.com

Event Services Coordinator
Joie Martin
jmartin@cahabamedia.com

Subscription Changes & Inquiries:
graphicspro@omeda.com

CAHABA MEDIA GROUP
PO Box 530067, Birmingham, AL 35253

Publisher
Matthew G. Conroy

VP of Sales
Greg Meineke

VP of Finance
Brandon Whittemore

Director of Content
Elizabeth Manning

Director of Operations
Laurie Tisdale

Director of Sales
Stacy Marshall

FLEXFIT

UNIPANEL™

BOUNDLESS EXPRESSION



5511UP

FLEXFIT TECH

PERMACURV

MESH FLEXFIT

UNIPANEL

ONE PERFECT PANEL. ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.

A stitchless front panel engineered for comfort with Flexfit® technology, now with a patented seamless front canvas – ready for completion. Designed for endless customization with a clean, comfortable, and structured fit, its ultra-smooth surface surface ensures effortless decoration and high-end custom results.

SHOP UNIPANEL™

YP Classics® and FLEXFIT® are registered trademarks of YUPOONG INC. | FLEXFIT.COM | @FLEXFIT

NEW HIRES & PROMOTIONS



Lino Nunez
Nazdar Ink Technologies

Lino Nunez has been appointed as narrow web technical application manager at **Nazdar Ink Technologies**. Nunez has 29 years of experience in the ink and print industry, with a focus on print production, ink manufacturing, sales, technical service, and customer support. In this role, Nunez will be responsible for technical service and field support for the flexographic narrow web market.



Kendall Whitley
S&S Activewear

Kendall Whitley has been hired as vice president of team sales for **S&S Activewear**. In this role, Whitley will develop and implement strategic sales initiatives to drive growth. He brings experience from executive roles at companies such as Converse and Adidas. He will report directly to **Toby Whitmoyer**, chief commercial officer.



David Sinner
swissQprint America

David Sinner has been added to **swissQprint America's** sales team as the new sales manager for the Central territory. Sinner joined the U.S. branch of swissQprint, headquartered in Elgin, Illinois. He will be responsible for swissQprint sales in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Avery Dennison recently honored its individual employees and teams that received a 2024 ADF Leadership Excellence Award through the **Avery Dennison Foundation**.

Epson announced several of its solutions products received Good Design Awards, including five printers and the auto chart reader portable accessory. Epson also received five 2025 iF Design Awards, earning recognition for three printer models, one projector, and the auto chart reader portable accessory.

Cheryl Goel, **Jessica D'Costa**, and **Joshua D'Costa**, owners of **Minuteman Press** franchise in Houston, joined the Minuteman Press International President's Club as they achieved close to $2 million in gross sales for the year ending 2024.

Inkcups announced that seven inks from its SB Eco Series eco-friendly pad printing ink line have received the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) Certification, under version 7.0.

GIVING BACK

LAT Apparel continues its history of community support through its donation of Live & Tell and Rabbit Skins T-shirts to **Bert's Big Adventure**, a nonprofit organization that provides chronically and terminally ill children with an all-expenses-paid trip to Walt Disney World.

SanMar Corporation, a supplier of wholesale accessories and apparel, announced its role as the presenting sponsor of Seattle's **Beat the Bridge**, a Type 1 diabetes charity race now in its 43rd year.

Atlantis Headwear sponsored **Settimana Della Sostenibilita** (Sustainability Week), which is hosted by the Confederation of Industries of Eastern Veneto and took place March 25-28 in Mogliano, Veneto, Italy.

Allegra Marketing and **Image360 Markham** partnered with **One Tree Planted** and sponsored the planting of 2,500 trees as part of their 50th anniversary.

Imperial announced a special collaboration with PGA Tour player and Imperial brand ambassador **Keith Mitchell**, global tech leader **Cisco**, and sportswear brand **Mizuno**. Together, they've created the exclusive Keith Mitchell charity game tour visor, with all proceeds being donated to the **Nantz National Alzheimer's Center**.

Charles River Apparel has announced new partnerships with **All Hands and Hearts**, **American Rivers**, and the **Pan-Mass Challenge**, further expanding its long-standing **Charles River Cares** program.

Alliance Franchise Brands partnered with **Halifax Humane Society**, a nonprofit open-door animal shelter based in Daytona, Florida.

Have news to share? Email gpeditorial@cahabamedia.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GPX Indianapolis
June 19-21
Indianapolis, Indiana
g-p-x.com/in

Colorways
August 14-15
Chicago, Illinois
mscprinthouse.com/colorways

GPX Long Beach
August 21-23
Long Beach, California
g-p-x.com/ca

GPX Meadowlands
September 12-13
Meadowlands, New Jersey
g-p-x.com/nj

GPX Charlotte
November 6-8
Charlotte, North Carolina
g-p-x.com/nc

WEBINARS

Xante
May 8

ColDesi
May 28

Gravotech
July 10

Xante
July 24

ASI
August 7

ColDesi
August 21

Equipment Zone
September 25

Xante
October 2

ColDesi
November 13

All times 12 p.m. CST
Register at **gpro.link/webinars**

INDUSTRY UPDATES

NEW HIRES & PROMOTIONS



Lorenza Sartorelli
CHT Group

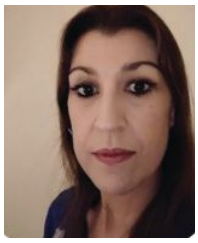
Dr. Lorenza Sartorelli joined **CTH Group's** management board as chief operating officer. With this appointment, Sartorelli completes the board, which consists of Chief Financial Officer **Dr. Christian Rink** and CEO **Eva Baumann**. As COO, Sartorelli will focus her responsibilities on the sustainable global alignment of the CHT Group's operational functions.



Michael Johnston
DPI Laboratory

Michael Johnstone has been appointed as senior sales consultant for **DPI Laboratory**. An industry veteran with over 30 years of experience, Johnstone will focus on developing and maintaining strong client relationships, identifying new business opportunities, and providing exceptional customer service.





Craig Mason & Hannah Soobhany
shopVOX

shopVOX launched a dedicated team based in Australia to better support its growing client base across Australia and New Zealand. Joining the team are **Craig Mason** and **Hannah Soobhany**, two seasoned professionals with experience in signage, manufacturing, and business digital transformations. Mason, a leader in the signage and franchising industry, brings over two decades of experience as a successful business owner, mentor, and systems expert. Soobhany also joins the team with signage industry knowledge, having worked both in signage materials supply and business systems implementation.

NEW BUSINESSES

Big Frog Custom T-Shirts & More, a provider of custom apparel franchising, announced its latest independently owned and operated store in Flower Mound, Texas, owned by local entrepreneurs and longtime friends **Mike Moore** and **Paul Julbes**.

Minuteman Press celebrated the grand opening of a new franchise in Tempe, Arizona; owners **Willie** and **Capri Price** look forward to tapping into new markets and expanding their reach.

ANNIVERSARIES

Plaskolite, a provider of engineering thermoplastics, proudly marked its 75th anniversary.

Q-Tees, a manufacturer and importer of tote bags, aprons, and towels, celebrated its 35th anniversary.

Vantage Apparel, a supplier of custom-branded apparel, celebrated 20 years of its **Vansport** line.

5 questions with... Susan Caldwell



Susan Caldwell is product manager - printing safety compliance at GMG EnviroSafe.

1 You're a product manager in tune with the printing industry at GMG EnviroSafe. Can you tell us a little about your role?

I provide printing industry-specific expertise to help shape assessments and ensure they reflect current industry challenges and best practices of developing safety cultures in the printing industry. I work to build relationships with industry leaders, organizations, and associations.

2 How did you get into this line of work?

My experience as a National PrintEd Certified Instructor for high school students, combined with my background in environmental management systems and health and safety management, uniquely positioned me to emphasize the importance of safety to my students. My transition to GMG EnviroSafe in 2023 to foster safety cultures in printing companies highlights my commitment to not just individual education, but also to the broader industry.

3 From your perspective, what are the biggest concerns facing the printing industry today?

There are several: lack of a written program, insufficient training, resource allocation, regulatory changes, and environmental concerns, as well as hiring and retaining qualified employees in the print industry.

4 With President Trump's administration focused on pulling back regulations, what kind of changes can print shops expect?

There have been efforts to roll back various environmental regulations. Print shops that use chemicals and inks may have seen changes in regulations regarding waste disposal, emissions, and the use of certain materials. While some regulatory changes could ease operations and reduce costs for print shops, others could raise concerns about safety and environmental impact. Each shop would need to evaluate how these changes specifically affect their operations and compliance.

5 GRAPHICS PRO readers often cross over into other trades as well as printing. What does your company offer for those more focused on engraving or apparel decoration?

As always, GMG EnviroSafe works to develop a safety culture within printing communities and works to ensure worker safety. With the apparel industry, we work to stay on top of PFAS laws and how these laws affect the industry for regulatory fines and environmental issues. With engraving, we look to make sure the industry is maintaining safety for its work force and also working to ensure they are environmentally compliant in the U.S. Making sure we are taking care of our environment and workers' safety is our No. 1 goal at GMG EnviroSafe. GP

Know someone who should be featured on this page?

Email gpeditorial@cahabamedia.com.

Scan to see Susan live at GPX Indianapolis in June.



S&S ACTIVEWEAR

1 Website
1 Purchase Order
100+ Brands

Your Go-To Partner for Apparel & Accessories

Scan to learn more about the S&S x alphabroder integration.

Widest Product Assortment

With 100+ brands, 20+ exclusive to S&S, you can streamline your ordering and operations by accessing all the brands you know and love on one easy-to-use website.

14 Distribution Centers Nationwide and World Class Automation

Our acquisition of alphabroder strengthens distribution, expands coverage, boosts inventory, and enhances service nationwide. We're also considering new facilities, especially in the West, for better service.

Most Accurate Order Fulfillment in the Industry

With an order error rate of **less than 0.01%**, you can rest easy knowing the goods you need will arrive as expected.

Inc. Best in Business — Awarded Inc. Best in Business 2024

S&S has been recognized in Inc.'s Best in Business Awards in the Operational Excellence category. This honor celebrates our cutting-edge work in automation and robotics within our distribution facilities.

adidas · ALLPRO · American Apparel · ANETIK · AUGUSTA SPORTSWEAR · Badger SPORT
BERNE · BELLA+CANVAS · bigaccessories · Columbia · C2 SPORT · COMFORT COLORS
CORE365 · DEVON & JONES · Dickies · econscious · FLEXFIT · GILDAN
HARRITON · HOLLOWAY · Huk · Imperial · INDEPENDENT · JAANUU
KISHIGO Quality that reflects · LEGACY · Liberty Bags · Live & Tell BY L.A.T. · M&O T-shirts · nomadix
NORTH END · OAKLEY · Paragon · PUMA · Q-TEES APRONS BAGS TOWELS · RICHARDSON
SPYDER · SWANNIES GOLF · TEAM 365 · TRIDRI · tultex · UNDER ARMOUR
YP CLASSICS

...and more!

Images courtesy of Roland DGA

SLAM DUNK:

VIVAS Inc. delivers graphics for the NBA All-Star Game

How Luis Vivas of VIVAS Inc. took on this high-profile project on a very tight deadline

By Ginny Mumm

No stranger to big projects, Luis Vivas, founder and CEO of VIVAS Inc. in San Francisco, recently completed a high-profile set of graphics on a very tight deadline for the 2025 NBA All-Star Game.

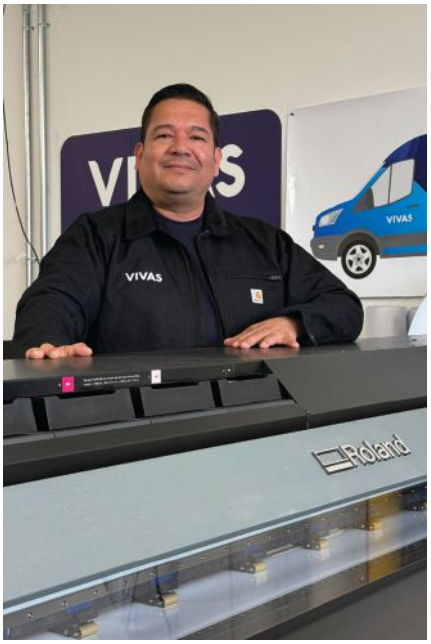
We talked with Vivas about how they landed the project, what elements were required, and how they managed to produce and install approximately 8,000 square feet of graphics in two short weeks.

Q: How did you win this exciting project?

A: This opportunity came to us as a result of the printing and branding work we completed for the 2024 NBA events. Additionally, over the past year, we've made significant improvements to our website, optimized our keywords, and enhanced our digital marketing efforts. These changes have helped increase our visibility and offer additional proof to new and existing clients of our ability to execute exciting projects like this one.

Q: What was the timeline you were working with?

A: It was an intense project that lasted two weeks, running right up until the day before the event. Given the scale of the project and the many last-minute additions, we had to work efficiently to meet deadlines.



At 7 a.m. on a Friday, two weeks out, our clients ordered six double-sided pole banners measuring 5' X 14', and 12 5' X 5' decals of the NBA All-Star Game logo — all needed that day by 6 p.m.

For this portion of the project, we used our Roland DG TrueVIS AP-640 latex printer to produce the pole banners and ran the logo decals on our TrueVIS VG3-640 eco-solvent printer/cutter. These graphics were completed at 4 p.m. and delivered at 5 p.m. Without our Roland DG printers, we could not have made it happen.

Q: How did you break down the project in terms of production and installation?

A: With two project managers, myself and Jefferson Vertiz, we were able to divide responsibilities effectively. We formed dedicated production and installation teams, allowing us to manage multiple simultaneous rush projects without compromising quality or missing any deadlines.

Q: Did the scope of the project expand as you worked on it, or was it pretty much as initially planned?

A: The project kept expanding as we went. Our NBA clients kept adding elements, and new clients, such as event sponsors, came in through

recommendations from those we were already working with. This made the project even more dynamic and exciting.

Q: What were the graphic elements you produced?

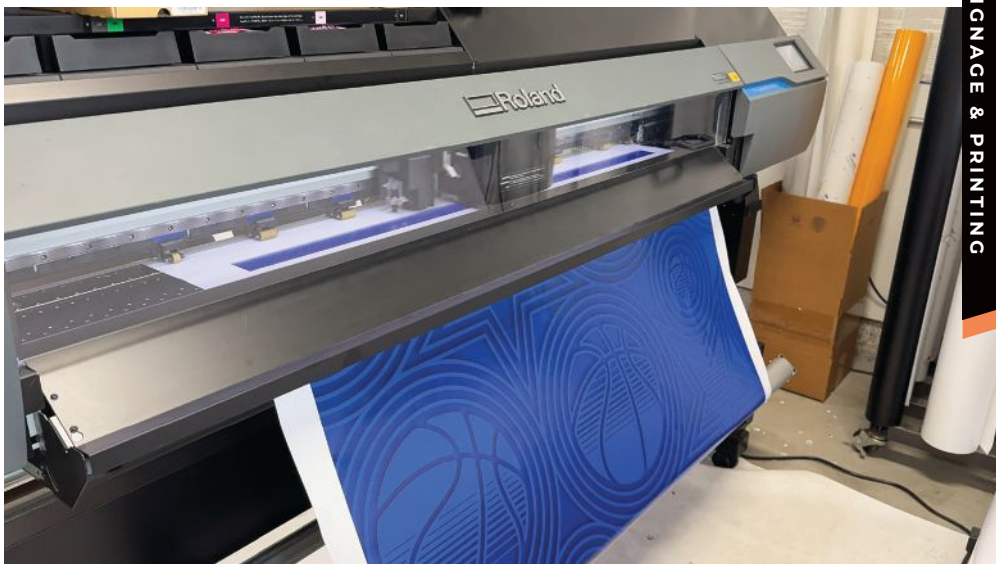
A: We worked on a wide range of elements, including wall graphics, window graphics, and banners, as well as signs on foamcore, acrylic, and PVC, decals, and more. Each piece contributed to creating a cohesive and impactful visual identity for the event.

Q: Given the wide scope of this project, which printers did you use to complete the various elements?

A: We used our Roland DG TrueVIS VG3-640 and VG2-640 eco-solvent printer/cutters, as well as our TrueVIS AP-640 latex printer. Having both ink technologies operating with VersaWorks RIP software and True Rich Color presets made it easy to hit brand colors across a variety of media and allowed us to choose the best device for each element of the project. We were able to provide excellent and consistent quality, along with precision and efficiency, which were essential for a project of this scale.

Q: What media did you use?

A: We worked with a variety of high-quality materials, including 3M vinyl 40C and matte lamination 8510, General Formulations optically clear media, and HEXIS decals, along with







foamcore, acrylic, and vinyl banner media. Each of these materials was selected to ensure a premium look and durability throughout the event.

Q: How did you choose the output devices for each part of the project?

A: With such a large volume of graphics required and the short turnaround, there was no time for color proofs — the NBA clients had to trust us — and by having three printers in-house, each with True Rich Color presets, we got the colors we needed. Having a range of devices also contributed to our efficiency and enabled us to deliver various elements on time, often the same day.

We chose to use our Roland DG TrueVIS VG2 and VG3 eco-solvent printers to produce most of the graphics because of their color vibrancy, durability, and fast production capabilities. Eco-solvent inks provided the best balance of quality and efficiency for many elements of this project.

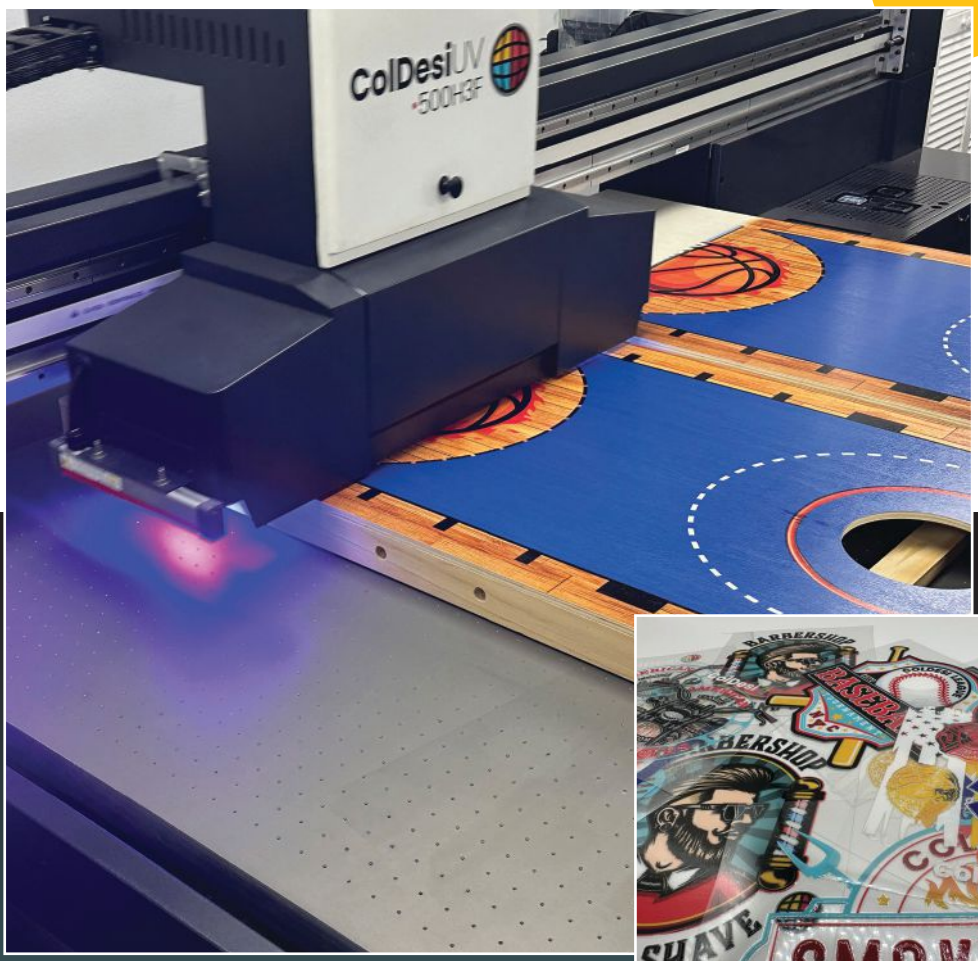
We also used our TrueVIS AP-640 latex printer, which also provided outstanding speed and quality, to deliver graphics that were dry and ready to go within the tight deadlines set.

Q: How important was color matching?

A: Color accuracy was crucial for maintaining NBA brand consistency. We used Roland DG's color management system to ensure perfect color matching across all materials.

The Roland DG printers enabled us to achieve exceptional graphic results. The precision, color range, and consistency of these machines, as well as their ability to handle large print volumes under tight deadlines, allowed us to execute this demanding project successfully.

FREE • MAY 29
12 P.M. CENTRAL



Print in a New Light: UV & UV DTF for Labels, Signage, and Hard Surface Customization

GRAPHICS|PRO webinar

The future of customization is here—and it's powered by UV light.

In this educational session, we'll explore how UV and UV DTF printing are transforming the way professionals create signage, labels, and branded products. You'll learn how these technologies are replacing older methods like vinyl, sublimation, pad printing, and even screen printing—delivering faster production, broader material compatibility, and full-color results.

Whether you're customizing hard goods, branding promotional items, or rethinking your sign production workflow, this webinar will give you a clear understanding of why UV and UV DTF are becoming the go-to solutions for modern customization.

SPEAKER



Marc Vila
Director of Marketing
ColDesi

Sponsored by

ColDesi
Achieving Dreams Together

REGISTER AT
GRAPHICS-PRO.COM/WEBINARS





Q: Do you have an estimate of the total square footage printed for this project?

A: The total square footage was approximately 8,000 square feet, but it felt like we wrapped all of San Francisco in vinyl!

Q: How often do you get rush jobs for events, both large and small, and how often are you able to take them on?

A: We handle rush projects frequently, and this experience has reinforced that we are fully prepared for these types of high-pressure events with tight deadlines. Our talented team, the advanced devices we use, and our efficient workflow allow us to take on these types of jobs without hesitation and exceed the expectations of our clients.

Our team was dedicated to producing excellent graphics for this important event, and having the right equipment makes all the difference. The NBA coordinator and client told us that they had never seen a printing company stay open 24 hours to accomplish production for the NBA All-Star Game weekend.

Q: How were the graphics received?

A: The response was overwhelmingly positive. The NBA's production team, event organizers, and even sponsors were thrilled with how everything turned out. Many of them complimented us on the vibrancy of the graphics and the attention to detail. It was extremely rewarding to see our work make such a strong impact at such a prestigious event.

Q: What lies ahead for VIVAS Inc.?

A: This project was a testament to the strength of our team, the preparation we've invested in, and the experience we've gained over the years. Being able to meet the demands of such a large-scale event on short notice reinforced the importance of having a solid workflow, the right people, and high-quality equipment. This opportunity has pushed our business to new levels, and we're excited for what's next! **GP**



Ginny Mumm is a freelance consultant for digital inkjet printer/cutter provider Roland DGA. For more information, visit rolanddga.com.

Introducing GPX Ambassadors – Indy 2025

Get Involved! Apply Now:

In 2025, we're inviting you to get involved with GRAPHICS PRO EXPO in your region and help us bring you the most relevant education, improve our show features, and collaborate with exhibitors to provide you with everything you need to grow your business. We're on the hunt for graphics industry professionals and GPX attendees who want to work with our team to provide feedback and new ideas on what they really need at their regional GPX trade show.

Who

Whether you're a longtime attendee, an industry rookie looking to make connections, or just someone who enjoys networking and giving back to the industry, we would love to work with you! We're looking for attendees who have a home base in each of our five cities who love connecting with others in the graphics market, have a strong presence in their local communities, and are excited to share their knowledge.



What

Here's what you can expect as a GPX ambassador:

- **Referrals:** Promote your participation in the event and help us reach new and potential attendees in your local market
- **Input:** Work with our show team to give us valuable feedback and ideas for what you would like to see more of at the show
- **Networking:** Engage with other attendees at the show and participate in demos where applicable
- **Future improvements:** Collaborate with our team post-event to connect attendees to our partner publication, GRAPHICS PRO, and help us improve future GPX events

What you'll come away with:

- Exclusive GPX swag
- Insider training and networking
- Social media spotlights and recognition
- Dinner with the team at your local GPX trade show
- Referral rewards for "Top 3" GPX Indy Ambassadors

When & Where

GPX will be held in five locations this year, with four cities left in its lineup for 2025:

- Indianapolis, Indiana: June 19-21
- Long Beach, California: Aug. 21-23
- Meadowlands, New Jersey: Sept. 12-13
- Charlotte, North Carolina: Nov. 6-8



Experience GPX

in **Indianapolis, IN**
June 19-21, 2025
Classes start June 18

Get hands-on experience and learn from the best at GPX University and WRAPSCON University.

WRAPSCON UNIVERSITY

GPX UNIVERSITY

Register now!

For more information and to view all 2025 show dates and locations, visit **g-p-x.com**

After you register, be sure to check out our new app for all the latest show info!

New innovations in ink technology for sign shops

By Bill Schiffner

Image courtesy of Canon USA



As wide-format inkjet printers continue to become more powerful and complex in terms of speed and what types of jobs they can produce, shop owners still need to keep their investments up and running and well-maintained. This is especially true when it comes to the unit's ink system. Recent innovations in wide-format printer ink technologies have significantly enhanced performance and versatility.

"Ten years ago, signage printers (solvent or UV) were not capable of producing the higher-quality applications, expanded color gamut, or durability they are today," said Reed Hecht, group product manager, Professional Imaging at Epson America. "This is in large part due to the improvements in ink formulas and printhead capabilities that have resulted in better color capabilities, durability, media compatibility — all which led to improving overall print quality and expanded applications," he added.



The SureColor R5070L 64" resin printer leverages multipurpose resin ink technology to deliver wallpapers, fabrics, uncoated papers, and traditional signage. (Image courtesy of Epson America Inc.)

More color options

"One major trend is that solvent inks expanded their color gamut by adding additional colors such as green and improved print speeds," reported Patrick Donigain, senior manager, LFP Business Planning & Strategy Group at Canon USA.

He pointed out that resin and latex inks offer environmentally-friendly options and have adopted the use of additional consumables such as optimizers and overcoats to improve dot gain control and scratch resistance.

"In addition, UV inks have evolved with greater adhesion and increased stretch. UV-gel inks combine UV curing principles with gel-based formulations, enabling instant curing, precise dot control, high print speeds, and versatile finishes like matte and gloss. These advancements collectively boost productivity and print quality across diverse applications," he explained.



Ink configuration on the Canon Colorado M series.



UV-gel is a technology that combines all the advantages of traditional ink technologies while, at the same time, eliminating many of their limitations. It's a unique "print-then-cure" technology with instant-dry gel inks, cured with UV LED lights.



Canon's Colorado M-series is a modular roll-to-roll printer with two-speed configurations that is also available with UV-gel white ink, boosting the printer's productivity and expanding the range of applications shops can create. (Images courtesy of Canon USA)

Sohil Singh, president of business development at StratoJet USA said the printing industry is undergoing remarkable transformations, with advancements in ink technology leading the charge. "From improving performance to addressing environmental concerns, ink manufacturers are developing formulations that cater to modern demands. There have been significant improvements in ink formulas, the types of inks suitable for different printing systems and applications, and essential maintenance practices to ensure excellent print performance."

Singh noted that ink manufacturers are developing inks with better durability, adhesion, and versatility. "Modern inks adhere more effectively to various substrates, including plastics, textiles, and metals, ensuring superior resistance to environmental factors such as UV rays and moisture."

"At the same time, eco-friendliness is a key focus, with water-based and soy-based inks reducing volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions. Innovations in pigment formulations are also contributing to richer, more vibrant colors, while faster drying times, achieved through UV-curable inks, are enhancing productivity in high-demand industries," he added.

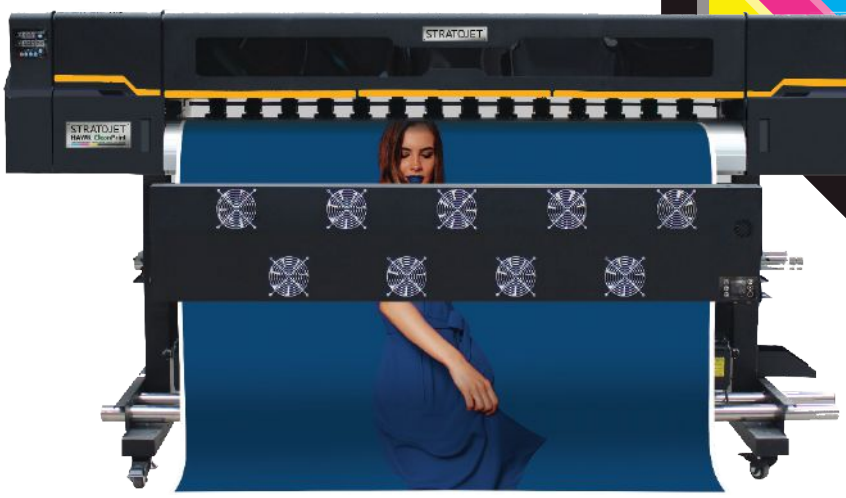
Brian Phipps, president and general manager at MUTOH America, agreed that ink manufacturers are making major strides in several key areas to enhance performance and meet evolving industry demands.



The ultra-productive SureColor V7000 4' X 8' UV printer touts 10-color UltraChrome UV ink including vivid red ink, gray, opaque white ink, and eye-catching varnish, it delivers bright, colorful, tactile prints with low graininess and smooth gradation.

(Images courtesy of Epson America Inc.)

Purpose-built for round-the-clock productivity, the SureColor F9570H dye-sublimation printer leverages UltraChrome DS ink to deliver high-quality, sellable prints with exceptional color. Its expanded 6-color ink set offers multiple configurations — CMYK plus light cyan and light magenta for smooth gradients, fluorescent pink and yellow for brightness, or orange and violet for a wider gamut — ideal for transfer printing in sports apparel, fashion, home decor, promotional products, and soft signage.



The StratoJet Hawk CleanPrint is a roll-to-roll printer using synthetic water-based inks. (Image courtesy of StratoJet USA)

Eco-solvent ink

"Eco-solvent inks are seeing improvements in cure time, specifically in reducing the 'outgas' period before applying an overlaminate," Phipps pointed out.

"Outgassing is critical to prevent silvering and separation. Traditional inks, depending on the vinyl manufacturer, recommend up to 24 hours of outgassing time before lamination. The big push as of late is getting toward the concept of 'same day' lamination or printing a piece in the morning and laminating before leaving for the day. Printer manufacturers have been working on ink chemistry, in tandem with vinyl manufacturers modifying the coatings, in some cases, outgassing has been reduced to six to eight hours," explained Phipps.

He said that MUTOH's eco-solvent ink is GREENGUARD Gold certified; this certification provides assurance that these inks meet stringent and comprehensive standards for low emissions of VOCs into indoor air. "Prints made with [these] inks are perfectly suited for indoor applications including office, classroom, and health care environments."

UV ink

Phipps said a major improvement ink manufacturers are making to their UV inks is a longer shelf life, ensuring inks remain stable and usable for extended periods, reducing waste and costs. Additionally, an expanded color gamut allows for richer, more vibrant hues, providing greater accuracy and consistency in high-end printing applications.

MUTOH offers two distinct UV ink formulations to meet different application needs, Phipps noted.

"Rigid ink is designed for adhesion and durability on rigid materials like acrylic, glass, wood, metal, and PVC. It delivers high-opacity white ink, making it ideal for backlit and multilayer printing applications. Rigid ink is optimized for sharp detail, vibrant colors, and long-term outdoor performance, making it a top choice for ADA-compliant Braille signage, industrial labeling, and promotional products."

He continued, "The other is flexible ink, which is engineered for applications requiring flexibility and stretch. Flexible ink adheres to curved, flexible, and roll-to-roll substrates. It prevents cracking or peeling, making it perfect for packaging, soft signage, and vehicle graphics. Additionally, it maintains excellent abrasion resistance and color stability, ensuring prints remain durable even under stress."

Dye sublimation

Phipps said that dye-sublimation inks always seem to push the boundaries of a higher release with as little ink





Ink configuration on the MUTOH XpertJet 1682SR Pro has an optional eight-color (CMYKLcLmLkOr) ink configuration. (Images courtesy of MUTOH America Inc.)



UH21 rigid ink is recommended for adhesion and durability on rigid materials like acrylic, glass, wood, metal, and PVC. It delivers high-opacity white ink, making it ideal for backlit and multilayer printing applications .



density as possible. "As dye-sublimation can become a waste-heavy, minimum-margin enterprise, using an ink formulation that releases more ink from the transfer paper and therefore allows less to be thrown away is key."

Phipps noted that MUTOH's dye-sublimation ink is engineered for high transfer efficiency, allowing for maximum color vibrancy with minimal ink consumption. "This results in reduced waste and lower production costs while maintaining sharp, vivid prints. [These] inks provide outstanding washability and colorfastness, ensuring that textiles and soft signage retain their brilliance even after repeated washing. These inks are also designed for smooth operation in MUTOH's printers, reducing nozzle clogging and improving overall print consistency."

The right system for the right job

Different printing systems require specific inks for optimal performance and longevity. Phipps said, for example, that piezoelectric printhead systems offer versatility and precision, supporting UV, dye-sublimation, eco-solvent, and multipurpose inks.

"UV inks cure instantly under UV light, making them ideal for both rigid and flexible substrates. Dye-sublimation inks produce vibrant, long-lasting prints on textiles and coated materials, ensuring sharp detail and high color release efficiency. Eco-solvent inks deliver durable, weather-resistant prints, making them the preferred choice for signage, vehicle wraps, and outdoor graphics. Multi-purpose inks provide flexibility across different applications, ensuring strong adhesion and high-quality results on various substrates," he explained.

When looking at applications, Donigain said that UV-cured inks are perfect for durable, versatile applications like signage and packaging due to their vibrant colors and quick curing. "Textile inks such as dye-sublimation and direct disperse dye inks are ideal for soft signage and apparel, offering vibrant colors. Latex, eco-solvent, and UV-gel inks are great for indoor/outdoor signage, vehicle wraps, and trade show displays," he added.

Singh said when it comes to matching inks with printing systems, a thoughtful selection is crucial. "For example, dye-based inks excel in delivering vivid colors for inkjet printers, while pigment-based inks offer durability and water resistance. Offset printing benefits from oil-based inks, which produce sharp and consistent images. In screen printing, plastisol inks dominate textile printing, whereas water-based inks cater to eco-conscious applications."

"For specific applications, UV-curable ink is a game changer, offering durability and color vibrancy on rigid substrates like glass, acrylic, and metal. Clean/latex/resin inks are versatile and eco-friendly, making them ideal for both indoor and outdoor applications," he added.

Phipps agreed that the best ink choice depends on the printer type and application, and using the proper ink formulations ensures exceptional performance, durability, and color accuracy across all printing needs.

It's all about the printheads

Roberts noted that when choosing the best inks for specific printing applications such as UV-cure, textile, latex, and eco-solvent, it's essential to consider how the ink



TH inks, made exclusively for use with Roland DG's TrueVIS XP-640 eco-solvent printer offer an expanded gamut (including red ink). The XP-640 features two staggered printheads that eject finer ink droplets at higher densities for high-resolution output with fewer passes and reduced ink consumption. (Image courtesy of Roland DGA)

formulation interacts with the brand of printhead. "As both the manufacturer of the printers and the inks, we design our ink formulations to work perfectly with our technology, ensuring optimal performance."

"We create inks specifically tailored to complement the capabilities of our printers. This strong relationship between ink and printhead technology guarantees excellent performance across various applications, delivering high-quality results that meet our customers' needs," Roberts said.

Hecht noted that Epson recognizes that customers have diverse needs and use printers differently, varying by application, even within the same product family. "Epson has traditionally offered customers a choice for ink cartridge size. For example, one of our models allows customers to select and install different-sized ink cartridges, ranging from 110mL to 700mL per cartridge, giving them options of price per mL and replacement timeframes. Similarly, our 64" solvent printer offers customers the ability to install either 800mL or 1,500mL of any color ink packs to best suit workflow needs."

Jay Roberts, UV specialist/application engineer at Roland DGA, added that Roland prioritizes the balance between ink formulation and printhead technology in their UV and eco-solvent printing systems, as this significantly influences print quality and durability.

"We ensure our UV inks are compatible with our printheads to prevent clogging and deliver consistent results. We also prioritize compatibility with our eco-solvent printheads to ensure reliability and high-quality output," Roberts added.

Maintaining your investment

One of the biggest challenges with large-format printing is keeping heads clean and nozzles unblocked. "Evaporative inks have a higher propensity to dry on heads, so additional care needs to be taken by equipment manufacturers to ensure print quality," explained Donigan. "White ink can be even more challenging, as its larger particles create more opportunities for clogs. Understanding how much manual head maintenance is needed and how much waste ink is used to maintain print quality is essential to understanding your productivity and running costs. Neglecting print head maintenance can be very costly."

Donigain added that the type of preventative maintenance needed is very dependent on the printer and ink technology. He said that some printers can require 10-20 minutes per day of maintenance, while others might only need 10-20 minutes per month. "The most important thing is that you do the maintenance. If the manufacturer supplies a care-and-use poster, hang that next to the printer with a maintenance tracking sheet that operators sign off on. Too many print companies don't put emphasis on this, which causes significant, unpredictable downtime and higher costs when parts fail prematurely. Automated maintenance is key and should be on your checklist of must-haves for your next printer."

Many unique challenges

Singh said that wide-format inkjet printing presents unique maintenance challenges that demand attention. "Printhead clogging, often caused by ink residue, can compromise print quality, while contamination from incompatible or low-quality inks may damage the ink system, especially in UV inks. Environmental factors like temperature and humidity fluctuations can affect drying and adhesion, while regular wear and tear of components like wiper blades and capping stations require timely inspection and replacement."

Singh pointed out that preventive maintenance practices are key to achieving consistent print performance and extending equipment lifespan. "Regular cleaning of printheads, rollers, and other components prevents ink buildup and ensures smooth operation. Shops should always use genuine consumables recommended by manufacturers to avoid compatibility issues. Maintaining optimal temperature and humidity levels in the printing environment is equally important. Routine checks, including nozzle inspections and calibration, can detect potential problems early, while scheduled professional servicing ensures that equipment runs at peak performance."

Singh said the advancements in ink technology and the emphasis on maintenance are reshaping the printing landscape. "By selecting the right inks for specific applications and adhering to preventive measures, businesses can achieve superior print quality while optimizing operational efficiency. As the industry evolves, staying informed about innovations and best practices will remain a cornerstone for success."

Roberts said it is good to make it a habit to clean the maintenance station daily. "Regularly wipe down the capping and wiper blades to avoid dry ink buildup and clogs that could lead to print head failures. Keeping print heads capped when not in use helps prevent ink from drying and causing blockages."

"Also, be sure to remove any debris regularly. Clearing away ink residue and debris around the print heads and maintenance station helps avoid contamination and ensures



EUV5 wide-gamut inks (including orange and red options) are formulated to bring out the best in Roland DG's UV printers and printer/cutters, producing high-definition prints on a wide variety of substrates and 3D objects. (Image courtesy of Roland DGA)

smooth operation. By following these simple maintenance steps, shops can improve print quality and extend the lifespan of their wide-format inkjet printers," Roberts added.

When in doubt, check the manual

Hecht said all wide-format printers will come with their own set of recommended preventative maintenance, so users are advised to consult the user manual and their dealer to best assess what is needed. "The most common preventative maintenance includes timed printhead cleanings and replacing user-replaceable parts such as maintenance tanks, capping stations, and fabric wipers. If the printer uses white ink technology, then it will require timely agitation to ensure no sediment settles in the ink cartridge (or pack). The dealer/installer should tell customers all recommended preventative maintenance. Staying on top of these tasks will help to prolong the life of the printer and ensure consistent, high-quality output."

Phipps said that consistent maintenance is essential to ensuring high-quality output and maximizing the lifespan of both the printer and ink system. He said most UV-LED printers require daily maintenance, including ink agitation to keep pigments properly dispersed, ensuring consistent color and adhesion. Regular cleaning of printheads, wipers, and cap tops prevents nozzle clogging and maintains sharp, high-resolution prints.

Phipps added that preventing downtime and ink settling are two things to look out for. "Wide-format inkjet printing systems are designed for continuous operation. If the printer is idle for too long, liquid inks can change in viscosity and chemistry, leading to nozzle clogs, color shifts, and print defects. [Some inks] are engineered for stability and smooth ink flow, reducing the risk of settling and ensuring vibrant, reliable output. Automatic cleaning cycles in printers help maintain proper ink flow and prevent common maintenance issues."

Phipps offered several tips for shops:

1. **Protect the printhead: the heart of the printer**
   To maintain peak performance, regular cleaning of printheads, capping stations, and wiper blades is essential to prevent ink buildup and nozzle obstructions.
2. **Optimize ink flow for consistent results**
   Replacing key components such as cap tops, dampers, and wipers at recommended intervals helps maintain ink consistency and prevent drying or clogging. Additionally, built-in automatic cleaning cycles keep the ink system running smoothly with minimal intervention.
3. **Maintain a stable environment.**
   Monitoring environmental factors like temperature and humidity also helps maintain ink performance. It's best to keep your printers in a controlled environment, where temperature and humidity are regulated to prevent ink viscosity changes and ensure accurate color reproduction. Proper ventilation also extends the lifespan of both the printer hardware and ink system.
4. **Manufacturer-supported guidelines and training**
   Phipps said most companies provide detailed written and video maintenance guides, ensuring operators have the knowledge needed to keep their printers in peak condition. Intuitive printer design, combined with easy-to-follow maintenance steps, helps shops reduce downtime and maintain consistent, high-quality output.

"By following these preventative maintenance steps, shops can keep their printer running at full capacity, extend the life of their printer, and achieve consistently stunning print results," Phipps concluded. GP



Roland DG's VersaSTUDIO BY-20 desktop direct-to-film printer takes full advantage of DTF inks that produce transfer graphics for apparel and textile customization. (Image courtesy of Roland DGA)



Bill Schiffner, a former freelance writer/editor based in Holbrook, New York, covered the imaging industry for over 25 years. He was the editor for several imaging publications and websites. He can be reached at bschiffner@optonline.net.



GRAPHICS|PRO webinar

On-demand education

Access our free online training from top industry leaders.

From Printing to Promos: How to Expand Without Extra Overhead

Learn how to expand your printing business into the promotional products industry without extra overhead. This webinar covers strategies to diversify revenue, enter the market cost-effectively, partner with suppliers to avoid inventory costs, use affordable marketing tactics, and scale efficiently through online platforms.

Sponsored by:

From Setup to Success: A Complete Guide to DTF Printing

This webinar is your all-in-one resource for mastering direct-to-film (DTF) printing. Whether you're just starting to explore DTF or looking to optimize your high-production T-shirt business, we'll cover everything you need to know to make informed decisions and get optimized success.

Sponsored by:

ColDesi
Achieving Dreams Together

Stand Out: UV Printing Features That Sell

In this webinar, you'll discover innovative UV printing techniques like paneling, frosting, texturing, and printing on unique materials such as acrylic, wood, and even metal. Dive into advanced capabilities like incorporating Braille into your designs and see how these features can transform your workflow. Whether you're looking to elevate your product line or tap into new markets, this session will inspire you with creative applications and show you just how easy it is to produce eye-catching, high-value pieces that set your business apart.

Sponsored by:

XANTÉ

Discover Untapped Markets for Laser Engraving

Tired of competing in a crowded laser engraving space? Wondering if there's a market that's yet to be explored? Join us for an exciting webinar where we reveal emerging markets that can elevate your laser business and help you stand out. Don't miss this opportunity to uncover new markets and grow your business!

Sponsored by:

AP LAZER
LEADING THE WAY

View upcoming and archived **webinars anytime:**
graphics-pro.com/webinars

Help realtors maximize signage to market & elevate their businesses

By Caleb & Kendra Price

In today's booming real estate market, standing out from the competition is more critical than ever. Realtors have an incredible opportunity to capture attention with effective signage but miss the mark when it comes to maximizing their impact. By leveraging innovative materials, strategic placement, and bold design, sign shops can help real estate professionals make a lasting impression.

The power of large-scale & repetitive signage

For commercial properties, the strategy is simple: bigger is better. Large window graphics, banners, and post-and-panel signs placed at multiple locations around a property create a powerful visual presence. When a potential buyer or tenant sees the same message repeatedly, it reinforces brand recognition and interest. Some of the most successful commercial real estate companies use this tactic, ensuring their signage is unmissable from multiple angles.

Even more visibility comes from building-mounted banners, which literally elevate impressions of the property. These large, eye-catching signs draw attention in busy commercial areas where potential buyers and tenants are already scanning storefronts. Banners are also cost-effective and durable, making them an excellent investment for realtors looking to make a big impact with minimal expense.

For residential neighborhoods, differentiation is key. Many realtors use standard yard signs, but creative design choices — such as unique shapes, eye-catching colors, or custom add-ons like hanging riders — can make a listing stand out. A bold, well-designed sign grabs attention, even in a crowded market.

Additionally, quality A-frame signs, feather flags, and banners at open houses enhance visibility and draw in potential buyers. Most open houses rely solely on a basic yard sign, but incorporating additional signage elements can create a more engaging and memorable experience for visitors.

While on-site signage is a given, realtors often overlook the impact of branding beyond individual properties. High-quality signage at a real estate company's headquarters, conference rooms, and front desk can reinforce credibility and professionalism. Dimensional letters or channel-letter signage showcasing a company's tagline — such as "Experience quality" — helps set the tone for high-value transactions.



Images courtesy of Signarama Concord



Leveraging advanced materials for longevity

Sign materials have seen significant improvements in recent years, offering enhanced durability and visual appeal. For example, modern vinyl lasts longer

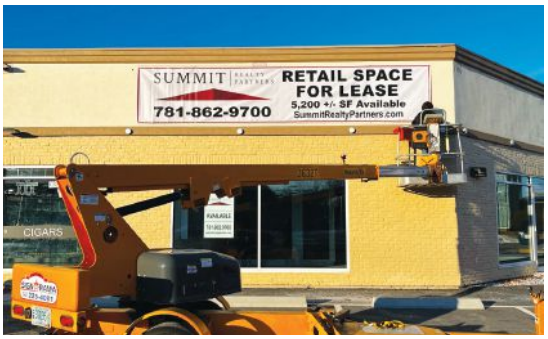
without cracking or fading, and sign substrates like aluminum composite material (ACM) and alumalite provide weather-resistant longevity. ACM and aluminum are superior to PVC, which can be used in certain climates but is prone to warping and cracking in extreme temperatures. Each market has specific materials that work best:

- **Commercial real estate:** Due to its durability and resistance to warping, 6mm ACM is often preferred.
- **Residential real estate:** Lightweight aluminum is ideal for yard signs because it withstands all weather conditions while remaining easy to install and transport.

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important. Realtors looking to align with eco-conscious buyers can opt for environmentally friendly signage solutions, including eco-friendly inks, low-carbon-footprint vinyl, and recyclable sign materials.

Additionally, advancements in printing technology now allow for textured printing, where elements of a sign or flyer physically pop off the surface. This technique can add a unique, tactile component to marketing materials, making them more engaging and memorable.













Effective signage strategy: Less is more

One common mistake in real estate signage is overcrowding the design with excessive information. Realtors often try to fit too much text into a standard 24" X 30" sign, making it overwhelming and difficult to read — especially for the many viewers who get only a few seconds to read the sign as they drive past. Instead, focus on a clean, eye-catching design with only the most essential details, and you'll capture more leads.

A strong, consistent brand presence is also crucial. Rather than reinventing the wheel for every listing, realtors should develop a recognizable brand identity that remains consistent across all their signage. This reinforces trust and familiarity, leading to stronger client recognition.

When it comes to installation, details matter. Upgrading post types, sleeve colors, and finials can make a real estate sign appear more luxurious and high-end. Finials, in particular, add a decorative touch that enhances the overall aesthetic, making a property appear more prestigious.

For large developments, oversized signage is essential. A 4' X 8' sign is often the minimum size necessary to communicate key details effectively. For large retail locations, banners as large as 8' X 16' can be used to ensure visibility without getting lost in the surrounding commercial landscape.

Getting to the 'sold' sign

Maximizing real estate signage is about more than just placing a sign in the ground. By embracing bold designs, leveraging high-quality materials, and incorporating strategic placements, real estate professionals can significantly enhance their visibility. As sign shop operators, providing these insights and solutions to realtors not only helps them sell more properties but also positions your business as an indispensable partner in their success. In a competitive market, great signage isn't just an option — it's a necessity. **GP**





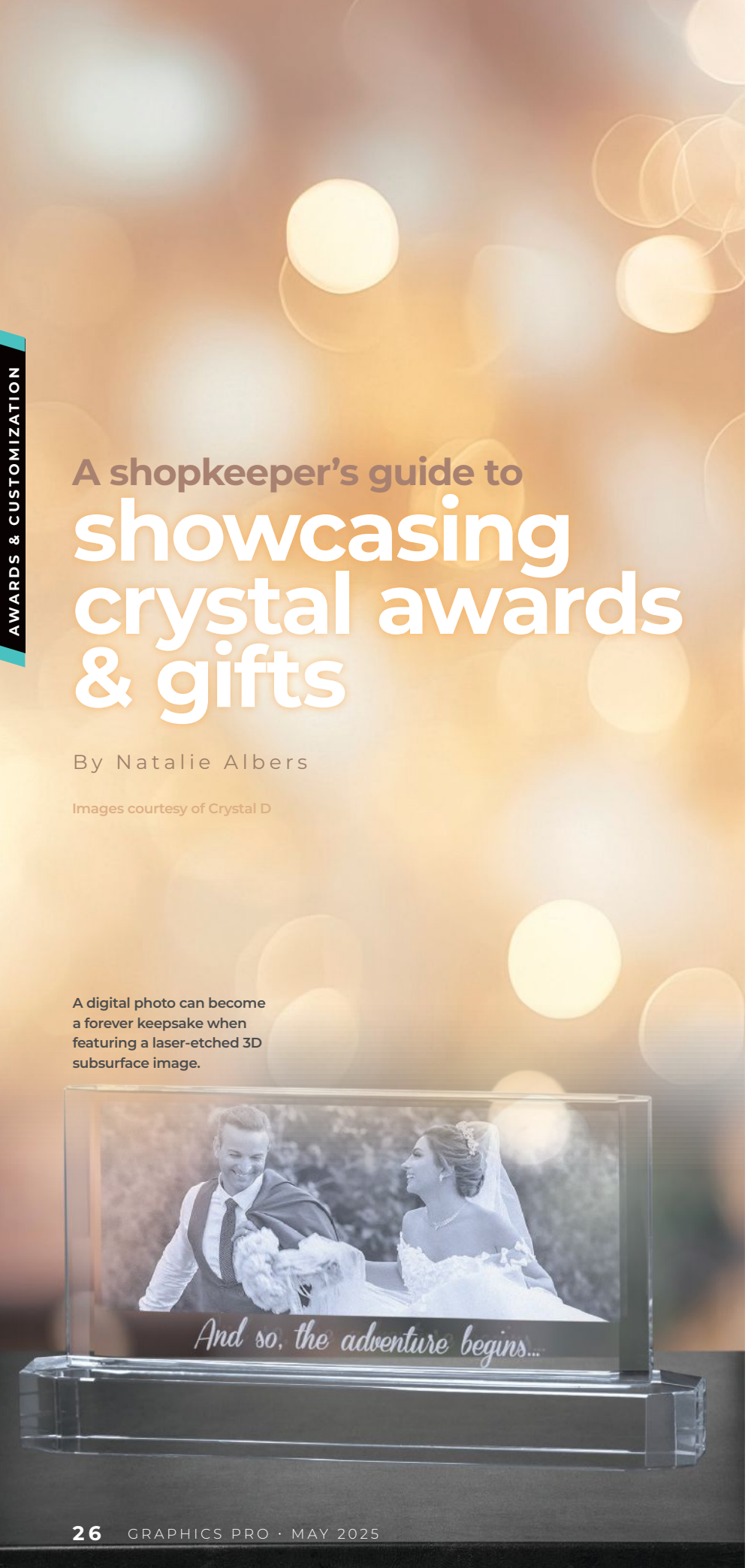
Caleb and Kendra Price are the owners of Signarama Concord. Caleb excels in installation and manages the company's financial and marketing operations. Kendra worked her way up from production manager to ownership and oversees all aspects of sign-making, from design to installation. Together, they focus on solving unique customer challenges while helping local businesses increase visibility.

A shopkeeper's guide to

showcasing crystal awards & gifts

By Natalie Albers

Images courtesy of Crystal D



A digital photo can become a forever keepsake when featuring a laser-etched 3D subsurface image.

With crystal's substantial presence, feeling is believing — and believing is buying. So, if your assortment could use a glow-up (or if you want to get in the crystal game for the first time), now is the time to set yourself up for success.

Crystal has always shined as the premier choice for awards and gifts, offering both aesthetic interest and an upscale impression. Today, crystal retains its classic appeal with the timelessness of deep etching while accommodating modern technology-enabled imprints like 3D subsurface images and full-color graphics that make details spring to life. There's something for everyone and the possibilities for customization are truly endless.

With higher profit margins than many other promotional products, crystal is a win-win choice for awards and recognition. Make sure your shop is poised to capture foot traffic — and sales — by having a curated selection on display that customers can hold in their hands as they "weigh" their options. We're here to help.

Think beyond trophies

While crystal is popular for trophies because of the versatility of imprint options and combinations (not to mention shapes that nod to different sports and activities), you'll also want your shop's collection to represent a wide range of other occasions. This will help you connect with customers looking for ways to commemorate things like graduations, anniversaries, and weddings, as well as sourcing traditional awards like employee recognition, team wins, and sales achievements.

Meet buyers' budgets

Crystal is associated with higher perceived value, so customers may initially dismiss crystal as an option before they learn how affordable



Customizing a crystal gift can be surprisingly affordable.

a customized crystal gift can be. Share design examples that meet various budgets, and how inexpensive pieces can look incredible with a custom imprint or pop of color.

Some shapes are so impressive on their own that a simple deep etch or 3D image is enough to make recipients say, "Wow!" Other items, like IllumaPix crystal prints, are affordably priced and perfect for personalizing — economically — with digital photos or graphics.

Promote fast turnaround times

Customers may assume customized crystal orders require weeks for production, but many suppliers can ship out orders in about a week's time after art is approved. Some also have a plethora of awards available for quick shipping.

Examples of these fast-turn options are helpful to mention as well, so customers know that those last-minute awards and gifts are guaranteed to look anything but last minute.



Meet those last-minute needs by showing customers ideas of quick-ship awards.





Every display should feature a variety of different samples that show a breadth of design ideas.



Having blanks on hand makes it fast and easy to customize in-house. Keep bases in stock as well, to show how this add-on enhances many awards and gifts (especially lighted bases)!

Show a range of samples

With hundreds and even thousands of designs to choose from, with features like bevels, textures, bubbles, colored crystal, metal, wood, and even parts that spin, having a variety of different pieces on display is key to kicking off creativity.

Customers will also appreciate seeing an array of imprints in person and having the chance to feel a deep etch, scope out the detail in a 3D subsurface image, and see the vibrancy of a full-color Illumachrome addition.

Work with your suppliers to get these samples, asking about curated kits that make an instant display or selecting individual pieces to include with what you already have. To meet the needs of a variety of occasions, ensure you also have a vase or two on hand (think weddings or anniversaries), as well as whimsical gifts such as crystal wine stoppers, phone holders, notepads, and candy dishes.

Keep blanks & bases on hand

In addition to having samples that show customers what can be done, it's wise to have blank awards at the ready so you can meet those urgent needs by etching them in-house.

Blanks are especially helpful for



A few simple tips and tricks can take your shop display from dull to dazzling.

awards that need to be further customized after being presented, such as for tournaments or contests, with winners' names and stats added.

Meanwhile, bases can set a statement as the foundation for many award designs. Have a few in your assortment (both standard and lighted) and offer them as an add-on to make their selection stand out.

Display dos & don'ts

Once you've got your awards in order, it's time for the fun part: making them shine!

Do: Choose an area of your store that makes it easy to see individual pieces and pick them up to see them more closely. Customers are always surprised by the weight of the crystal, so keep your samples at a reasonable height to maximize viewing and reduce the risk of someone dropping them.

Do: Go for contrast. Because crystal is clear, you'll always want to set your pieces against a darker background to make the imprints stand out. Also, ensure your display lighting is coming directly from the top or bottom of the shelf. If you have lighting coming in sideways, pivot your crystal pieces slightly to make the lighting hit at an angle, providing illumination without the designs becoming obstructed by the light.

Do: Include bases, especially lighted bases, to demonstrate how these add-ons enhance crystal awards. Lighted bases bring imprints to life and even allow the awards to be elegantly illuminated in darkened rooms. They can be powered by batteries or a cord, depending on the need.

Don't: Collect dust! Routinely clean all surface areas of the awards and your displays. We recommend using microfiber dusters for this, along with standard eyeglass cleaner (no harsh or abrasive chemicals) to remove fingerprints.

Lean on your suppliers

Remember that your suppliers are your partners! From ensuring your collection is state-of-the-art, to helping you come up with unique design ideas, to making sure your customers' orders are handled with the utmost care and attention to detail, your supplier is key to your success.

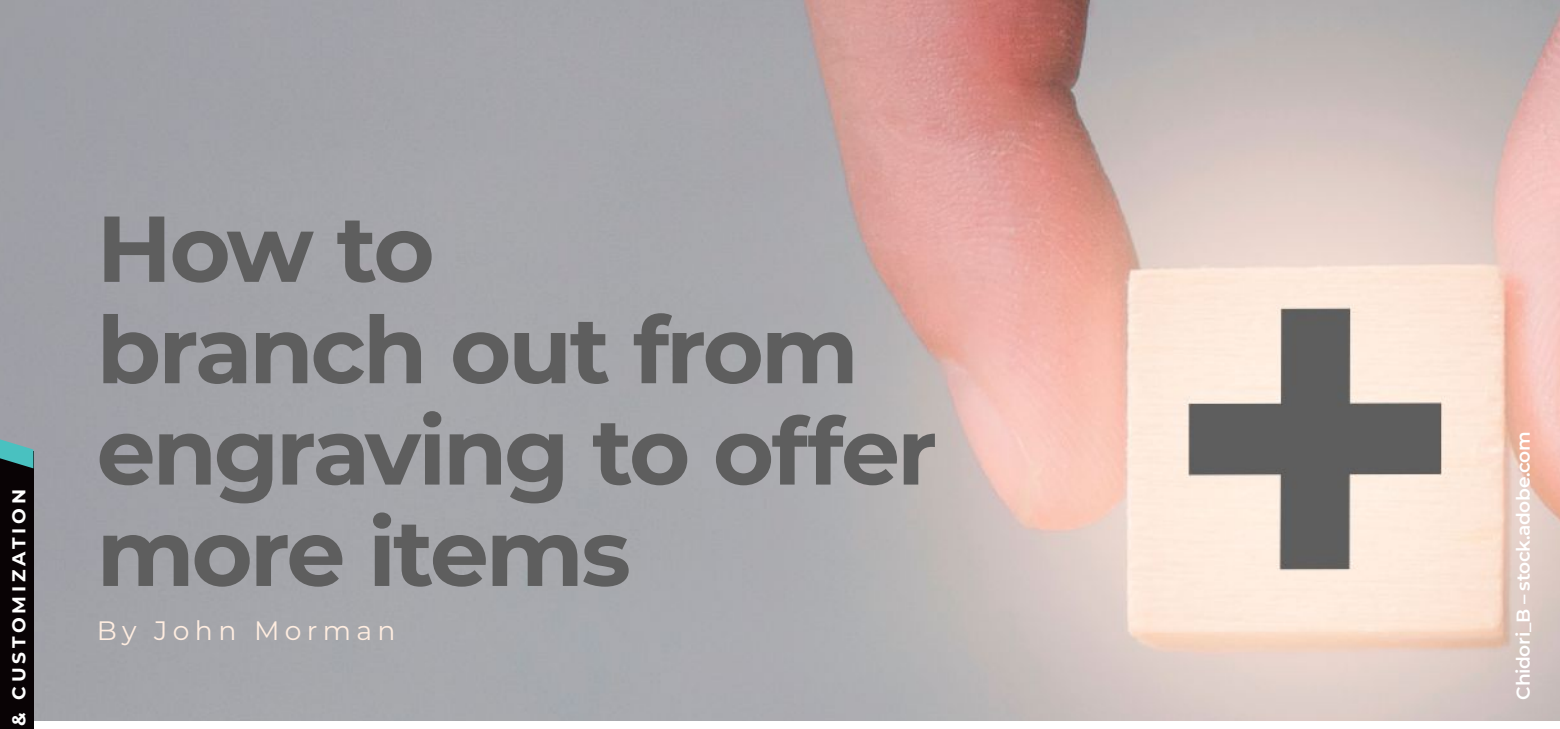
Work with them to help you grow your crystal business and make sourcing your awards simple, easy, and fast. They can also help you with the creative side, offering ideas and solutions your customers will love so you can focus on being the one-stop shop for beautiful ways to celebrate. **GP**



Natalie Albers is a Twin Cities-based writer and editor with more than two decades of communications experience for small businesses and large corporations. Natalie serves as communications manager at Crystal D and is passionate about recognition, as well as about helping organizations connect

How to branch out from engraving to offer more items

By John Morman



My previous articles

have dealt with starting up and developing your laser engraving business — customer base, potential market segments, and so on. This month, I'd like to take a side step and talk about opportunities to develop more business by looking at different processes.

As you've progressed with your business experience behind you, you have gained a lot of familiarity with your graphics program. By using your graphic skills, you can create images suitable for use in different products using different processes such as direct-to-garment (DTG) printing, embroidery, and weaving. Each process involves different tricks to maximize the results you're seeking.

If you know of businesses already involved in any of these processes, you can save yourself a lot of time and money by figuring out how best to work with them.

DTG printing

One option is to talk with a local DTG business and ask if they're prepared to work with you and simply charge a fee for the graphic. The printer will deal with the sale and that company will sell the item directly to the customer.

If you're interested in taking on the job yourself, investigate the cost of DTG printers. These are relatively inexpensive, but as always, you get what you pay for. It is a technology that is developing quickly so it's best to look around and decide just how deeply involved you want to get.

One point with printers: I saved money by getting a less expensive machine, knowing at the time I couldn't print on black or very dark-colored garments. (To get the best results, a white "base coat" has to be applied.) I decided not to go that route, and in retrospect, I probably should have. Pretreatment and/or post-treatment may be advisable to get and preserve the best quality image. This in and of itself is not that complicated, and further machine purchases, such as heat presses, may not be needed. So, decide how far you want to get and proceed accordingly. Remember that this is not the same as screen printing, and the colors may not be as vibrant as a screen-printed product.

Embroidery

Speaking to commercial embroiderers, I realized that there would be a lot of expense involved, and there is a fairly steep learning curve. A lot of inventory can be wasted during that process, the cost of which needs to be taken into account along with the embroidery machine itself, of course! These come in varying complexity for differing thread choices, and, of course, the associated expense that goes with those options.





This an example of what I would term a "general" purchase, i.e., anyone could purchase it. Examples of "custom" items for specific customers can include wedding messages, anniversary messages, family trees, military insignia with dates of service, and so on, or anything to do with an individual.



These are examples of a ladies' T-shirt, a onesie, and a mens' T-shirt. I think the graphics speak for themselves, but they illustrate the quality of imaging that can be realized with a relatively inexpensive DTG machine.

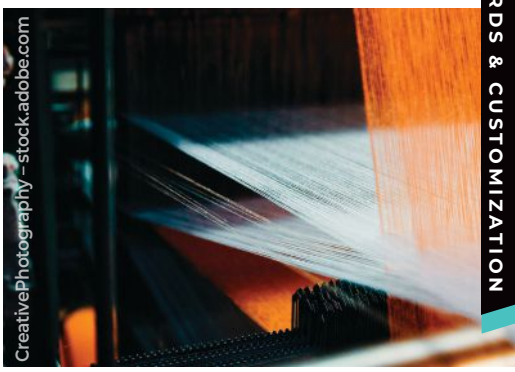


An embroidered throw, a sweatshirt, and a golf shirt.

Images courtesy of John Morman



Hyusein – stock.adobe.com



CreativePhotography – stock.adobe.com

I know a commercial embroiderer, and we have a deal that works for both of us. I supply the graphic, he charges me a set cost based on the garment, and I sell to the customer.

Woven products

This is something you are, I would say, never going to take on yourself, and is probably the simplest process to adopt for your business. There are several companies in the U.S. who will accept your graphics and weave the products, ranging from cushions to apparel, wall hangings, and throw rugs. Two things: The weaver can't always match your colors exactly, so there can be a bit of a learning curve as you figure out the best options from your palettes that will work for the weaver's thread color matching. Second, the weaver will have strict guidelines as far as the type of graphic they can accept and the maximum template size for each category.

Pros & cons

There are several advantages to offering these services. All three options give you an enhanced product offering, and obtaining samples of each for display adds a lot of color to your store displays. You have added potential for profits, particularly with designs for a general customer base as opposed to "special" jobs for individual customers. (For which you can charge a little extra. For example, there is a $30 difference between my "general" items and "specific" items.) Even with the general items, if you create your own graphic, you are still producing something that is unique to your business, which itself can be attractive to customers. There can obviously be a potential for you to develop a "wholesale" business for other businesses that might want to carry your products.

The disadvantages are that you will be faced with choosing some capital investment as opposed to working completely on a wholesale basis with suppliers. As I mentioned, I opted to purchase a DTG printer, but my woven and embroidered items are completed for me by other businesses. In my case, I negotiated a cost that worked for my embroidery supplier and allowed me to have a worthwhile margin for my retail prices. Similarly, the wholesale cost I was quoted from my weaver left room for a reasonable markup.

The single biggest disadvantage with DTG work is the number of products you want to carry and, subsequently, the amount of inventory you'll need when offering different sizes and colors. This is manageable, however, and doesn't need to cost as much as you might think.

This kind of work may not fit in your business model, or you may be happy with the volume of your engraving business. I can say that adding these processes to our business has been a definite plus, and I would encourage you to at least consider them if you want to add a couple of strings to your bows. As always, good luck! GP



John Morman is the owner of Celtic Tides in Lexington, Virginia. He and his wife, Mary Jo, have been running the shop since 2005. John started laser engraving in 2003.

The gift of connection

How branded products forge stronger corporate bonds

By Alice McCalla

It wasn't long ago that corporate gifting was largely confined to the holiday season, and gourmet baskets or other generic tokens were among the common choices. Times have changed. Today, companies are not only recognizing the strategic value of gifting throughout the year but are also looking for brand-name goods to show how highly they value their clients. More than ever, promotional products are tangible representations of a brand's identity, values, and commitment.

In the corporate world, branded gifts have become a vital tool for building relationships, fostering loyalty, and driving business growth, not only for clients but for employees as well. Thoughtful gifts can strengthen relationships with established and new clients, leading to increased loyalty and referrals, and can increase staff retention rates by rewarding valued team members.



Images courtesy of Fully Promoted

The corporate advantage: Streamlined branding & strategic vision

One of the key advantages of working with corporate clients is that they have established a well-defined set of brand standards. Corporations understand that the key to successful branding is consistency, and these brand standards not only save time and reduce errors but also ensure that every product aligns perfectly with the company's overall brand identity.

Smaller clients may still be developing their brand standards, so colors, layouts, and other brand elements may change from project to project. As a result, they require a greater time investment to ensure brand alignment, which may result in a lack of brand consistency.

Corporate clients also approach promotional products from a strategic perspective. They see them as an integral part of their marketing, sales, and employee engagement programs. Products are chosen based on how they will connect with the client's target audience, convey the desired message, and help them achieve their overall business goals.

Technological advances have expanded branding opportunities, particularly when it comes to decoration methods. In the past, embroidery and screen printing were the primary options, with limitations on color choices and minimum order quantities. But today, we have access to a wide range of cutting-edge techniques. Direct-to-film (DTF) printing, for instance, allows for unlimited colors and smaller quantities, making it ideal for complex designs and personalized items. UV stickers are another game changer, offering permanent, industrial-grade labeling for a variety of products.

These technological advancements have not only expanded our creative



capabilities but have also enabled us to offer more flexible options with faster turnaround times and more cost-effective solutions for our clients.

Riding the wave of corporate gifting trends

The corporate gifting landscape is constantly evolving, driven by changing consumer preferences and technological advancements. One of the most significant trends is the growing demand for brand-name products. Companies are no longer satisfied with generic items; they want recognizable, high-quality goods that reflect positively on their brand.

A few years ago, it would've been fine to give clients any wireless Bluetooth speaker with a cool, new feature. Now, clients are specifically asking for premium brands like JBL and Skullcandy.

This shift toward premium brands is fueled by the recognition that promotional products are a direct reflection of a company's brand and values. While less expensive items may be suitable for mass giveaways at community events, gifts for top clients need to convey a sense of appreciation and quality.

Apparel has also undergone a significant transformation. The days of the ubiquitous polo shirt are long gone. Today, corporations are embracing a wider range of styles and fabrics that might be found in any upscale retail store. Brands like TravisMathew, Tommy Bahama, and even Brooks Brothers have become increasingly popular.

The result: Promotional products companies can offer their clients a more diverse and stylish corporate wardrobe. Instead of a team clad in identical blue polos, you might see women in cardigans or blouses







and men sporting puffer vests — all while maintaining a cohesive and professional look that aligns with the company's brand guidelines.

Thinking outside the goody bag

Corporations are going beyond trade shows and events with their branded products, finding new and innovative ways to leverage these items. They're using them as leave-behinds during sales calls to create a memorable, lasting impression. Some are even building their own retail stores, offering branded apparel and merchandise for clients to purchase.

One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the rise of employee onboarding and appreciation programs. With hiring becoming increasingly competitive, companies are using welcome gifts to attract and retain top talent. These kits often include items like branded apparel, mugs, notebooks, and tech accessories, all designed to make new employees feel welcome and valued.

In a world where remote work is becoming increasingly prevalent, these onboarding kits provide a tangible way to connect with new hires and establish a strong company culture. It's about creating a sense of belonging, even when employees are geographically dispersed.

It's not just about onboarding either. Companies are investing in employee appreciation gifts to show their staff, at all levels, that they are valued. These gestures foster a positive work environment, boost morale, and improve employee retention.

Of course, as this trend becomes more popular, it's increasingly likely that your competition is adopting it. How can you stand out?

Be a consultant, not just a vendor

In a competitive market, a smart strategy is to take a consultative approach rather than transactional.

When a corporation orders from a large online vendor, they're essentially treated as a brand-new customer every time. There's no personal connection, no understanding of their brand and corporate culture, and no guarantee of consistency.

With a consultative approach, you're building long-term relationships with your clients — taking the time to understand their brand, their target audience, and their business goals. You become a trusted advisor, offering expert guidance and creative solutions that align with their unique needs. You're at the top of their mind when they start a new project and need ideas. You'll be ahead of the curve at the next trade show, already knowing your client's preferences so you can find them the perfect products.

For example, one of my clients, a power company, likes fun items that light up. These items align with both their culture and their brand. Another client, a hospital, is keen on tech gadgets for their doctors. By anticipating their needs and curating a selection of relevant products, you can provide exceptional value and build lasting partnerships.

Any marketing person in a corporate office is incredibly busy. By building a strong relationship with them, you can serve as a valuable resource, offering ideas and solutions that help them achieve their goals. Plus, by being a trusted vendor to one department, you can have the opportunity to connect with other departments of the organization, such as human resources, safety, and community outreach.

Seizing opportunities & building relationships

Building relationships is paramount. Get to know your clients, understand their challenges, and become a valuable extension of their team. By providing exceptional service, creative solutions, and a deep understanding of their brand, you can forge lasting partnerships that drive mutual success. GP



Alice McCalla is the owner of Fully Promoted Houston SE and Houston NE and has worked in corporate marketing, public relations, and branding since the early 1990s. Her general philosophy on marketing and branding is: No matter how the tools may change, the fundamentals remain the same — create a strong brand, be consistent with the use of your brand, and invest in the resources that will help you grow.



Caldera DTF & DTG RIP software

French RIP software specialist **Caldera** has introduced its latest RIP solution for direct-to-film (DTF) and direct-to-garment (DTG) printing for both beginners and professionals in the industry. The new solution is compatible with Windows and Mac, and designed to provide more flexibility for all users. Previously, the software was only available in bundles from selected DTF and DTG printer OEMs. The new RIP will be rolled out for the entire garment decoration market, engineered to be a simplified solution that allows users to offer full customization to their clients for unique pieces and small-batch print runs. The interface includes built-in self-training guides and access to Caldera's knowledge base. The software has been developed to handle white ink with precise White Management Tools and measurements, while the Print Management features include ready-to-use presets. Additionally, users can preview their designs before printing, allowing them to spot potential errors and save time. **caldera.com**

Imperial Headwear



Imperial Headwear's spring collection offers all-new styles and fresh new colors in top sellers such as the The Wrightson (5054) and The Wingman (7054). These styles are made from upcycled poly performance fabric and are now available in new two-tone colorways. In addition to these two performance-driven caps is The Harrison (5054U), an updated version of the five-panel rope cap, and The Independent (7054N), which is designed to offer the timeless look of the 7054, minus the rope. The Sophisticate X210X, is a new style featuring performance grid fabric. The Gambit (X240 & X240M), are pigment dyed styles developed for on and off the golf course. For those in need of something a bit larger, the The Original Performance XL XL210P). Rounding out the collection with new mesh looks, the brand new 1988M The Whitaker, a soft-washed mesh-back trucker, and The Hinsen, a mesh back version of the women's ponytail option (L338). **imperial1916.com**



Ninja Metallic Flex Patch

Ninja Transfers has introduced Metallic Flex Patches. This new product is designed to provide a durable and highly reflective finish, elevating designs with a sleek, professional look. These patches utilize advanced flex materials engineered to ensure long-lasting wear while maintaining vibrant metallic sheen and superior flexibility. Ideal for streetwear, athletic apparel, corporate branding, and fashion-forward designs, these patches cater to a wide range of industries and creative applications. The Metallic Flex Patches are available in a variety of colors allowing customers to tailor their designs with maximum versatility. Crafted for easy application using heat transfer technology, they are designed to adhere seamlessly to a wide range of fabrics without compromising on quality or durability. **ninjapatches.com**



Unicorn White from International Coatings

International Coatings Company has introduced Unicorn White, a plastisol ink designed specifically for polyester and problematic synthetic fabrics. Engineered with ultra-low bleed and fast-flash technology, Unicorn White is developed to combat dye-migration issues commonly faced by screen printers. Its advanced composition is designed to provide crisp and vibrant prints on a variety of polyester-based garments. Unicorn White is part of the FlexCure line, which means it can be cured across a range of temperatures. Unicorn White's low-cure, low-bleed properties help stem dye migration on cotton/poly blends as well as on most polyester substrates. **iccink.com**



Black Box Vacuum Solutions CNC vacuum

The Hurricane, the latest CNC vacuum from **Black Box Vacuum Solutions**, is engineered for sign making, cabinetry, nested-based manufacturing, and more. The two-stage design allows users to choose between two motor mode or four motor mode with the press of a button. Top features include: circuit breaking switches, an integrated vacuum gauge, threaded steel intake port, integrated relief valve system, and sound-dampening base with threaded exhaust port. Each Black Box Vacuum system is built and tested in Alpharetta, Georgia. **blackboxvac.com**

What's trending in womenswear

From T-shirts to caps, what you can expect to see this year in styles, cuts & colors

By Paula Aven Gladych



Image courtesy of Cotton Heritage

Women's fashion trends change every year and 2025 is no different, from the styles and cut of the clothing to popular color choices. But when it comes to apparel, what separates womenswear from unisex or menswear? Isn't a T-shirt just a T-shirt? It depends on who you ask.

Women's apparel

"So far rolling into 2025, the ladies' market has definitely evolved from what it was," said Greg Brown, vice president of business development for Cotton Heritage, a wholesale shirt supplier. "Five years ago, the ladies' market was very fitted. Everything had an hourglass shape to it, for the most part. Over the last couple of years, things have gotten shorter and wider."

One of the top styles currently is the mom crop, a boxy T-shirt that hits right below the belt line. In the past, womenswear was all about thin, sheer fabric, but over the last few years, the market has added weight to the garments, giving women the opportunity for unisex-type products, Brown said.

Unisex products are basically male products that come in extra-small sizes to fit women's smaller proportions or 2X and higher sizes to fit people of both sexes.

"Women's fits differ from men's and unisex in that they are cut to accommodate a woman's shape and curves," said Jen Oleksik, vice president of apparel for LAT Apparel. "Oftentimes, men's/unisex does not complement a woman's figure as it doesn't fit correctly across the chest or sleeves/armhole area and can oftentimes be too long as well."

Men's shirts have a longer arm, while women's shirts have shorter sleeves that are more slanted, so they don't cover the whole arm above the bicep, which "gives a more feminine look," said Brown.

Many companies that produce T-shirts have gone to a 7-oz T-shirt. Women's



Live &Tell®
BY L.A.T.



VINTAGE WASH

THE SOFTEST TEE EVER.

5.7 oz. 55% ringspun cotton/45% polyester vintage wash jersey

3502 LADIES' VINTAGE WASH TEE



S&S
ACTIVEWEAR



The Live & Tell Vintage Wash assortment achieves its authentic look and feel through a special wash process, which creates unique and natural variances in texture, distress, and shade. These are intentional and are NOT considered defective.





Images courtesy of LAT Apparel

shirts typically weigh 3.7- to 5.5-oz, while unisex shirts tend to be 4.3-oz. Anything above 5.5-oz is considered a male version, he said. "So far, in the ladies' market this year, we have not seen that heavy is better," he said.

"We have not seen that gravitation to the same magnitude to the ladies' market with an oversized look, still textured to the traditional ladies' with very little oversized silhouettes," Brown said.

Boxier, oversized, and relaxed silhouettes continue to trend, said Oleksik. "Details like heavier gauge ribs, raw edges, washes, and textures all offer an elevated appearance and visual interest."



Images courtesy of Cotton Heritage



The fleece or sweatshirt side of the womenswear market has remained consistent with crop tops or shorter silhouettes. It has moved away from hoods, trending instead toward crew-neck silhouettes or quarter-zip styles.

In the fleece market, anything above 9-oz is "too heavy," Brown said. Normally, women's fleece garments are 6.5- to 8-oz.

"It is amazing how many fabrics we look at before we make it into a garment," Brown said. Many times they'll ask, "Is that too heavy? Is the loft on the fabric good enough? How is it going to print?"

He added, "Not everything is going to perform in print the way we want it to print. Right now, all of this is print-on-demand. They want simplicity when it comes to what they are putting their print on. If you give them something that doesn't print well, it slows all of their machinery down and they have to stop and start over."

The tightness of the fabric is what drives a lot of Cotton Heritage's shirt market.

"The cotton ringspun segment of







Images courtesy of Cotton Heritage

the business has grown. Polyester or performance fabrics are not nearly as popular as they used to be, especially in ladies," he said. "I think the ladies' market likes more cotton or tri-blend. The polyester cotton segment of the business is way better to print on than the performance fabrics."

The Pantone color of the year is mocha mousse, followed by earth tones and pastels.

"We are not seeing nearly as much of the bright colors as we have in the past," Brown said. "That might come back, but more muted pastel tones are very active now in the ladies' market."

Oleksik of LAT Apparel said that as "we move into spring, yellow tones are heavily trending. Warm neutrals are also replacing the cooler, gray neutrals."

Women's headwear

The same trends that affect the women's shirt market also apply to headwear. The myth used to be that it was easier to sell unisex caps than to













Images courtesy of Infinity Product Group

focus on one demographic or the other, said Ramona Watson, vice president of product development and marketing for Infinity Product Group. But the sale of more than 50 million women's baseball caps debunks that myth.

"Yes, women can wear a men's baseball cap. They can cinch it up more and it may not look the greatest, but they can wear it," said Watson. "But for them to enjoy it and feel good it needs to fit their head better."

Women's baseball caps typically have a smaller circumference and a lighter, smaller visor board. "Everything is tweaked to fit women's heads better," she said.

Women's headwear also follows the same style and color trends as the rest of the womenswear industry, from the colors to the designs.

Watson mentioned that mocha mousse, which is a warm, rich brown color, is definitely trending in 2025. Also, vanilla, which is a light creamy color, chocolate, and caramel. Along with the warm colors, other trending colors include jewel tones — such as emerald and jade green — and pink.

Trucker hats are still the most popular cap on the market with their mesh back and room on the front for some type of promotion, whether it be printing, transfers, or patches.

"We were surprised that women love that shape too. I don't think it is going away anytime soon," Watson said.

Women also love foam-front caps and retro caps that have a rope across the split between the visor and the hat.





Decoration wise, woven patches are still huge. "We're also seeing more rubber and silicone applications, whether on T-shirts or headwear, just small hits of those types of applications," Watson said.

Another trend that was big at a recent fashion trend show in Las Vegas was animal prints, from leopard and cow to snake prints. Florals have also been strong in womenswear and Western themes are also big.

Women have embraced camouflage as well, from traditional camouflage to camo in different colors with added elements, such as flowers.

"Women love to make a statement with what they are wearing. That's where we make it different with fun colors and patterns. We follow those trends to get them excited about wearing something made just for them," Watson said. **GP**



Paula Aven Gladych is a freelance writer based in Denver, Colorado. She can be reached at pgladych@gmail.com.

SANMAR
×
STANLEY/STELLA

Introducing a New Standard for Blank Apparel

Since 2012, Stanley/Stella has offered exceptional tees and fleece that are soft, durable and designed for decoration. It's our honor to be the brand's exclusive U.S. supplier of 20 premium styles.

Shop this NEW Collection at sanmar.com





Zamrznuti tonovi – stock.adobe.com

Women in screen printing

A more inclusive industry starts in your own shop

By Megan Griffith

The problem with talking about being a woman in the screen-printing industry is, I imagine, a similar problem that people of color have talking about the industry: we would like nothing more than to talk about anything else. There are countless numbers of brilliant printers, shop owners, designers, embroiderers, and other decorators who fit into these categories and have tons to say about their fields of expertise.

Instead, stages, panels, and podcasts are typically filled with white men, leaving the rest of us to remind everyone that other people exist and should be considered in these spaces. We get to talk about what it is like being our identity in the industry, instead of what we really want to be talking about: the industry itself. While we'd like to believe we've come a long way and are quickly becoming a community of equality, there is still a lot of pushback on people of color and women in most business spaces.

Last fall, I won an award for Women in Screen Printing and gave a whole speech on listening to women's voices and appreciating their value as leaders and experts. Afterward, I spent most of my time talking to women in our industry who had experienced sexism from their peers. I spent another good portion of time talking to men who thought such awards should be about merit instead of gender.

I have been in or around this industry since I was three years old, have two degrees in design fields, and 13 years of experience managing a shop that has quadrupled in size since I took on the role. I've been doing this longer than most people in the industry, and I've met tons of women who could say the same but are often overlooked for their male counterparts. Merit is simply not enough to make the whole industry inclusive.

The good news is, things are changing. We are starting to see more awareness in decorated apparel education spaces where women and people of color are given a platform. More shops owned by marginalized groups are being elevated and heard more than in generations past. The great news is there are plenty of opportunities for shops to apply their own small actions to encourage the industry as a whole to be more welcoming to all people.

Introspection

The easiest first step is talking to the people in your shop who fit into these categories. Ask the women in your shop how they can feel safer, happier at work, and more heard. Ask the people

of color if they've ever experienced racism in your shop, and how you can help facilitate change. Generating a generic list article of "How to solve prejudice in your shop" won't solve things in your shop specifically because no one has the exact same problems. Listening, learning, and applying change are the most effective ways to make a more inclusive space.

If you don't have any women or people of color in your shop, ask yourself why. Sometimes we can overlook our own bias in hiring and that might be something worth examining. According to a Harvard Business Review study, if there is only one woman in the hiring pool for a position, the chances of a woman being hired are virtually zero, versus adding even one more woman to the finalist pool increases the odds of a woman being hired by 79.14 times.

It's not about hiring someone who's unqualified for the job — it's about examining who you are considering in the hiring pool and whether you're trimming out candidates based on relating to them personally or recognizing the potential that comes with candidates from backgrounds and experiences different than your own.

Making your print shop more inclusive doesn't have to look like a big overhaul of business as you know it. Consider things like feminine products in bathrooms, private nursing spaces for mothers, and flexibility in hours for kids' appointments. Make sure sexist or racist jokes are not tolerated and put consequences in place for those who make offensive comments.

The effort for inclusion can make a statement all on its own. Some believe everyone's money is green, so they'll print whatever a client asks as long as they are paying. We won't print anything that could be remotely considered hate speech against any group, no matter how much money we would lose in turning away the job. At the end of the day, your staff knowing you've got their backs and care about them is worth more than any money because they are the ones keeping your shop running for future jobs.



Zamrznuti tonovi – stock.adobe.com

Intersectionality

Another important step is considering intersectionality. Intersectionality better represents the overlap of sociological frameworks people fall in and how they might be affected by discrimination than considering each group separately. Historically, people in multiple undervalued groups have compounded their risk in job viability in the Venn diagram of their identities: women of color, LGBTQ+ people of color, people with disabilities or mental diagnoses, etc. If they are hired, they're more likely to be looked over for promotions.

While women as a whole have been making progress in leadership roles since 2018, according to a 2023 McKinsey & Co. study, women of color in every step of leadership are severely underrepresented compared to their white male counterparts. This isn't from a lack of ambition or knowledge either; 88% of women of color have ambitions to be promoted to the next level, and statistically, 73 women of color were promoted for every 100 men.

Making new spaces

The thing that's different from previous generations is we understand today that, if space is not made for women in this industry, we will make new spaces. Organizations like Women in Print Alliance, Print Girl Mafia, and even local groups on social media and forums were created out of a need to speak to peers without being talked down to or ignored. I've found a wealth of resources from these groups, just being able to learn how to better our shop without navigating around egos. I've found an abundance of friends to text or call when there's an emergency on press and I need a solution.

Thanks to ever-evolving technology and communication channels, people looking for inclusive spaces have a new opportunity: to go elsewhere and create communities if we aren't invited to the current ones. Change has to happen with the people who sit at the table. Marginalized groups should be represented on stage, on podcasts, in classrooms, and as leaders in the industry. But if you don't give us a seat at the table, we will build our own table. If you don't know where to start, talking to people in your own shop should be the first step. But if you need more help, my inbox is always open. **GP**



Megan Griffith co-owns P&M Apparel in Polk City, Iowa, with her brother Ryan Griffith. Their print shop is third-generation family and woman-owned, and founded by a WWII veteran. Megan is a 2024 Women in Screen Printing award winner, 2018 Business Person of the Year award winner, and 2017 Screenprinting magazine Rising Star Award winner.

Swing into golf season with headwear

Grow your customer base into the golf industry via headwear

By Jerry Biag





Images courtesy of Imperial Headwear

As golf season comes into full swing, it is time for teams, associations, and professionals to start thinking about new gear and, most importantly, branded headwear. A good, personalized golf hat not only shields its user from the sun's harsh rays, but also promotes the team, association, etc. on and off the course.

There are many important factors to remember when pitching the perfect golf hat to your customers, such as material, size, shape, color, and performance ability. The information below will outline a few of the different selling points and customization options when it comes to golf headwear.

Breathability is a must for golf hats

Firstly, when choosing a golf hat, breathability is a key factor to consider. Breathable hats allow air to circulate, preventing heat buildup and promoting evaporation of sweat. This helps maintain a cooler head temperature, reducing discomfort and the risk of overheating. Not to mention, avoiding the stress of that dreaded post-round hat hair.

Materials like lightweight cotton, mesh, and technical fabrics are ideal for maximum ventilation. With superior breathability, these hats ensure reliable comfort even during the hottest days — because nothing can keep you from that early morning tee time.

6 traits all top golf hats have in common

1. **Performance bucket hats are a hole-in-one**

   The performance bucket hat is your go-to for maximum sun protection and a fun summer vibe. This style features a wide brim that provides ample coverage, shielding your face, neck, and ears from harmful UV rays.

   The best bucket hats for golf are crafted from performance fabric with moisture-wicking properties that help keep you dry, even on the hottest days. Its lightweight and breathable material ensures air circulates freely, preventing heat buildup under the hat.



2. Showcase your skills with a performance visor

A performance visor is a fantastic option for those who prefer something a little different. The visor provides excellent sun protection for your face while leaving the top of your head open for maximum ventilation. The moisture-wicking sweatband helps manage perspiration, keeping it out of your eyes during physical activities.

The performance visor combines functionality with a fun, sporty design. The adjustable strap ensures a comfortable fit, and the durable, breathable fabric makes it perfect for long days in the sun. With its stylish look and practical features, a performance visor is a must-have.

3. Have fun with breathable prints & patterns

The unique and stylish look of a patterned style is perfect for those who want a classic, versatile cap with superior breathability while also standing out on the course. The front panels provide structure and sun protection, while mesh or performance back panels allow for maximum airflow, keeping your head cool in the heat. The print and patterned designs add a subtle yet stylish touch, making this style suitable for various outfits.

Patterned caps can be made from many different materials, such as lightweight, moisture-wicking fabric that will ensure a dry and comfortable fit. It's ideal for outdoor sports, casual wear, or any activities where you'll be spending time in the sun. Adjustable closures allow for a secure, customized fit.

4. Enjoy effortless style & sophistication with mesh-back caps

Mesh-back performance rope caps are a stylish blend of classic and modern design elements. Solid and two-tone color schemes with performance rope options detail make it a standout accessory. Trucker caps offer excellent breathability with the mesh-back design, ensuring your head stays cool.

Crafted from performance fabric, trucker caps can provide moisture-wicking properties to keep sweat at bay. The structured form and adjustable fit ensure comfort and durability, making this cap a reliable choice for sunny summer days.







5. Catch a breeze with playful cotton caps

Lightweight cotton styles are a favorite for those who prefer more of a classic look and feel. Cotton caps are lightweight and breathable, making them ideal for hot weather and a stylish addition to any golfer's wardrobe.

The cap's cotton fabric is naturally breathable and comfortable, providing a cooler experience during sunny days. With adjustable sizing and durable construction, cotton caps are both functional and fashionable for golf headwear.

6. Stay cool this golf season with trending styles

Picking the perfect headwear is important, not only to keep you cool but also to ensure you stay comfortable all season long. Below is a quick outline of the top trends in the golf world:



- **Laser-cut mesh:** Laser-cut or perforated mesh-back hats are all the rage right now, from local municipal courses up to professional tour events with players like Phil Mickelson and Max Homa rocking these trendy styles.
- **Two-tone styles:** Two-tone styles, which have been blowing up on social media over the past year, are making their way into golf. With many brands, courses, and professional events, including these popular colorways in their pro shops and souvenir stores, most recently, the 2025 Waste Management Phoenix Open offered multiple fresh two-tone styles as part of this year's merch lineup.
- **Five-panel rope:** Five-panel rope caps are no stranger to the world of golf. These gems have been featured on tour and in pro shops around the world for many years, but they are not going anywhere. With a timeless look and fantastic decoration space, these classics are here to stay.
- **Print & pattern:** The rise of print and patterns must be noted when looking into golf headwear. A great way to add a little flare to





any outfit, prints or patterns offer the same performance features with the added benefit of standing out from the masses. Just look at Ricky Fowler over the years, most recently donning all camo from head to toe, talk about unique!

- **Women's fit**: Women's fit styles are starting to gain more traction as women's sports as a whole keep growing larger and larger. With a lot of structured hats out there in the golf world, it is always good to keep smaller fitting styles in mind when selecting golf caps.



Tee up with customization

Patches: Rubber, leather, and PVC patches are popular because they offer versatility, durability, and premium branding options. Patches provide a bold, professional look with detailed logos and graphics.

Embroidery: Embroidery is a great choice for golf headwear because it offers a high-end, durable, and visually striking decoration method. Embroidery adds a raised, textured feel, making logos and designs more eye-catching and professional.

Side panel embroidery allows for secondary logos, slogans, or additional design elements without crowding the front panel. This offers a unique branding opportunity and adds a premium touch.

Heat transfer: Heat transfer allows for vibrant, detailed designs with a smooth finish. This is ideal for complex graphics, gradients, and photorealistic images that embroidery can't achieve.

Wrapping up

Finding the right golf hat can make a significant difference in how comfortable your clients feel during a round of golf. With a wide variety of styles, materials, shapes, and sizes, plus crucial features like sun protection, breathability, and moisture-wicking properties, using the information above can help you steer your customers toward the ever-growing world of custom golf gear, and there is no better place to start than headwear. **GP**



Jerry Biag serves as the director of marketing at Imperial Headwear. He can be reached via email at jbiag@imperial1916.com.



Success strategies for embroidery & apparel decoration pros

10 tactics you can implement today

By Jennifer Cox

Still today, five years after the COVID-19 pandemic began, its impact on independent business owners continues. The way consumers find products and the way consumers buy products has changed permanently. 2020 has become a clear line in the sand. There is the way business was done until 2020, and the way we do business now in the aftermath. In order to succeed now as an apparel decoration professional, we have to adapt and evolve to meet our potential customers on this new playing field.

Getting your business organized and streamlined so that you can run your operation efficiently is one of the best ways to lay a solid foundation for success. Having what you need, where you need it, and when you need it makes it possible to get things done, whether you are ordering inventory, running your equipment, creating invoices, or marketing your business.

Here are several actionable strategies that you can implement in your business to help you grow your business:

1 Strengthen relationships with your suppliers

- Build strong connections with multiple suppliers to ensure access to quality products and materials. If you do not know who your inside sales rep is at the companies you order from the most often, ask the next time you place an order. Getting to know this person, and letting them get to know you and your business can give you advantages over competitors.
- Negotiate better pricing or case pricing discounts to increase profitability with the suppliers you order from the most. Tip: National Network of Embroidery Professionals (NNEP) members get these sort of discounts, even on smaller orders.
- Stay informed about new products and trends by signing up for the email newsletters with your suppliers.

2 Invest in learning & skill development

- Attend industry trade shows, webinars, and workshops. You will find out about the latest trends, colors, designs, and styles. If you cannot attend in person, check out the options available online.
- Join embroidery or small business

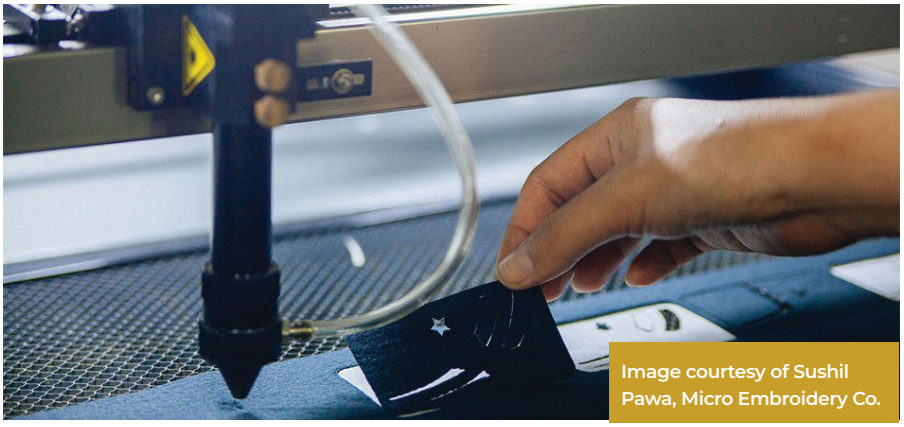


Image courtesy of Sushil Pawa, Micro Embroidery Co.



fizkes – stock.adobe.com

networks to exchange insights, ideas, and information. The local florist may have a new marketing program that could work well for your business.
- Experiment with new design styles, materials, and techniques to expand what you offer. The next time you are in a retail setting with apparel products, look at what is on the apparel. How big is the design, where is the design located, what are the color trends? Are they showing something new or different that you could recreate for your customers?





Image courtesy of Troy Neu, Old Town Embroidery

3 Improve your time management & work-life balance

- Use time-blocking methods to allocate dedicated time for different tasks. It turns out that multitasking is not as efficient as touted. Doing some of everything can lead to nothing getting done. Order inventory two times a week instead of daily. Open your email two or three times a day, and handle all the emails at that time, maybe first thing in the morning, after lunch, and at the end of the day.
- Set realistic work hours and avoid overbooking your workload to prevent burnout. Very few embroidery and apparel decoration jobs require that you miss your child's game, or work until 3 a.m., forgoing your sleep. If a customer demands a quick turnaround, apply a rush fee. Many customers then back down and admit that they need the order by a much more reasonable date. If a work call comes in after hours, let it go to voicemail and return the call in the morning. Enjoy your evening at home. You will come to work tomorrow recharged, relaxed, and ready to tackle the full day ahead.
- Delegate tasks where possible through hiring, outsourcing, or automation. Hiring a bookkeeper to post your expenses and income frees you up to do more sales or have more time to run your equipment, increasing your income.

4 Expand your product mix

- Offer additional decoration services such as applique, heat transfers, direct-to-garment printing, or sublimation, or partner with a local business that offers these services.
- Create seasonal, community, school, or holiday-themed designs and sample products that customers can order or purchase without customization.
- Partner with local businesses or events to provide branded uniforms or promotional apparel.



Image courtesy of Sandtricia Strickland, Essential Creations Chicago.



GamePixel – stock.adobe.com

5 Leverage automation & technology

- Use an order management system to track projects and invoices. There are excellent industry-specific options available, create your own, or tweak a general business solution to meet your needs.
- Invest in updated embroidery software to streamline design editing and production.
- Automate email marketing and social media to maintain customer engagement. With these solutions, you can set it and forget it instead of having to work on it continuously.

6 Develop a customer loyalty program

- Offer discounts for repeat customers. Establish discount offers for bulk orders.
- Implement a referral program where customers earn rewards for bringing in new business. Rewards can be discounts on future orders, free products, or free digitizing on their next order, for example. Make the reward align with the value of the new customer. A referral who orders one shirt is not the same value as a referral who orders hundreds of shirts for their employees.



Debalina – stock.adobe.com

- Stay in touch with past customers. Email personalized follow-ups and special promotions. Email them when you notice a product that would pair nicely with the order they placed recently.

7 Organize your pricing & financial information

- Identify and track material and labor costs to ensure profitability. Tip: If you are not paying yourself a paycheck, why not?
- Use accounting software to monitor income, expenses, and profits. This makes filing your business taxes more efficient and accurate, ensuring that you pay what you need to, while reducing your taxable income as much as possible.
- Regularly review profits earned by order to evaluate your pricing. With this knowledge, you can increase your prices when you discover that you did not hit your profit level targets on specific orders. Tip: Contact me at jobprofitswksheet@nnep.com and I will email you a free job profits calculator worksheet that makes it fast and easy to determine your profits per order.



utah51 – stock.adobe.com





8 Enhance production efficiency

- Standardize processes to minimize errors and save time. If you spend time determining how to hoop something, or what stabilizer to use, create recipe cards to consistently run jobs that are on the same kinds of products.
- Run similar jobs back-to-back to maximize productivity. Nothing slows down your day like having to switch the equipment from flats to caps, back to flats, and then caps again!
- Maintain equipment regularly to avoid breakdowns and delays. Like any machine, your equipment will run best when it is well-maintained. Oil the machine, replace needles, and clean out the bobbin case springs regularly. If the equipment starts to sound different than normal, or if you have more thread breaks than usual, pay attention! These are often some of the first clues that the equipment needs some maintenance.

9 Strengthen & organize your marketing efforts with systems & tools

- Plan and schedule social media posts in advance. You do not need to reinvent the wheel every time you post. Repurpose your images and your content to share it across more than one platform. Post a short video, and then also share an image from that same video on another day.
- Organize a collection of high-quality images and short videos showcasing your work and your equipment in action.
- Create a marketing calendar for promotions and customer engagement. Create a template that helps you create posts that are not just "buy my stuff," as those posts do not generate much interest or business. Tip: NNEP members get an customizable industry-specific marketing calendar template with their membership.

10 Build a strong brand identity

- Develop a consistent look for your logo and messaging. Define a color scheme and style for your online marketing and your print materials, and use it consistently. When someone sees your marketing, your company should be the one they associate with those colors, that look, that style.
- Maintain a consistent presence on social media and your website. Think of any brand beverage or car. Yep, you could visualize it because those companies are experts in creating and promoting their brands. Apply the same strategy to your business.
- Showcase customer testimonials and success stories. People are influenced by social proof, which is when a customer gives you a testamonial, or posts on social and they are wearing or using your products.

If you feel like you have days where you get nothing done for your business, taking the time to organize your information, workflow, marketing, and systems may be exactly what you need to move your business forward profitably. From working more closely with your preferred suppliers to creating and then implementing a cohesive marketing plan to making your business highly recognizable, each of the strategies above can make your business run better, more efficiently, and more profitably.

Take one of the strategies above and apply it in your business this month. See if it makes a difference and improves your performance or your profits. Once you get one in place creating the results you desire, consider adding another layer, another strategy. A gradual implementation of adding these into your business layer by layer over time will prevent overwhelm as well as make it possible for you to see the improvements as they evolve.

Running a successful business is a marathon, not a sprint. And as all marathon runners know, the secret for success is in all the things. It is in how well you prepare, how well you pace yourself, how well you adapt to the current conditions, and how well you learn from your past experiences. Take a look at where you are with your business today. Think about where you want your business to be a year from now. Decide what strategies will help you get from here to there. And finally — go do it! Nothing happens if you change nothing. Anything is possible when you create a plan to apply change or changes. GP



Jennifer Cox is a co-founder and president of the National Network of Embroidery Professionals (NNEP), an organization that supports embroidery and apparel decoration professionals with programs and services designed to increase profitability and production.

Past prints



Fishes with stitches

Simulated suede design

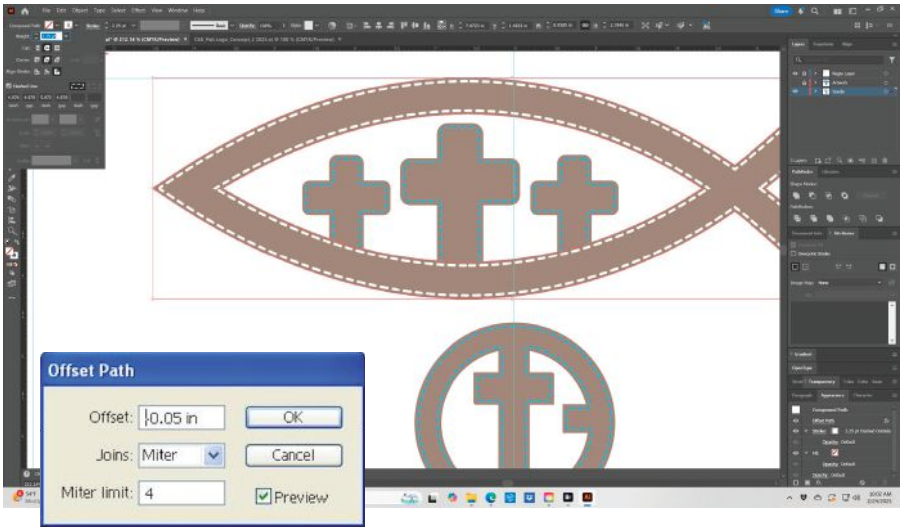
By Lon Winters

As you may have read in last month's issue, our company owns a clothing brand known as Christian Edge Apparel. This is where we provide clothing for outreach programs for churches, schools, missions, youth programs, and other organizations. In last month's magazine, we shared how we refreshed a decade-old T-shirt design. This month we're also working on a Christian Edge Apparel project. I know, I know — we just did the religious thing last issue. But, if you have to double down on something …

Let's start with some heavy Christian history here. The Greek word for fish, "ichthys" or "ichthus," became an acrostic (similar to an acronym explained as a composition in which certain letters form words.) "Iesous Christos Theou Huios Soter," which translates to "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." It is symbol consisting of two intersecting arcs, the ends of the right side extending beyond the meeting point to resemble the profile of a fish.

Dating back the early second century, during Roman persecution, early Christians used the fish symbol as a way to secretly recognize each other, drawing one arc of the fish and having another person complete it. The symbol is linked to various biblical events, including the Holy Eucharist, the miraculous catch of fish and the feeding of the multitudes. Fish are mentioned throughout the Gospels as well. The ichthys symbol is still used today as a way to express faith and affiliation with Christianity. While the traditional ichthys is a simple fish shape, there are variations.





Simulated suede

For decades, we have offered a screen-printed technique that looks and feels remarkably like real suede with stitching. The real thing, while available, even as a transfer, is far less cost effective for larger runs and lead times can be prohibitive. The next best thing is to simulate it using screen printing. We always say, "If you can make something look like something it isn't, it always works!"

The design we wanted to do was an ichthys, or fish as we will call it going forward, with three crosses. After creating our basic shapes in Adobe Illustrator, which will be the suede, we selected the fish and copied and pasted it in front. Then we added a stroke color of white to it. Opening our stroke options, we changed the weight to 2.25pt, chose a round cap so the edges would be blunt. For the corners we selected a round joint.

Now, here is the real magic for those stitches. After we turned on the dashed line, to vary the stitch size and to make it appear more realistic we set the first dash at 5pt, the first gap to 3pt, 6pt on the second dash, and 2pt on second gap and so on. Once we had simulated stitching shapes, we needed to offset the path, so it followed the inner edge. With our stroke selected, we went to effect, selected the path menu and then to the offset path menu. We set it to -0.0601, the joints to miter with limit of 4. -.06 was just too predictable for our liking. We repeated this process with the three crosses on the inside with settings slightly smaller. For the final effect, we went to the original suede



fish and cross outline, copied it, pasted it back and offset it to the lower left to make a drop shadow. This visually helped set the suede up off the shirt and make it additionally convincing. Since we built all of this on layers in spot colors and in Illustrator, it was already separated and ready for output.

We outputted on CTS (computer to screen) the black on a 305 tpi (threads per inch) with a pretty thin stencil for the softest hand possible. The black ink was cut 80%. We mixed the suede ink to a brown color we liked using natural suede base and it went on a 156 with a standard 14% EOM (emulsion over mesh). Finally, the stitch screen would be white puff with just a touch of brown PC (pigment concentrate) to cream it up a bit on a 110 coated using a high solids pure photopolymer emulsion for a thicker ink deposit to leave that texture so we could feel the stitching tactilely. We exposed, developed, dried, taped, and inspected the screens after imaging. Three screens total.

Using the preregistration fixture on press made set up a breeze. Print order was soft black first using a 75/90/75 triple ply dual durometer squeegee. Then the suede, followed by a flash and a cool, and finally the puff went down last — both employing a bit softer 65/90/65s. First strike off was perfect at the end of the belt! The black was so soft it had a water-based feel; the suede was brown and fuzzy, and the puff stitch rose in the dryer for just the right height to feel almost like stitches. We ran this image on forest green, which worked really well. We had to manage the heat after the flash and in the dryer. We had to just gel (dry to the touch) the suede ink on press. Too much heat and that ink would blow and fuzz up on press causing it to fall in the dryer and destroying the effect. The puff would come up just right in the dryer if all went well and it did.

The ichthys, or "Jesus fish" is a symbol, originally used by early Christians as a secret identifier, and now is commonly seen on bumper stickers, coffee cups, and apparel. **GP**



Lon Winters is founder and president of Colorado-based Graphic Elephants, an apparel decorating studio and international consulting firm. He was inducted into the Academy of Screen and Digital Printing Technologies in 2013 and is widely recognized for his contribution to the graphic printing industry. Learn more at graphicelephants.com.

Finding your fit

Building a womenswear niche that works

By Aaron Montgomery

When you think about the womenswear space, one word should come to mind: possibility. This is a massive opportunity to serve people in a way that's meaningful, personal, and profitable. But let's be honest, trying to serve "all women" is about as effective as making a T-shirt that fits every body type perfectly right off the rack. The magic happens when you narrow your focus and speak directly to a group of people you understand, respect, and genuinely want to serve. There are always reasons to celebrate women, but May brings some special opportunities to honor their influence, support their well-being, and connect through thoughtful design that speaks to who they are and what they value.



New Africa – stock.adobe.com



The problem with 'general'

When business owners tell me their target customers are "women, ages 25 to 55," I know we've got work to do. That's not a niche, that's half the population. And while it feels inclusive, it leaves customers confused, so your marketing and sales efforts just end up being noise. A woman buying activewear for her small-town barre studio isn't looking for the same vibe as a mom grabbing matching shirts for a dance team. Their style, their budget, and most importantly, what they want to feel when they wear your product vary wildly. That's why defining a women-focused niche starts with asking the right questions.

Good niches start with listening

When I work with people on their ideal customer profile, it often feels like they're guessing who their customers are and what they value. Even if they have a vision in mind, they sometimes feel like they're guessing what their ideal customers want. Guessing is not part of the strategy, listening to what they value is. The good news is your ideal customers are telling you everything you need to know and slowing down to recall the specifics of conversations, requests, and where they lit up will tell you everything you need to know. That might be comfort, style, representation, identity, connection, or just a little bit of fun. And that starts by understanding what kind of women you're trying to reach. Are they business owners? Teachers? Fitness lovers? Moms on the go? Retirees who just joined a travel group?

I believe as business owners we should avoid information that is prescriptive and strategies that are based on doing what is told because that is the way they did it. Too many business owners want to be employees with options. Meaning they want someone to tell them what to do and then they will blame the instructions when it doesn't work. It's time to embrace the business owner role and ask more "why" questions, and be inspired by the information you are taking in, like this article and the rest of this amazing magazine. I want to give you some question prompts that will help you better "listen" to your ideal customers. These aren't just surface-level prompts. They help you create a niche that's based on shared values and real connections, not assumptions or stereotypes.

- What's the real reason someone buys from you — and how do they want to feel when they wear it?
- Who are your current favorite customers? What do they have in common?
- What do they care about beyond the product? Style? Sustainability? Faith? Community? Humor?
- Where are they already spending their time and money?
- What kind of conversations are they having that your product can be a part of?

Niche doesn't mean small

Here's a common hang-up: "If I narrow my niche, I'll lose customers." But the opposite is true. When your message is clear and specific, the right people pay attention, and you get above the noise and grow your business beyond your wildest dreams. I don't believe we can sustain working with everyone, and honestly, my life minutes are too precious to waste on that. I want you to be working with your ideal customers. The more focused you are, the easier it is to design, market, sell, and just love what you get to do each day.

And when you design products that speak directly to a niche, you start building trust. Whether that's a collection for women in trades, a faith-based apparel line, or stylish wear for new moms. Trust builds loyalty. Loyalty builds returning customers and word-of-mouth opportunities. Do you see where that leads?

Fit is about more than size

As you continue to uncover your fit, the fit for your ideal customer must go beyond the cotton and stitching. Finding your niche isn't just about market data. It's about alignment.


PRASANNAPIX – stockadobe.com

Do your values match the people you're trying to serve? Does your style, your tone, and your product selection feel like them? Are you showing up in your marketing in a way that makes your ideal customer say, "That's for me"?

This is especially important when designing for women. You're not here to speak for women. And for those of us who are males, we certainly won't gain any traction speaking at women. To find the right fit when it comes to womenswear, your marketing should create space with them. That means listening more, stereotyping less, and building a brand that celebrates real women, not some vague marketing version of them. Yes, the actual person, not a demographic.

Let your niche grow with you

May is a month full of reminders about women's strength and influence. Mother's Day, Women's Health Month, and a whole season of renewal. It's a good time to reflect on where your business is planted and what kind of growth you want to see.

Your niche doesn't have to be locked in forever. You can grow into it. Adjust it. Refine it. But the sooner you pick a direction, the sooner you'll build momentum. Stop waiting for the "perfect" product line or the "right" audience to show up. Start with what you know. Listen to who you love serving. Trust that when you design for someone specific, your message lands stronger, your marketing gets easier, and your business becomes more fulfilling. By taking action and listening you will find your fit.

Keep exploring

If this article got your wheels turning, keep going. There are some great books, podcasts, and industry leaders focused on niche building and customer-centered design. Here are a few worth checking out:

- "Building a StoryBrand" by Donald Miller
- "This is Marketing" by Seth Godin
- "Marketing Made Simple" podcast by StoryBrand

And next month, we get to be back together in Indianapolis for GRAPHICS PRO EXPO. At 8 a.m. on June 21, I get to share a popular discussion titled "Marketing Better in 2025: Grow Profits with Clarity and Connection." I can't wait to see you there. Email me at success@oursuccessgroup.com to let me know you are going to be there and tell me what your niche market is. Maybe I can share some questions to ask yourself to better refine your marketing message, so the fit you have with your ideal customers is even stronger.

Your niche is waiting. Go meet her. **GP**



Aaron Montgomery's company, Our Success Group, assists with business plans and pricing strategies, as well as customer service and marketing. He is the author of "The FUNdamentals of Business Success" and the co-founder of a facilitated six-month mastermind collective called Radical Goal-Getters. Aaron also co-hosts the 2 Regular Guys podcast.





DIRECT TO FILM TRANSFERS
ULTRACOLOR MAX
with NEW INKS
SEE THE DIFFERENCE
Cleaner. Brighter. Better.
Certified Safe
OEKO TEX
CPSIA
TRY A FREE SAMPLE
STAHLS' TRANSFER EXPRESS
GP0525

YP CLASSICS
PERFECT FOR CUSTOM PRINTS
6609/6609T
High profile retro trucker. Print-ready with a smooth, solid front panel.
SHOP NOW
NEW FOR 2025

Banner GripFlip™
Amazing new flip up frame that stretches any size vinyl banner within the frame, and the tops snap down to cover the banner edges. There are no visible external screws, and the profile is only 2.5 inches wide!
Create large and beautifully, drum-tight stretched vinyl banner displays!
Screw pushes clamp bar down through bottom to force tightening and clamp down on the banner.
Only 2.50 inches
Vinyl Banner Material
1 inch
Flip top snaps down completely covering all screws and stretcher bar. Clean, perfect look!
To see more:
bannergrip.com

JOHNSONPLASTICS PLUS
EPSON SURECOLOR®
V1070 PRINTER
UV & DTF Printing
NEW!
TREND ALERT:
selling fast!
scan me TO SHOP
JPPLUS.COM
1.800.869.7800

GOOF PROOF®
SCREEN PRINTED TRANSFERS
NOW AVAILABLE FROM STAHLS'
Screen Printing in Only 4 Seconds!
• Real Ink
• One Color
• Soft Hand
TRY A FREE SAMPLE
STAHLS'
GP0525

6.5oz
18 SINGLES
GARMENT DYED
1812GD
6.5 OZ WIDE TEE
Bigger than a crop tee and smaller than a regular tee, the Wide Tee is just right in the middle. This breathable top is a sporty fit on men and relaxed fit on women.
Available in Dolphin Blue, Light Grey, Off Black, Off White, Port, and Spectra Yellow.
WHOLESALE-IMPRINTABLE DIVISION
WWW.LOSANGELESAPPAREL-IMPRINTABLE.NET
INFO@LOSANGELESAPPAREL.NET
(213)275-3180

Manipulating type for impact

Three text tricks

By Stephen Romaniello

Type is a powerful visual element capable of expressing ideas. How type characters look on the page communicates as much, or more, than how they read. When used creatively, text effects can enhance a message and make it more interesting and compelling. Above all, text effects create impact that attracts a viewer's attention.

In this month's article, I'll present three creative, fun techniques that will transform your ordinary text characters into interesting visual elements. A simple step-by-step sequence of commands can create believable images that enhance a layout. We'll also be looking at the systematic workflow that is required to create these effects.

I'm using Photoshop for these demos, but any image editing software with similar features will work.

Creating a new document

When you launch Photoshop, choose New File. In the New Document dialog box choose Print with dimensions of 8.5" X 11" and 300 PPI for the resolution. Choose RGB 8 Bit for the color mode and click the Landscape icon for a horizontal orientation. The background contents are black. **(Fig. 1)**

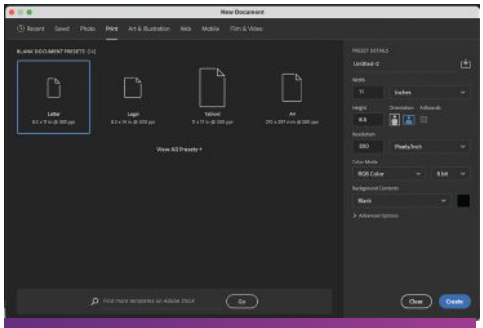


Figure 1. The New Document dialog box.



Figure 2. With the Polygonal Lasso tool, draw a diagonal line horizontally through the center of the of the text and continue creating a four-sided polygon selection above the top part of the text.



Figure 3. Drag the Sliced (copy) layer contents to the right with the Move tool.



Figure 4. With the Brush tool, draw a black diagonal line that follows the angle of the cut mark, then merge the two layers (Sliced and Sliced Copy). Duplicate the merged layer twice and drag the two new layers into position.

Sliced text

This technique is relatively simple involving just a few steps to produce a dramatic cut paper look.

1. In the center of the art board, type the word "SLICED" in Arial Black, all caps, 125 Point, White.
2. With the Polygonal Lasso tool, draw a diagonal line horizontally through the center of the of the text and continue creating a four-sided polygon selection above the top part of the text. **(Fig. 2)**
3. In the Layers Panel, click the Layer Mask icon. The black part of the layer mask represents the bottom area of the layer content that is concealed from view.
4. Duplicate the layer. The layer is automatically named "Sliced (copy)".



Figure 5A. First, click the Bevel and emboss box and adjust the specifications.



Figure 5B. Add a stroke.

5. Press the Command (Mac) Control (Windows) + I keys to invert the layer mask. The mask on this layer conceals the top part of the text. With the Move tool, drag the Sliced (copy) layer contents to the right. **(Fig. 3)**
6. To create a shadow, you'll need to rasterize the layer. Rasterizing converts the vector data on the type layer to pixels so that the layer can be manipulated with manual tools. From the Layers menu, choose Rasterize > Type. Then, with the Brush tool sized to 100 points, 0% hardness and 100% black as a foreground color, draw a diagonal line that follows the angle of the cut mark.
7. To create a stack of slices, as in **Fig. 4**, merge the two layers, Sliced and Sliced (Copy), Duplicate the merged layers twice and drag them into position.

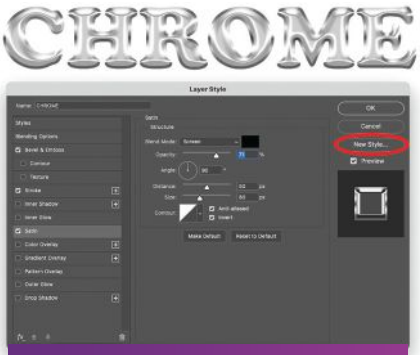


Figure 5C. Add Satin.



Figure 6. Add a Gradient fill layer.

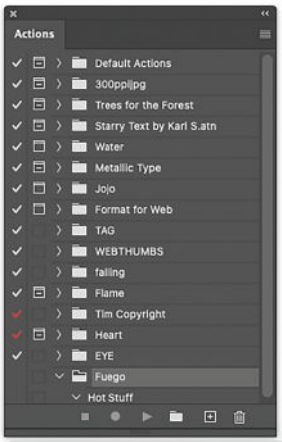


Figure 7. Type additional text and apply the saved style.

Layer style type

The sliced effect is very simple and requires only a few steps. This next one, is quite simple too and uses Layer Styles to produce a shiny, chrome text effect.

1. Create a new document that has the same specifications as the "Sliced" document except for a white background.
2. Choose the Type tool and enter your text. Assign specifications, in this case, Cooper Black, all caps, 126 point.
3. In the Layers panel, double click the area to the right of the type layer thumbnail to display the Layer Styles dialog box. Click the Bevel and emboss box and adjust the specifications to resemble **Fig. 5A**.
4. Choose Stroke and adjust the specifications to resemble **Fig. 5B**.
5. Choose Satin and adjust the specifications to resemble **Fig. 5C**.
6. Save the layer style by clicking the New Style button. The style is saved to the Styles panel.
7. For even more impact, change the background color. Click the Fill/Adjustment layer icon in the layers panel and choose Gradient. Choose a gradient from the list or make a custom gradient with the Gradient Editor. Because the type is partially



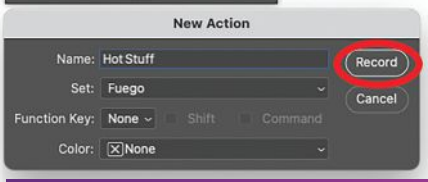


Figure 8. Name the Action "Hot Stuff" and then click Record.



Figure 9. The position of the flames is based on a Work Path.

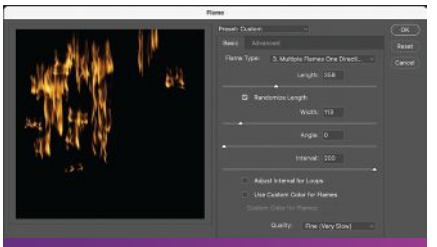


Figure 10. The Flame filter dialog box.



Figure 11: The gradient and an Outer Glow layer style is applied to the letters. The reflection is made by merging the layers, duplicating them, flipping the duplicate vertically, dragging it below, and applying a Perspective transformation. A gaussian blur filter was applied and the layer opacity was reduced to 50%.



Figure 12. The Hot Stuff action applied to different type.

transparent, it will pick up the colors of the background. **(Fig. 6)**

8. Add additional text. Use the Styles panel (Window > Styles) to apply the saved style to the new text layer. **(Fig. 7)**

Burning hot text

This next effect is really hot and a little more complex. We're going to apply the Flame filter to text to make it appear as if it's surrounded by flame. Not only that but we're going to record this process as an Action and then apply the effect to another text document.

New document

In this instance, the new document has the same specification as the Sliced text with dimensions of 8.5" X 11" and 300 PPI for the Resolution. Choose RGB 8 Bit for the color mode and click the Landscape icon for the orientation. The background contents are black.

Recording the action

Open the Actions panel. (Window > Actions). From the Panel Options menu choose New Set and name the set "Fuego." From Panel Options menu choose New Action. Name the Action "Hot Stuff" and then click the Record button. **(Fig. 8)**

Entering type

Choose the Type tool. Choose a font and a size. For this exercise I chose Hobo Std, all caps, 170 Points, white. Click the document and type the word "FUEGO." The new text layer is automatically named "FUEGO. From the Layers menu choose Layer > Rasterize >Type to convert the new text layer into pixels.

Applying filters

Photoshop's Flame filter is versatile and can save lots of time, but it requires a few preliminary steps to activate it. First, you'll need to make a path from the text characters. **(Fig. 9)** Press Command (Mac) or Control (Windows) and click the copied layer's thumbnail in the Layers panel to select it. Then go to Window > Paths to display the Paths panel. From panel options menu choose Make Work Path, then click OK. Duplicate the FUEGO layer. It is automatically named FUEGO (copy).

To open the Flame filter dialog box, go to Filter > Render > Flames. The Flames interface has a several controls and a very nice preview window. **(Fig. 10)** The controls specify the Flame type, (I choose Multiple Flames One Direction) length, width, angle and interval. You can even choose a custom color for the flame effect. Click OK to apply the flames.



Figure 13. Google "Text Effect Actions" and you'll find dozens of sights that offer them for sale or for free to download and apply to your text.

Coloring the type

To better unify the type and the flames, apply a gradient to the text. Drag the Fuego Layer to the top of the stack. Click Layer Styles icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Gradient Overlay from the list that appears. Click the gradient preview area in the center of the options to display the Gradient Editor.

At the bottom half of the Gradient Editor, click the horizontal ramp that displays a preview of the current gradient's colors with house shaped color stops directly below the ramp on each end. Double-click the color stop on the left to display the Color Picker. I chose black for the left stop applied to the top of the letters, red for the middle stop and black on the right for the bottom of the letters, but of course, you can choose any colors you like. Click OK to exit out of the Gradient editor.

Add an outer glow Layer Style to give the text a soft halo effect. At this point, click the stop button on the Actions panel.

Fig. 11 shows the gradient applied to the letters, the outer glow layer style and a reflection made by copying the layers, flipping them vertically, dragging them below, and applying a Perspective transformation. A gaussian blur filter was applied, and the layer opacity was reduced to 50%.

Run the action on different text

Before you run the action on a new document with different text, click the Toggle On /Off dialog box (the little square) next to the Hot Stuff action. As the action runs it will stop so that you can enter different text and make necessary adjustments. **(Fig. 12)**

Warning! This is a relatively complex action. You may have to try this several times with intervals of manual manipulation before you get satisfactory results. Worry not! As the I-Ching says, "Perseverance furthers!"

Versatility

In this article, I've scratched the surface of a huge subject by presenting three distinct methods for jazzing up type: a simple five-step slice effect, shiny chrome letters using Layer Styles, and finally, a red-hot flame filter effect that was recorded as an Action to later be applied to additional text. I chose these examples to illustrate the versatility of the software and the fact that there are many approaches to creating amazing type effects.

In addition to text generation features, we've explored the intricacies of Photoshop's workflow. In producing any graphic documents, its critical to know your tools and commands, where to find them and how best to apply them.

Obviously, with software as powerful as Photoshop, the potential to produce dazzling type effects is endless. FYI, there are a lot of designers who publish written step-by-step instructions of text effects online. There is also a plethora of type effect video tutorials on YouTube. Furthermore, if you like working with Actions, there are literally hundreds of type-effect actions on the internet. Just Google "Text Effect Actions" and you'll find dozens of sights that offer them for sale or for free to download and apply to your text. **(Fig. 13)** GP



Stephen Romaniello is an artist and educator who has seen the evolution of digital graphics since the beginning of the digital revolution in the 1980s. He is CEO of GlobalEye Systems, a graphics software and creative imaging consultancy, and founder of Gorilla Geeks, a creative consulting firm.



BullRun – stock.adobe.com

The power of the stay interview

How to keep top employees

By Marshall Atkinson

Nobody has to tell you that hiring is hard. And keeping good people? It feels like that is even harder. Lately, other shops have resorted to poaching our best employees.

If you are in the decorated apparel industry, you've felt this punch to the gut all too often. The hiring pool is shallow. Competition for decent staff is fierce. And turnover? It hits hard when your rock star press operator or key customer service rep walks out unexpectedly.

Ouch. That's why you should turn to something powerful right now.

The stay interview

Unlike exit interviews, which are too late, or performance reviews, where the power dynamic is uneven, a stay interview is simply a casual, honest conversation. It's about checking in before there is a problem. It's asking, "Why do you continue to work here?" instead of wondering, "Why did they leave?"

Whether you like it or not, your employees have choices. If you are not talking to them about their work experience, someone else might be.

Think about this

What does a good stay interview look like? Think coffee chat, not HR meeting. You want to ask open-ended questions that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no." Really, really listen. And most importantly, act on what you hear. In a nutshell, you want to ask them: What do you love about your job? What makes your day harder than it needs to be? How can we better support your goals?

Even small changes, like fixing a broken process or leading the team with empathy, can make a

huge impact. You definitely won't know what they are thinking until you ask them. Don't assume.

In the print industry, where every person on your team matters, retention is your secret weapon. I visit a lot of shops, and the ones that thrive have staff that are growing old with the business. These veterans are the backbone and secret sauce for these companies. They have been there, done that, and literally have printed the T-shirt. But what if one of them leaves? A 30-minute conversation today can save you weeks of scrambling later.

So, grab a cup of coffee (get one for them, too!), pull up a chair, and ask members of your crew what's really going on with their work and their lives. You might be surprised what they tell you.

And best of all? When you listen, they stay.

Why interviews matter

Finding good employees in the decorated apparel industry has never been more challenging. You don't need a magazine telling you that. Shops are running lean, workloads are heavy, and the available labor pool is tight. So when you do have a great employee, your top priority should be keeping them. That is where the stay interview comes in.

A stay interview is a casual, one-to-one conversation designed to understand why your employee stays, what they love, and what might be frustrating them. Until you ask, you don't know. This isn't about performance reviews or a checklist. It is about a person-to-person connection.

When to hold them

You will want to meet with each employee at least once a year for their stay interview. Maybe twice a year would be even better if you can swing it. This is a proactive tool, so your goal here is to get ahead of any problems before they fester. You might also want one after a new hire passes the 90-day mark or even after a huge project ends. It's good to take the temperature and understand what someone is thinking.

How to hold one

The idea behind this is just two people chatting. The tone is casual. Grab some coffee or sodas and sit somewhere informal. You want them to feel comfortable enough to open up. So don't sit behind your big desk and stare them down. The big boss dynamic is wrong for this. You want your staff member to feel safe and reassure them there are no right or wrong answers. It is all about them, and not about you. Shut up and listen. This is your chance to hear their truth. Let them talk. You can take notes, but the point is to understand your employee, so don't make it an inquisition.

Below are the best 10 stay interview questions. Don't feel the need to ask all of these. Rewrite them to how you naturally talk or what you want to discover.

Common mistakes to avoid

Since this is a conversation, it may stray into murky waters that make you uncomfortable. Sometimes, it is good to air out problems, so consider this a good thing.

Whatever is said, don't get defensive. Take notes and repeat what was said back to them. You don't want the stay interview to become a gripe session, but you want to stay positive and focus on solutions.

Don't wait until someone is thinking of quitting to ask these questions. It is good to confront reality and comprehend someone's point of view. Even if it is hard to hear.

What to do with the info

As you interview your staff, you may find patterns or repeat concerns. This is a signal for you to enact change or improve something. When you enact any change, make it visible. Even small, it shows you were listening, taking employees' concerns seriously, and trying to improve something. However, someone may chime in on something that is out of bounds, ridiculous, or beyond financial reach. Respond to it and see if an alternative can be made.

Final thoughts

Stay interviews are not a silver bullet. Yet, they are one of the smartest, simplest ways to keep your team strong. If you want loyalty, trust, and less drama in your shop, then make a habit of talking with your people, not just at them. **GP**



Marshall Atkinson lives and works in Mesa, Arizona. He is a frequent contributor to industry magazines and a popular trade show educator. Recognized for his industry education contributions, he was elected to the Academy of Screen and Digital Printing Technologies in 2020.

10 best stay interview questions

- ☐ What do you look forward to when you come to work each day?
- ☐ What do you like the most and the least about your job?
- ☐ Is there anything about your job you find confusing or frustrating?
- ☐ Do you feel recognized for the work you do here?
- ☐ What would make your job easier or more enjoyable?
- ☐ Do you feel you are growing professionally?
- ☐ What keeps you here?
- ☐ What might tempt you to leave?
- ☐ Do you feel your work is valued and meaningful?
- ☐ How can I better support you in your role?

AWARDS & CUSTOMIZATION

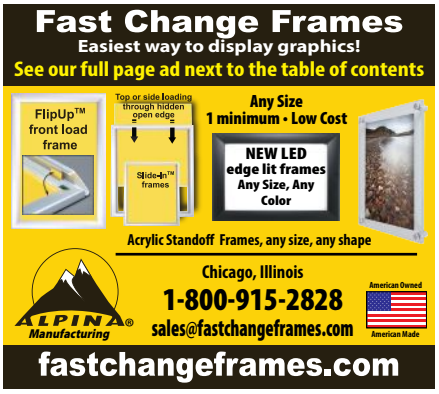


SIGNAGE & PRINTING



SIGNAGE & PRINTING





To advertise, visit:
graphics-pro.com/advertise



ADVERTISER INDEX

Advertiser	Page
6Sign	5
ADA Central Signs	64
Alpina Mfg LLC	3, 57, 64
ColDesi Inc	15
Flexfit	7, 57
Gildan Activewear SRL	CVTP
Graphtec America Inc	19
Hartlauer Bits	64
GRAPHICS PRO	**23, 64**
GRAPHICS PRO EXPO	**16B**
Infinity Product Group	39
Jackson Marking Products Co Inc	64
Johnson Plastics Plus	33, 57
LAT Apparel	37, 56
Los Angeles Apparel	IBC, 57
Mutoh America Inc	1
Otto Intl Inc	56
S&S Activewear	11
SanMar	41
Signs365.com	FCG
STAHLS'	IFC, 57, BC

The Advertiser Index is intended solely as a convenience for our readers and is not a written or implied part of any advertising commitment. As such, GRAPHICS PRO assumes no liabilities for unintentional errors or omissions.

8.5 oz Wide T-Shirt

Introducing one of the heaviest tees available on the market. So thick, it could almost be called a sweater. This textile is durable, comfortable, and virtually shrink-free thanks to the garment dye process.

Garment-dyed means it's been washed in dye after it was sewn, so the color will stay true even after repeated washings. It also gives a broken-in feel, just like your favorite T-shirt that's been worn for a decade.

1201WGD

- Unisex
  S | M | L | XL | 2XL
- Made in Los Angeles
- 8.5 oz/yd^2
- 12/1 Open-End Jersey
- 100% Cotton

- Black Edge
- Light Grey
- Creme
- White



8.5 OZ
12 SINGLES
GARMENT DYED
SHRINK-FREE

LOS ANGELES APPAREL
Wholesale-Imprintable Division
www.losangelesapparel-imprintable.net
info@losangelesapparel.net
(213) 275-3120

GOOF PROOF® TRANSFERS

NOW AVAILABLE AT STAHLS'



SWIFT

PRINT, PRESS, & PROFIT IN SECONDS!

Get a professional screen printed finish in just 4 seconds!

Press 50 shirts in 30 minutes and you could earn up to $275 in profit. It's that simple. See the example below for a possible scenario.

Orders placed by 3 PM ET ship the next business day so you can fulfill more orders even faster!

Example of How You Could Profit:

50 full front transfers are only $0.99 cents each, with no setup fees and quantity price breaks to maximize your profit on bulk orders.

- Blank T-Shirt: $2.50 (e.g., Gildan 5000)
- Goof Proof® Transfer: $0.99
- Total Cost Per Shirt: $3.49
- Selling Price Per Shirt: $9.00
- Profit Per Shirt: $5.51
- Total Profit for 50 Shirts: $275.00

This is just one example—actual profits depend on your pricing, blank choice, and labor costs.

Free Samples



STAHLS'®

STAHLS.COM | 800.4.STAHLS

GP0525