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Sign Update

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2014 ISSUE 148 £2.50

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Feature on page 50

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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2014

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Advertising Manager - **Martin Hinchliffe**.....Tel: 01784 605 601
email: martin@signupdate.co.uk

Editor - **Kathryn Johnson**.....Tel: 01784 605 602
email: editor@signupdate.co.uk

Features Editor - **Jemima Codrington**Tel: 07772 516 227
email: jemima@signupdate.co.uk

Graphic Design - **Tony Hinchliffe**.....Tel: 01784 463 904
email: tony@signupdate.co.uk

Accounts - **Linda Hinchliffe**.....Tel: 01784 463 904
email: linda@signupdate.co.uk

Publisher - **Roger Hinchliffe**.....Tel: 01784 463 904
email: roger@signupdate.co.uk

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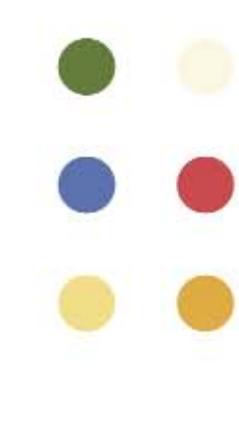
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Exciting times for our industry

Looking out my window whilst I write this, I can see a banner hanging on some scaffolding outside a house that is being renovated. Even though it's at the other end of the street I can clearly see what the company is called and their website address. What's more, it is very windy yet this banner doesn't move so you can always see what it says. So it's interesting to read the feature on flags and banners in this issue, which starts on page 58, as we find out that due to their many advantages, soft signage is becoming increasingly popular. The signage and graphics sector is supporting this growth by producing printers that make the whole process quicker and creating new display systems that make it easier to swap banners around, to make it more flexible.

Our other feature, which starts on page 46, looks at how signmakers are getting creative with installations and what they are using to fix signs of all shapes and sizes in place. There are often challenges with fittings, such as when they need to be invisible, or in the case of HNS Signs who make a lot of signs for hospitals, strong enough to withstand deep cleaning.

In Product News there are some great new signage solutions to read about, in particular the digital signage system called Tensator, which is proving successful in transport hubs. Graphics for floors that maintain their quality are feasible and show how effective signs in alternative locations can be, rather than just on walls.

In Product Choice two different companies credit their Mutoh ValueJet printers for saving time and money, which has helped both businesses grow. Other sign shops tell us about their new machines, such as a Sagetech Koolkut wall saw; a VUTEK® HS100 Pro high-speed digital press (the first to be installed in the UK) and a Tekcel 2m x 3m router.

Speaking of machinery, don't miss our April issue, which will feature many companies and suppliers exhibiting at Sign and Digital UK, the perfect time to have a look at what's out there. I hope to meet some of you at the exhibition and talk about what your business is up to — as always we love to hear from you and maybe showcase a special project. Also, if there is a relevant issue you would like featured in this magazine, please get in touch. Till the next time...

Kathryn
editor@signupdate.co.uk



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G-Floor – Changing the world beneath our feet

A revolutionary new product is poised to 'take the European flooring market by storm'.

Marketers have increasingly been drawn to the benefits of using the surface we walk on to promote products and services and also for 'way-finding' purposes.

According to Soyang Europe, they've gradually been waking up to the notion that when visitors and shoppers enter a location for the first time, they often spend a great deal of time looking at the floor as a way of navigating unfamiliar surroundings. And yet traditionally most directional or PoS material is sited on walls.

But printing bespoke graphics and advertising messages on flooring media has historically been problematic. Durability, longevity and practicality have all presented challenges. A clever piece of promotional material for a high profile brand won't be doing much for the brand's reputation if it becomes scratched, scuffed or discoloured in a short space of time.

Wide format media specialists, Soyang Europe say they have the answer, with a 'remarkable' new product called G-Floor, which they are confident will completely change traditional perceptions of what is possible in the field of customised flooring.



Soyang Europe's G-Floor product delivers the ability to brand and decorate public spaces.

The high-tech new media, originally developed in the United States, is based on a high density clear, flexible PVC substrate, capable of being printed to the underside using either UV curable or solvent inks on a grand-format printer.



Large areas of continuous runs of flooring can be decorated.

Because the image is printed beneath the media, the thick wear-layer protects the integrity of the graphic. G-Floor is hygienic, easily installed and repositionable, as well as has 'excellent' load-bearing capability, with low noise and sound absorbing characteristics. A range of different finishes provide a 'safe, effective and hard-wearing' grip surface for a wide variety of retail, business and public space applications. There is also an option of a solid white media, suitable for surface printing in cases where print suppliers only have four colour process capabilities.

Andrew Simmons, Sales Director for SOYANG Europe said: "We believe that the sheer durability and versatility of G-Floor will turn the industry on its head. No other product currently available has such a high level of durability, or is available in such a wide range of finishes or widths. The potential for retail outlets, restaurants, cinemas, vehicle showrooms, fitness centres, hotels, exhibition halls, stages, sporting venues

and airports, is genuinely fantastic. This product moves the game on from simply printing floor graphics to being able to produce Graphic Floors"

Available in widths up to 3m and thicknesses to suit virtually any kind of flatbed, roll to roll or hybrid grand format printer, G-Floor offers 'almost limitless marketing and logistical opportunities'. Simmons says: "This really is a very cost effective product and the speedy installation process coupled with its durability and ease of repositioning make this a far more viable proposition than conventional laminate or tiled flooring alternatives. The scope for this product is so vast and exciting that I think we're barely touching the surface of its potential. What we're really keen to do is nurture creative partnerships with printers, designers and marketers to really develop the full effectiveness of this product."

www.g-floor.co.uk
www.soyang.co.uk

Summa unveils the successor to the 'world's best' thermal transfer printer/cutter

Summa proudly announces the official launch of the successor to their renowned thermal transfer printer/cutter: DC5.

At 137 cm, the DC5 is the world's widest thermal transfer resin printer/cutter and comprises over four times the width of its nearest competitor.

It delivers customer ready prints with no need to dry or laminate. Resin ribbon printing may last outdoor for up to five years without lamination, says the company. One single machine will deliver durable full colour and accurate contour cut graphics with the ability to cut completely through the material. The automatic resin ribbon changer can combine process colours, a wide range of spot colours and mirroring metallic foil printing for high-profit effect graphics that only thermal transfer printing will provide. Thermal transfer printing is currently the 'most environmental friendly method on the market'. There is no chemical waste, no VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) exhaust or noxious solvent fumes that could entail any health risk.

Other features include an Ethernet port and a new user interface. The available widths for the DC5 are 50cm (new), 61cm, 75cm, 100cm (new), 122cm (new) and 137cm. The widths for DC5sx are 50cm (new), 61cm and 75cm.

A modern styled user interface was also added to the DC series to meet operator needs for ergonomics and safety.

The touchscreen facilitates 'quick and easy' navigation through the menus and displays a broader range of information on the screen.

www.summa.eu



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APA presents the new Galaxy Red Chrome effect

A revolutionary new product is poised to 'take the European flooring market by storm'.

APA continues to search for 'original and innovative solutions to satisfy every wrapping desire' so offer 'up to date fashionable colours in gloss, satin, matt and camouflage, three-dimensional and material effect'.

Galaxy Red Chrome is the most recent product launched to the market by the Italian company. The high value adhesive film with the 'inimitable' metallic red stardust effect, 'undoubtedly does not go unnoticed for its originality and elegance'.

APA is already undergoing further variations with the same effect and with different dyes. The new film enriches the Chrome Galaxy line that at the moment comprises two variations (Steel and Red), to complement the range 'perfectly

mirroring the different desired shades'. Highly conformable, and manufactured for flat, undulating and curved surfaces, Galaxy Red Chrome is particularly suitable for those who wish to highlight detailed graphic areas with a shiny and chromed finish.

As well as the aesthetic value, Galaxy Red Chrome also carries out a protective function and, should you wish to return to the original chassis colour it can be easily removed without leaving glue residue. Thanks to the micro-channels that allow air to escape, bubbles and imperfections are avoided, which 'guarantee a perfect result and a strong aesthetic impact'.

www.apaspa.com



The 'inimitable' Galaxy Red Chrome wrap.

Screen launches Truepress JetW3200UV wide-format printer

Screen Europe has formally launched the new Truepress Jet W3200UV wide-format printer.

The Truepress Jet W3200UV is a 'new generation, mid-range flatbed inkjet printer that incorporates several features which are usually found in more expensive machines'.

It can take rigid board or paper sheets up to 3.2 x 1.6m format and up to 50mm thick, or multiple smaller sheets at once. The W3200 can produce production print at 10, 14, 18 or 22 passes depending on the speed and quality required. The printer uses vibrant and flexible Truepress inks, which deliver high-definition, wide-colour gamut print quality with 'excellent resistance' to the bending and cutting of media. Users can specify colour options to suit their needs: CMYK + LcLm, +LcLmWW or +WW.

At the launch Mike Willis, managing director of inkjet consultancy Pivotal Resources, spoke about the rapid evolution of wide-format inkjet technology and the development of commercial markets for these printers over the past decade. "In the early days nobody knew what the market would be for wide-for-

mat inkjets," he said. "But it has opened up a new category and now it is used for multiple applications from sign and display, point of sale, posters, wall covering, and packaging as well as for processes in electronics and ceramics. Industrial inkjet is expected to really accelerate over the next few years."

The Larger Profile in the UK is the world's first user of the Truepress Jet W3200UV, having acted as an early adopter for three months before confirming its order in November. Giorgio Damiano, designer and operator at The Larger Profile, was on

hand to give an account of his company's experience of using the printer for a variety of work, especially quality sensitive, 'solid colours', display and wall panels for retailers, including a lot of work on clear acrylics, for which the high opacity white ink is essential.

Martijn van den Broek, wide format sales manager for Benelux at Screen Europe, highlighted the standout features of the new printer, such as the nozzle mapping technology, automatic cleaning, mist extraction system and how accurate placement of the 14 picolitre droplets is achieved. "Ultimately this new printer gives reliable high productivity with consistent superb print quality. Add the great substrate flexibility and added value applications such as multi-layer printing and the Truepress Jet W3200UV is setting a new standard in the market," he said.

www.screen europe.com



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HP expands suite of custom wall décor solutions

New tools help print service providers and wallcovering manufacturers deliver 'high-value wall decoration applications'.

HP has expanded its digital printing solution for wall decorations, to help print service providers (PSPs) and wallcovering manufacturers with applications for commercial, retail and residential spaces.

The HP digital printing solution consists of a modular range of design software, media, HP Latex Printing Technology, finishing options and industry certifications.

This scalable solution enables customers ranging from small PSPs to large wallcovering manufacturers to take the growing customisation trend to the wall with unique or short-run wallpapers, wallcoverings, wall murals and canvas prints.

HP WallArt is an easy-to-use, cloud-based web service that helps simplify the design, visualisation and production of customised wallcoverings. Introduced at Heimtextil 2013, the tool is already in use by more than 1,100 customers in 66 countries. Following this successful trial, HP WallArt will remain free for new and existing HP Latex Printing Technology customers.

New features for HP WallArt include:

- A new alliance with global stock photography company Fotolia, giving users easy access to a wide variety of high quality, professional images, designs and artwork.
- Integration with customers' online storefronts for a customised and branded web-to-print solution that streamlines quotations, billing and managed information systems.
- A free HP WallArt application for iPad®, available through Apple's App Store, which provides real-time, interactive design and accurate previews of the finished wall layout.
- Easier production of canvas prints, including a multi-panel canvas option and automatically generated installation instructions.



Part of a digital wall décor showroom created by renowned industrial and interior designer Markus Benesch, 'brings to life the creativity and innovation' made possible with digital printing and the complete HP solution.

Additional new components for the HP digital printing solution for wall décor include:

- Certifications to help meet international wallcovering industry standards. HP Latex inks have been tested and certified by authorised third party labs and are compatible with industry standards, such as the EN233 standard for washability and colourfastness, the Euro class standard, Class B for flame retardancy and the CE Mark. These tests have been performed on a range of substrates from leading media vendors.
- Automatic winding systems from Fotoba International, which can reduce labour costs and improve efficiency by providing ready-to-pack wallcovering rolls directly from the cutting device. Two models are now available: the REW104 for media up to 104 cm (40.9 in) and the REW160 for media up to 160 cm (62.9 in).

'The tool is already in use by more than 1,100 customers in 66 countries.'

"The wall decoration market is on the verge of major change enabled by the speed, quality and versatility of HP Latex digital printing technology," said Joan Perez Pericot, worldwide marketing director, Large Format Sign & Display Division, HP. "Working with industry-leading vendors, HP provides innovative tools and solutions across the entire workflow to help wallcovering manufacturers and print service providers differentiate their offering, reach new customer segments, push creative boundaries and ultimately bring in new revenue."

www.hpwallart.com

More sales so lower price for SignClip TF

SignClip TF, introduced at Sign & Digital UK in 2012 is going 'from strength to strength'.



Designed for the temporary and disposable sign markets, this innovative clip firmly fixes corrugated plastic signs to poles, and solves the problems associated with the self inflicted damage of cable-tie fixing.

Sales of this recent UK invention have reached levels which allow the manufacturer to scale up mould outputs to high

hourly volumes. This substantially reduces the unit cost, allowing Wyzrds to pass on the savings to the customer through a real price reduction. TF clips will now be available at 20p each.

According to Managing Director Pat Lennard: "Twinflute has long been the perfect low-cost material for temporary signage, yet there has been no tool available for flat fixing a board to a pole. SignClip TF was designed for exactly this job.

Like the "Tetra pak" milk carton, this is very much the kind of product which should sell in tens of thousands at an attractively low price and relies on volumes for its profitability. We are determined to do our part and keep prices as seen as possible to encourage volume sales. This will give sign makers a great opportunity to extend their professional service with a new profit centre.

We are optimistic the SignClip TF will become the every-day fixing method of choice for sign makers and their customers."



Outside the UK, SignClip is going international and is about to be launched in North America.

www.SignClip.co.uk

'Punchy Roller' created with the help 3M 1080 Series and William Smith

Premier Vehicle Wrapping were able to create a distinctive vehicle wrap to meet some very particular customer requirements, by using 3M's 1080 Series wrapping film, with additional help from William Smith.

Premier Vehicle Wrapping, who specialise in full wraps for prestige cars, was asked to create a colour change wrap to a Rolls Royce Ghost that would liven up the appearance of the vehicle.

3M 1080 Series Aluminium White was chosen for the roof, bonnet, boot and window area of the car. But the specific shade of metallic purple requested by the customer for the lower part of the vehicle could not be found in any vehicle wrap material range.

To create the desired effect, William Smith printed the required shade of metallic purple onto 1080 Series Aluminium White.

"It was a really good print job," says Premier Vehicle Wrapping's Daniel Brown. "It worked extremely well." The wrap was finished with gloss overlaminate. "Our client was really impressed as it gave the appearance of a paint finish," said Daniel. William Smith has been a main supplier to Premier Vehicle Wrapping for several years, providing both materials and print. 3M 1080 Series is available from William Smith, ex-stock, as full, part or custom slit rolls and same day despatch is provided on full or part roll orders received up to 6.00pm.

3M 1080 Series is a long term, removable dual cast film that has been designed with sufficient rigidity to allow easy handling without the need for application tape. Featuring 3M's Controltac Comply pressure-activated adhesive, it is easy to reposition and ready to use straight from the box. With up to six years durability, these films offer 'excellent opacity' and are highly weather resistant. 1080 Series is suitable for flat surfaces and simple curves.

"I'm very impressed with 3M materials and always advise our customers to use these," said Daniel. "1080 Series is very easy to use and really good quality. I can trust it and know that it will stay in place."

www.vehiclewrapfilms.co.uk





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5mm	1.19	1.80	3.00	4.77	6.79	7.88	9.13	11.02	12.40	13.65	15.03	20.95	25.24	33.32	45.85	58.43
10mm	2.34	2.92	5.84	9.30	11.69	14.95	17.55	20.87	23.45	25.73	29.28	40.50	49.44	54.56	84.98	107.82

FOAM PVC (all available colours - 10mm & 19mm available in white only)

no minimum order

Height	100mm	150mm	200mm	250mm	300mm	350mm	400mm	450mm	500mm	550mm	600mm	700mm	750mm	800mm	900mm	1200mm
3mm	0.72	1.00	1.39	2.13	2.70	3.48	3.83	4.81	5.09	6.14	7.06	9.02	12.88	15.45	17.51	19.00
5mm	1.06	1.74	2.34	3.14	4.52	5.12	5.75	6.53	7.10	8.62	9.38	12.68	17.00	21.12	25.24	26.50
10mm	1.47	3.07	4.38	6.40	8.10	9.11	10.79	12.90	14.84	17.20	19.62	25.69	35.02	41.42	47.38	49.95
19mm	3.20	4.22	7.45	9.70	13.65	14.26	16.68	18.42	20.71	22.94	24.98	30.20	47.38	55.11	61.80	67.90

3mm ALUMINIUM COMPOSITE (Dibond, Alupanel)

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Height	100mm	150mm	200mm	250mm	300mm	350mm	400mm	450mm	500mm	550mm	600mm	700mm	750mm	800mm	900mm	1200mm
Colours	1.69	2.34	4.02	5.57	7.00	7.83	9.25	11.26	13.80	15.47	17.00	20.98	24.10	28.10	36.00	50.59
Mirror	2.38	4.86	6.79	9.32	13.77	14.83	17.31	19.70	23.13	25.00	28.12	34.94	36.10	41.50	51.00	82.21
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2mm	2.88	3.68	4.38	5.56	6.18	6.95	7.73	9.01	10.04	11.07	12.10	15.19	18.28	23.43	30.64	41.97
3mm	2.85	3.56	4.40	5.46	6.07	6.96	7.86	9.10	10.27	11.72	13.26	17.34	20.77	26.40	35.06	56.65
5mm	3.36	4.20	5.20	6.44	7.17	8.22	9.26	10.74	12.40	14.25	16.00	21.00	24.64	31.23	41.36	63.86

EXTERIOR MDF

Height	50mm	75mm	100mm	125mm	150mm	175mm	200mm	225mm	250mm	275mm	300mm	375mm	425mm	500mm	600mm	1200mm
5mm	0.36	0.82	1.18	1.60	2.40	2.55	2.95	3.70	4.27	5.09	6.60	9.30	10.70	12.10	14.20	43.16
12mm	0.88	1.52	1.88	2.76	3.85	4.52	5.30	6.12	7.29	9.12	10.00	11.60	13.70	16.80	18.82	57.23
18mm	1.55	2.40	2.91	4.00	4.95	6.05	7.50	8.40	10.60	12.10	14.50	16.60	20.21	21.80	28.50	85.36

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New roller banners

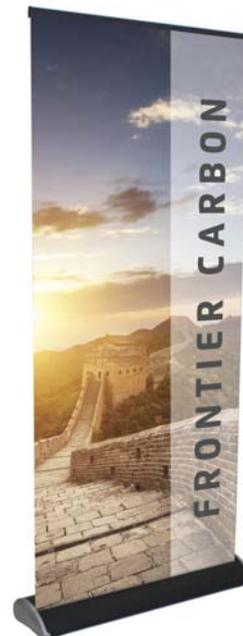
Innotech Digital and Display Ltd have launched two new additions to their popular roller banner series.

The Origin Carbon is available in 80cm and 85cm widths and the Frontier Carbon is available at 85cm wide. These models feature a graphic height of 2m and a snap clip rail allows for ease of graphic installation. The Carbon roller banners are individually bagged and boxed for maximum flexibility.

Both stands build on a proven platform of reliability and value for money and the new Carbon Black finish is a welcome addition to Innotech's portable roller banner range.

Both stands are featured in Innotech's latest Platinum Book which is the 'essential' buyers guide for visual communication purchasers and specifiers.

www.innotechdigital.com



Smallest bezel for modular video walls

Smallest bezel of only 3,7mm with new 55" LCD display from Eyevis.

Eyevis developed the new LCD display type EYE-LCD-5500-XSN-LD for the construction of modular video walls with an extremely slim bezel of only 3.7 mm in control, conference and presentation rooms or for POS/POI. The XSN display is a 'new milestone' in the fields of LCD technology for video wall applications. Thanks to the extremely slim bezel of the device it is possible to create video wall setups with an almost invisible mechanical gap of only 3.7mm between the active screen contents of the individual screens. 24/7 ready display characteristics paired with several new features for the electronics make the new EYE-LCD-5500-XSN-LD a first choice for modern video walls in professional applications.

The new display offers best image quality with full HD resolution (1920 x 1080 Px), a high brightness of 700 cd/m² and a contrast ratio of 3500:1. Thanks to the internal matrix function with the loophrough functionality for RS-232 control and digital video signal

distribution, the new 55" LCD display enables video walls with an almost infinite number of displays. The loophrough functionality also enables the transfer of 4K signals. Thanks to the daisy chain all displays in a video wall can be updated with a few clicks. The direct LED backlight of the displays offers a 'homogenous illumination, high screen brightness and perfect colours in every environment'. The optimized environmental performance guarantees a reduced power consumption and thus an economic operation, according to the company.

Eyevis has integrated several features that under specified operating conditions enable non-stop operation (24/7). Thus, the integrated pixel shifting prevents image sticking. Dynamic pixel refreshing a special system driving the TFT cells avoids also image sticking and considerably increases the display lifetime. Soft picture mode, an intelligent scaling mechanism, smoothes out extreme contrast transitions. This process avoids the so called boundary line image sticking, which occurs at "sharp" transitions (e.g. black to white). If required, the degree of "softening" can be adjusted manually. The robust metal construction allows the application in more demanding areas. For video walls up to a 200" diagonal, the display can optionally be equipped with an infrared multi-touch surface with up to 32 simultaneous touch points.



Technical Specifications EYE-LCD-5500-XSN-LD

- Display resolution: 1.920 x 1.080 (16:9)
- Screen size: 55" (ca. 139 cm)
- Brightness: 700 cd/m²
- Contrast: 3.500:1
- Viewing angle: H:178° / V:178°
- Response time: 8 ms (GTG)
- Colours: 8 Bit Colour Depth
- Bezel: 3,7 mm

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Ricoh Pro L4100 large format printer series

Ricoh announces the European availability of its new Ricoh Pro L4100 latex large format printer series.

The new roll-to-roll large format printer, officially available in the UK market from March 2014, comes in 130cm (53 inch) or 160cm (63 inch) widths and supports up to seven colours in various configurations.

In addition to CMYK, orange, green and white inks are also available. The Ricoh ProTM L4160 and L4130 deliver 'high print productivity and quality as a result of technological innovations' such as the Ricoh piezo electric print heads. The series also reduces the environmental impact of printing through its use of aqueous latex ink and ability to operate with low power consumption.

The Ricoh Pro L4100's latex ink is an aqueous (water-based) ink which contains a low level of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). It has no odour and the low curing temperature of 60°C ink enables both quick drying, for a fast job turnaround, and the ability to print on many heat-sensitive substrates without damaging them.

Stephen Palmer, Director, Production Print, Ricoh UK & Ireland, said: "The Ricoh Pro L4100 series has been through Ricoh's rigorous quality assurance process, and we have been assimilating the positive customer feedback we received. As well as being ideally suited for the specialist signage market, we are particularly excited to

be able to offer print services providers in the UK another solution to support their business growth and offer new services such as display and signage to their clients."

The extensive array of media includes PVC, tarpaulin, synthetic paper, coated-paper, uncoated paper, film, textiles and more. It also allows the use of lighter weight substrates, thus reducing overall costs, including shipping. Ricoh is expanding the range of compatible substrates through its continuing media profiling and testing programme in partnership with Colour Concepts, an industry standard for media validation.

"Ricoh latex inks offer outdoor durability of one to two years, or two to three years with lamination," says Stephen. "With white ink, you benefit from brilliant colour on all substrates - including transparent and dark materials - for signage, branded materials and window displays. And the addition of orange and green extends the colour gamut to encompass a wider range of vibrant colours, ideal for both indoor and outdoor materials, and to reproduce corporate colours accurately."

Using Ricoh's latest generation of high quality stainless steel multiple jetting piezo inkjet heads, three different drop sizes are produced at once, with drops as small as four picolitres. The result is 'smooth, lifelike images every time'. The small drop size also enables production of smooth gradations and fine details, including fine lines and small fonts.

Ricoh Pro L4100 series features summary

- Seven colour printing — CMYK, white, orange and green.
- Latest generation Ricoh piezo variable drop print head with drops as small as four picolitres.
- Aqueous latex ink with low environmental impact.
- Durable printing for outdoor and indoor applications.
- High productivity printing up to 18.2 m2 per hour.
- Fast drying.
- Wide range of media supported, from PVC to paper to textiles and more.
- Choice of two print widths (1361 mm or 1610 mm).
- 50 per cent less power consumption than its closest competitor.
- Lower ink curing temperatures for reduced energy consumption and use of lighter-weight and heat sensitive materials.
- Optional ColorGATE menu-driven RIP for exact feature set specification

The Ricoh Pro L4100's Uninterrupted Ink Supply System (UISS) adds to the productivity of the printer. "When one CMYK ink cartridge runs out of ink, the system switches automatically to the second cartridge of the same colour for unattended printing," says Stephen. "In a busy print production environment, this ensures that the operation runs as smoothly and productively as possible with minimal operator intervention."

The Ricoh Pro L4100 is available with the ColorGATE RIP. "We are providing ColorGATE as a bespoke menu-driven RIP that allows users to choose the exact feature set they need," says Stephen. "It is intuitive, reducing the learning curve and improving productivity. And it includes excellent colour management tools ideal for demanding commercial print environments."

Stephen said: "We anticipate that commercial printers will find the quality and environmental responsibility of a Pro L4100 series printer coupled with the power and colour management capability of the ColorGATE RIP an attractive combination."

www.ricoh.co.uk





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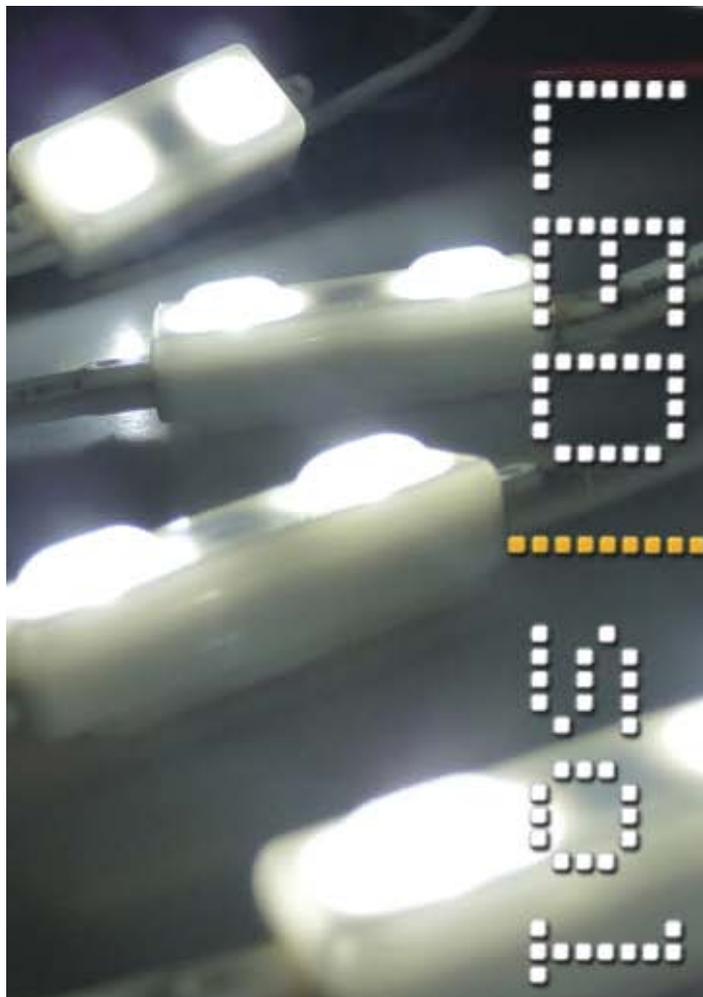
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New scratch resistant blackboard film

ASLAN, the manufacturer of self-adhesive films for special applications, complements his range of memoboard films with a new blackboard film called ASLAN CR 62.

Chalk can be wiped off easily with a wet cloth without leaving a residue. A scratch resistant surface makes sure that 'no ghosting or shadows remain even after long-term usage'.

The black self-adhesive pvc film is ideal for daily changing menus in restaurants or coffee shops, says the company. Also in offices, schools and children's rooms every smooth surface can 'turn into a writable blackboard'.

www.ASLAN-schwarz.com



ASLAN CR 62 blackboard film provides a reusable, scratch resistant surface.

New opportunities for outdoor print providers

Sihl Direct UK, who produce, sell and distribute speciality films and substrates for digital printing, has launched Permovable™ outdoor graphic film.

This unique new product creates 'exciting and cost-effective opportunities' for outdoor graphic specialists.

Permivable™ is a 2 ml, non-PVC, pressure sensitive film developed for direct use on previously unavailable locations, walls, pavements, roads, parking lots and other unsealed outdoor surfaces for short term event promotion. This self-adhesive,

digitally printable media for use outdoors on rough, porous surfaces 'offers a host of benefits in comparison to previously available graphic films'.

The substrate can be installed without the need for special tools or surface preparation. Once installed, the printed film conforms to the structure underneath whether it is concrete, asphalt, or other porous materials used in walls, slabs, paths, streets or parking lots. It meets the anti-slip standards for outdoor pavements, and requires no over-laminate.

Permivable™ is also 'vinyl-free', so is no risk to the environment that can arise from metals. When the graphic is no longer needed it is easily removed, along with the adhesive, with a power-washer, fracturing into sand-like particles that need no special disposal methods.

Sihl Direct customers, such as The Binary Box, are successfully using Permivable to meet customer demand for easily removable outdoor graphics while building a 'thriving' business. Chris Chadwick, Director of Binary Box said: "We sourced Permivable from Planet Solutions and working closely with them and the Sihl team, we found the media easy to work with. It was easy to apply and easy to remove using just soapy water and a stiff brush. I was pleasantly surprised how scratch resistant it was and it saved us a production step, as we would normally laminate, which wasn't needed with Permivable."

For Sihl Direct, Permivable is an ideal fit with the company's extensive portfolio of digital printing films and substrates. Ian Turnbull, Operations Director of Sihl Direct UK, said: "We are delighted with the market response to this clever product. Not only is it kind to the environment, Permivable also saves digital printers hours of time spent applying and removing outdoor graphics which is helping them reach new customers and expand their businesses."



www.sihl-direct.co.uk

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New roller banner film from ADS

A new roller banner film, made by Kernow Coatings, is available from materials stockist and distributor Amari Digital Supplies.

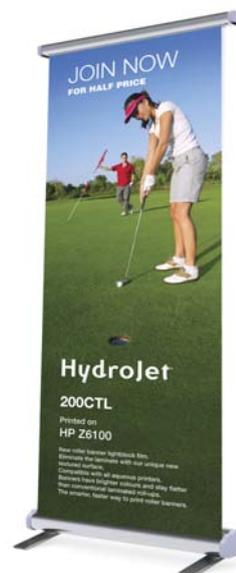
Called HydroJet Textured Lightblock Film F200CTL, it is optimised for all aqueous inkjet printers using dye and pigmented inks. It offers full compatibility with all large-format platforms using these inks and in particular those manufactured by HP, EPSON and Canon.

The 200-micron film features a textured surface, a dimensionally stable polyester film base and special instant-drying non-porous coating that eliminate the need for lamination. This makes

it a more economical and faster solution for printing roller banners. The anti-static grey back also provides an outstanding light-blocking capability. While banners are imbued with brighter colour tones and stay flat under all conditions compared to conventional laminated roll-up alternatives. The film is available in a sheet size of 914mm x 30M.

'HydroJet Textured Lightblock Film F200CTL provides a smarter and faster solution to the digital printing of roll-up banners' says the company.

www.amaridigitalsupplies.com



Transform, renew and protect a boat with wrapping

The Ri-Wrap Marine self-adhesive materials from Ritrama are the 'ideal solution for the customisation and renewal' of every kind of boat. Lower costs and time saving, make it profitable compared to traditional painting, says the company.

If the signs of time passing by start to show on your boat, or if you simply want to change the colour, forget about painting and switch to boat wrapping, says Ritrama.

Painting needs time, days of boat stop and, above all, is expensive. Paint has to be constantly polished and treated with special products.

With Ritrama films you can 'change the colour quickly and inexpensively as well as guarantee a very high level of protection from UV rays. And you do not lose colour'.

Boat wrapping films

The range of Ri-Wrap Marine self-adhesive materials includes three shades of blue; two grey; and a white. The particular use has needed the development of a different kind of film compared to a vehicle wrap. It's highly waterproof in order to protect the boat and scratchproof. Ritrama are the 'only producer of a nautical specific, high-quality film all over the world'.

It is possible to also use their range of films such as matt shades, chrome shades, glossy shades and carbon or leather-like textures on the boat. After the application the parts most susceptible to damage are covered with a scratchproof film, which results in the same characteristics of the nautical films.



Main benefits, according to Ritrama

- Reduced application time and boat stop
- No need to dismantle the boat
- Affordable price, definitely cheaper than painting
- More resistant and long lasting than painting
- No colour loss
- In case of damage of the film only the ruined part will be removed and replaced
- No need for special maintenance: just use water and soap
- Reversible operation
- The film will protect the original paint from sunrays and scratches
- Possibility to also cover dashboards and other boat parts
- Can be applied anywhere above the waterline
- Gives the chance to renew the look of the boat, choosing between a vast range of colours and textures
- Possibility to create personalised logos and graphics.

How it works

The application is 'easy' and has to be done by Ritrama Certified Application Centres technicians. There's no need for any particular preparation, no abrasive material is used, and no material is taken away. It takes about a day to finish a 9 metre long boat, then the films needs to rest for about 48 hours. Apart from complete wrapping, it is also possible to put on special decorations or simple details such as stripes and personalised logos.

Advantages of boat wrapping

Painting a boat is a very hard operation, that can require up to 15 days, and has to be made in special structures. Boat wrapping can be finished in a few days.

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APA present new fire resistant vinyl

APA presents the new Easy-Pro range of plotter self-adhesive films, ideal for applications on smooth or flat surfaces and specifically manufactured for the decoration of shop windows, exhibition panels, advertisement panels and stands.

Easy-Pro is specifically required where the fire resistant certification is requested. For example, trade fairs, exhibitions and public places. The new vinyl has successfully passed fire reaction tests in accordance to the European regulation EN 13501-1 requirements, obtaining the European B-S2-D0 classification. Results prove it to be of a high level of technical and qualitative standards required in the field of the fire prevention.

A high performance material, which has a wide variety of usage in the interior fitting of offices, shops and houses, for the decoration of walls, false ceilings, platforms and also suitable for specific medium term duration external decoration.

Easy-Pro guarantees a 'good cover and guarantees colour brilliance even for applications on dark surfaces'.



Results prove it to be of a high level of technical and qualitative standards required in the field of the fire prevention.

The optimum film ductility in terms of cut and weeding makes Easy-Pro the 'ideal solution to obtain a perfect application and exclusive effects'. The new range is available in the smooth, opaque and transparent finish within a wide colour range to respond to individual needs.

APA will also soon present the updated APA ELITE, ELITEFAST series and four vinyls for digital print with corresponding lamination, these will also have the fire resistant classified B-S2-D0 certificate.

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Upgraded panel processing solution from XYZ International

The PANELBuilder sheet processing solution from XYZ International has been further upgraded to 'greatly enhance its production capabilities'.

The system provides a three-in-one panel processing solution, which comprises; a specially configured large-format CNC router; and dedicated software program that will simultaneously groove, drill and profile-cut single or multiple sheets of aluminium composite and/or solid aluminium materials widely used by sign manufacturers.

A key new enhancement has been the addition of the XYZ Auto Zone Management function that make sure material is held securely throughout the entire cutting cycle to provide 'optimum accuracy and a perfect edge finish'. The system provides three different vacuum hold down modes (Live Deck, Pendulum and Independent Switching). Live Deck will automatically activate and deactivate vacuum zones according to the live position of the cutting head. While the Pendulum mode, as the most popular for panel fabricators, allows the vacuum to switch between two virtual zones (usually the front and rear halves of the router) to enable the router to operate continuously for maximum productivity.

The XYZ PANELBuilder system can be configured to handle all standard ACM/MCM sheet sizes. Key design features include a triple Z tooling arrangement complete with three five horsepower router spindles, an automatic tool mister/coolant facility for



machining plate aluminium and pop-up location pins for material alignment. Waste generated during the cutting and profiling process is safely removed through a chip extraction system that includes an automatic vacuum extraction manifold.

The supporting software includes both 2D and enhanced 3D design and layout capabilities to accommodate more complex panel processing requirements.

www.axyz.co.uk

Caldera enhances Print Standard Verifier tool with IDEAlliance G7 standard

Print Standard Verifier, the Caldera tool that ensures standards conformity across printing processes, has been augmented with the addition of support for G7.

Published by international organization IDEAlliance, G7 integration is the latest step in Caldera's continuing mission to help digital print service providers achieve a certified process standard and is available for users of GrandRIP+, GrandTEX+, VisualRIP+ and VisualTEX+ immediately.

Caldera simplifies the complex process of hitting these standards by handling conformity calculations within EasyMedia in the RIP suite. Operators select a print configuration in Print Standard Verifier and confirm the standards their output must meet, as well as the targets the colours are expected to hit. The Caldera engine then measures print colours against the required chart to verify if the print settings will enable meeting the color standard requirements.

"Universal standardisation has existed in offset for some time, but the variables incumbent to digital print have made it difficult to establish a global standard," explains Joseph Mergui, chief executive officer, Caldera. "However, print buyers expect homogeneity of colour regardless of application and substrate, be it signage, packaging or paper. Our continuous upgrades to the Caldera suite are driven by these pressures and keep our printers at the leading edge of dependable, colour-faithful production."

The IDEAlliance G7 protocols join a number of other specific international standards within Print Standard Verifier. ISO 12647-2 for offset litho, 12647-7 for proofing from digital data and 12647-8 for validation processes from digital data are all included, as are Fogra's Process Standard Offset and Process Standard Digital. RIP owners can receive the addition of G7 to the suite with purchase of a software update.

"Repeatability and cross-platform colour delivery are now critical commercial pressures for printers, and guaranteeing each across different substrates, gamut and chemistries is mission-critical," explains Frederic Soulier, chief technical officer, Caldera. "Whether customers are demanding conformity with the major ISO, Fogra or G7 standards, this addition to the Caldera EasyMedia module will keep them consistent and competitive."

G7 is a definition of the appearance of greyscale and a methodology for applying this to CMYK-based print machinery. The device-independent process uses a neutral print density curve to create faithful comparisons and enable shared appearance of output when cross-process colour management is unavailable.

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Tensator virtual assistant

Tensator passenger journey management has installed two of its Virtual Assistants in Heathrow's Terminal 4 as part of the airport's check in and security process.

The Tensator Virtual Assistant (VA) uses cutting-edge technology to project an image and create the illusion of a real person. Fully customisable, it brings messages to life and helps to engage passengers with consistent and clear communications.

'Louise', who wears a full Heathrow security uniform, is situated at check-in and security and informs passengers about acceptable liquids and other security processes.

Heathrow bought the VAs following a six-month trial, which showed a reduction in bag rejections, meaning fewer delays through the security process.

Colin Sherwood, airport specialist at Tensator said: "Bags were being rejected at search areas because of non-compliant liquids. The VA helps make passengers aware of what they can take through security. Faster through-times at check-in means less stress for passengers who can now progress to duty-free and relax at the beginning of their journey."

A number of major airports, both in the UK and abroad, have adopted Tensator Virtual Assistant technology to convey compliance messages to passengers and Heathrow is now considering adding two more in 2014.

'Louise', at the foot of the escalator and close to the lift, delivers her directional/safety messages whenever she detects movement in the immediate area.

Heathrow bought one Tensator VA Premium for the security area, and one VA Ultra which is situated at check-in.

The VA Premium is a next generation digital signage solution designed to enhance both the passenger experience and the company brand. Features include a proximity sensor to ensure timely message delivery and up to 20 hours non-stop operation time.

With a footprint of just 50cm x 50cm, the Ultra can be easily moved to almost any position within the check-in area. Its flexibility also means it can be utilised in other areas of the airport terminal such as security areas, aisles or end caps in retail units. This creates a flexible point of difference for conveying important security messages; dealing with frequently asked questions from passengers; and helping airport shops to promote special offers and product information in an innovative way.

Colin added: "We're thrilled that the VA has managed to assist in the security process at Heathrow and help passengers to really engage with the all important security message."



'Louise' at Heathrow Airport.

There is also one at King's Cross Station in London, who advises travellers with heavy, awkward to handle baggage to use the lift rather than risk the escalator. Tensator worked alongside telecommunications and security systems integrator TEW Plus Ltd to supply, configure and install the unit which, during a six-week trial, has seen a large increase in passengers using the lift.

Ajay Joshi, head of media and technology at Tensator said: "Existing signage was being ignored and the safety of escalator users was of great concern. We worked in collaboration with TEW Plus and Network Rail in the strategic design of the Virtual Assistant to both improve safety on escalators and promote the use of the lifts for heavier baggage. It's obvious by such a massive increase in passengers using the lift that the Virtual Assistant's instructions are being clearly understood and carried out as planned."

www.tensator.com/uk/sectors/airports-and-transport.aspx



The other 'Louise' at King's Cross Station.

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PRODUCT *News*

Enhanced Mimaki JV33 'offers print companies even more'

Mimaki has announced an enhanced and updated version of the 'highly successful' JV33 outdoor durable printer, which was launched in early February.

Widely regarded as the 'pillar' in Mimaki's outdoor durable inkjet product line, the JV33 has garnered much praise for its capabilities and gained a very loyal customer following along the way, says the company.

The newly enhanced model is an updated version of its top selling JV33 roll-to-roll series of eco-solvent and solvent inkjet products, which they claim further underlines their reputation for continual development and innovation.

"We're genuinely excited about this enhancement to the industry leading JV33 printer."



The enhanced Mimaki JV33.

A key element of the upgrade is the addition of Mimaki's Advanced Pass System (MAPS) technology. This is an innovative approach to discharging ink droplets to minimise, or even eliminate imperfections in high production mode. The MAPS system delivers at least a 10 per cent speed increase to the already fast printing solution; and functions with Mimaki's almost

odourless SS21 solvent, ES3 eco solvent and dye sublimation ink sets.

Exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services Ltd, John de la Roche, national sales manager for the company said: "We're genuinely excited about this enhancement to the industry leading JV33 printer, which offers our

customers even greater productivity; all for the same price. The Mimaki JV33 has consistently been an exceptional and effective tool for many of our customers and in doing so, created a very dedicated fan-base."

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PRODUCT *Choice*

The Larger Profile builds bigger business with Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV printer

Print specialist now able to 'handle high-quality, volume work not previously feasible'.



Giorgio Damiano, TLP designer and operator with Gary Orsman, MD of TLP.

The Larger Profile Ltd (TLP), a display print specialist in Letchworth, successfully completed beta testing Europe's first Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV flatbed UV inkjet printer.

Established in 2010, TLP works in close partnership with Benchmark, a specialist retail design manufacturing group working for leading supermarkets, DIY chains and brands such as Samsung.

Gary Orsman, MD TLP explains the process that led to choosing the brand new Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV flatbed printer: "We started with an Océ Arizona 550 UV flatbed and it was ideal, however none of the printers at the time could do white ink, and we wanted that. So, earlier this year, when Screen asked me to be the beta site for this new machine with white – I jumped at the chance."

The experience and impact on the business has been 'extremely positive from the start'. The new printer has enabled TLP to handle high-quality, volume work that would not have been feasible previously, says the company. For example, they relied on the Truepress Jet's combination of 'speed, quality and consistency' to fulfil a large project to print Foamex wall panels and acrylic signage for 250 in-store pharmacies for a major UK supermarket, at a rate of five or six stores a day.

The Truepress Jet W3200UV printer is designed as a 'cost-effective solution for companies looking to upgrade from legacy high-quality, low speed digital printers to a

latest generation printer that combines high quality with high productivity'. It is built by Inca Digital, a pioneer and manufacturer of high-speed UV flatbed inkjets and a Screen subsidiary company.

"Carrying the Screen name gives certain guarantees about build quality and servicing that customers can rely on," says Bui Burke, Vice President of Sales at Screen Europe. "Inca Digital makes fantastic high speed printers, and we at Screen have the experience of supporting our existing large format UV printers and inks, from the Truepress Jet 2500UV onward."

The W3200UV is a moving bed printer that can take rigid board or paper sheets up to 3.2 x 1.6m format and up to 50mm thick, or multiple smaller sheets at once. It features a 14 picolitre drop size and prints at 10, 14, 18 and 22 passes with a thin ink film that helps with flexibility on the media. The bed travels under the head carriage gantry, which builds up the image with between eight and 22 passes depending on the speed and quality required. The "realistic production speed" is 85sqm per hour. The configuration used at TLP is the top model, with eight ink channels for CMYK, light cyan and magenta, and 2 x white.

Gary is delighted with the combination of speed and quality from his new Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV and said. "It can print 85sqm per hour with CMYK and, even for top quality with maximum passes, we rarely drop below 66sqm per hour. Also the Truepress's bed size means we can handle 3 x 1.65m panels and fill the bed with several panels if we wish to get maximum use." "What I always wanted from a digital printer with my background in quality packaging, we are now getting from the Truepress," he says. "It gives me the quality and speed that I couldn't get anywhere else."

<http://thelargerprofile.com>
www.screeneurope.com
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PRODUCT *Choice*

New Mutoh ValueJet saves time and money

Installation of Mutoh ValueJet 1624 with Bulk Ink System from SMGG leads to 'big cost and time savings' for Dalesflex Signs & Graphics.

North Yorkshire based Dalesflex Signs & Graphics Ltd was founded 18 months ago to serve the ever-expanding market for vehicle wraps, alongside traditional wide format print applications.

The company decided to replace its aging Mutoh Rockhopper printer it had initially acquired with a newer, more efficient model. Andy Walls, Dalesflex's company director, said: "We were pretty confident that we wanted to stay with Mutoh printers, so we started searching the Internet for suppliers of these machines. We spoke to a number of companies and in mid-2013 settled on making the purchase of a Mutoh ValueJet 1624 through Stanford Marsh Group Graphics."

Stanford Marsh was established 50 years ago and has been providing 'informed and impartial advice since its inception, helping customers to make the right decision for immediate and long-term business requirements'. The Stanford Marsh Group Graphics (SMGG) division was established in 2010 to focus on the graphics industry and has a sales force, service engineers and nationwide technical support coverage.

Andy said: "As a new business, we

were keen to work with a company that could simplify the whole purchasing and installation process. The company offered us an end-to-end service from recommending a solution through to sorting out a way of leasing the chosen system, thereby helping us to retain more of our cash reserves."

Targeted at the sign and display market, the Mutoh ValueJet 1624 printer is for both start-up and established businesses, and is suited to long-term outdoor applications. These include full-colour posters, banners, backlit signage, POS displays, external notices for buildings, production plants and construction sites as well as adhesive signs and stickers. The ValueJet 1624 is also an 'excellent choice for durable, photo-realistic prints for indoor usage'.

The 1624 is covered under Mutoh's standard warranty and, on the recommendation of SMGG, Dalesflex opted to deploy Mutoh's Bulk Ink System (BIS). Andy Walls said: "SMGG were very knowledgeable on what the Mutoh system could offer. They correctly advised that buying the bulk ink would be significantly more cost-effective than purchasing individual cartridges. The Mutoh BIS enables us to keep the running

costs of the machine down, whilst sticking to OEM inks."

ONYX's RIP was installed on the machine and SMGG also provided training for the Dalesflex team on the software.

Dalesflex has already put the machine to good use with a short-turnaround project shortly before Christmas. Andy said: "On our previous printer, the project would have taken weeks. However, with the new Mutoh successfully installed, we managed to print 250 linear metres of media in just three days. It was unreal – the machine just ate the media! If anything, our only issue following installation relates to the fact that we need to retrain our practices to keep up with the printer."

Andy said: "I would highly recommend SMGG. The company offered us the best deal out of all the parties we contacted and made the purchasing and leasing process as seamless as possible. The guys there are incredibly helpful and we know we have their support and back-up in the extremely unlikely event that we encounter any technical issues."

www.smgg.co.uk



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PRODUCT *Choice*

Mutoh ValueJet helps business grow

To meet the demands of its growing business, PartyBanners.co.uk bought the recently launched dual-head Mutoh ValueJet 2638. Digital Print Media, a Colourgen reseller, supplied and installed the machine.

Since the start of the business, PartyBanners.co.uk has worked with David Bearman at Digital Print Media (DPM). Mark Long, Founder, said: "We have a lot of trust in DPM, particularly when it comes to the advice and guidance they offer. He first recommended Mutoh printers and we have stuck with this choice all the way from our first Rockhopper right through to the new ValueJet 2638. As an engineer I like to be able to get the most out of all my printers and the build quality of the Mutoh's has allowed me to keep printers running and producing high quality output for many years."

Another advantage is Mutoh's new Universal Mild Solvent ink with its rapid drying time. "The ink dries immediately so as soon as it comes out of the printer, the output is ready to be cut and finished. Output from the older machines needs around 15 minutes to dry, which means we have significantly speeded up our workflow and are now able to get through more banners, more cost-effectively. Also, by using the full 2.6m of the machine and the nesting func-

tion in the RIP, we have been able to minimise media wastage and maximise productivity."

Mark's son, Justin Edwards runs the day-to-day operations of the company and is also impressed with the new Mutoh. He said: "Another great feature is the vacuum bed, which allows the media to go through the printers more smoothly than before. This adds to the consistency and quality of the output and further helps us to have a cost effective and efficient workflow. It is this workflow that allows us to deliver the quality and rapid response our customers enjoy, as well as the unbeatable costs of our banners."

Mark said: "We built the on-line banner design application entirely from scratch and have spent nearly 10 years developing it into the comprehensive, easy-to-use solution it is now. We are producing hundreds of banners of all sizes every week and customers are always delighted with the quality, service and cost."

"Our strength is in the flexibility we offer. Our software allows customers to design their banner online through our web site or even from their mobile phone, either using one of our templates or completely

"Our business is all about the speed and efficiency of our workflow. This means our printers need to be fast, reliable and deliver consistently high quality. We purchased the new Mutoh VJ2638 as a backup to two of our older 2.2m machines but the speed and ease of use of the printer has meant that it has taken over from the other machines to become our main printer. We have been able to get nearly 80sqm/h out of the VJ2638, but tend to run it at around 36sqm/h for the majority of our work." Mark Long

from scratch if they prefer. The system then processes that design and puts it in to the workflow that results in a high quality, durable banner. The customer can also specify how the banner is finished, in terms of hemming, eyelets or other requirements."

"Around 80 per cent of our customers are people needing one or two banners for a special event or party," says Mark. "However, an increasing amount of our business is coming from commercial companies.

These companies are competing with large chains who are able to purchase a lot of point of sale material, which is shared across the chain. We are able to provide this same opportunity and service to smaller companies and franchisees, allowing them to take advantage of one-off or seasonal advertising so they can compete on an equal footing with the chains."

As the company grows, Mark knows that he is working with a printer manufacturer that will continue to deliver printers that meet their ever-expanding requirements. "We are looking to expand internationally as well as in the UK and this may well mean we need to increase our printing capacity and we will certainly be sticking with Mutohs. Similarly, in DPM and Colourgen, we have partners that understand our business and our requirements as well as work hard to ensure we have solutions we need to grow and develop our business."

partybanners.co.uk



Mark Long, Founder (on right) and his son Justin Edwards with their Mutoh ValueJet.

Great graphics shouldn't cost the earth...

"The classic Sesame Street song says that 'it's not that easy being green', but Colorset are proving those words are simply not true", says the company.

With their recent purchase of four wide format HP LX260 printers from CWE Solutions, they're making great strides in environmentally friendly production. Colorset Director, Tom Phelan, said: "We've moved to the HP latex printers predominantly for the environmental properties brought by the water based inks. "We believe that the eco-drive for recycled and recyclable products shouldn't cost you the earth, and this issue isn't going to go away.

"Our business ethic is strongly rooted in protecting our environment. Pvc and plastic may be cheaper but they just end up in landfill. We believe that by investing in these latex printers they may be a bit more expensive, but we're doing our bit."

Set up in 2002, Colorset has branches in London Bridge and Nottingham. They work within with most sectors, such as retail, museums, sport, property, exhibition, events and interiors.



Tom adds that they 'don't want to be the biggest or tap the mass market, they want to be known for their creativity and quality'.

He said that CWE Solutions made the buying process easy: "We had been waiting for the quality to be there before investing, and with the HP LX260, we find that the medias are more receptive, colours are more vibrant, last longer and don't fade. CWE were a real help as they understood our business needs, and offered good pricing and technical back up."

CWE Solutions Director Darren Walker said: "As with all our clients, we really took the time to work with Colorset and make sure their investment was the right one to deliver on their business aspirations.

"We have a wide range of experience and expertise and were happy to recommend the HP LX260s as a perfect fit for Colorset's requirements. In addition to the excellent quality of finish, HP Latex Inks and recyclable materials offer a reduced environmental impact that is second to none.

"We are keenly aware of our duties and responsibilities to the environment, and we aim to supply the best print solution for our clients, whilst keeping a firm eye on the impact

that we and our technologies, are having."

The four new printers were installed at the end of October – two in Nottingham and two in London. Around the same time, Colorset took another step towards ensuring quality across the board by adding three vans to increase their fleet to seven with 13 installers.

"Not many companies have their own dedicated installers, but rather than outsourcing this gives us greater control and reliability," says Tom.

Having the same production facilities in both of their sites helps the company 'deliver quality and consistency across UK-wide campaigns'. Nottingham picks up installations from Birmingham to the north, with London picking up the rest of the country. They also work with customers in the Republic of Ireland, Holland, Germany, and Spain, and they have just expanded into Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York.

"International retail companies with London headquarters want their graphics to be the same the world over, and we can

deliver that for them," he said.

But Colorset aren't content with static graphics – through newly-set up sister company Motion Advertising Technology (MAT) they are turning windows into enormous double-sided video screens.

"Using a layer of vinyl infused with 10,000 shards of glass, clients can project images from in-store and stream live content, turning 2D into 3D and even 4D. It can even be adapted for touch-screen," says Tom.

MAT can give the video the capacity to interact with the consumer, allowing them to dictate from their smartphone, the images they would like to see on display. It can be hosted and configured from a central hub so that with the click of a button a campaign can change in an instant across multiple sites.

MAT not only install the systems, they also write the software and have worked with manufacturers to source and fine tune the material – and they think they've 'got it down to a T'.

"This technology means that international retailers can use the technology in their flagship stores to stunning effect, and with the HP Latex printers we can supply their other outlets with fantastic printed graphics complementary to the multimedia campaign," added Tom.

www.colorset.co.uk

PRODUCT *Choice*

Blaze 'triples the power' with a third Tekcel router!

Blaze Neon, a long standing sign businesses, recently took delivery of its third Tekcel 2m x 3m router for the group.

Supplied exclusively by Complete CNC Solutions, the new Tekcel system was installed in late December 2013 at Blaze Neon's Broadstairs manufacturing site, alongside their previous Tekcel 2m x 3m router.

Established in 1981, Blaze Neon designs, manufactures, installs and maintains all types of signs for many well known high street names in retail and banking. Blaze say they are constantly managing major signage projects throughout the UK and across Europe and have just successfully completed a huge re-brand for one of the major high street banks. Blaze operates two manufacturing sites incorporating Cygnia Maintenance Ltd, totalling 135,000sq.ft. And as a Group employ a 300+ strong workforce of highly skilled staff and 'advanced production technology'.

Blaze made the decision to update its existing CNC routing facility at its Birmingham base with a state of the art routing system, in 2008. The installation of the high performance Tekcel 2m x 3m CNC router delivered a range of new production features that had been unavailable to Blaze on its previous routers. This included a powerful 10hp HSD spindle motor, capable of changing its tools automatically. Digital servo technology and ballscrew drives on all axis, to enable it to deliver and maintain pinpoint precision and optimum production speeds over their lifetime. Having been in

situ for over six years now, the Tekcel CNC router has lived up to its reputation as the sign industry's most respected 'high production workhorse' often operating all hours to deliver high quality sign output, from a wide range of rigid sheet materials.

Based on the performance of its Birmingham-installed Tekcel router, Blaze ordered a second Tekcel VSR 2m x 3m router in 2011, to update its CNC facility at its manufacturing base in Broadstairs, Kent. As well as the usual advanced features Blaze had been accustomed to, this machine was also fitted with the Tekcel Opticam "Cut to Print" registration camera system option, to assist with the accurate profile cutting of digitally printed sheet materials.

Due to a 'heavy order book' for 2014 and continued high production requirements, they subsequently ordered their third Tekcel VSR 2m x 3m router from Complete CNC Solutions. Delivered, installed and commissioned all in one day, the new VSR now joins their previously installed Tekcel router in a state of the art, purpose built router room. The new Tekcel VSR 2m x 3m router now fitted as standard with 1Kw brushless digitally encoded servo motors on all axis, driving the ever reliable and accurate ball screw technology; new fully automated dust foot; vacuum hold down; tool length sensing; extraction and mist coolant

features; along with its newly released motion control system. Designed and built in-house with the future in mind, this motion controller takes care of the most demanding of data processing and has the 'most advanced router technology control system available today'.

"Continued investment in both personnel, training and cutting edge technology means that Blaze can undertake all aspects of sign work in-house and this approach has kept the at the top of its game for the past 30 years", says the company.

With their CNC operators in Broadstairs experienced in all aspects of CNC routing, it wasn't long before the Tekcel routers were straight into action again, on the next major project. Benefiting from using the high performance solid carbide, single flute tooling, cutters and accessories supplied by Complete CNC Solutions, Blaze continue to maintain their high standards of edge quality finish and improved tooling performance required when cutting many types of sign industry materials, such as Acrylics, ACM, PVC Foam, MDF, wood and aluminium.

www.blaze-signs.com
www.completecnc.co.uk



Investing in a new CNC routing division

Panel Systems, who supply decorative and composite panels, have invested over £100k in the very latest 5-axis equipment to enable it to establish a new CNC routing division.

The new 'Z5' 5-axis CNC router, which has been installed at the company's Waleswood manufacturing site in Sheffield, has 'increased the company's capabilities and capacity, to enable it to machine board materials to much more intricate and complex designs'.

To support this investment, Panel Systems has also expanded its CAD design team and invested in new software systems. The introduction of Solidworks, alongside the existing Alphacam software, will enable the company to 'improve its service levels to customers'.

Chris Ibbotson, Managing Director of Panel Systems, said: "This is a very exciting time for our business. This latest



technology will enable us to machine 3D shapes and handle materials up to five metres in length, a significant step up in our capabilities. There is demand in the market for high quality routing services and rapid turnaround and this investment will add to our existing range of three CNC routers. The investment also reflects our confidence that the economy has turned a corner and there will be new opportunities for the company in 2014."

The new 5-axis machine, which can be used on timber, plastic, foam and composite materials, is already producing pan-

els for children's playgrounds, flood barriers, truck panels, retail signs and shower trays. Designs are taken from customers' own drawings in a range of file formats to enable rapid prototyping of materials or can be created by Panel Systems' CAD designers.

Sheffield-based Panel Systems Ltd, which will be celebrating 40 years of trading in 2014, has a large product range, such as composite panels, hot-wire cut styrofoam, revostage and many different types of cladding.

www.panelsystems.co.uk

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PRODUCT *Choice*

UK's First VUTEK HS100 Pro goes to consolidated event specialist

The move that finalises McKenzie Clark's integration with Icon has led to further investment being made with the purchase of a VUTEK® HS100 Pro high-speed digital press, the first to be installed in the UK.

As a first-time purchaser of EFI™ technology, the company's new flat-bed and roll-fed UV-curable 3.2m platform is complemented by the Fiery® proServer digital front-end, enabling both throughput and quality to be 'addressed on the same device without compromise'. And is an 'important addition to increase productivity of point-of-purchase and event graphics'.

The amalgamation into a single site for the former McKenzie Clark and Icon brings together two diverse areas of wide-format display requirements as 'precision photographic quality output combines resources with sport and event brand management in one production area'. Managing directors Graham Clark and Keith Goodwin believe that the variance in print criteria is easily addressed with the high-speed VUTEK HS100 Pro press, which features the latest greyscale print-heads plus EFI's innovative pin and cure technology that allows for greater droplet control and different finishes across a variety of materials.

For Icon, the key necessity was to supersede its existing Lambda output with newer, more sustainable technology without compromising the 'superlative' quality for which the company is renowned. "It is vital that we maintain consistency across colours with the option for matte, satin and gloss finishes so that we can easily meet the results expected by our clients, many of whom specialise in the beauty and fashion sectors,"



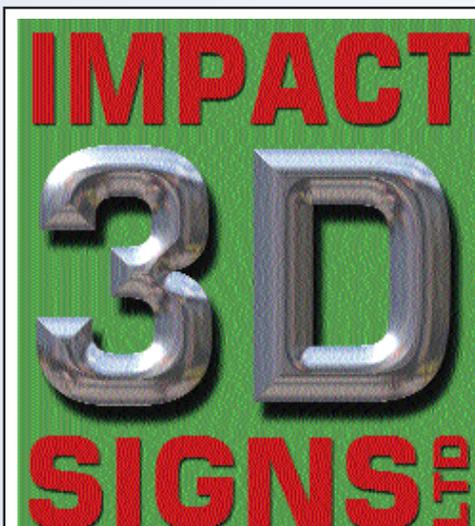
said Graham. "Our prior experience of wide-format printing technology has increased our expectations of what we can expect from the right platform. Although this is our first ever purchase from EFI, we are confident that the VUTEK HS100 Pro is the right machine for all of our requirements."

"The contrast in print needs created by the complementary markets in which Icon specialises means that our newest wide-format printer must give us the best of both worlds," says Keith. "It is essential that it addresses very fine standards of print with precision colour matching for close viewing, yet accommodates extremely high throughput speeds for jobs which are going to be observed from a distance."

Formed by the merger of Speedway Signs and Aerosigns, Icon's roots go back

to 1937. The company is the UK's largest event branding specialist, handling major events worldwide such as the forthcoming Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, which it is sponsoring, and the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil. McKenzie Clark was founded in 1963 and its expertise in live events and retail is complemented by full design and management services. The acquisition of the two companies by Chime Communications 'consolidates the strengths of both businesses and accelerates continued expansion'. The investment in the EFI VUTEK HS100 Pro and EFI Fiery proServer 'increases their wide-format capabilities with the steady growth in production demands'.

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Sagetech Koolkut

When Gordon Speirs was looking for a wall saw for his Lincoln sign and graphics business, The Sign Shop, he found several cheap but poor quality machines, and lots of expensive one's. But he felt there were few options in between that are high quality, capable vertical panel saws, at affordable prices.

It was British panel saw specialist Sagtech's Koolkut range that filled the gap. As Gordon said: "The Koolkut KK12 wall saw was exactly what we needed – at the right price."

Delivery delays

Until the middle of 2013, Gordon had relied on buying Dibond, Foamex and other sheet materials cut to the sizes required for each job. The approach was workable, but had its limitations. "Particularly for smaller orders, having sheets cut before delivery was causing delays and that was a problem. I realised that it would be much quicker for us to buy standard sheets for these jobs and cut them in house as we needed them," he said.

Gordon already had two fixed-blade cutters, but neither was particularly versatile, and struggled with aluminium composites. Since The Sign Shop was seeing an

increase in the use of these materials, Gordon was keen to put in place a more capable system.

Flexible response

Flexibility was the key. "I wanted a quick and easy way of cutting sheets for smaller jobs – quick enough to make us a lot more flexible in responding to customer requirements," he said. For smaller 'rush' orders, waiting for the sheet material supplier to cut and deliver was no longer a viable option.

A wall saw would be the best tool for the job, Gordon knew, but when he went to the Internet to find out what models were available, he found an unexpected problem. "There seemed to be plenty of cheap saws of pretty poor quality," he said. "And at the other end of the scale, some frighteningly expensive machines which were way beyond the budget of smaller signmakers like us."

Quality, capability and value

Gordon found only one range of saws in that all-important middle ground, offering excellent quality and capabilities at a price affordable to the smaller signmaker.

The Koolkut range caters for various sizes of sheets, with the smallest model, the KK12, cutting up to 2.5m x 1.25m and the largest, the KK21, up to 3.1m x 2.1m. All Koolkuts feature an immensely strong steel frame, a moving column for easy, compact operation, innovative sealed bearings running on linear shafts (ideal for dusty environments) plunge and bevel cutting, and simple and compound angle cutting to the full length and breadth of the sheet.

Installed in the summer of 2013, The Sign Shop's Koolkut KK12 wall saw is already having a 'significant impact on the business'. Cutting a mix of Dibond, various thicknesses of Foamex, acrylics, MDF and plywood, it has greatly improved workflow and the company's ability to respond quickly to requirements. Gordon said: "We aren't cutting huge amounts – a few sheets a day – but it's making a big difference. The ability to cut materials as we need them is great."

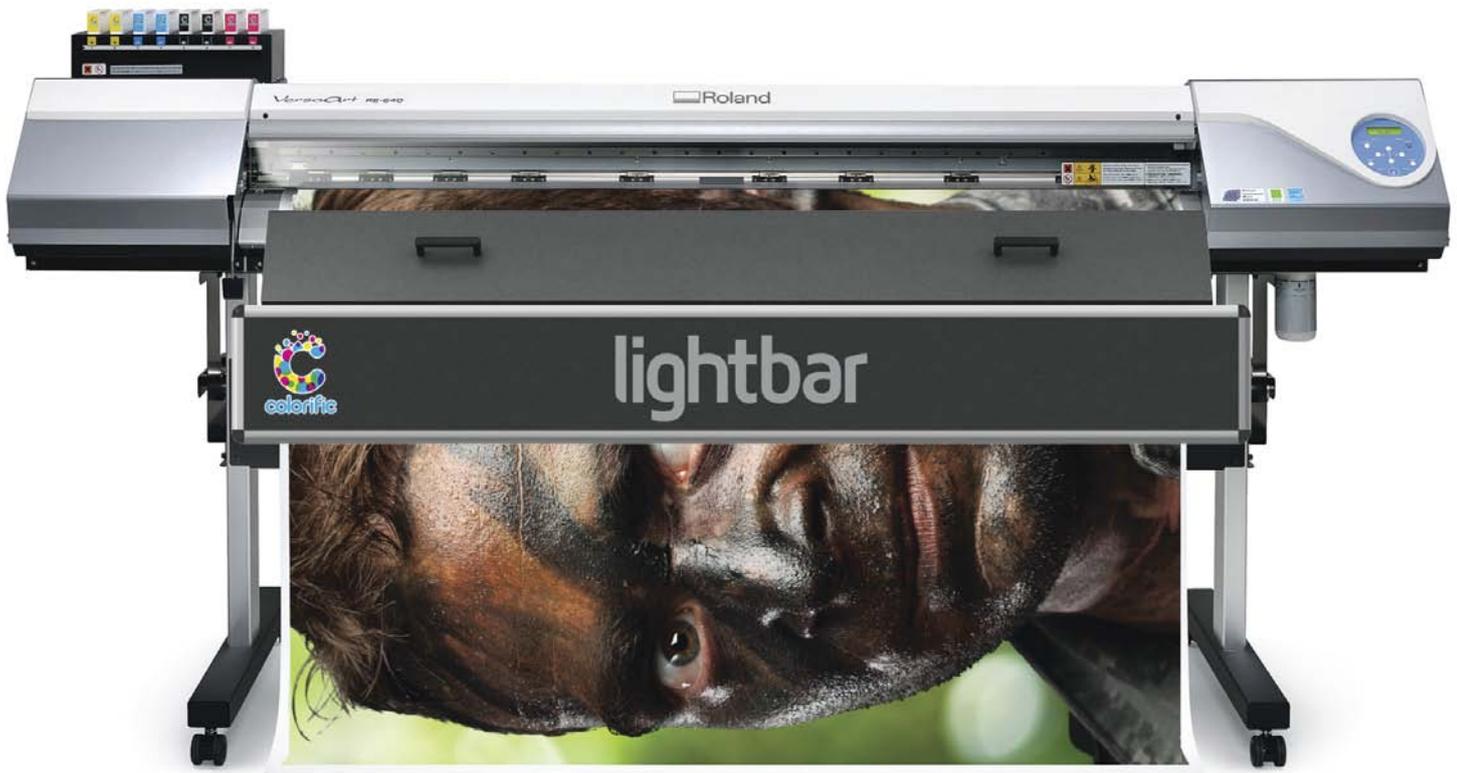
Established in 1996, The Sign Shop specialises in signage, vehicle graphics, labels, printed promotional gifts, flat-bed printing and exhibition materials, serving a wide range of businesses in the Lincoln area.

www.sagetech.co.uk



The Koolkut KK12 wall saw at the Sign Shop in Lincoln.

The Sign Shop 'amazed' with their UV640



The Sign Shop in Birmingham has recently invested in a new UV640 printer from Colorific.

The roll-to-roll printing system utilises the latest Roland RE640 chassis with an integrated Lightbar as the heart of the solution.

The installation of the UV640 System has 'instantly increased production speed and dramatically reduced turnaround time' so The Sign Shop can offer a same day service to its customers.

The Sign Shop and sister company Mr Signs are run by two brothers who have been involved in sign making and large format printing for up to five years. They have experience with a wide range of plotters, cutters and older printing devices. Their previous large format printer was a Chinese machine purchased from another sign company in liquidation. And although the machine produced prints of a reasonable quality, the reliability and support of the machine was from China so there was no direct point of contact based in the UK. "I had to become an engineer myself to keep the

machine going," said Nabeel owner of The Sign Shop.

With a diverse customer base in a busy city, the key to their success they say, is to offer a fast, high quality service to its customers. The UV640 System fulfilled all the criteria and with a low investment price this was perfect solution.

"The output from the Lightbar system is beautiful and amazing, we are always looking to produce the best quality we can. In addition, the UV ink technology also means we no longer have to wait 24 hours before application once it's printed and we simply ship or install," says Nabeel.

Before installing the system, the brothers looked around at using the other standard eco solvent options available on the market, but none of the current technologies could offer them the advantages of the Lightbar system. "The support from Colorific has been perfect, with a range of custom profiles for all the materials

we use created on-site as part of the installation," says Nabeel.

He said: "Once we had the machine operating for a while we were surprised at how economical the ink costs were compared to previous systems. Not only do we use less ink, we have also saved in production time therefore reducing our square meter costs by up to 30 per cent, which is fantastic and helps us stay competitive."

"The Sign Shop Birmingham is a great example of more companies harnessing the benefit of this new technology available to them. The UV light inks combine all of the advantages of Solvent and Eco solvent inks in producing photographic output. But with the added benefits of UV curable chemistry, which offers great adhesion, instant drying and low odour," says Stewart Cobby of Colorific.

www.colorificink.com
www.the-signshop.co.uk

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Getting to grips with fixtures and fittings

Beyond just being a necessary component of every signage job, fittings and fixtures are now also becoming design features in their own right. Jemima Codrington spoke to experts in this field to find out how sign makers can tackle tricky jobs, save time and expedite the installation process whilst getting an exceptional finish every time.

Michelle Henry, MD of HNS Signs Ltd, is a third-generation sign maker. While Michelle uses a number of industry-specific tools when it comes to fitting signage, she also relies on some tricks of the trade passed down from her grandfather to get an impressive finish.

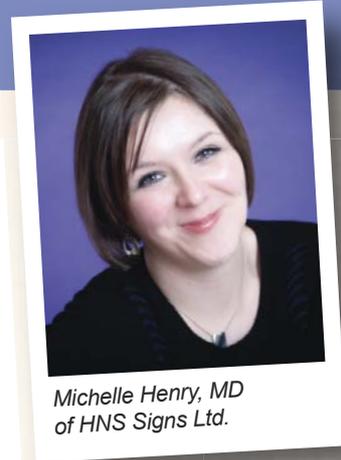
Hanging large, heavy signs can require the use of sturdy chains, which although do the job, aren't always the most aesthetically pleasing.

To circumvent the use of chains when fitting heavy signage, Michelle's grandfather utilised none other than fishing tackle. He was responsible for fitting suspended signs in hospitals, vicinities in which visible chains weren't desirable. Kent & Co Ltd, a Liverpool-based manufacturer of rope and twine produced a trace wire that could be used instead. Doubling nicely from its intended use for angling, the trace wire was the perfect solution in the 1980s, and still works for signage application today.

Like her grandfather before her, Michelle and the team at HNS Signs work extensively with hospital signage. "Hospitals make up about 70% of our workload; in fact, we are currently looking at re-signing 80 different hospital sites in the Midlands area. We use this stainless steel wire along with crimps and ceiling clips to fit signs of up to 45kgs," says Michelle. "This is almost invisible, but is essential for the NHS as it

can withstand deep cleaning. Kent & Co also have a translucent wire, often seen suspending the signs in supermarkets. The wire comes in spools of 100m and costs as little as £3 per spool, and can also hold a weight of up to 45kgs."

To fit the sign, the team at HNS Signs will start by drilling a 3mm hole in the top two corners of the sign. "We then thread the wire through it and fasten by squeezing a crimp with pliers over the looped wire, and the same is done with the ceiling clip."



Michelle Henry, MD of HNS Signs Ltd.



Michelle uses crimps to fit signs of up to 45kgs.



The trace wire is a helpful trick to hang heavy signage without using clunky chains.

The "outside-the-box" approach doesn't just extend to hanging signage in hospitals, but also applies to the design of the signs themselves. The Birmingham Children's Hospital was having difficulty accelerating the process of handing over patients from paramedics to nurses. HNS designed an eye-catching sign, and packed the back with large squares of acrylic bonded together with tensol. To fix it to the wall, they used a high-bond tape to work around the hospital wall layout. The result was a practical, clearly visible sign without any visible fixtures or fittings.

Although Michelle favours some little-known tricks of the trade when it comes to positioning larger signs, some jobs call for the use of modern tools to tackle common problems.

The perks of timesaving tools

When it comes to saving time, money and making the installation process smoother overall, Michelle turns to stockists Siggeer to find the tools for the job. "They have a whole host of items which save time and make the fittings process easier," she says of her choice.

These tools can be used to combat a number of tricky issues – for example, in jobs that require a vinyl print to be layered over an existing sign, rivets can be problematic. The Rollepro can be used to neatly cover these rivets, and it takes "literally seconds" to iron out the kinks and provide a smooth finish, while another useful tool Michelle turns to is the Snake, which assists with the application of graphics onto vehicles.

www.hnssigns.co.uk



HNS used high bonded tape to fit this hospital sign with no visible fixtures or fittings

In addition to offering a wide range of tools to assist sign makers with installation, Signgeer also stocks a variety of fixtures and fittings suitable for supporting both interior and exterior signage.

One of the newer additions to the roster is a fixing that holds signage to chain-link fences, aptly named the "Fence Fix." Developed over the past twelve months, the durable fixing can be adjusted to fit any size fence, is totally reusable, and can be connected to most fencing types including Bastion V Type, chain-link, Heras and mesh. The system works well for common types of outdoor signage such as banners, but is not the only option sign makers have when it comes to fixing soft signage.

"At Signgeer, we have developed our own heavy duty Eyepro 2 manual machine, the only one of it's kind on the market that gives users the option to fix metal or UV stable plastic eyelets into banners or korrex," says Louise Gardener, Managing

Director of Signgeer. "The plastic eyelets are available in black, white or a clear finish, and are more cost-effective than your traditional metal eyelets."

To avoid the colours of the eyelets and the colours on the banner clashing, an increasing number of sign makers are opting for Signgeer's clear fixings. But for those wanting to inject some additional colour into their signage, there are a number of unique standoff locators available that can provide a distinctive finishing touch.

Create a colourful finished project

Signgeer are distributors of the highly successful Pizazz Multi and Mono Mount standoff locators, which allow sign makers to layer different materials with a stand off of up to 50mm. These fixings are available in a number of different textures and



Signgeer's Eyepro 2 manual machine

colours, enabling the user to create interesting signage that spares no attention to detail. With prices starting from just £1 a fixing, the Pizazz standoff locators are a cost-effective and practical solution, especially when dealing with the installation of a bespoke project.

"They're manufactured from UV stable resin and high-quality solid brass rod, and come in a range of 11 colours in matte or gloss as well as in your standard chrome and brass and aluminium finishes," reveals Louise. In fact, Signgeer has over 150 combinations of Pizazz Mono and Multi Mounts in stock, making it easy for sign makers to find something to suit the needs of almost any project. "We also offer traditional and standard aluminium posts and clips, Velcro, colour headed screws, and snap caps, plus Signgeer's own manufactured range of stainless steel fixings for hanging signs."

www.signgeer.com.



Signgeer stocks solutions to help sign makers fix exterior signage to fencing.



Pizazz Monomounts are used to blend in with this sign's overall design.



Pizazz Multimounts, available from Signgeer.

FIXTURES & FITTINGS *Feature*

Getting to grips with fixtures and fittings

Janice Fairfield, Marketing Director of Fairfield Displays & Lighting, notes that there are numerous types of fittings available, ranging in the number of parts, materials and finishes. All sign fixings are not the same – which can be made apparent if used in a single installation.

“I have frequently seen buildings with a real mismatch of fittings from different suppliers, and the co-ordination of the scheme has been completely spoilt,” says Janice. “The way a sign is fixed to the wall can make a tremendous difference to the visual appearance and the perceived value of the sign. Sign makers are always looking at ways to increase profit, and simply using a professional looking sign fixing can make a huge difference.”

Fixings may appear to be just a perfunctory part of sign installation, but opting for the right part for the job at hand can make a significant difference to not only the finished look, but also ease of installation. Fixings can be made in two parts or three parts, with three-part fixings offering many benefits to sign makers. “One huge advantage is that they are so much easier to fix,” says Janice. “The back section is a brass boss, which is quick and easy to screw to the wall. It will take up to a no.10 screw, which means you can get a good fixing in a brick or breeze block wall.” As the fixing can be implemented without using a screwdriver, it’s a useful choice when working on ladders and is a quick and easy option for most signage jobs. When working with wooden display panels or doors, small, two-part fixings are ideal. “The hole size will vary from supplier to supplier, but they normally start from around a no.6 to a no. 8 screw size,” says Janice.

Suspended cable vs. standoff fixings

The two types of primary fixings are stand-off, which holds a sign away from a wall, and suspended cable, which can hang signs from numerous different surfaces. These two primary fixings can help create very different finished effects, and can be used in a number of different settings.

A standoff fixing holds a sign away from a wall, and can be used indoors to create signage in places like reception areas, and outdoors to promote things like menus. Small and large signs can easily be fitted with standoffs, and are supplied from 12mm diameter up to 25mm diameter, and in depths from 14mm up to 75mm.

Standoffs are versatile and easy to use, and can be used in conjunction with a single sign or mounted on a wall in a group to create directory signage. “Standoffs are used when you need a fixed position sign which can be mounted to a flat wall, desk or display unit,” says Janice. “One advantage of using this type of fixing is that it is easy to change a sign at a later date. Another is the overall appearance; as the sign is away from the wall, dust will drop down behind which means it will always remain smart and clean. Standoffs are a great way to turn an ordinary wall mounted sign into something that looks absolutely stunning compared to an ordinary screw, which gets rusty.”

Suspended cable systems (also referred to as rod systems) are a great choice when it comes to fixing multiple signs, giving the end user more control and flexibility.

A suspended cable doesn’t need to be fixed to a flat wall, and can be hung instead from a number of surfaces. This system works well for a multi-sign project, as well



LED Light Pockets™ to create powerful and attractive displays.

as in cases where the sign may need to be changed frequently. Removing and replacing a fixed sign is time-consuming, and can leave behind holes and other structural damage in the process. A suspended sign, however, can be simply swapped in and out while being hung at any height on the vertical cables or rods. “In cases where information is constantly changing, opt for an acrylic pocket, and then signs and graphics can be dropped in without the need to use any tools. The cheaper it is to change the sign, the more opportunities there are for repeat business,” affirms Janice.

Quality is key

As with most signage components, cheaply made fittings are likely to break sooner, and those that don’t will age and make the overall signage look old and untidy over time.

“Cheap fittings tend to be made from aluminium, while quality fittings are made from solid brass and are finished in an elegant satin chrome or high gloss polished chrome,” says Janice. “While aluminium standoffs or cables may look similar, they will have a much shorter life span and are not suitable for use in a moist environment, as the dampness can affect the threads. Something as simple as damp umbrellas being stored in reception could affect the them, which is why if these fittings come with guarantee at all, it’s only usually for one year.” Brass fittings, on the other hand, have quality smooth threads that come with a lifetime guarantee, and are easy to replace to keep signage looking fresh and polished for years.

At Fairfield, Janice is noticing that clients are demanding more from even simple signage and display units. “Lighting is becoming more and more integrated even in very basic signage – it’s now extremely easy to add a touch of sparkle by using LEDs.” These lights can be used behind panels mounted with standoffs to add an attractive glow, or alternatively sign makers can clip LED Light Pockets™ to a cable or rod system to create an illuminated sign at any height, without any complicated wiring.



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www.fairfielddisplays.com



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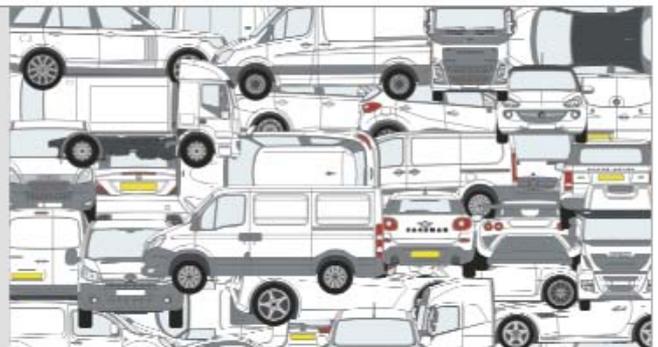
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FIXTURES & FITTINGS *Feature*

“In our experience, clients will choose having the job done right the first time over the cost every time”



Mirror & Glass Fixings & Fittings.



Brass Sign Locators.

FK Moore is turning attention towards improving value in 2014, looking for ways to help sign makers find quality tools and products for fitting signage at reduced costs.

“We are strengthening our drive to offer our customers value, whilst refusing to compromise on quality,” reveals Paul Farrant, Director of FK MOORE. “Whilst many companies look at how to reduce product prices by altering the product itself, we have been very successful in the past at looking for efficiency savings, allowing us the flexibility to keep prices down.”

www.fkmoore.co.uk.

Get the most for your money

When it comes to return on investment, Paul recommends metal sign locators on account of their tried-and-tested performance. “The longevity and secure nature means that sign makers can have as much confidence in the finished product as the client.” He recommends that sign makers steer clear of selecting fixings on price point alone, pointing out that like anything, you get what you pay for. Selecting cheaper fittings may seem like a cost-effective way to source materials, but it doesn’t guarantee the fixing will last, and almost certainly won’t result in repeat business.

“We find when the quality of the fixings are shown to the end user, using the correct material and paying attention to the quality of finish, even if that means at a small increased outlay, it is appreciated,” says Paul. “In our experience, clients will choose having the job done right the first time over the cost every time.”



Socket Screws & Interscrews.



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QPS tech support keeps textile design house running

When the Centre for Advanced Textiles (CAT) at the Glasgow School of Art needed a new source of technical support, word-of-mouth led the team to Quality Print Services Ltd (QPS). Four years later, CAT says its relationship with QPS has helped it to maintain the valuable textile printing service it provides to students, graduates and successful design houses.

Established in 2000, CATdigital is the commercial arm of CAT, creating customised and bespoke printed fabrics for the fashion and interior design markets. Using a pair of seven-year-old Stork Sapphire digital inkjet printers, CATdigital works with current Glasgow School of Art students, the college's graduates and established designers at global names like Topshop and ASOS.

Its services are recommended by design courses across the globe. Orders arrive from the Glasgow campus to Australia, from remote Scottish islands to the most northerly location reached by DHL: a Norwegian address within the Arctic Circle. "We're a resource for students and graduates, an incubator for advice and facilities," said Alan Shaw, Industry Coordinator at CAT.

CATdigital prints on over 40 different types of natural fabric in lengths up to 100 metres and has recently invested in new steaming and washing equipment for its finishing department. "There's no point being able to print 100 metres of fabric if you can't finish it," says Alan. But as a design-focused enterprise it also proudly offers design samples as short as half a metre. "Larger companies wouldn't take on such short-run work, it would waste their time. The industry has grown and technology has moved on but people still need half-metres printed."

The CAT stable also encompasses Classic Textiles, a digital printing house specialising in recreating the 20th century's most iconic textile designs, including the exclusive reproduction of the 'Calyx' design by Lucienne Day.

While the majority of the day-to-day machinery maintenance is handled in-house, CAT gains from the efficiency benefits of bringing in a dedicated engineer for less frequent issues such as replacing pumps or dealing with dropped heads. The business sought a new technical support supplier for this work around four years ago when its OEM service was withdrawn. After trying services offered by other companies and finding them unsatisfactory, they came across QPS.



Rachel Mimiec flags (community flags at the Helix 2013).

"There are certain things that only need doing every six months or so and since QPS does these on a daily basis it makes sense for them to handle it," said Alan. "We've been really happy with QPS since we first got in touch with them around four years ago. We have a great relationship with the team, especially our regular contact Paul King – he's an excellent engineer."

CAT's success lies in its high level of customer service born of the traditional design backgrounds of each of the print room staff. "We don't just receive a file and print it; we can tell you what's wrong if something does go wrong and can give help to those who need it," he said. However, the organisation's academic roots and on-campus home do not mean CAT can rest on its business laurels. "We are a commercial enterprise and we need commercial back-up. QPS delivers great service we can rely on."

Chris Bailey, QPS Director, said: "We travel all over the country to meet the service needs of our customers and are delighted to have been giving support to CAT up in Glasgow for the last four years. We're always happy to help customers out in an emergency situation, but it's great to maintain regular contact with businesses like CAT and make sure their equipment continues to run well after several years' use."

CAT's business ambitions continue into 2014, with plans to upgrade to a new textile printer to accompany its finishing kit investment. QPS says it is looking forward to keeping the new machines running well into the future.

QPS's technical support for the UK market accompanies its role as a leading supplier of Nazdar alternative wide-format inks, new and reconditioned wide-format printers from top brands, Neolt laminators and printers, RIP software and media from Ilford BioMedia, Phototex and Hydrosol. QPS has also been appointed an Authorised Roland Dealer for dye-sublimation applications.



'Rafmanpeckham fullroom' - produced by American Medium. The Photo was taken by Vartivar Jaklian.

www.catdigital.co.uk
www.classictextiles.com
www.qualityprintservices.com

PROJECT *News*

BT Sport fleet features 3M Envision non-PVC wrapping film

For its new BT Sport TV service, encompassing BT Sport 1, BT Sport 2 and ESPN, they used vehicle livery specialist Stewart Signs to wrap their fleet of vans.

Around 108 of the 168 service vans have so far been wrapped using 3M's award-winning non-PVC Envision Print Wrap Film 480Cv3 with Envision Gloss Wrap Over-laminate 8548G.

BT worked with marketing agency AMV BBDO to create the 'Great Sport Happens Here' co-ordinated UK-wide campaign using TV, print and outdoor media. With the fully wrapped BT Sport livery making an important and eye-catching contribution to the success of the campaign and reflecting BT's image and reputation on the road. The vehicle wrap used colours and graphics consistent with the agency's cross-media campaign and featured the BT Sport logo in full colour, with the key marketing messages 'Great Sport Happens Here' and 'Free with BT Broadband'.

Stewart Signs, a long-term and trusted BT livery partner, worked with AMV BBDO and the BT Fleet organisation to print and apply the van wraps. This took place at three Stewart Signs' service centres and some BT Fleet workshops. The wraps used 3M's Envision film and over-laminate that provided a powerful sustainability edge and complemented BT's CSR policy, but at an affordable cost. The film was chosen unequivocally for the project and added to the successes Stewart Signs has enjoyed during a 50-year partnership with 3M.

Having won 'Best Environmental Substrate' at the 2013 European Digital Press Awards, Envision Print Wrap Film 480Cv3 with Envision Gloss Over-laminate 8548G from 3M proved its outstanding environmental and production-related capabilities. This high-quality cast film can boast not only higher performance by comparison with other vehicle wrapping solutions but also significant sustainability benefits. As a non-PVC film, it releases fewer toxins and is free of phthalates to reduce issues with incineration during post-use disposal. It is also produced using biodegradable materials with less solvent and has no added chlorine or other halogens.



One of the vans wrapped in the award winning film and over laminate from 3M.

Complementing these environmental benefits, the film offers significant advantages in application. Because of its flexible character it provides outstanding conformability to vehicles with difficult-to-reach and complex contours; low stress levels during the application process which eliminates, lifting, cracking or tearing of the film; an ability to be liberally repositioned until perfect adhesion to the substrate is achieved; and excellent concealing power to prevent 'show through'. The film also prints well, is easy to handle and can be purposely removed without any adhesive residue or other imperfections once a livery promotion has run its designated course.

Marketing Manager at Stewart Signs, Gary Stanley said: 'The BT vehicle wrapping project was completed within a very tight time frame, with only a short period between completion of the graphics and application of the printed wraps. Like all businesses, BT cannot afford to have large numbers of its vehicles out of service for long periods. Use of our strategically located service centres and access to BT's own facilities ensured that downtime was minimal.'

On the choice of 3M's Envision vehicle wrapping solution, Senior Buyer at BT Fleet Geoff Wileman added: 'We chose the 3M Envision film because it supported our CSR policy and did not cost the earth.' Product Marketer at 3M Commercial Graphics Division, Pen Webley said: 'We are delighted that BT chose Envision for such a prominent campaign. As legislation, consumer demands and sustainability issues continue to advance, 3M is continually striving to streamline, optimise and innovate across its product lines in order to reduce impact and share the benefits of its technologies. Envision has proved a real breakthrough in the vehicle wrapping market.'



The film has environmental benefits as well is considered easy to apply.

www.3M.co.uk/graphicsolutions
www.wrapyourcurves.co.uk
www.stewartsigns.co.uk

Banners for all

Modestly describing themselves as a 'cottage industry' plays down the fact that over the past 14 years in business, Banners For All, in Buckinghamshire has become acknowledged experts in the field of soft signage.

Run by father and son team, Ralph and Ashley Ballhatchet, the business prides itself in its family oriented values but has worked hard to diversify, with some innovative and unusual business development strategies.

Established in 1999, the business took advantage of new technologies to print direct to polyester cloth with water based sublimation inks, to produce colourful flags and banners. Eliminating the traditional screen process of cloth printing enabled them to remove setup costs and increase the colour range to full photographic, whilst dramatically reducing the price to their customers.

By continually embracing ever developing technologies, Banners For All quickly moved from simple flags and banners for birthdays and anniversaries into the wider commercial and retail markets, with a number of high profile names on their client list.

The right equipment has always been key to their continued success and growth, and Ashley Ballhatchet is enthusiastic about the virtues of the Mimaki kit that they have run for many years. He said: "One of the first machines my father ever purchased was a Mimaki TX1600S textile printer, later upgrading to the TX2, which was an incredibly reliable machine. As customer demands became more challenging, we invested in a Mimaki JV33 coupled with a CG-FX Cutter in 2008, to do vinyl banner, exhibition graphics and decal production, which previously we had to outsource. The sheer quality of Mimaki's production output has certainly helped us to keep ahead of the competition and enabled us to expand our offering to customers."

With expertise developed over many years in the soft signage industry, the company has become something of a specialist in producing bespoke flags for football clubs and supporters across the country, even setting up its own website. This provides customers with a 'one-stop shop' from which to design their flags from custom templates and order the printed article, all online.

Premiership and League clubs regularly use their services to produce bespoke promotional flags and banners for their stadiums, as do a host of supporters clubs across the land.



Banners For All produces huge football flags for clubs up and down the country.

Their Mimaki kit was further upgraded with the addition of a high speed TX400 volume production textile printer in early 2013 and more latterly with a new UJF-6042 flatbed LED UV printer. Ashley explained; "The needs of our clients have continually changed and evolved, and we have had to look at ways of meeting those demands. The addition of smaller scale flatbed UV printing to our portfolio enables us to produce all manner of PoS items, including an exciting range of personalised faceplates for tablet PCs, used for display and promotion purposes."



A new market for the company is the production of tablet faceplates using its Mimaki UJF-6042 printer.



Banners For All's Ashley Ballhatchet (R) and Stephen Wheeler (L).

Promising quick turnarounds and working all their machines all the time, the importance of excellent service back-up was one of the reasons the business continues to invest in Mimaki kit. "Whenever we've needed technical support, the backup service from both our supplier Granthams and Mimaki's UK distributor Hybrid Services has been excellent and provided much needed continuity of operation," he said.

'Cottage Industry' they may be, but a quick look at their websites; www.bannersforall.co.uk and www.footballflags.co.uk seems to demonstrate how the ability to respond consistently to those ever changing customer demands has allowed them to develop a very successful and multi-layered business operation.

www.bannersforall.co.uk

PROJECT *News*

BMW Park Lane refurbishment

Having worked successfully with BMW on previous projects, W&Co were contacted to assist them with their basement handover bay refurbishment at their flagship store on London's Park Lane.

BMW wanted to brighten up their otherwise gloomy basement area with large format graphics and the 'FabriLite' fabric face light box was chosen as the ideal



solution to cover a number of the large plain white walls. A range of units were built to custom sizes, the largest being a huge 8m wide! W&Co worked closely with the design team to create a range of exciting graphics that give the impression that the customer's new car has driven straight out of the design.

www.w-co.co.uk/bmw-lightboxes.php

LED lighting isn't just for signs

Multitechnic Ltd, the trade-only suppliers of chemically etched signs are trying out LED lighting - but it has nothing to do with signs.

Part of their production involves UV sensitive processes, and this has limited the workspace lighting options. Spot lighting is no good for a working area, and fluorescent lighting produces far too much UV light so it has to be filtered. LED lights however produce very little in the UV spectrum, and the huge improvements in LED technology mean that workspace illumination is now a practical option.

Multitechnic have opted for new suspended ceilings with 600mm square panel lights to create a much better working environment in part of the production offices, and in part of the production area. If this proves successful then the rest of the offices and production space will be fitted out later in the year.

Managing Director, Colin Edge, explained the thinking behind the move: "If you improve the working environment then people can do a better job. If we can see better we can produce a better quality product. And if the lighting is of a better quality it reduces eye strain and fatigue. If people prefer working with the new

lighting then it makes sense to install it in all working areas. It is as valuable an investment as any other new equipment."

Working out the financial costs and benefits is not an exact science. The cost of fluorescent tubes and their disposal is becoming significant. Taking into account all issues such as maintenance Multitechnic estimate that the combined ceilings and lighting will pay for themselves in about five years.

Cost however wasn't the main issue. "We have been wanting to improve the lighting in that area for years, but practical units that illuminate over a large area were not available. If it does completely pay for itself over just a few years then that is an added bonus. It has been a good excuse to give that whole area a complete refit, from ceiling to floor so definitely a good move," says Colin.

He said: "LED lighting does have a limited lifespan, but if it needs replacing after five years or so, but technology will have moved on by then and it will be time to see what improvements are available. It isn't a bad idea to have an incentive to review the working environment every few years anyway. Most of us take it for granted but we shouldn't as it affects how well we

work, and how well we feel at the end of the working day."

Multitechnic plan to evaluate the lighting, adjust the amount of lighting if necessary to get it right before tackling the much bigger production area. It will be interesting to see if LED lighting can do more for the sign industry than just illuminate products.

www.multitechnic.co.uk



Bill Mordue Interiors who are carrying out the refit at Multitechnic recommend 600mm square panel lights. These can also be fitted into existing suspended ceilings and are available in a range of sizes and outputs.

Paddy Power 'backs a winner' as stores get make over from Strata

Hull based signage, shop fitting and engineering firm Strata Holdings, have got a national contract with bookmakers Paddy Power to refit more than 160 branches.

Strata Holdings Group companies have created brand new internal and external signage, as well as elements of shop fitting and metalwork in their stores throughout the UK.

Strata Holdings is made up of Sovereign Signs, Ark Shop fitters and Pearlgreen Engineering. The three businesses are collectively responsible for creating the shop signage, illuminated signage and have also created a new concept; in-store booths for "Fixed Odds Betting Terminals" (FOBT) to add privacy to customers betting in-store.

Teams from Sovereign Signs and Ark were involved in manufacturing MDF panelling and back boards, while Sovereign also made and installed light boxes and printed all signage elements. Engineers from Pearlgreen created all the metalwork for the fixed odds betting terminal booths.

The contract also sees the creation of new fascia signage, counter wall signs and section headers to each sports bet section, such as greyhounds, sports and tote.

Iain McKenzie, Sovereigns senior project manager, said: "We use all three companies to help solve the brief from the client, giving Paddy Powers customers the ultimate betting experience, with privacy within the individual FOBT booths.

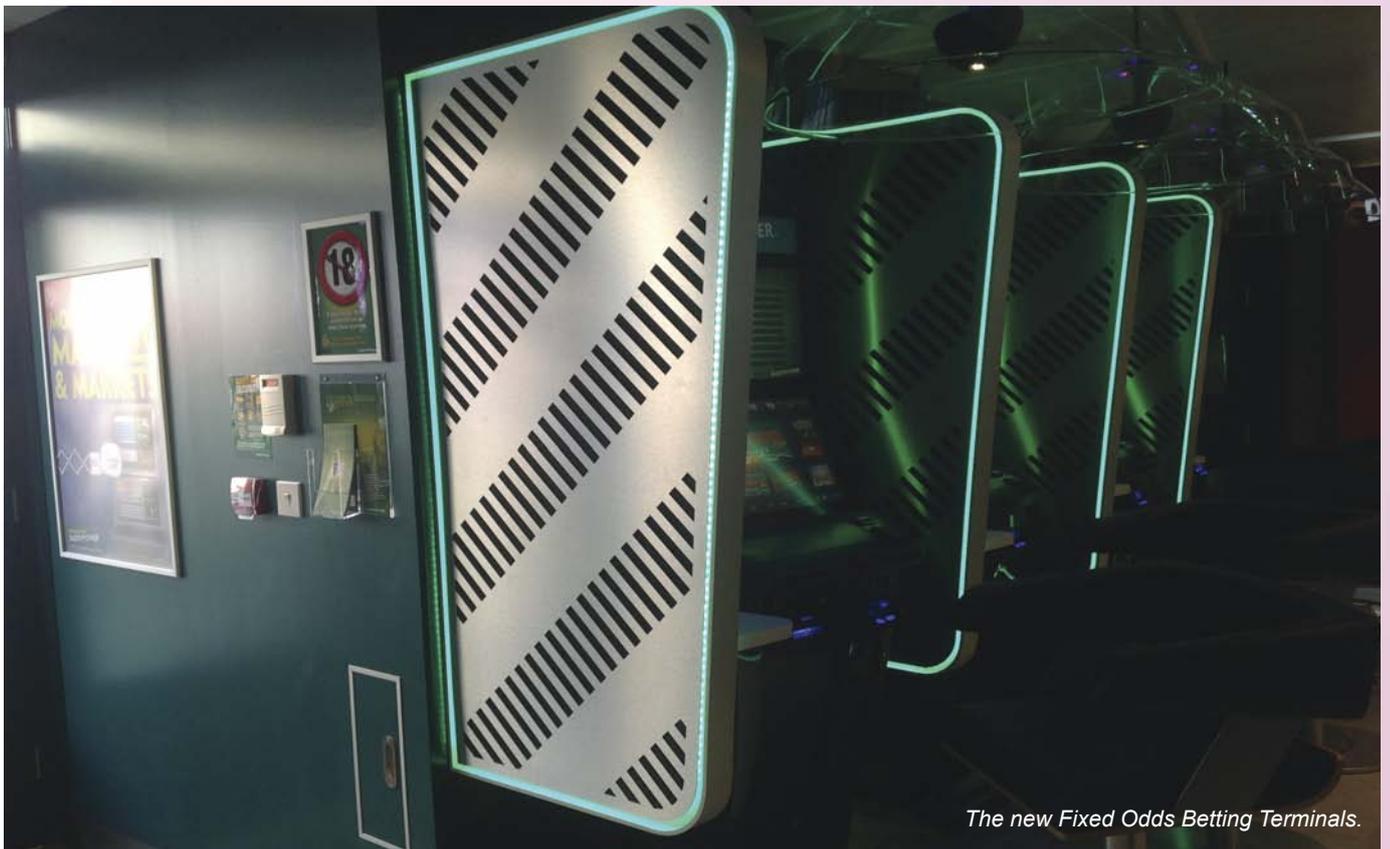
"We have worked closely with Paddy Power as a client, to really allow us to be able get the best out of the project, understanding ultimately what the client wants to deliver for their own customers."



The shop front fascia.

Ian Jones MD of Sovereign Signs said: "Paddy Power were looking to make the betting experience as relaxing and comfortable as possible. We developed the FOBT's to place Paddy Power at the cutting edge of the betting market. With our flexibility in design and manufacture we make their stores look great and help give their customers a brilliant user experience."

www.strataholdings.co.uk



The new Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.

No sweat!

"Every now and again we produce a piece of work that we are so proud of we want to tell the world about it," says the Sussex Sign Company about the job they did for their client Caburn Hope to produce signage for The Gym Group.

The Sussex Sign Company has been responsible for producing all the signage, window graphics and internal displays for The Gym Group for over 19 of their sites across the whole country, from Swansea to Glasgow including many in London.

They say: "This proves that we really are a nationwide company that can not only deliver on deadlines and produce excellent quality signage but can work with clients to not only meet but exceed their expectations on many levels."

The signage in the photograph consist of a powder internally illuminated aluminium fascia, using clear push through acrylic with translucent vinyl; the illumination is by energy saving LED's. The main sign is a Flex Face light box illuminated sign system which is ideal for larger outdoor illuminated sign applications such as illuminated outdoor advertising, company outdoor signs and shop front signs. Flex Face light boxes are robust and durable with a 200mm deep aluminium profile as standard, with internal supporting struts fixed to the back panel to create the rear tray of the light box. The internal illumination of the light box in this instance is produced using energy saving LEDs.

The Flex Face light box is called this because it features a flexible PVC banner fascia which is stretched across the front of light box to create what is essentially like a skin on a drum. The PVC banner 'skin' is specifically manufactured for backlit applications to allow for the light to pass through and illuminate the banner graphic from edge to edge. As well as standard square and rectangular, Flex Face illuminated signs can be formed in many shapes and sizes such as circular and irregular shapes and large illuminated letters to create bespoke large format illuminated signs.

The two very large signs to the left and right of the flex face



sign are Aluminium composite sheet. This has a polyethylene core sandwiched between two aluminium skins and is a rigid, lightweight product available in a wide range of colours and finishes. The colour of this particular sheet was white. The smooth and extremely flat surface of aluminium composite readily accepts screen and digital print inks as well as vinyl lamination. Coupled with dimensional stability, aluminium composite sheet is notable for its limited rate of expansion and contraction even under extremes of temperature. They chose aluminium composite for this application because 'the product is equally suitable for outdoor as well as indoor applications'.

About the Gym Group

It was founded by John Treharne, a former England squash player, in 2008. Perhaps that's why they are so focused on proper health and fitness benefits, and less on the luxuries that a small percentage of traditional health club members want'. John has a long and successful history in the gym business. He opened his first health club chain, Dragons Health Clubs, in 1991, building the business to a total of 22 clubs. He floated the company in 1997, and in 2000 he and his investors sold it on. He then spent time lending his expertise to premium gym chain Esporta, before concentrating on the launch of The Gym Group.

The Sussex Sign Company is 'proud to be working with Caburn Hope and in turn The Gym Group.'

www.sussexsigns.com

All signs lead to Nottingham burger business

Nottingham-based signmakers and vehicle livery specialists Allen Signs have helped 'cook up a tasty new identity' for a busy American burger bar.

Graphic designer and owner of Studio Deathray, Matt Clixby, who was in charge of the rebrand for Annie's Burger Shack and



Freehouse in the Lace Market, approached Allen Signs following the opening of its Nottingham office in May 2013.

As well as creating the illuminated external signage, Allen Signs also produced internal signs, vinyl artwork and printed wall-paper featuring a photo of Annie's family and a forest scene.

"I was in search of a signage company and came across Allen Signs on Twitter so it was perfect timing," said Matt. "As a company Allen Signs has been fantastic to work with. The team grasped the vision Annie and I were trying to create and successfully met the brief."

Annie's Burger Shack was first established in 2009 in The Old Angel pub in Nottingham. Owing to its popularity the restaurant moved to bigger premises at The Navigation Inn and then into its own premises in Nottingham's Lace Market in January 2014.

Annie Spaziano, owner of Annie's Burger Shack, said she is always keen to support other local independent businesses.

"From the start I have been very specific about sourcing local produce for my burgers," explained Annie. "I continued in this mindset when planning my own restaurant - I wanted to only partner with local businesses, so when I heard that Allen Signs were also based in Nottingham, they were a perfect fit!

"All of Allen Signs' ideas were great and totally connected with my and Matt's visualisation of the new restaurant.

"The team was fantastic; from the start they were professional and friendly. I will definitely be working with them again on future projects - they are now part of the team!"

www.allen-signs.co.uk

BrightSign XD Brings to Life Robert Wilson's Video Portraits at the Musée du Louvre in Paris

Robert Wilson has unveiled a ground-breaking new video installation at the Musée du Louvre in Paris, France. Powered by BrightSign XD, Wilson's "Living Rooms" exhibit features Lady Gaga in the re-creation of several renowned paintings housed at the Louvre. The Death of Marat, The Head of St. John the Baptist on a Charger, and Mademoiselle Caroline Riviere – as well as one Japanese bondage-inspired portrait in which Lady Gaga appears bound and suspended in midair.

'The striking installation is the perfect juxtaposition of modern artistic technique and classic artistic works, resulting in a provocative interpretation that blurs the lines between traditional art and modern pop culture'. BrightSign's digital signage media players power the entire installation, encompassing 17 separate LCD and plasma displays installed throughout the sprawling museum.

Dissident Industries handled the technical implementation, including development, production, post-production and installation. This project at the Louvre is the latest effort in Dissident Industries' longstanding collaboration with Robert Wilson.

"The behind-the-scenes hardware that powers our video exhibits needs to be rock-solid, and BrightSign's players are as rugged as they come," said Matthew Shattuck, co-founder of Dissident Industries. "In terms of the players' video quality, reliability and form factor, BrightSign wins by a mile."

The Louvre's curators ceased collecting contemporary art many years ago; so it's quite unusual for a major video installation of this scale to be displayed at the museum. "Living Rooms" is attracting a great deal of attention, provoking a fascinating discussion about the modern interpretation of classic works. This singer is well known for 'pushing the boundaries of artistic expression, and her collaboration with Robert Wilson further cements her position as a pop culture icon'.

"Living Rooms" opened in November 2013 and will run through February 2014.



The ground-breaking Robert Wilson video installation at the Musée du Louvre is powered by BrightSign XD players.

About BrightSign

BrightSign, LLC is based in Los Gatos, California, and develop products, software and networking solutions for digital signage. BrightSign solid-state digital sign controllers set new standards for both stand-alone and networked digital signage applications with their 'superior video quality, reliability, affordability, ease of use and interactivity'.

www.brightsign.biz

Signs fit for a Queen!

Signs Express (Aberdeen) is 'delighted' to receive a Royal Warrant of Appointment following their on-going provision of signs and graphics services to Balmoral Castle.

The Aberdeen sign makers have been working with the Royal Estate for over five years and have provided numerous signs over that period. One commission has been the provision of large format print displays showing original photos of the Royal Family. These are displayed at an exhibition which takes place annually at the estate, allowing the public to explore the castle and grounds.

Royal Warrants are a mark of recognition for companies or individuals who have supplied goods or services to the Households of HM The Queen, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh or HRH The Prince of Wales. This prestigious accolade is a real achievement for Signs Express (Aberdeen) who is delighted to work with the Balmoral estate'.

Jim Gifford, owner of the Aberdeen centre said: "Having such a

prestigious client as the Balmoral Estate is wonderful, as is being able to call ourselves Royal Warrant Holders. The hard work and dedication of our team over many years has allowed us to reach this stage, we hope to continue to work with Balmoral for many years to come."

Balmoral, which is within the Cairngorms National Park, was purchased by Prince Albert in 1852 and has been one of the residences of the Royal Family ever since. The magnificent estate covers 49,000 acres and is home to herds of deer, Highland cattle, and ponies.

Signs Express (Aberdeen) is working on a project with Balmoral to renew their existing signage and also provide a solution for removable visitor signs.

The Aberdeen centre, which opened in 1996, supplies a full range of signage and vehicle graphics to Aberdeen and the surrounding areas. The experienced and fully trained team are on hand to assist with a 'comprehensive, expert service from design stage through to installation'.



Jim Gifford, owner of Signs Express (Aberdeen)

FLAGS & BANNERS *Feature*

Getting creative with banners and flags

Soft signage offers many advantages for both end-users and sign makers; versatility, affordability and ease of transport to name a few. Jemima Codrington spoke with resellers and manufacturers to get the scoop on what's behind the boom in banners and flags, and to see how sign makers can maximise potential within this market.

Rebecca Dack, Marketing & PR Manager with Signs Express Ltd., has seen the range of applications for banners vary significantly over recent years.

Retailers and events have traditionally utilised banners and continue to do so, but there are a number of other sectors that are now choosing this method of promotion.

"Local authorities and the public sector are using this medium more than ever before to promote their initiatives, and even as a more permanent form of branding," says Rebecca. "Many local councils have recognised the advertising opportunity available by dressing the lamp posts on the high street with soft signage as forms of sponsorship for festivals, 'in bloom' competitions and city of culture." In addition to demand from local councils, Signs Express franchises have reported demand from construction companies, retail parks as well as exhibition and conference centres across the UK.

So why are so many sectors branching out? Perhaps one reason is the improvements made in the substrates used to create the banners themselves. No longer relegated to exclusively indoor use, banners and flags can be created on a wide number of materials including those lightweight enough to create temporary hoardings, scaffolding wraps as well as portable displays used for short term promotions and events. "The development of die sublimation materials has given a new dynamic to soft signage, making it more attractive to the customer," says Rebecca.

Another factor could be attributed to market research, as an increasing number of clients are realising the potential of inexpensive, temporary signage. "Customers recognise that movement attracts attention, and so are utilising temporary solutions to attract business," says Rebecca, revealing that many customers are also choosing soft signage as a way to dress their premises through the selection of more ornate and decorative fixing methods.



Projecting banners for Sheffield Art Galleries by Signs Express.



Feather flags for local council by Signs Express.

Choosing the right soft signage

While more and more banners and flags can be found on lampposts and hanging elsewhere outdoors, not all substrates are suited to these conditions. Sign makers should be sure to clarify with the client whether the banner is intended for indoor or outdoor use, as well as what it is going to be fixed to. Having a clear idea of the fixing system will help keep maintenance to a minimum, even when changing the signage. "Once a tensioning system is in place, the sign maker only needs to replace the skin for each new message, keeping overall costs down but ensuring that the temporary messages are securely fixed," says Rebecca. "Getting a clear understanding of the customer's needs is vital, as a short-term promotion will affect the material choice and cost accordingly."



Teardrop flags by Signs Express found in Milton Keynes.

To manage client expectations and price the project accurately, Rebecca recommends asking a number of key questions to ensure the job is done right and to increase the chances of repeat business:

- How long is the campaign? This is what will determine the material and methods used.
- Where and when this will be installed? Establish the fixing methods required for adequate tensioning.
- Is it free moving (eg. a flag)? The anchor points need to be correct to ensure secure fixing and to avoid uneven wear and tear.

Sign makers also need to ask the customer if they have the necessary permissions to install the signage – otherwise the job will be rendered useless!

www.signsexpress.co.uk



Promotional banner for The York Dungeon by Signs Express.

Janice Fairfield, Marketing Director at Fairfield Display & Lighting, notes that banners have become not only a more cost-effective option for end-users, but also for sign makers as well.



Banners can be beautifully displayed using systems from Fairfield Displays.

Growth in technology in recent years has prompted more and more sign makers to take an interest in this market, as it's no longer an expensive or time-consuming process to create flags and banners. "Because it's become cheaper to make banners, they can be offered to customers at much lower prices," says Janice.

Creating the ideal banner requires the sign maker to take a proactive approach to the initial enquiry, ensuring to ask all the right questions to maximise the chances of ongoing contracts. "A good idea would be to offer a price that includes four changes of posters or banners throughout the year, this way the client can be locked in," advises Janice.

When it comes to conducting these changes, there are a number of tools to make it easy to swap banners in and out, including some new user-friendly systems available from Fairfield.

Putting sign makers in control

Fairfield Displays has just launched Signware, an extensive range for hanging and displaying banners.

The range includes a profile called AnoGotcha, which will hold banners and posters up to 2mm thick. The profiles are made in 3 metre lengths and can be further customised by sign makers to suit the needs of the job. With profiles available in

colours such as silver aluminium or black, sign makers have control over the size and style of the banner display system to accommodate a wide variety of requests.

"One reason these profiles are incredibly useful is because the aluminium is robust and does not bow, so it looks elegant and will hold even large graphics firmly in place," says Janice. The system enables banners to be displayed in foyers, theatres,

.....continued on page 60



The Butterfly Track is a flexible ceiling mounted system onto which the banner systems can be hung.

FLAGS & BANNERS *Feature*

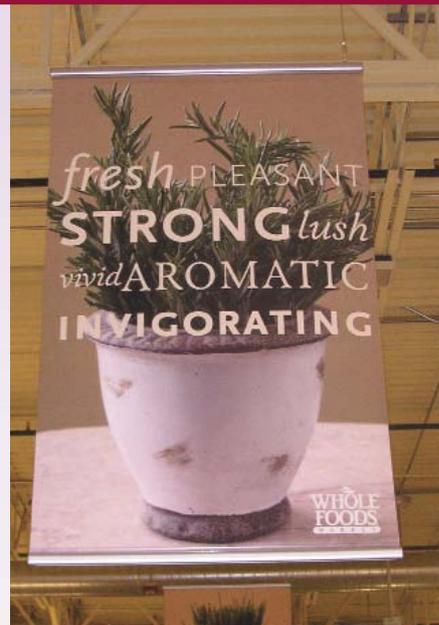
retail stores, schools and public buildings, and so can work well for a number of clients.

Another reason the Signware range is beneficial for sign makers is the fact that it's

been designed for speed. Utilised by a House of Fraser branch in the Midlands, the system allows staff to change the banners across the entire sales floor in just a few hours using the RoPole tool, which will lift the poster straight up to the ceiling and clip straight into the ceiling grid or the Signware ceiling mount. As poles are available in up to a 6-metre length, they're ideal for use in retail buildings or restaurants. The Nickken retractable cord system, also available in the Signware line, enables users to simply change graphics by pulling the cord with a pole.

The third system is the Zipline™, which is great for large rollouts during which clients need to hang the same size banner from different ceiling heights.

"This system allows you to drop a cable down and lock it into the position required without cutting anything," reveals Janice. "The added advantage is that if the follow-



The AnoGotcha can be used to handle even large graphics.

up campaign has posters of different sizes, it does not matter. This is an inexpensive gadget that can clip straight into a false ceiling grid."

www.fairfielddisplays.co.uk

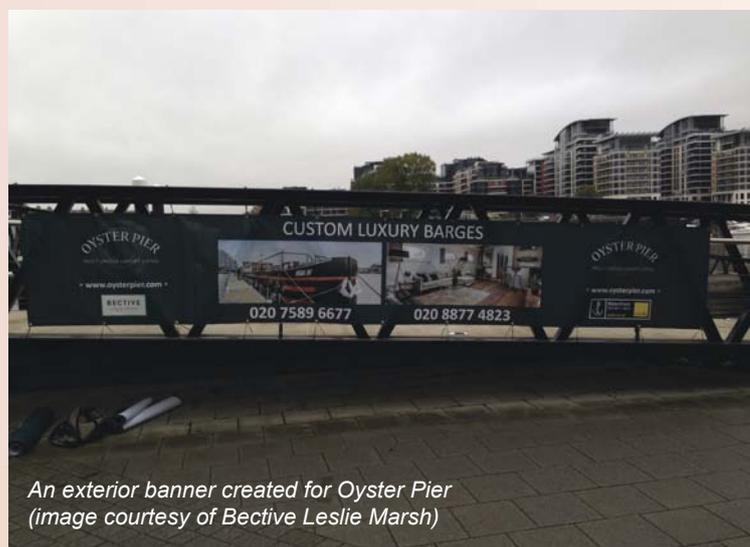


Banners work well across many different sectors, including retail and hospitality.

With over thirty years of experience in the printing industry, GiraffePress Ltd. made the move to wide format in 2009. Since then, the company has seen a rise in interest in banners, particularly when it comes to indoor promotional advertising.

"Banners are a lot more cost-effective than other forms of traditional signage," says Jason Pavlou Managing Director.

"If, for example, you were exhibiting at an exhibition, it is much cheaper to create 2 or 3 Roll-Up Banners than the larger Pop-Up type. Of course, if you wanted a large 'flowing' display', then the modular kind is a fantastic option. These banners do not require electricity, (unless of course you wanted to add lighting), which helps keeps costs down."



An exterior banner created for Oyster Pier (image courtesy of Bective Leslie Marsh)



Interior banners created for Wedding Ideas magazine.

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FLAGS & BANNERS *Feature*

.....Continued from page 61

Roll-up banners and modular systems (Centro) are simple to set up, reusable, and graphics can easily be changed on the modular banners to act as a great 'future value' product. Roll-up banners are a great choice for start-ups, as they enable companies to get their message across loud and clear at minimal cost. Although they're a great choice for companies with a limited budget, Jason notes that even large corporations use these as part of their advertising arsenal. GiraffePress Ltd has clients across an extremely varied range of industries and professions turning to banners for their promotional needs. "The simplicity and cost works well for everyone, but especially for clients that need to travel abroad for exhibitions and seminars. My client base ranges from sole-traders to professional speakers including Nicci Roscoe, right the way through to large corporations and charities" says Jason.

Presenting the market with new opportunities

Since moving into the wide format market, Jason and his team have rapidly expanded their resources, investing in a Roland Versa UV print and cut machine, something Jason reveals to be a shrewd investment. His team are now able to print a varnish (either matt or gloss) adding up to seven coats of varnish to create a beautiful embossed finish. This look adds depth to the finished product, and can be printed onto almost any substrate. The service is a relatively new one, and GiraffePress Ltd. are one of very few companies in the UK currently offering it.



Banners are a popular choice for temporary signage used at exhibitions.



An eye-catching curved banner for LimeTree.

There has been an increased demand for spot varnished banners in recent months, in addition to continuing demand for modular display stands. "These stands are similar to the curved pop-ups, except the graphic panels can be easily replaced as required to either one panel or more to fit the clients needs. "For example, if a client had 3 metre stand next week and needed a smaller 2 metre stand in 6 months time, they can just remove one part of the display to suit their needs," explains Jason.

While banners and other elements of soft signage may have appeared as a hobby-sized market for some, for Jason, this niche has become the company's biggest seller and has helped it to thrive.

"Print, as an industry, can be broken down into numerous sectors, large format is just one, and even that can be broken down again into smaller sectors," he says. "Working mainly with banners may appear risky to some, but as the want for this product rises and the market continues to expand, there's enough demand to prove that banners have become a substantial sub-market of it's own. There's enough work out there for everyone to go around".

www.giraffebanners.co.uk

With more sign makers turning their attention to soft signage, there has been a spike in the sales of wide format printers designed to print onto these substrates at Roland DG (UK).

"Launched in 2013, our SOLJET Pro4 XF-640 wide format printer, nicknamed The Beast, has already become a popular choice for sign makers printing soft signage banners and flags," says Rob Goleniowski, Business Manager of Sign & Graphics. "It has tremendous production capacity – printing at speeds of up to 102m²/hr, making it ideal for high volume production or on-demand requirements." The VersaART RE-640 has remained another popular choice, growing over the years to become one of the most robust and cost-effective solutions for both textile and vinyl banner production. Retailing for under £10,000, this printer has become a staple for many sign makers looking for what Rob describes as a "flexible and robust production workhorse."



Roland DG has reported a spike in interest in banners and soft signage.

The SOLJET Pro4 XF-640 and VersaART RE-640 can print both dye sublimation for textiles and materials and EcoSolvent for PVB banners. Combining ease of use, low running costs and reliability, these printers provide a high return on investment for sign makers. According to Rob, Roland's success in the soft signage market can be attributed to providing sign makers with this sort of versatility. "We are one of the few manufacturers that can offer a complete solution," he explains, pointing out that Roland DG offers everything from the hardware, software and inks that are used to create flags and banners.

Rob also points out that despite its popularity elsewhere on the continent over the past few years, soft signage and flags have only recently started enjoying the same level of success in the UK. Until recently banners had been deemed by many as a niche market, but with businesses looking to diversify and gain a competitive edge, many are now adding banners to the roster. The increased focus on greener solutions and materials has also led many sign makers to explore this sector. "In line with this, manufacturers have also been working hard to improve the environmental credentials of their technologies by developing machines with lower carbon footprints, power consumptions and ink costs; and the greater availability of recyclable materials has boosted this further," adds Rob. And as higher shipping and logistics costs have made the delivery of traditional signage more expensive, it has become mutually beneficial for sign makers and clients to opt for more lightweight soft signage solutions such as fabric banners rather than PVC to keep costs down.



The SOLJET Pro4 XF-640 has been nicknamed "The Beast".

What to look for when venturing into the banners and flags market

When considering moving into soft signage, there are a number of factors sign makers should take into account. Printing onto soft substrates, for example, can require different machinery to what's already in place. "No one wide format machine will do it all," says Rob, "however, there are some very flexible wide format technologies available today so ensure you invest in a machine that can grow as the company grows to provide you with maximum return on your investment." And as is the case with all jobs, investing in high-quality machinery and materials will ensure the best possible outcome. "Don't just go for the best price at the

point of purchase – it's a false economy and many sign makers out there will tell you exactly that." Choosing reliable and robust products will enable companies to print, finish and fit banners with the confidence to know that the quality and vibrancy of the colour and the fabric will remain over time.

From retail and POS to events, festivals and general corporate signage, banners and flags can be utilised across a number of sectors, and open up doors to countless possibilities when it comes to sourcing new business.

www.rolanddg.com

Peter Miles, Textile Product Specialist at All Print Supplies, notes that improvement in materials has opened up more possibilities for sign makers to not only create eye-catching, high-quality signage, but do so for less.

In addition to being easier to ship due to the lightweight nature of the product, a number of fabrics are now crease-free and washable too, providing greater flexibility and longevity. "Many fabric solutions such as the spider frame also allow installation to be completed by the end-user, further saving time and money," says Peter. "Therefore, sometimes the only cost from a logistic perspective is shipping a jiffy bag containing the print, rather than a large parcel and then specialist installation."

This ease of transportation and installation proves particularly helpful when dealing with large graphics, which are increasingly in demand as the type of clients using this signage continues to vary.



Exterior banners that can be used in conjunction with fencing are cost-effective to make, and in high demand.

FLAGS & BANNERS *Feature*

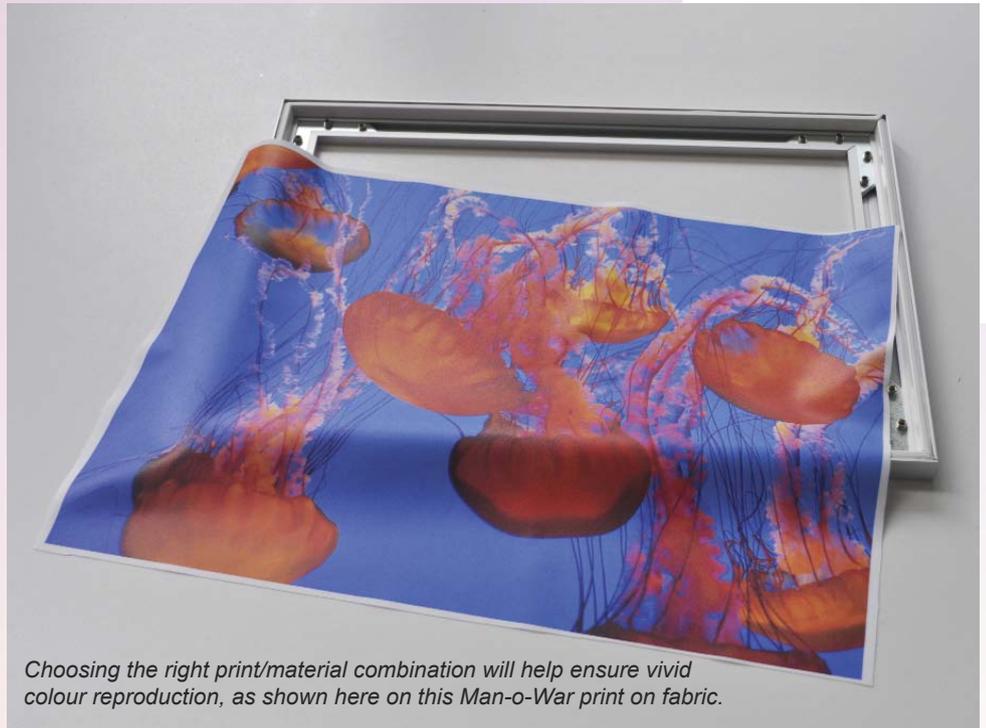
Selecting the right fabric

Finding the right fabric to bring a banner or flag to life is important to ensure rich colour reproduction and longevity of the product, something the team at All Print Supplies advise sign makers to focus in the early stages. Primarily important is the compatibility of the inks and media, advises Peter.

"Fabrics come with a variety of coatings applied to suit different end user applications, for example - flags, backlit displays, hanging banners and so on. It's important to ensure the fabric has the right coating for the printer you are using and for the end user's desired application."

To ensure a high quality of print every time, the All Print Supplies Research + Development team work extensively to test various fabric, printer and ink combinations to ensure maximum compatibility and performance for a wide variety of applications. Once the banner is printed, sign makers should then consider how it's going to be finished, taking into account things like whether it will be hot cut or cold cut. "The majority of woven uncoated fabrics will naturally want to fray," explains Peter, "but this can be overcome by hot cutting. However if you don't have this facility, we recommend always stitching and taping hems to prevent this from happening."

www.allprint.co.uk.



Choosing the right print/material combination will help ensure vivid colour reproduction, as shown here on this Man-o-War print on fabric.

"The majority of woven uncoated fabrics will naturally want to fray"



This APS butterfly flag grabs attention as visitors attend a show (Nov 2013).



New Esko store for bits, blades and parts opened!

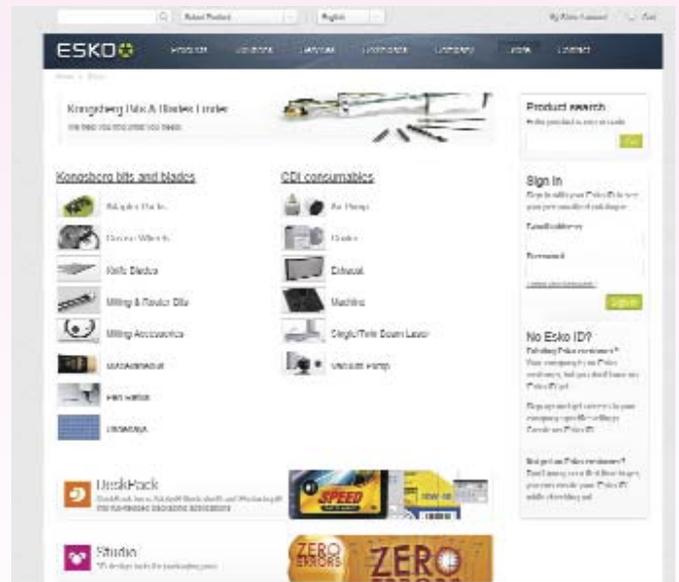
Esko opens new online shop to order Kongsberg and CDI consumables 'fast, easy and accurate'.

Esko announces the opening of its unique online store with intelligent storefront that simplifies the bits, blades and underlays purchasing for users of Kongsberg cutting tables and the consumables purchasing for CDI flexo platesetters.

This the company says, reinforces its leadership position as the first in the sign and display industry. Esko Store, currently available in English, is publicly available for new and existing Esko customers around the world.

"Come shop with us!", says Christian Korte, Esko Senior Vice President Sales. "Our intelligent storefront features a state-of-the-art shopping experience that makes it easy to find the right bits, blades and underlays quickly and easily. This is a unique capability among digital cutting table suppliers, again demonstrating Esko's leadership in this field. Visitors to the store will find not only the best materials, but also the best know-how, service and shopping experience."

"Built-in intelligence is especially useful when searching for Kongsberg accessories using the Kongsberg bits and blades finder," says Kenny Van Bogaert, Esko Business Development Manager e-commerce. "Find the best bits and blades for a specific job by entering material, quality and finishing method specifications. And for each bit and blade, the Esko Store advises the set-up you require on site, including which Kongsberg table, tool insert and adapter you need. In My Store Account, customers will see the Kongsberg table(s) they own. Simply selecting a specific Kongsberg table provides immediate access to ordering underlay fittings for that table."



The Esko Store features advanced filtering options that allow visitors to narrow their search when browsing a specific category. As well as a compare functionality that enables side-by-side comparisons of products within the same category.

www.esko.com/store

Antalis launches comprehensive guide to sign and display

Antalis UK has launched a new 120-page guide to its full range of sign and display products.

The guide, which is aimed to help customers and printers to choose substrates for different applications, includes

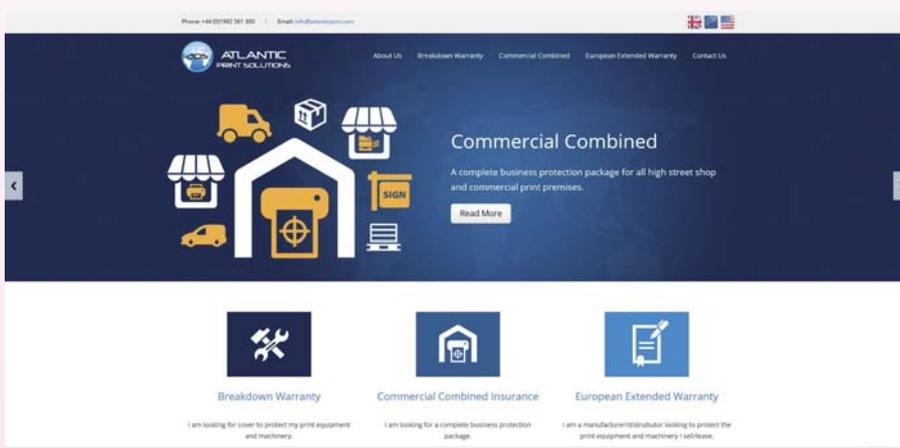
every product offering from PVC, large format papers, plotter vinyls and sundry items. It also presents visual representations of the possible applications for each substrate, helping printers identify how each product can be printed to obtain the best results.

Among the extensive range of products displayed in the guide, include familiar brands such as 3A, Drytac and Orafol as well as its pan-European Coala range of large format digital media.

Commenting on the launch of the new Guide, Michael Crook, Sign & Display Product Manager said: "In a market where more and more printers are diversifying their capabilities and branching out in to large format production, this guide will be invaluable to those looking for help in selecting the best product for their applications."

Michael continues: "We have worked hard to build a strong portfolio of sign and display products so customers can source everything they need, quickly and efficiently from one supplier. This guide demonstrates exactly what we are trying to achieve and we hope that it will become the number one reference for anyone in the industry, whether they be small players new to this sector or established print experts."

Antalis.co.uk



Mimaki scoops 'Most Pioneering Product' for second year running at Trophex

The Mimaki UJF-6042 received 2014's "Most Pioneering Product" award at the popular Trophex exhibition in Birmingham, which is 'indicative of its groundbreaking nature and unique production features'.

With its smaller sibling; the A3 format UJF-3042HG winning the 2013 award, the small format Mimaki flatbed range is 'firmly established in the promotional products and awards sector as the strongest and most innovative choice'.

The UJF-6042 adds increased bed size to the smaller 3042 unit – with an A2 (610 x 420) format vacuum table and 150mm head height, allowing a range of substrates to be printed to. One such application demonstrated at the show was the production of promotional items, such as pens and iPhone covers, as well as acrylic photo blocks and awards. Forming part of I-Sub Digital's Digi-Foil system; where traditional foil techniques can be replicated within a digital workflow, the Mimaki delivered spectacular foil effects onto trophies and plaques that 'impressed visitors to the event'.

Exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services Ltd, Mike Lewis from the company said: "To receive such an important award for the second year running is a great accolade. The Mimaki UJF range is the world's most popular UV flatbed printer for good reason. It allows print companies to be innovative in their product of-

fering as well as creating strong revenue streams for them; a vital area for customer retention as our economy continues to recover."

The Mimaki UJF range features white ink, unique digitally printable primer and a clear varnish, alongside vibrant process

colours. With the UJF-6042 capable of achieving up to 1800dpi photo quality output, the printers deliver unsurpassed quality and productivity across a broad variety of markets.

www.hybridservices.co.uk



The award winning Mimaki UJF 6042.

YPS show true colours in 2014 with demo suite additions



Mimaki's SUV series is expected to be 'in high demand in the UK market this year'.

Your Print Specialists (YPS) is 'anticipating a vibrant 2014 with the major expansion of its dedicated wide-format print demonstration suite'.

Its facility now includes the Mimaki JV400 SUV, 'tipped to be a popular investment option for sign and graphics houses this year', as well as a CJV30 print-and-cut engine with both white and silver inks. From the Canon range, YPS adds the versatile imagePROGRAF iPF6400S and iPF8400S aqueous machines for high-resolution indoor applications.

Authorised Mimaki reseller YPS will 'champion the virtues of the manufacturer's SUV chemistry this year', which combines the flexibility associated with solvent-based machines with the durability of UV-curable. Available in 1.3 and 1.6m widths and with a maximum print speed of 18.1sq m/hr, the SUV series, which is unique to Mimaki, features a 3-Way Intelligent Heater, which eliminates drying time.

The addition of white and silver inks creates 'luscious, high-margin print' for both indoor and outdoor work. At widths of 0.6, 1.0, 1.3 and 1.6m, this solvent or eco-solvent machine's cutting options include full contour cutting, for intricate vehicle decoration work, and half-cutting for stickers and labels.

www.yourprintspecialists.co.uk

ICON delivers immersive FIFA Brand experience in Morocco

World football governing body FIFA turned to ICON to provide an 'innovative' interactive experience to engage fans attending the FIFA Club World Cup, which took place in Morocco in December. Located in the Marrakesh Fan Zone, the 144 sqm structure allowed fans to have an immersive brand experience that was 'representative of FIFA's vision, mission and values for world football at all levels'.

The installation comprised two key elements; the first of which was an interactive photo booth. Having registered their details fans could choose, via tablet, from a range of stadia backdrops and star footballers which provided the setting for their memorable photo. This unique image was then emailed to them to share via social media and act as a reminder of their FIFA experience.

The second aspect was a unique experiential structure with a capacity for 75 people. Here fans viewed a highly emotive seven minute experience that incorporated film footage relayed onto a giant LED proscenium arch. Plus animations and holographic images of the FIFA World Cup Trophy and Christian Karembeu, a previous FIFA World Cup winner. The experience got to the 'heart of FIFA's mission and reflected the real passion of the game'.



During the tournament, FIFA President Sepp Blatter visited the experience and commented on the 'fantastic show and how he hoped it was helping FIFA to re-engage with its fans ahead of the eagerly anticipated FIFA World Cup next year'.

The project was an initiative of FIFA's corporate communications department who worked closely with ICON on the project. The ICON:Live! team was led by Richard Dale and they worked in close collaboration with the FIFA Archive department to source some 'truly iconic and inspiring moments from football history' to incorporate into the presentation. A portion of the structure had to be sourced in the UK and ICON then worked closely with local suppliers in Morocco to ensure a professional installation. By the end of the tournament it was estimated that 28,000 people had experienced the installation and an average of between 300-400 photos per day had been uploaded to the social media platforms.

With all eyes focusing on Brazil and the FIFA World Cup next year, ICON is hopeful that 'this will not be the only opportunity for football fans to really immerse themselves in this unique experience'.

www.icon-world.com

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Innova Solutions 'firmly fixed on European success'

Lancashire based bonding and adhesives company Innova Solutions, officially opened their second warehouse at their HQ in Colne in January 2014.

The company who primarily cater to the sign industry in the UK and Europe, have seen improvements across all areas of the business, including 'record sales and expansion of the workforce'.

The new warehouse development has been possible not only because of sales growth but also due to Innova Solutions being identified for the government funded Growth Accelerator programme, which helps 'high growth' companies to achieve more. £70,000 worth of funding was also secured from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). Officially opened by Andrew Stephenson MP, the warehouse was constructed by local firm Dale Contractors and designed to 'fit perfectly into the scenic rural backdrop of Trawden'.

Andrew Stephenson, MP for Pendle, said: "Small businesses are really critical to the economy, what we've seen over the last three years is 300,000 new small businesses open. But seeing businesses like Innova Solutions expand, take on more people and work towards more exports is really, really encouraging."

Additional storage space provided by the new warehouse will help Innova Solu-

tions continue their 'success with European exporting' as well as 'boost their potential for increased domestic sales'.

Glenn Dunleavy, Managing Director at Innova Solutions, said: "This year has been going particularly well, we're looking to grow the business 30 per cent in gross profit terms and the future is looking very

bright for us - we're aiming to get to 25 per cent export. People tend to like British firms and British products, every time we get on a plane and go and see someone in Europe we come back with a new customer and an order."

www.innovasolutions.co.uk



Glenn Dunleavy, MD of Innova, on the left and Andrew Stephenson MP at the opening in January.

Newtech events

The Newtech events have been specifically created to demonstrate 'joined-up' solutions from a variety of manufacturers and to help print and graphic firms combine unconnected new products to produce an integrated workflow.

They are being held in Edinburgh 18-19 March; Belfast 20-21 May; and Bristol 1-2 July.

"Having spent more money and time than I care to remember on buying and updating pre-press, printing and finishing systems, with all the attendant hurdles to overcome, I completely understand the position many buyers find themselves in," says Martin Morrissey, MD at Marketing Alchemy, the organiser of the events.

"By bringing together these groups of companies, one for each product or market sector, much of the basic systems and personal linkages are saddled up pre-event and ready to run."

The HP Latex 260 Printer: visitors can see a live demonstration of HP's WallArt Solution 2.0 software, which has the ability to produce a full 3D visualisation of how a room would look decorated with wallpaper printed on the HP Latex 260 Printer, using material from fellow exhibitor Neschen. Other demonstrations will also include the printing of banners which will be welded and sewn using Matic finishing equipment from the Atech stand and

eyeleted by Hanolex. Production of self adhesive vinyl will be cut using the latest cutting equipment from Summa and keder users can see JJ Carter's working with Atech Matic welding. The HP 260 printer will be shown in combination with Clarity Software. This allows users to accurately assess the cost of each print in terms of ink and media used whilst factoring other known costs. And demonstrations of how the finished product can easily be inserted into the latest display systems will be given by Ultima Display Systems.

www.newtechlondon.co.uk

ITC to demonstrate 'quality and service' at Sign UK 2014

Industrial Tooling Corporation (ITC) will be keen to 'emphasise the quality, service and support provided with its market leading cutting tool solutions' at the 2014 Sign UK exhibition.

ITC feels that 'in the face of increasingly low quality imported products, high quality and innovative solutions manufactured in the UK are essential for manufacturers intent on delivering high quality components'.

Highlighting its position as the 'UK's benchmark in cutting tool solutions' for the sign industry, ITC will once again be launching a number of new innovations from its stand. With a UK based manufacturing and research and development facility, they provide the sign industry with the 'most dynamic tooling solutions available.' At the 2014 Sign UK show, they will showcase their new coating for the established 3061 Series for machining stainless steel and similar exotic materials; the extension of the market leading 180 Series of cutters; and the 4071 Series of cutters for the machining and chamfering of foamex, plastic wood, MDF and additional abrasive materials.

Further developments that will be on show include the 2041 Series. This incorporates an innovative geometry with enhanced wiper flats and polished flutes that improve swarf clearance, especially when conducting pocketing operations on acrylic, aluminium and wood. The result is exceptional surface finishes and the elimination of scouring type marks.



They say that for the customer, this reduces the requirement for secondary hand finishing operations and the consequent time and labour requirement. Other products on show will include the addition of three flute cutters to the 2091 Series of Up and Downcut tools; and the 2121 Series of extra long cutters for machining difficult to reach surfaces.

ITC will also demonstrate its solutions for issues such as de-laminating, excessive burrs, poor surface finishes and the ability to eliminate hand finishing. Their technical experts will be available to discuss any issues show visitors may have with cutting materials of all types.

www.itc-ltd.co.uk

PrintMAX puts 'customers first'

Following a year of 'unprecedented success' for the southern based Roland dealer, the company have announced that their key focus in 2014 will be 'customer satisfaction'.

With their ethos of 'exceeding expectation' printMAX have always gone the extra mile for their customers. With growth of up to 50 percent expected in the next two years for the industry, printMAX are keeping their customers at the 'heart and core of their business'.

2013 saw a year of firsts for the Roland reseller as they received the 'most successful authorised dealer' accolade for

a third consecutive year. They also achieved first worldwide sales of both the Versacamm VSi and VersaUV LEF-20 and went on to sell more LEF-20's than any other UK dealer.

In 2014 printMAX says they will offer extra value in every way possible. From a 'committed customer service team, the very best ink and media solution available, along with a wealth of technical and application support and knowledge'.

MD Michael Bolton said: "At printMAX we have always strived to offer the very best solution for our customers. With our current product range along with

the knowledge and expertise we have on board, I fully believe that we can offer our customers the perfect solution for their business. We've developed an extremely loyal customer base by operating under one simple guideline "under promise and over deliver" and we do, every time!"

Over the next 12 months, printMAX will showcase 12 very different customers in a series of case studies, which document a variety of challenges and triumphs from customers in a range of industries.

www.printmax.co.uk

The Vikings have landed!

Viking, a specialist supplier of tapes, two part adhesives and sealants to the UK sign industry, has opened its first branch in conjunction with 3M Tapes and Abrasives.

Viking, launched in Keighley in 1989, already has a 'solid commercial footing' across West, North and East Yorkshire, and is now mounting an 'assault' on neighbouring South Yorkshire. Which it regards as one of the fastest-evolving heartlands of the UK manufacturing sector.

The company, a distributor of 3M tapes, adhesives and abrasives distributors, will be concentrating initial efforts across Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley, and Sheffield, with its sights set on Lincolnshire and North Derbyshire.

Viking's managing director Colin Bennett explained: "We already have a number of sign accounts in this part of the world and have identified a gap in the market for a specialist tapes, adhesive and abrasives distributor. Our aim is to provide the region's rapidly expanding manufacturing industry with quality products and cost-effective solutions.

"Our new South Yorkshire operation is supported by two Viking technical salesmen and two 3M technical specialists. As part of our launch programme, we are promoting new VHB tapes, new low cost 3M high Bond products and the new range of 3M industrial sealants – all of specific interest to the sign industry."

Ian Graham, of Wakefield, has been appointed as branch supervisor. With 30 years' experience in the industry sector, specialising in tapes and adhesives, he's returning to the Viking fold after previously working for the company.

Viking has been dealing with 3M since 1989 and remains a strategic partner of the global technology giant, notably in driving forward its growing e-commerce business. The company remains the leading online supplier of 3M products in



Pictured outside Century Business Park are, from left, RiDO's Dean Hughes, Viking's Rotherham area sales executive Mark Snee, Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce's Shane Young, Viking director Melanie Bennett, 3M's area sales representative Glen Matthews, Viking managing director Colin Bennett, and the company's key account manager Craig Smith.

the UK and ranks among its top three performers overall.

Stuart Fellows, 3M's sales manager, said: "Viking will provide a real focus for our specialist range of products and I am relishing the challenge of improving our penetration in what is one of the fastest growing areas for manufacturing industry in the country."

Viking pioneered the use of the internet, tailoring its www.vikingtapes.co.uk site to provide a 'safe passage through the maze' of available adhesive products. An online helpline deals with hundreds of enquiries a month.

Colin, who has over 40 years' experience in the industry, said: "We already have a significant number of online customers

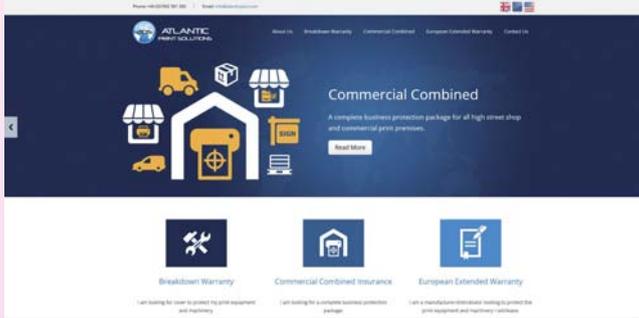
across South Yorkshire, but no matter how comprehensive an internet service may be, there is still a requirement for face-to-face contact – another reason we are taking an on-the-ground presence there."

He paid tribute to the help and advice received from both Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, and Rotherham Investment & Development Office (RiDO), Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's regeneration arm.

"They have proved invaluable in helping us to locate our new South Yorkshire premises and in opening up access to a generous business support package," he said.

www.vikingtapes.co.uk

Protection for all high street shop and commercial print premises



Atlantic, the print and sign industries specialist insurer have released their new website to introduce the Commercial Combined insurance for sign shop, sign centres and commercial printers.

Atlantic have also recently released a European Extended Warranty program to add to its UK Breakdown Warranty programs. The Commercial Combined insurances come with additional benefits for every policy holder inclusive of a BCRU approved audio verification security system, equipment and installation free, with low cost monitoring and aftercare.

'So much more for so much less' claim Atlantic who also offers additional policy benefits that includes a comprehensive risk management online services package for tax, legal & employment advice, business law legislation, health and safety and business continuity planning for all policy holders.

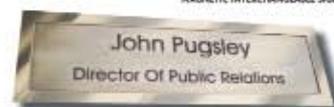
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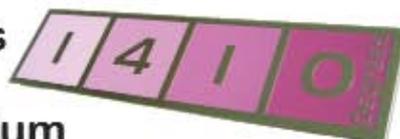


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TRADE-LETTERS.COM go green

After months of planning and a significant investment 'trade only' letter fabricators **TRADE-LETTERS.COM** recently announced that all their manufactured products are made using 100 per cent green energy.

After the installation of a commercial quality 20 kw solar array to the roof of their Wirral production facility, and a further supply deal with Ecotricity, they can now proudly say their letters are produced from 100 per cent renewable energy.

Mark Ashcroft managing director said that the company has made giant leaps this year with regard to its green credentials, even down to a recent deal agreed with their couriers that make all of **TRADE-LETTERS.COM**'s parcel deliveries carbon neutral. With an average of over 100 parcels a day leaving the facility it is a massive carbon reduction. "Our electricity generation alone saves something like 20,000 kg's of carbon going into the atmosphere every year. **TRADE-LETTERS.COM** are proud of their position as the first 100 per cent green letter supplier in the UK market today," says Mark.

He said: "For many years we have been at the forefront of letter production in the UK. I read in the trade press a lot about other companies acquiring larger premises, and new faster machinery. It irked me that nobody talked about the environment or the use of our resources in a sustainable manner. So we have

been brave and made the first move with a significant investment in solar energy. As with previous innovations we expect others will follow.

"Whatever your view may be on climate change, renewable energies are still a great addition to the countries energy mix and have made our production facility's electricity bill almost disappear.

"As a supplier we are under no illusions with regard to UK sign makers having a choice of whom they use to manufacture their letters. We are proud of the fact that we are the first to give them the choice to go green at no cost to themselves and definitely no cost to the environment."

www.brimark-signs.com



Sign & Digital UK expands for 2014

Floor-space grows with over 120 exhibitors already confirmed.

Faversham House confirms that Sign & Digital UK is expanding its floor plan by 20 per cent following increasing demand – over 120 exhibitors have already booked their space.

Already larger in floor-space than the 2013 exhibition, Sign & Digital UK 2014 has seen a growth in bookings across the board, with particular interest from wide format print suppliers, signage and

display systems, lighting and digital signage firms. They include **i-Sub, Multipanel/Perspex Distribution, Sloan LED and One Digital Solutions.**

2014 will also see the return of leading brands such as **Fuji-film, Graphtec and Inktec/Jetrix.** Other exhibitors at Sign & Digital UK include **Hewlett-Packard, Epson, Canon, Roland DG, Hybrid Services/Mimaki, Grafityp, Perfect Colours and Colourgen.**

Rudi Blackett, event director for Sign & Digital UK, said: "Despite the ongoing tough economic climate, we're delighted at the industry's commitment and enthusiasm for the sign and display industry's leading trade show, Sign & Digital UK. With new technology to show and new business opportunities, the show is already bigger than last year and is shaping up to be better than ever."

Sign & Digital UK is the annual trade show for sign making, display solutions and digital printing. Showcasing the latest innovative products, technologies and services, the exhibition attracts the world's top manufacturers and suppliers from across the sign, display, graphics and print industry.

29 April to 1 May 2014

Hall 2 at the NEC, Birmingham

www.signanddigitaluk.com



QPS reassures customers on BioMedia availability

Quality Print Services (QPS) has reassured its customers in the wide-format print and display market that it remains a distributor of BioMedia recyclable display films, despite manufacturer Ilford Imaging's decision to stop production at its Swiss factory.

Ilford Imaging Switzerland hit financial difficulties last year and declared its insolvency in December. But QPS has stock to sell and will continue to supply BioMedia for the foreseeable future – at the same price point as non-recyclable materials.

"It's saddening that Ilford Imaging has become another financial casualty in our industry, especially as we believe its eco-friendly substrate BioMedia has such great potential to improve the sustainability of sign and display businesses," says Chris Bailey, Director, QPS.

"Fortunately we invested in a large quantity of stock from the BioMedia range

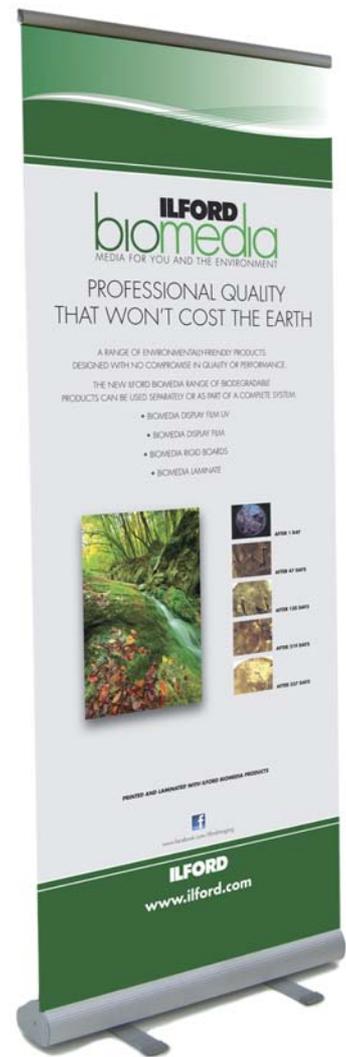
ahead of Ilford's difficulties and so are able to meet immediate demand from our customers, at a price that will help them meet sustainability targets such as ISO 14001 certification without being at a financial disadvantage."

BioMedia, winner of the SGIA Product of the Year award in 2011, is both fully recyclable and biodegradable and can be incinerated for energy production without releasing harmful gases or chemicals.

The range, available from QPS in a selection of thicknesses and/or widths, includes matte-finish BioMedia Display Film and BioMedia Display Film UV, which offer an alternative to traditional substrates for pop-ups, banners, indoor and outdoor poster displays and exhibition graphics.

www.qualityprintservices.com

BioMedia is suitable for a range of applications.



Stanford Marsh expands Scottish operations with three new appointments

Stanford Marsh Group, founded in 1965 to provide wide format printing equipment, technical support and consumables to anyone with a wide format output need, has appointed three new staff to 'bolster' its Scottish sales operations.

David Murchie has been appointed in an internal account manager capacity, whilst Yvonne Reilly and Mark Timoney have joined the company's field sales team. All three started with Stanford Marsh in December 2013 and are based at the Motherwell Office.

David Murchie worked at HP for a number of years in corporate and public sector imaging and printing account manager roles. He has a background in imaging devices and has the knowledge to support Stanford Marsh's customers in Scotland. Yvonne Reilly also joins Stanford Marsh from HP. An experienced IT sales professional, Yvonne has a proven track record when it comes to her 'professional and entrepreneurial approach to selling'. Mark Timoney joins from Equinet where he had much success selling IT services and solutions. With a solid background in B2B sales and knowledge of the graphics arena, Mark will be charged with 'ramping up' sales of wide format hardware.

Adrian Painter, Director at Stanford Marsh, said: "Stanford Marsh Group's business operations have been growing apace of late and these three appointments have been made in order to meet the increased demand for Stanford Marsh solutions within all sectors, including the company's traditional CAD/technical and wide format print solutions, large format graphic devices, BIM solutions within the CAD market and 3D printing devices.

"The newly appointed team members have industry background akin to our own business and a wealth of experience," says Adrian, "but will also get the necessary training and support to enable them to offer impartial and informed advice to our existing and prospective clients across all our sectors."

www.stanfordmarsh.co.uk



From left to right: David Murchie, Yvonne Reilly and Mark Timoney.

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Although not essential, the candidate would benefit from experience in basic printing knowledge and using vinyl plotters. Also, any install experience would also be an advantage as some reactive out-house fitting work may be necessary.

The candidate also requires a clean UK driving licence and a CSCS Card would be of an advantage.

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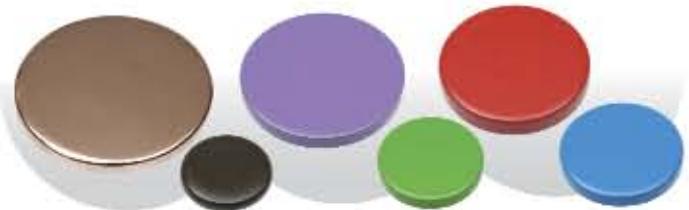
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