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PRODUCTS AND EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

Sign Update welcomes news and information relating to new and improved products for possible coverage within the news and review pages. Sign Update however accepts no obligation to provide coverage or return unsolicited products which are sent to it.

Sign Update is always delighted to receive correspondence hints and tips for articles which should be sent in the first instance in outline form, together with the author's name and address. Manuscripts, photographs and other materials will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped address envelope. No responsibility is accepted for any unsolicited materials.

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Two direction?

As we go to print on this issue, Fespa Digital 2014 (Federation of European Screen Printers Associations), held in Munich will have just finished. Attracting visitors and all of the major printing companies from round the world, it's no doubt going to be a place where many sales are made. To coincide with this event, our feature on digital printing looks at some of the issues around this burgeoning sector and how sign makers can potentially grow their business significantly by investing in the right machine. Yet it's not as straightforward as is often made out. So we hear from some industry favourites about what to look for if buying one for the first time and what to bear in mind before spending so much money.

Our other feature covers what a lot of signmakers are thinking about in this economic climate, which is whether to pursue new markets. Some businesses have tried something new but found financially it's not worth it. Whilst others have come across a product or a machine that has quickly proved lucrative without an enormous set up cost. Like one business we speak to, it's maybe not so much about going after quick profit, but improving your products and make sure you offer customers the best possible service.

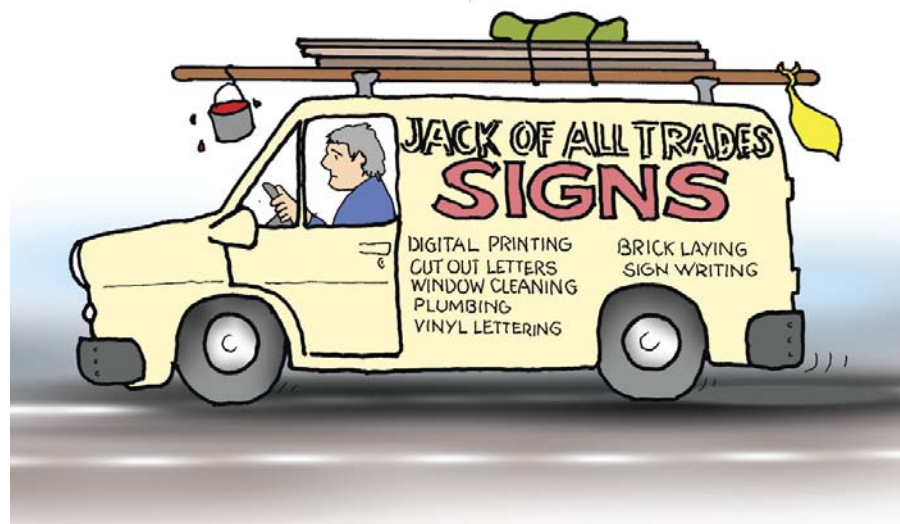
But let's not forget why most of us are here. Since spending more time on social media (please follow us, we so enjoy talking to who's out there!) we've come across many interesting and impressive signage jobs. Our project news section covers these so if you have finished a job you are really proud of, we'd love to include it our future issues. Likewise if you have some interesting news; would like to review a product or machine; or even provide a 'how to', get in touch.

Till the next time...

Kathryn



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3M adds to vehicle wrapping solutions

3M has added five colours to their Car Wrap Film Series 1080, bringing the number of colour options available to 55. 3M has also introduced a matte version of the popular Scotchcal Gloss Over-laminate 8580.

New colours for the 3M Car Wrap Film Series 1080 are: Gloss Charcoal Metallic, Gloss Blue Steel Metallic, Matte Dark Navy, Satin White Aluminium and Matte Deep Black.

Series 1080 is designed for solid colour vehicle detailing, decoration and full wraps. The films can be applied to flat and curved surfaces and incorporate a multi-layer construction and grey-pigmented adhesive for 'excellent' opacity. Invisible air release channels in the adhesive enable the film to be repositioned during the application process, for 'fast, easy and bubble-free graphic installations'. The films can be purposely removed for up to five years to accommodate changing vehicle personalisation and customisation requirements.

Scotchcal Matte Graphic Protection Over-laminate 8580M by 3M offers a complementary alternative to the film's gloss counterpart. This enables a wider range of special effects to be achieved in vehicle wrapping applications involving digital printing. It is designed for use with Controltac



A vehicle wrap film from the 1080 series.

Graphic Film IJ380-10 by 3M for the most challenging applications and with Controltac Graphic Film with Comply v3 Adhesive IJ180 by 3M for those that are less complex. The 25-micron cast matte film features a solvent-based acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive

and offers six years' durability.

Vehicle wrapping films from 3M are available from primary distributors William Smith and Spandex.

www.3m.co.uk/graphicsolutions

Drytac Europe to launch new range of ReTac media

Drytac Europe are launching new products in the new ReTac permanently peelable range including ReTac 75, ReTac 200, ReTac Chalk and Drytac WipeOut.

ReTac 75

ReTac 75 is a 75µ (3 mil) 'permanently peelable' white polymeric PVC film coated on one side with a pressure-sensitive low-tack repositionable Polyacrylate adhesive. Suitable for use with solvent, eco-solvent and UV inkjet printers. This printable vinyl has been specifically developed for wall graphic applications.

It enables users to install, reposition and remove graphics on numerous surfaces such as most indoor areas, ceramic tiles, PVC flooring, and sealed concrete without causing any damage. Available in 1370mm x 50m rolls, the glossy film is compatible with Latex, Solvent, Eco-Solvent and UV inkjet printers.

ReTac 200

ReTac 200 is a 200µ high density polyethylene substrate with a higher rigidity than ReTac75. Being thicker and more rigid

makes ReTac 200 'easier to apply and remove'. It can be used to create graphics that hide the profile of the wall behind it, giving a smoother image. ReTac200 is a 'strong' substrate, and will not be damaged by repeated removal and re-application.

ReTac Chalk

Available in a green finish, ReTac Chalk is a 180µ PVC chalkboard film, with the same pressure sensitive, low tack repositionable adhesive as the other ReTac products. This product creates chalkboards that can be applied to virtually any surface and used, re-used and removed easily when required.

Drytac WipeOut

This repositionable product is a dry-erase material. Drytac WipeOut is a 50µ Polyester film with a hard coat dry erase surface coating. This product carries all the benefits of the peelable ReTac 75 and ReTac 200, whilst being able to create instant dry-erase boards wherever there is a need for them.

Steve Broad, Sales Director for Drytac Europe, said: "The ReTac films are an excellent addition to Drytac's range of



products. Unlike traditional removable adhesives that all have a tendency to form a strong bond over time, these products have a new Polyacrylate adhesive technology that will not change its strength pattern over time. This offers a fantastic bond without the worry of damage to the underlying surface when removed.

"The new ReTac range adheres to almost any indoor surface and offers enormous flexibility as they can be repositioned numerous times without losing adhesion and leaves no residue when removed."

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New photo paper from ADS

Amari Digital Supplies (ADS), a division of Amari Plastics, has added a new photo paper from Sihl to its range of digital media. 3454 Solvent Paper PE 240 has been developed specifically for use with solvent, UVC and Latex inks. The bright white glossy PE-coated paper will provide 'high-definition photographic-quality' prints that are both water and abrasion resistant. And can be used without the need for lamination for a wide range of longer-term interior applications such as advertisements, indoor designs, photographic displays and special decorative effects.

3454 Solvent Paper PE 240 is a 240gsm product that combines a dimensionally stable base material with a particularly robust surface coating. The prints generated are, it is claimed, fast drying by comparison with those produced using similarly positioned paper products and have a 'superior colour brilliance and sheen', thanks to the paper's luminosity.

Supplied in a 1,372mm wide x 30m long roll format, the paper is available either direct from Amari Digital Supplies or at branches of Amari Plastics.

www.amaridigitalsupplies.com



Permanent cast film for curtain sided vehicles



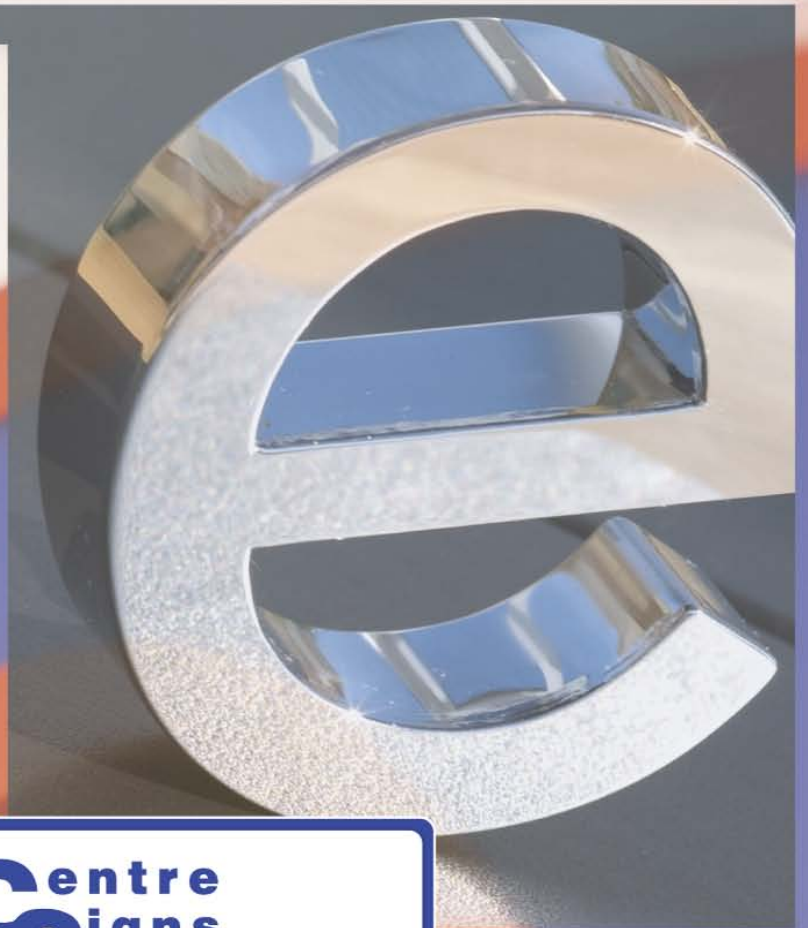
With APA Truck film you can personalise or renew commercial vehicles with unique and exclusive colours, and it's 'always simple and fast'.

APA Truck is the Cast film for plotters and solvent, UV and Latex printers. Specifically manufactured to personalise trucks and curtain sided vehicles, it is a 'high quality material with excellent performance qualities', resulting from APA's 'experience and technology'.

APA Truck is a highly conformable film to resist the daily mechanical stresses and different kinds of weather to which curtains are exposed to. It is a 'fast, healthy and non-pollutant alternative' to paint.

The immediate and fast application ensures that APA Truck helps to 'minimise the standing time of a commercial vehicle'. There is also the transparent laminate film available in gloss and matt finish to protect the printed images available in this range.

www.apaspa.com



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ASLAN's new film for difficult surfaces

With a new and 'especially strong' adhesive ASLAN offers the ideal solution for applications on various difficult surfaces.

The white glossy, polymeric digital printing film UltraTack ASLAN DFP 07 is a 'good all round product' and suitable for rough, uneven and low energy surfaces. A high initial adhesive tack allows the application at low temperatures.

With an outdoor durability of seven years it is ideal for long-term applications that require a permanent adhesive such as containers or trailers.

The digital printing films can be printed with all major solvent, eco-solvent, latex and UV-curable inks. A double-sided PE coated liner make sure of a good flatness in the printer and a high moisture stability.

ASLAN's other new product is a double-sided self-adhesive film with perfect flatness for sheets, ASLAN DK 1. This transparent film offers a wide range of applications, according to the company. They are suitable for the self-adhesive finishing of maps, prints, plans, posters and more and allow a simple application.

The film has got an equally strong, permanent adhesive on both sides. The initial adhesive strength is delayed, which facilitates the application.



One side has a reinforced 120 g cardboard liner that is marked with a centimetre division and therefore 'ideal' for sheets. The reinforced cardboard makes the handling of the thin double-sided self-adhesive film eas-

ier and guarantees a good flatness, they claim. The other side has a flexible PE release liner.

www.ASLAN-schwarz.com.

Drytac Europe FaceMount adhesive

Drytac's FaceMount™ mounting adhesive has been made for the face mounting of virtually any image to clear substrates such as PetG™, acrylic, Plexiglas™ and polycarbonate. It is also appropriate for lenticular

imaging applications and backlit display transparencies.

FaceMount is a 25µ optically clear polyester mounting film coated on both sides with a pressure-sensitive, solvent-based

acrylic adhesive that is protected prior to use on both sides with siliconised polyester release liner. It is available with permanent adhesive on both sides.

This product is optically clear and is 'ideal' for demanding applications where colour integrity is of 'paramount importance', such as high-end proofing and photographic laboratory printing, museum quality fine art and giclée printing.

Steve Broad, Drytac Sales Director Europe, said: "FaceMount meets the very highest standards in clear mounting applications at a cost-effective price-point. Once the image is applied to the surface, FaceMount will disappear and you will just be left with your original artwork. It is the latest in a series of solutions we've developed to meet specific applications and is a must for all who want to mount artworks behind any type of clear substrate."

Drytac's entire range of films and adhesives is exclusively distributed throughout the UK and Ireland by Antalis.



www.antalis.co.uk
www.drytac.co.uk

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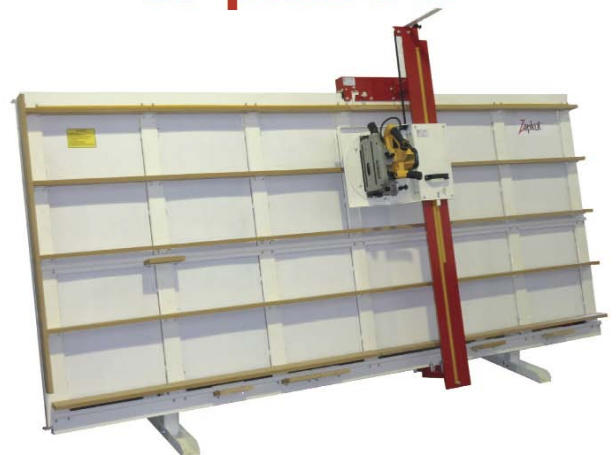
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PRODUCT *News*

TheMagicTouch

Having pioneered and introduced the 'ultimate' in affordable dark garment decoration with the WoW image transfer process, TheMagicTouch now introduce some real 'game changing' applications using the same white toner-based printer technology.



Individual personalisation and short-run production of ceramic mugs has been dominated by "white" coated mugs decorated using traditional sublimation transfer process. However, things are about to change they claim

Together with ceramics coater and decorator Listawood based in the UK, TheMagicTouch have formed a global partnership to promote and market this new opportunity. This 'milestone' in mug decoration combines the patent protected SatinMug developed and engineered by Listawood and the CPM transfer paper from TheMagicTouch with the new white toner technology.

The matt-satin finish offers a contemporary look and smooth tactile feel. The initial eight colour range includes black, red, blue, yellow, green, cyan and pink with a white version also being suitable for either toner or sublimation decoration.

One advantage of the compliant and dishwasher safe SatinMug is Listawood's ability to produce mugs to a specific Pantone colour with a minimum production requirement of only 1000 mugs.

TheMagicTouch also introduce printable mug boxes which will assist in promoting this personalised concept and add value to what is already regarded as a higher value product. The CPM toner-based transfers produced on the white toner TMT/Okii 711 printer can be applied using traditional mug presses.

Jim Nicol, Managing Director said: "Our own experience and research has confirmed the market for white mugs into the B2B market has become very competitive. This new opportunity will give everyone a good chance of making some money and creating new business opportunities."

www.themagictouch.co.uk

New Mimaki printer for outdoor and sublimation markets

Mimaki recently announced the availability of the JV300-130/160 family of eco-solvent inkjet wide format printers. The Mimaki JV300-130/160 is compatible with solvent and water-based sublimation inks, and used for outdoor signage, posters, interior décor and vehicle wrapping.

"Mimaki was the first company to bring solvent inkjet to wide format printing," said Mike Horsten, General Manager Marketing EMEA for Mimaki Europe.

"Since that time, we have continued to bring innovation to this space, including increased quality, flexibility and environmental sustainability. These printers are also extremely flexible as they can be used for both eco-solvent and water-based sublimation printing."

The range of new printers features brand new print heads that can easily manage both solvent and water-based inks for a broad range of wide format printing applications. The printers will run with two different ink types that support a wide range of materials and applications, including SS21 eco-solvent ink in CMYK, light cyan, light magenta and white. Newly developed inks are also available

in orange and light black to extend the colour gamut and improve gradation performance. High density printing and fast drying time enable more throughput and shorter production cycles without blocking or bleeding. Alternatively, the

Mimaki JV300 can run Sb53 water-based sublimation inks for printing on textiles, producing bright colours and enabling high-density printing.

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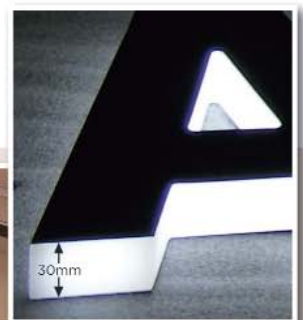
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Epson launches dye sublimation printer for roll-to-roll textiles

Epson has launched the SureColor SC-F7100, a 64-inch digital dye sublimation transfer printer. Epson has responded to customer feedback for a textile printer engineered for short to medium print runs after the success of the SC-F7000. Developed and manufactured by Epson, the SC-F7100 features an enhanced auto take-up reel with improved tensioning; a new post-platen heater; and an optional print drying system for 'greater reliability and efficiency' when producing textiles roll-to-roll.

"Not only does the SureColor SC-F7100 deliver on performance, cost, reliability and flexibility, it also opens up new revenue streams for customers."

The SC-F7100 is 'ideally suited' to mid to high volume producers of soft signage, who want to capitalise on the growing requirement for short to medium volume textile production. Whether driven by changing trends in fashion, or for the production of promotional material for forthcoming high-profile events, the SC-F7100 makes print runs of items such as soft signage and apparel, 'efficient and easy'.

The SureColor SC-F7100 benefits from Epson's 'experience in hardware and print-head design'. This they say means 'unmatched reliability, leading to effortless performance, low running costs and durability'. Central to the machine's reliability, is their trusted and proven Micro Piezo TFP printhead technology. Recognised as 'robust', it ensures downtime is kept to a minimum, leading to 'increased productivity'.

With Epson's water-based and environmentally friendly UltraChrome DS ink, users can be assured of consistently 'high quality, vibrant output, boasting fine details and smooth graduations'. The roll-fed CMYK SureColor SC-F7100 works with all major dye sub transfer papers and a wide range of substrates with polyester coating across a wide range of media, such as fabrics; and metals and plastic.

The output is approximately 58m²/hour, or typically 30m²/hour in two-pass production mode. This is combined with a 1.5 litre bulk ink system and long-lasting one litre (1.08kg) ink pouches.

The Epson Professional Sublimation Edition RIP bundled software, makes the production of high-quality output 'quick and simple'. While single-operator loading makes light work of control and media handling. The LCD panel is intuitive and simple to use and a low TCO means it is 'financially undemanding' too.

Martin Johns, product manager, Epson UK, says: "Not only does the SureColor SC-F7100 deliver on performance, cost, reliability and flexibility, it also opens up new revenue streams for customers. We have listened to our customers and know this is a clear need and we have reacted accordingly. These improvements enable them to respond to and maximise the business potential presented by the demand for short to medium textile production runs."

www.epson.eu

Epson summarises the key features

Epson engineered for performance, quality and reliability bringing low Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

Epson's proven Micro Piezo TFP printhead for high throughput and long production life

High resolution up to 720x1440dpi image quality

Prints on a wide range of dye sublimation transfer papers up to 64-inch (1625mm) wide

High-quality output enhanced with Variable Sized Droplet Technology

Highly reliable 40kg auto take-up reel with rewinding accuracy of + / - 2.5mm

Quick drying with the post-platen heater supporting 30 to 55deg C

Single-operator media loading with lift levers; automatic media tensioning control

Productivity is delivered thanks to output of up to approximately 58m²/hour, or typically 30m²/hour in two-pass production mode.

Integral and easily refillable 1.5 litre bulk ink system with one litre (1.08kg) ink pouches for low maintenance and longer print runs

Epson UltraChrome DS aqueous ink produces vibrant colours, sharp contours and smooth graduations, with excellent light/wash fastness, and abrasion/perspiration resistance

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Fujifilm introduces roll inkjet printer for the sign and graphics market

Fujifilm is launching a new large format printer targeted at the sign industry. The Vybrant F1600 is a 1.6m roll-to-roll device featuring their patented FUZE hybrid UV ink technology.

Fujifilm's FUZE technology can improve the efficiency and results achievable within a large format production environment, says the company.

The UV component of the ink produces a 'durable ink film with strong scratch resistance'. While an eco-solvent carrier results in low ink build and improves the flexibility in terms of handling and finishing. Thanks to the UV curing capability, no de-gassing time is required, and substrates can be finished and shipped immediately after print.

The Vybrant F1600 is a four colour CMYK machine with a productivity of up to 18.0 m²/hour and guarantees adhesion to a wide range of substrates. The device is 'ideal' for printing vinyl or any other flexible materials to create indoor or outdoor applications where durability and quick delivery times are key. The combination of UV chemistry with an eco-solvent carrier offers vivid colour reproduction, resulting in a smooth glossy print.

Mike Battersby, large format marketing manager at Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems, said: "The Vybrant F1600 is a highly effective roll-to-roll platform that increases the competitiveness of small and medium large format printers.

"Fujifilm's FUZE technology integrates the unique benefits offered by UV chemistry with an eco-solvent carrier. The durability, flexibility and high gloss finish print produced by the Vybrant F1600 will help companies to take their production performance to the next level and provide customers with quick turnaround jobs."

The printer will be commercially available in summer 2014.

www.fujifilm.eu/eu/products/graphic-systems



Composite panels

Building on the success of products such as Dibond, Reynobond, Etalbond, Skybond and Alupanel, Blackburns has developed its own range of ACM, which the company believes is 'superior to other products and is at the cutting edge of technology'.

Blackburns Aluminium Composite Panel (BCP) is particularly suitable for sign and display applications due to its 'high strength, rigidity and durability'. This rigidity is achieved by its construction, which comprises a polythene core sandwiched between two thin aluminium sheets.

This combination of the materials and manufacturing process provides a product that can be up to a third of the weight for the same rigidity of more traditional paneling products.

All Blackburns' composite panels are available pre-finished in polyester paint, and offer a five year product guarantee. BCP can be supplied in full sheets or each sheet can be cut to bespoke sizes and shapes or manufactured into Sign Trays.

Guy Hammond, National Product Manager-Signs with Blackburns said:

"The Blackburns Composite panel is a very welcome addition to our product offering and has already been in demand from sign makers. Our customers report that it is particularly useful for applications where potential theft is a problem because, unlike alternative metal sheet materials, BCP has no residual scrap value, and is therefore less likely to be taken.

"One particular grade to highlight is the Blackburns Composite Traffic Panel which is specifically aimed at the road traffic sign market. This has been achieved in conjunction with composite manufacturers and expertise within our own organisation, which has over thirty years experience of supplying metal substrates to the road traffic sector.

"The BCP Traffic panel complies to the road traffic regulations of BS EN 128891/2007 that requires the product to be tested to make sure it meets all the tests required, it also has a 12 year warranty."

www.blackburnssigns.co.uk



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Greenstock supplies LED flexible strip and accessories for the electrical market

Embedded on 8mm or 10mm wide flexible tape with a self-adhesive backing and with an extremely low profile, the high brightness LEDs are 'ideal' for a wide range of applications such as architectural and sign lighting.

The LED flexible tape has cut and re-soldering points at marked intervals throughout the tape (every 25mm or 50mm depending on type) allowing the length to be customised by cutting, terminating and re-joining as required. Greenstock also offers a wide range of easy to apply connection accessories including clip on joining connectors in L configuration suitable for fitting tape around corners or in right angle configurations, T pieces and 4 way splitters.

There are multiple grades of tape available offering different light outputs ranging from 4.8 to 19.2 watts per metre at 12V DC, with a correspondingly wide range of lumen outputs. Tape is available in a wide range of standard colours, various whites and in RGB colour changing variants. Standard IP20 and outdoor rated IP65 versions are also available. Greenstock is also able to offer custom colours or alternative IP ratings on request as special order items.

Greenstock offers a wide range of accessories including 12V DC power supplies and LED drivers. LED Dimming units and RGB controllers in both manual and RF remote control options. These enable colour change sequences, adjustment of static colours, strobe speeds and brightness settings of LED strips. And give the ability to change lighting settings to create mood and ambience.

There are also aluminium profiles ideal for use where the LED is installed in a visible position. These not only act as an enclosure for LED strips but also as a valuable heat sink to the LEDs for increased life. Clear, frosted and opal diffuser styles are then available to clip onto the aluminium profile. There is also a range of controllers available for LED strip.

Where customers have a volume re-

quirement for LED strips, Greenstock offers its U-Connect plug and play system, which creates an easy to install, custom lighting system in a 'cost-effective and high quality package'. For example, Greenstock's U-Connect system can significantly reduce the cost and complexity of customers lighting installations.

www.greenstock.co.uk



The LEDs can be used for a wide range of applications such as architectural lighting, sign lighting and perimeter lighting.

New version of CAD/CAM software

Type3, part of the Gravotech group, have released TYPE EDIT V12, the latest version of the leading CAD/CAM software for industrial and artistic modeling; design; engraving and cutting, which is dedicated to NC machines.

TYPE EDIT V12 introduces a 'fresh new modern' interface; new features in 2D, 3D and machining; new import filters; easier scripting possibilities; and offers increased 'efficiency and creativity' to all its users.

The new Quick Access Toolbar (QAT) groups the main features of TYPE EDIT, the ones users use most often so that they are always visible and accessible. The QAT is common to all tabs but can be personalised.

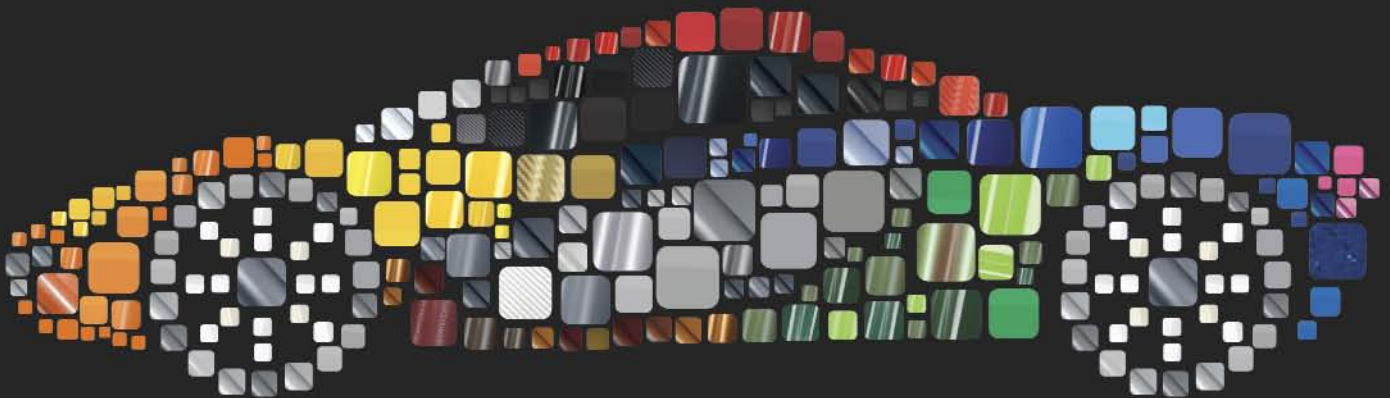
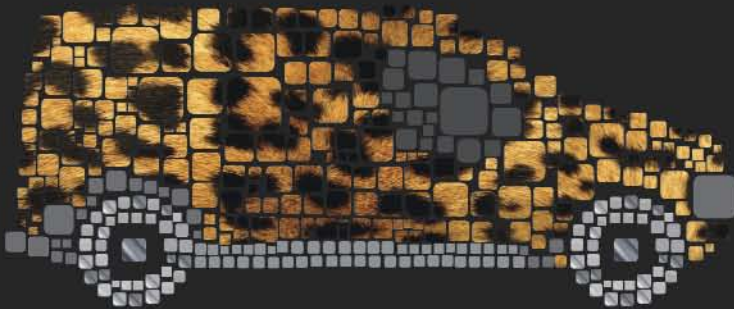
Each user can create its own work environment, with its own tabs and tools and can create different environments depending on the job.

Regarding 2D and 2.5D design tools, it offers new functions and possibilities. But the research and development team also worked on enhancing existing features. Scripts, for example, are an automatic way to link a series of operations determined by the user and executed by TYPE EDIT features. They help users automate a series of operations they regularly do for a specific job, which speeds up the process and reduces errors.

The new LED feature has been developed specifically for the sign industry, to answer the growing demand for LED (light-emitting diode) layouts, according to the company. TYPE EDIT V12 allows the easy creation of a LED job that can be used either for cost estimates or manufacture. Reports, tools and new preview functions also help professionals make the most of powerful functionalities both in CAD and in CAM, for 'higher accuracy and speed'.

www.type3.com

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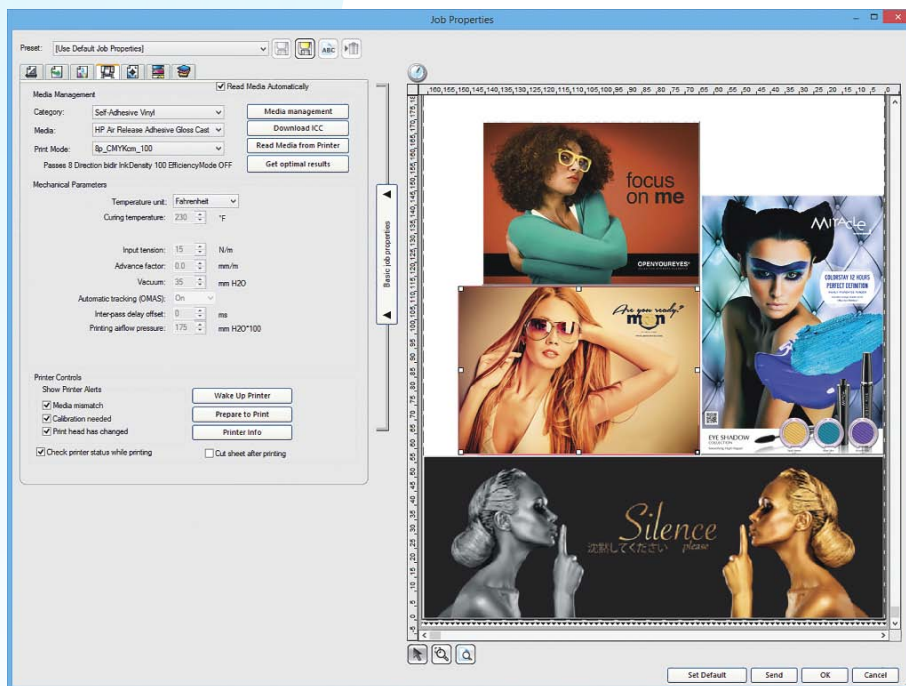
SA International (SAi), who provide solutions for the professional signmaking, large format digital printing and CAD/CAM for CNC machining industries, has announced that its popular FlexiPRINT signmaking software will be bundled with the newly launched HP Latex 310 and 330 Printer solutions. At the same time, SAi has been named a Platinum-Level HP Business Partner.

According to the company SAi FlexiPRINT is used by the majority of the world's signmakers, and is an established package that has 'fast and easy-to-use' native PDF RIP software. With a suite of image manipulation features, it is ideal for sign shops and print and copy franchises looking for a flexible solution to meet their signage application needs.

With SAi FlexiPRINT HP Basic Edition software, operators of the new HP Latex 310 and 330 printers have the benefit of automatic downloading of media profiles from the cloud-based HP Media Library. Profiles integrate directly with the printer settings for fast, efficient operation.

SAi FlexiPRINT HP Basic Edition features a Print Wizard to 'shorten the learning curve' for beginners; tools for scaling and rotating; interactive and automated tiling; nesting tools; and color managed printing. These features provide the ideal functionality for companies just entering the large format market or small-to-medium sized signmakers for which the HP Latex 300 Printer series was designed.

Users may upgrade to SAi FlexiPRINT HP Premium Edition or FlexiSIGN-PRO HP



Edition which offers more functionalities, such as an all-in-one print-and-cut workflow for established signmakers or those whose businesses are expanding. SAi FlexiPRINT HP Premium Edition and FlexiSIGN-PRO HP Edition are also available when purchasing the HP Latex 360 Printer.

"The SAi FlexiPRINT software bundled with HP's latest Latex printers provides a strong foundation for sign printers entering

the sector, as well as those already up and running," said Sarit Tichon, Senior VP, WW Sales & Marketing, SAi.

"This collaboration acknowledges SAi's position as a leading supplier of RIPS and software solutions for the sign and display industry and, as a Platinum-Level partner, we look forward to working closely with HP to help bring new benefits and efficiencies to the signmaking market," says Tichon.

LPflex Sign Systems

Trade Signs recently launched their new LPflex system to the UK's sign market. LPflex sign systems provide 'flawless' illumination, and can be manufactured in many lighting styles and combinations to 'cover any demand'.

It is a patented technology and has a lifespan, quality, and consistency matched by no other similar product on the market today, says the company. They say it is simply solid acrylic with embedded LEDs, which offers 'unparalleled possibilities in terms of design and creativity'. It can be used for interior and exterior signage or design elements.

The company said: "LPflex is high-end signage that can be made in a wide variety of striking designs, and is also often used for

architectural signage due to its versatility and illumination uniformity. Trade Signs are extremely excited to offer this product to their customers, as this type of signage is highly desirable and an excellent selling tool to those high-end clients."

This new sign systems have a long lifetime, low degeneration and high energy efficiency. Manufacturers of LEDs in general refer to a long lifetime of being up to 100,000 hours and a low cost energy of up to 90 per cent compared to neon lighting, however they do not state anything about degeneration. Some LEDs can lose up to 70 per cent of their initial brightness after just a couple of months, but with LPflex sign systems this isn't the case.



"These sign systems are brilliant for illuminated letters that are 200mm and above, and are also perfect for flagship stores, and small illuminated lettering. Even the smallest of letters can be illuminated with LPflex sign systems. Letters are cut by high-precision router, and laser cutters and look absolutely stunning in any location'.



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Spandex UK adds to ImagePerfect™ Accessories

New product saves time with no need to heat and leaves no adhesive residue

Spandex UK has expanded its ImagePerfect™ cleaning products and accessories with the addition of IP Vinyl Remover Pro.

The high performance, ready-to-use vinyl remover is easy to apply with a roller. It simplifies the removal of self-adhesive vinyl from a variety of surfaces such as, vehicles, sign boxes, windows/glass surfaces, plastics, whiteboards and anodised aluminium, says the company.

IP Vinyl Remover Pro is designed to save time by removing the need to heat the vinyl and clean adhesive residue from the surface after removal. The operator applies IP Vinyl Remover Pro to the surface of the vinyl to be removed, waits 20 to 30 minutes and the vinyl will peel away in large pieces or can be jet washed off with no residue. The underlying surface should be cleaned with IP Surface Cleaner or washed with soap and water.



IP Vinyl Remover Pro is available in one and five litre bottles and can be applied using existing application equipment such as trays, foam rollers and brushes.

Executive Director of New product Development at Spandex, Roland Keller says: "We are constantly looking at new innovations that will make our customers' lives easier. With the lifecycle of many vinyl applications becoming increasingly shorter, we needed to respond to this situation with a product that would allow customers to update, or change, promotional and decorative graphics more frequently.

"Ease of use, efficiency and safety were the critical elements to consider in the development of the IP Vinyl Remover Pro, enhancing the comprehensive range of other cleaning and application fluids in our accessories range."

Roland said: "The new addition to the ImagePerfect accessories range is a unique product created by our expert team based on decades of experience with signage materials. Customers can now get the full package for vinyl graphic application and removal from Spandex."



IP Vinyl Remover Pro is classified as non-toxic, non-irritant for skin and eyes, non-hazardous for transport and non-hazardous for the environment.

ImagePerfect accessories includes IP Adhesive Remover, IP Magic Clean, IP Magic Apply, IP Surface Cleaner and ImagePerfect Cleaning Towels.

www.spandex.co.uk

Epson's first dye sub transfer paper

Epson has launched its first dye sublimation material called DS Transfer Production Paper. It is unique to Epson and has been optimised to use with their range of SureColor SC-F inkjet printers and UltraChrome DS inks. It has been specifically developed for the volume production of textiles for fashion and soft signage applications.

The paper is lightweight (75gsm) and designed to dry quickly and avoid wet cockling. Its high ink transfer to textile substrates capability, even with heavy ink loads, 'maximises ink use efficiency and produces consistent high quality, sharp images and vibrant colours'. The 'excellent' dimensional stability of DS Transfer Production Paper during the printing and

ink transfer processes makes the paper easy to handle. And reduces any potential waste of paper, ink, and textile while maximising production, according to the company.

Martin Johns, market development manager, Epson UK, said: "Our first transfer paper gives end users total peace of mind by providing a complete solution comprising Epson printer, ink and media, which have been optimised to work together to ensure the best all-round quality and performance for textile applications."

Available now the paper is compatible with the SureColor SC-F range of dye sublimation printers and available in two high-volume roll sizes: 1.08m x 1.52m and 1.62m x 1.75m.

Epson highlights the key features

- Designed for fashion and soft signage textile applications
 - Dimensionally stable
 - Lightweight (75 gsm) and quick drying with no wet cockling
 - High ink transfer to substrate capability
 - Delivers consistent quality, sharp images and vibrant colours
 - Easy to handle
 - Minimises waste of paper, ink and textile to maximise cost-effective production
 - Optimised for use with Epson SureColor SC-F6000, SC-F7000 and SC-F7100 dye sublimation printers
 - Compatible with Epson UltraChrome DS ink
 - Available in two roll sizes
- <http://global.epson.com/>



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"maintenance vehicles will need 'HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE' text... This text must be a minimum of 70mm high for temporary traffic management vehicles and 140mm for all other vehicles carrying personnel or equipment."

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FINDING NEW MARKETS

How sign makers can capitalise on new opportunities

As the economy emerges from recession, sign making businesses are branching out, and looking for new avenues of revenue in what's becoming a competitive marketplace. Jemima Codrington spoke to industry experts to determine which submarkets are the most lucrative for sign makers, and how investing in new tools can help them reap the maximum return on investment.

For Michelle Henry, MD of HNS Signs Ltd. an initial foray into promotional items proved to be an eye-opening experience.

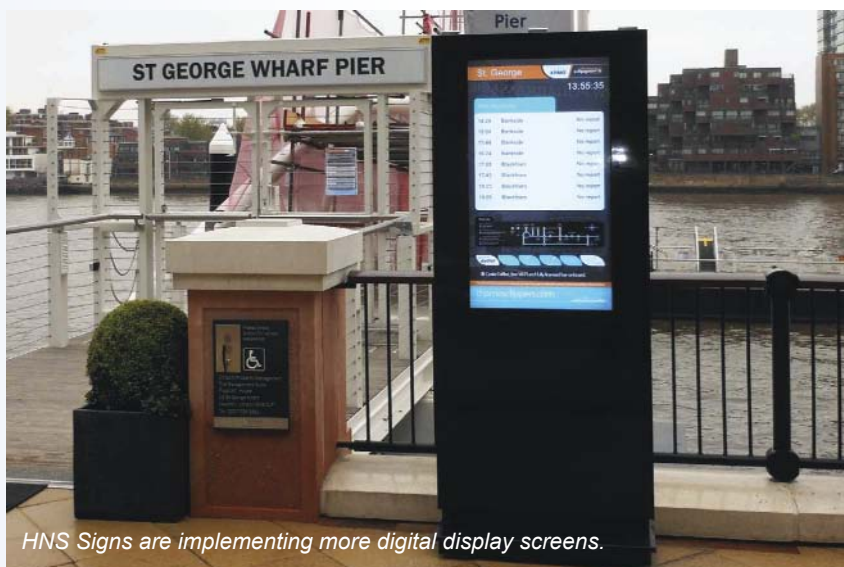
When first starting out, Michelle's objective was to design t-shirts, banners and mugs. "I guess I considered all work to be good work," she says. However, once she began work in this sector, it was discovered it to be far less lucrative than she initially believed.

"There is too much competition, and the end consumer wants to pay as little as possible for these sorts of items," she explains. With these so-called 'novelty' items posing a low profit margin, Michelle returned to her signage roots, and built the business in this area. Not dissuaded by early attempts to diversify, Michelle and the team at HNS Signs are now moving into an area that is proving to be lucrative: digital signage.

Currently working with an electrical company, Kestrel Electrical Systems, HNS Signs are working towards offering Digital Display Screens. These are standalone units that can also be built into signs and structures, and Michelle has already utilised them in installations in restaurants and Housing Associations. "I believe that this is a market to watch, as these units are easy to update and change at relatively low cost. I do not feel that digital display screens will ever replace signs, but they will certainly accompany them."

The role social media plays in sourcing new business

According to Michelle, sign makers may not need to necessarily diversify the actual services offered to find new business, but address the way they are presented to the market.



HNS Signs are implementing more digital display screens.

"Something that I feel is really important and yet overlooked by many sign companies is the importance of a good website and the use of social media," she explains. Since revamping the HNS website and keeping an eye on social media analytics, web traffic has increased by 400%.

This has resulted in an increase in sales of 300% since January.

The relatively small investment into developing an online presence has contributed significantly to the company's exponential growth, which is only poised to continue. "So many people tell us that they choose us not based on price, but because our website looks better than our

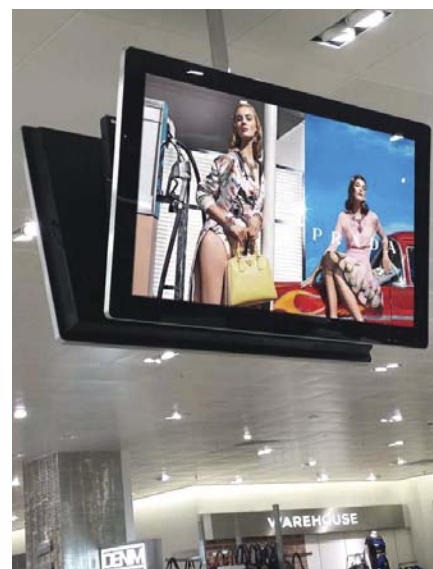
competitors," she says. "We are now investing in SEO for the website as our conversion rate is so good."

Finding new markets and business opportunities online has been lucrative for HNS Signs, and as such, Michelle encourages other sign makers looking to increase profit to consider the benefits of investing in social media.

www.hnssigns.co.uk



Digital display screens are ideal for use in retail and hospitality installations.



A digital display screen from HNS Signs.

According to Rebecca Dack, Marketing Manager at Signs Express, improving turnover isn't always about offering new products entirely, but finding a way to improve the products and customer service already available.

Rebecca notes that generating better customer engagement with the vast range of innovative products sign makers can already produce is key. Client care is a primary area of focus at Signs Express, where the aim is to take a bespoke approach to each and every project. "Good customer relations are forged from communication and trust, and result in longevity," she says. "It's about extracting as much information as you can from your customer, and being able to provide the best possible product and service to suit their requirements."

Rather than focusing on extending business in what are deemed less profitable areas, Signs Express plan to utilise creative thinking to come up with new ways to tackle common jobs, for example, integrating lighting. "Signs and sign making is a creative industry, and with it having more and more options available through LED signage, it's not necessarily just the sign that will get noticed, but the creative thinking behind it," says Rebecca. From how the sign is applied to where it sits, the colours used as well as the final message, there are numerous opportunities for creative thinking, even in traditional signage applications.

The importance of market research

"The most important investment to be made for any business exploring new markets is research," says Rebecca, without which sign makers can quickly find themselves



Wall graphics in the Fulham Broadway Shopping Centre by Signs Express Twickenham.



Escalator graphics as applied by the Signs Express Twickenham branch in Fulham Broadway Shopping Centre.

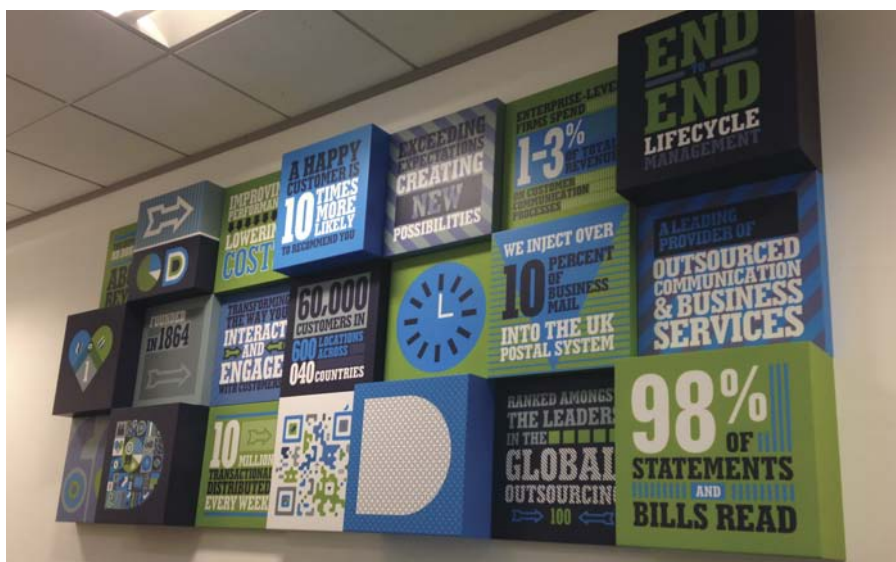
making a loss instead of a profit.

Research enables businesses to garner knowledge of the product, the target market and the skills required to achieve success, as well as to carry out cost analysis and gauge the time it will take to implement, considering factors like any staff training that will be required. "Never offer a product or service you do not fully understand to a customer," says Rebecca, adding that another common mistake made when entering new markets is under-capitalisation. Any move into a submarket, no matter how lateral, should be

supported by appropriate funds, including a "buffer" to pay for incidentals. "Another mistake is not to have clear objectives, or a detailed strategy to follow," she continues, noting that these plans allow you to monitor your efforts, and ensure everyone on the team is following the correct procedures.

Practicing what they preach, Signs Express has recently restructured its business model to create an ethos focussed on helping one another. Placing an emphasis on cooperation and the sharing of information, the leading signage company aims to better customer service along with skill sets and knowledge. The company's head office in Norwich has most recently focussed on making sure the assets and strengths in every employee across every franchise are used to their full potential. It's this commitment to employee development that will lead to that all-important client retention.

"For Signs Express, it's less about moving into sub-markets in order to 'make a quick buck' and much more about creating long lasting business relationships built on our knowledge, skills, creative input and expertise," says Rebecca. "For us, the most lucrative way forward for any sign maker is to focus on providing customers with a service they will want to return for; a service that not only provides a sign, but a whole signage solution, including the creative message."



"Brighten up your boardroom" bespoke wall display by Signs Express Warrington.

www.signsexpress.co.uk

FINDING NEW MARKETS

For sign makers wanting to diversify their services, foil fusing is a simple way to make a nominal investment that will provide high ROI.

Recently displayed at the Sign and Digital UK exhibition, foil fusing machines from Caslon were met with a positive response. Though the technology itself has been around for over fifteen years, only over the past eight or so has it become prevalent, owing to the rise in availability of laser printers. Caslon carries a range of foil machines, speciality foils and foil cutters, making them a one-stop-shop for any sign maker considering venturing into this new market.

Investing in a foil machine is smart for sign companies of all sizes looking to create print items, such as wedding invitations, certificates, letterheads, business cards and gift tags. The process begins with an image printed with a laser printer, the toner image, which is then passed through the foil machine. The foil is then bonded to the toner, without requiring the use of any dye.

"If they send us some samples, we'll foil them and send them back, so they can see the exact results they'll get from the machine before purchasing."

Simple to use, the machines come with a 12-month warranty, and the maintenance costs are virtually nil. "A lot of sign makers already have digital printers, so for them, it's just an add-on feature," says David Ball, Sales Director, Caslon. "It normally takes about 10 minutes to train an operator, but often we don't even install them, we just ship them out and the operator can be trained up just by reading the manual." In addition to the ease of use, the price point makes it an attractive option for many sign makers.

A basic machine is £1850, and comes fitted with a roll of gold foil ready to go. Sign makers can then buy up to 25-30 different colours of foil, including speciality effects and patterns, to undertake a wide range of jobs. Far more cost-effective than dye, foil costs roughly 7p per A4 page.

"The advantage here for a sign maker is the profit margin," says David, "as the end user still perceives the product as being high cost. By using standard foils you can cut the cost of production to a tenth or less, so your margin is greater."

Giving sign makers creative options

Foil fusing enables sign makers to create all manner of printed documents, ranging from decorative to perfunctory in nature.

The number of foils available can be utilised to create different effects, such as oil slick or flitter. The machine itself can also be used to create a desired effect; for example, to achieve "spot" colouring (or foil on certain document elements like the logo or border), separate the images and print those to be foiled first, run them through the machine, then put the document back through the laser printer. The foil will only attach to the toner, enabling the operator to create everything from invitations to secure documents. The Blanket Holographic and Security foils are able ideal for creating safe documents, and although they may be more expensive the standard rolls, they can increase the security of a document ten fold. For example, if a sign maker attached foil to a logo or circle on a document, and someone attempted to duplicated that document, the foiled area would come out as a black circle.. This means that by investing in a roll of the holographic foil, sign makers can create everything from certificates to concert and football tickets, and charge a premium for this service.



A foil fusing machine in action at Sign and Digital UK

David has already seen a number of savvy sign makers invest in foil fusing technology. "We have sold a few machines to sign making companies who are slightly more ahead of the game; those who are deciding to expand, increase or maintain their business, or that need to add other strings to their bow," he says. "This technology is ideal for sign makers looking to move into other markets with the existing equipment they have, or into those that aren't overly complicated." As each laser printer is different, it's important to check the compatibility before purchasing a foil fusing machine. Certain ranges work better with the technology than others, and as such, Caslon offer a free service to help sign makers ascertain how finished products will look using their existing printer. "If they send us some samples, we'll foil them and send them back, so they can see the exact results they'll get from the machine before purchasing."

www.caslon.co.uk



L – a picture with foil fusing, R – the same picture without.



Spot colour effects can be achieved with a foil fusing machine.

Antalis stocks the Coala product line, a comprehensive range of large format materials for water-based, solvent, latex and UV printer technologies.

The products are an ideal way for sign makers to move into a variety of sub-markets ranging from wraps to print, textiles, soft signage and more, without having to invest in new dye sublimation technology. As Coala rolls can be used with standard UV or latex printers that many sign makers already own, according to Michael Crook, Coala Product Manager, it is both easy and affordable to utilise the products to open up new revenue streams.

"Coala has a product for just about every application, whether it's for relatively new markets or traditional signage," he ex-



Products in the Coala range provide sign makers wide ample opportunities



Banners from the Coala range, available from Antalis.



Sign makers can create banners using products in the Coala range.

plains. "The variety available enables sign makers to create everything from exhibition graphics to canvases, banners, textiles, backlit films and self-adhesive vinyls." Users can even create super-wide format products such as billboards using products in the Coala range. From products in matte to gloss, suited to indoor or outdoor applications, the range of substrates is extensive. For sign makers looking to move into lucrative markets, Coala offers a great deal of options, with three growth areas in particular posing a number of opportunities for sign makers.

Three primary areas of opportunity

While demand for products to create traditional signage applications remains strong, Michael notes that there are three sub-markets in particular that are seeing strong growth.

The first is window graphics, a growing market that is proving popular with the hospitality and retail sectors. Printed window and windowsill graphics can be created using the special line of films available from Coala, and these sorts of products are increasingly in demand. "Another area that's proving strong is wall coverings," says Michael, adding that demand for products in



Coala products can be used to create backlit displays

this market virtually doubles year on year. Sign makers are able to create products for interior design and décor, ideal for placements in hotels or retail establishments, with relative ease using the specially-formulated products for wall textiles. These textiles can be printed upon and then stretched across ceilings or even into frameworks, and self-adhesive products can be used to wrap everything from furniture to canvases, and bulkheads within retail environments. "These products are quite contemporary, and offer clients something that's a little different," says Michael. "They're fire-rated, dirt-repellent, and easy to use."

In the same vein of moving into more design-lead markets, textiles is the third area in which there has been significant growth in recent years. Although soft signage has been utilised for a number of years, especially in European markets, it is only just starting to grow now in the UK. Using Coala textiles to create products in the soft signage market, sign makers can create everything from drapes to other decorative fabrics.

With the release of the new Coala swatch at FESPA, there are now even more colourful options for sign makers available at Antalis.

www.antalis.co.uk

All Round Signs make an impact with Applelec's LED signage for BSW Timber Group



All Round Signs were instructed by long-time clients BSW Timber Group to create corporate identity signage for their Fort William sawmill, with support from Applelec.

Established over 160 years ago, BSW Timber Group is the largest sawmilling business in Great Britain with six sawmills in the UK and one in Latvia. All Round Signs created signage for the company's expanding Fort William sawmill, K2, which is located close to Ben Nevis.

Jamie Ball, project manager at All Round Signs, said: "Our client was keen to establish a strong corporate impression at their growing site in Fort William and we designed signage to be displayed on a large timber building facade. We chose Applelec's LED lighting systems for the project as we wanted to add impact by using illumination, but also create low maintenance signage due to the busy site location. As one of the largest projects we've been involved in, working with Applelec provided the support we needed to bring the project together and made sure we were confident we could deliver."

The BSW logo was adapted slightly by

"Their focus on the longevity of their customer's purchase sets them apart and shows they are a company with the very best interests of their customers at heart."

All Round Signs to ensure it would be visually successful when illuminated against the natural wood cladding of the installation site. Making use of the timber background, the identity signage was created in several individual parts using fabrication styles appropriate to each element of the sign. A built-up rim and return style was chosen for the 'BSW' lettering whilst the tree logo and K2 sawmill site logo feature built-up flat faced construction styles. A fabricated sign tray with radius corners and a stencil cut face was used for the 'Timber Group' lettering.

Illumination to the stencil cut faces of the tree logo and fabricated sign tray was achieved using Applelec's LED Light Sheet,

which was chosen for its ability to provide bright, even light and for its three year warranty. Green halo illumination came from Applelec's stocked SloanLED V-Series modules which were selected for their five year warranty periods. Throughout the construction reverse fitted back trays were painted white to enhance the halo illumination with all LEDs fully wired-up and bench tested by Applelec.

Sam Armstrong, Applelec sales director, explains: "We are extremely pleased this project has been such a success for All Round Signs. They have shown creativity in adapting their client's logo to ensure it would be suitable for its intended location and worked towards future-proofing the installation by choosing LEDs with three and five year warranty periods. Their focus on the longevity of their customer's purchase sets them apart and shows they are a company with the very best interests of their customers at heart."

www.allroundsigns.co.uk
www.applelec.co.uk

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Let's compare with one of the UK leading sign lighting companies, Portland Lighting. Taken from their web site, Ecolux II, 1000 lm/m @ 70 lm/W (always ask what the efficacy is). If we compare their light to our Ecobright which is also 1000 lm/m (same brightness), our efficacy figure is 117 lm/W, so it is more economical (9W per metre instead of 14.4W).

Installation is very fast thanks to clip-on fit fixing brackets. Quality is assured when you are dealing with a company which has been serving the sign trade for almost 30 years.

With standard white powder coated finish, costs start at £16.00 per foot for Ecobright including delivery (no hidden extras).

PROJECT *News*

Beauty point digital storytelling

'Innovative table construction with recurrently installed eyevis LCD displays gives a digital impression into the product range of the cosmetics company from Aachen'.

The cosmetics company BABOR has invested five million Euro in the expansion of its company headquarters in Aachen. Part of the expansion is the new beauty point, which is the exclusive visitor centre for the company. In this bright and open room, visitors can follow up at first hand the history of the company based on important product innovations. An innovative table construction implemented by Vertigo Systems GmbH with four recurrently installed LCD displays type EYE-LCD-4600-M-USN-LD by eyevis is the conceptual and spatial center of the beauty point. Using the 2.05 m x 1.15 m screen for the possibilities of digital storytelling, image and product films provide insights into the company and the 'premium cosmetic products'. For the control of the displays a touch-system is installed.

The display table is a special construction particularly developed for BABOR and directly customised to the measures of the eyevis displays. The signal input for the displays had to be taken into account. Thanks to the integrated matrix function and



the loopthrough functionality of the eyevis displays it was possible to feed the signal in only one display and transfer it directly from there into the other displays. This facilitated the construction. The eyevis displays achieve the brilliant image display that was

necessary despite the bright ambient light by the detailed full HD resolution, the extremely high screen brightness of 700 cd/m² and the high contrast of 3500:1.

www.eyevis.de

3M wrapping film features in Virgin Trains' livery stunt

3M's Controltac Graphic Film with Comply Adhesive Series 160C-32 was used by corporate livery specialist Stewart Signs to create a 'spectacular' train wrap for Virgin Trains. It was used for 'its suitability for

large-format installations, adhesive performance and long-term graphics durability'. The wrap was used as part of a travelling movie promotion for new film X-Men: Days of Future Past. It was applied to a specially

refurbished train that would feature the graphics until the end of July.

After careful removal of the existing Virgin Trains' livery, teams of Stewart Signs' highly trained livery applicators meticulously wrapped each carriage of the train with digitally printed images of the film and its main characters. It took the teams 160 hours to apply 549 square metres of the 3M film featuring 3M's renowned Comply adhesive technology. This enables 'straightforward' installation of large-format graphics due to the presence of specially embedded channels in the adhesive that allows air bubbles to escape during the application process. This make sure of 'perfect' adhesion to flat and gently curved surfaces, including those featuring rivets. The adhesive is also grey-pigmented to provide excellent hiding power, while the film has a matte finish that is scuff-resistant.

Controltac Graphic Film with Comply Adhesive Series 160C-32 was designed and tested in accordance with relevant rail industry standards.

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



Christie MicroTiles wall installed at L'Oréal

Christie®, a global visual technologies company, is 'pleased to announce a significant installation of MicroTiles® at the Paris headquarters of L'Oréal, the world's largest cosmetics and beauty company'.

Having worked with Wilmotte & associés on the design for the renovation of their headquarters, L'Oréal were looking to create a display environment that 'reflected the group's vision and its level of excellence' for their new entrance lobby that joins their two main buildings together. Aurelien Grocq, project manager at Labeyrie & associés, was responsible for the technical design and the management of the wall project. He said: "Before the project went out to tender, we worked with L'Oréal to test prototypes of screens and tiles. One of the reasons that they finally selected Christie MicroTiles was that they provided better picture quality – richer colours and truer levels of black. In addition, the tiles were only 26 cms in depth so they fitted perfectly in the architectural design of the hall."

Joe Graziano, market development manager, MicroTiles, EMEA, at Christie said: "MicroTiles have received tremendous recognition across EMEA in all application and industry sectors since its launch. When a global leading industry giant like L'Oréal's commits to the product to this magnitude, you realise just how effective and game changing MicroTiles are. This is an incredibly impressive wall with 312 tiles spanning 39 tiles wide by 8 tiles high, resulting in the largest native resolution MicroTiles wall in the world. With 52 electronic control unit (ECU) (1 in every 6



MicroTiles), this wall not only offers an unparalleled 0.5mm pixel pitch across the entire display, but also enables content and creative designers to play with an awe-inspiring 121,080,960 pixels."

The communication agency Phénomène produced the immersive video content about all of the L'Oréal brands and these are displayed on the MicroTiles wall every

day and are viewed by employees and visiting clients and customers.

Rémi Lavaine, project manager at L'Oréal, said: "We are delighted with the Christie MicroTiles wall. We chose the MicroTiles largely because they had thinner gaps between the tiles and therefore the image content appeared more seamless. Piaton & associés produced the concept design of the communication tools, and the content which Phénomène created appears sharp and vivid on the MicroTiles wall – the resolution is extremely impressive and unsurpassed. This is exactly the look that we wanted to achieve."

"We are extremely proud to have installed the biggest native resolution wall of MicroTiles at L'Oréal's World Headquarters. The result looks stunning. Our partner Axians has done an amazing job on the installation," says Olivier Collet, senior business development manager, France, Christie.

There is also a smaller display wall which has been constructed in the shape of a digital clock. The display consists of 5 x 6 MicroTiles, containing a total of 5 ECUs. This clock is positioned on the wall opposite the large display wall and shows the current time at various large cities around the globe.

www.christieEMEA.com



PROJECT *News*

City view comes to 'life' with LED light box

W&Co designed, manufactured and installed a 'stunning' large format curved fabric face LED light box panorama of the city skyline, as would be viewed from the upper level apartments of a new set of luxury waterside apartments in EC1, London. The 16.5m wide backlit panorama was created with two large format light boxes manufactured in multiple sections which were joined together on site on the ground level showroom apartment. They worked with leading brand identity and visual communications experts Socrates.

Socrates Production Manager Bambi Montgomery said: "These two large light boxes were created for the show apartment in the marketing suite for the new Canaletto apartments currently under construction in City Road, London. They feature the views buyers will get from both the balcony (day-light visual) and the bedroom which features a night time scene."



She said: "The curved balcony light box was manufactured to extremely exact tolerances and both light boxes on arrival from Germany fitted perfectly. W&Co pulled out all stops to meet the tight deadlines set for both manufacture and installation and we were extremely happy with the finished product."

Canaletto launched with an impressive 3D-mapping spectacular onto the side of the building and W&Co were 'very pleased to see our light boxes appearing in the launch video and hope that the illuminated landscape views across the London skies help to sell the luxury apartments to prospective buyers'.

www.w-co.co.uk

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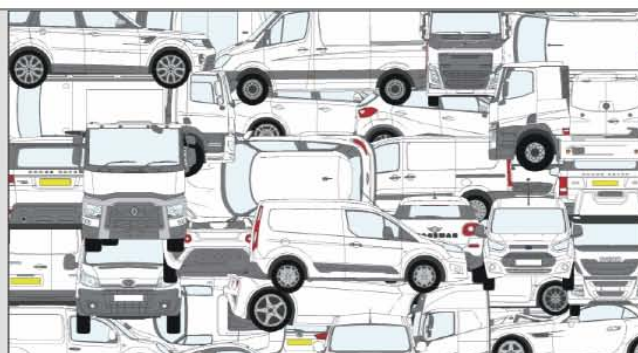
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Library of Birmingham

Philip Ball, managing director of Newbury-based Cobal Signs discusses the issue of wayfinding and the challenge to supply over 110 different designs of sign; and more than 8,000 individual signs throughout the project.

Finding your way around many public places can be challenging at the best of times. In some cases signage can be difficult to read and confusing. Opened in Birmingham in September 2013, Europe's largest public library will ensure that every visitor – estimated to be around three million each year – is on the same page when it comes to navigating the 35,000 m2 of floor space occupied by the library and the adjoining Birmingham Repertory Theatre (REP).

Showcase library

Designed to replace the Birmingham Central Library, construction first started on the new Library of Birmingham in January 2010. Over three years later, and at a cost of £189 million, Birmingham's latest iconic cultural landmark opened its doors, providing the general public with access to over one million books, hundreds of public access computers, a studio theatre, exhibition space, cafes, music rooms and roof top gardens.

The library also accommodates the Shakespeare Memorial Room, an original feature from the city's Victorian library.



Wayfinding

The Library of Birmingham is the largest building of its kind in Europe. With 10 floors (eight of which are open to the general public) spread over enough space to cover six football pitches, it's easy to see why signage plays such an important role in making sure

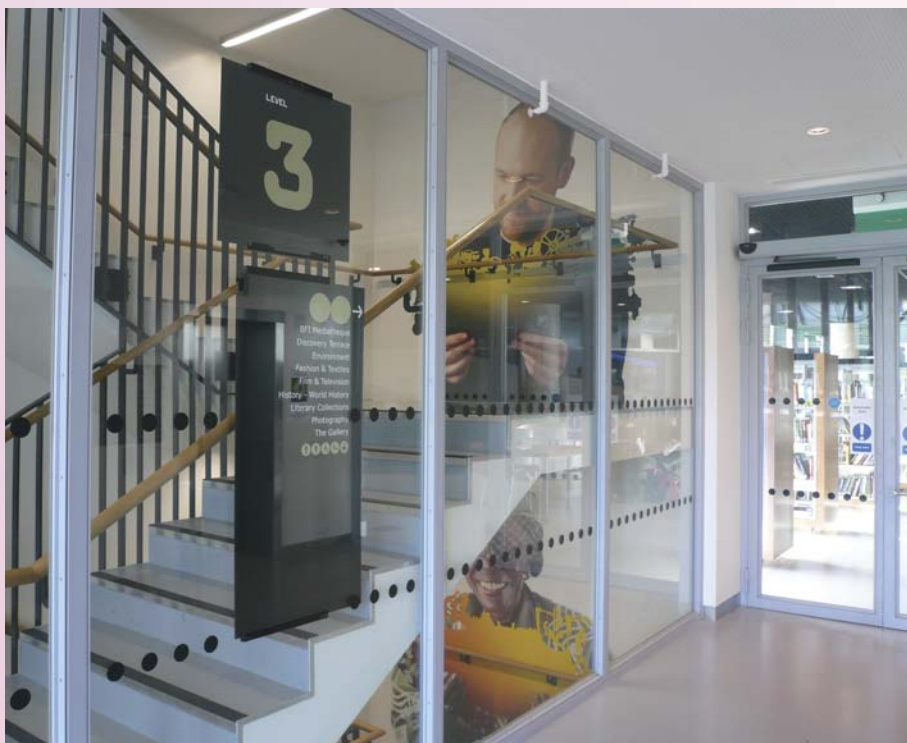
visitors and staff can orientate themselves around this vast building.

Wayfinding is based on principles of mental mapping along with the gradual disclosure of information at the right time and place. The design of the signs and graphic language is important for a number of reasons. They must fit in with the overall design brief and the aesthetics of the building, while offering uniformity and consistency. More importantly, wayfinding in a building such as this should be simple and intuitive for everyone to follow. Cobal Signs worked closely with Patrick Arends, associate architect with Mecanoo, to ensure that all signage met the architectural design brief and branding guidelines.

Commenting on the issue of wayfinding, Patrick Arends believes that first and foremost, architectural wayfinding plans should include intuitive 'people flow' designs. These should be considered at the very early stages of the design process.

"If the space is dependent on signage, we haven't done a great job. For libraries you obviously can't get away without signage. There are many different floors, with many different functions, all of which need identifying from start to finish.

"Signage has many stages. The first one is to provide information as to where a particular destination is. Second stage signage should be 'en-route' and third stage signage confirms you have reached your destination."



The key to providing effective wayfinding is providing information at the right moment. Too much information becomes clutter and it loses its function; too little signage will cause people to get lost, become frustrated and potentially spoil their overall experience. Mecanoo architects designed a strategy based on decision-making spots in the building and by implementing a hierarchical sequence of signs, from high-level information to more detailed information, managed to simplify the wayfinding experience.

Cobal Signs met this challenging design brief by manufacturing several different types of signs, including tactile and Braille signage, for the numerous floors and departments within the library and REP. These included statutory signage for both buildings; room signage; lift and stairwell areas; information points including TV screens, directories and three-dimensional images; four-sided pathfinders on each floor; main reception lobby; over 3,000 shelf dividers; 1,000 CD and DVD dividers and 1,500 shelf headers. Manifestations for architectural glass partitions for the 'Contemplation Room' and staff areas offer privacy, while mirroring the main building's exterior façade.

The Library of Birmingham/REP in numbers

- 1 restaurant
- 2 roof terraces
- 6 football pitches - equivalent floor space
- 9 floors each with four-sided pathfinders
- 110 different types of sign
- 200 public access computers
- 300 rooms with signage
- 1,000 CD and DVD divider signs
- 1,500 shelf header signs
- 3,000 shelf divider signs
- 8,000 signs in total
- 10,000 visitors a day can be accommodated
- 35,000 m2 of floor space
- 3 million visitors a year (estimated)
- £189 million – total cost of overall project



One of the main challenges for Cobal Signs was to make sure that each sign met the branding guidelines set by the Library of Birmingham and that all names were correct and corresponded to each area within the library.

Signage in a public building is essential for visitors, particularly those visiting for the first time. Thanks to the meticulous planning and design work from Mecanoo, Cobal's signs enable visitors to use the Library of Birmingham to its full potential, locating the information they need within library departments on large floor areas.

www.cobal.co.uk



Creative campaign brings together international photographers and digital artists

Mutoh Belgium partners with Fotolia for their Creative Ten campaign.

Mutoh Belgium announces its partnership with Fotolia for the third season of Fotolia's TEN Collection Campaign.

TEN is a creative, digital and educational project created by Fotolia in 2011. It aims to 'democratise digital art'. 'Every two months, an internationally renowned photographer and an equally renowned graphics artist create a unique piece of art in which they expose their vision of the future. These artists have never met or worked together previously. They are uniting to share the artistic know-how that brought them international recognition'.

Each of the created works of art is released bi-monthly on the TEN Collection website and made available for free for a period of 24 hours for web users and graphics designers to download the layers, graphics elements and style effects.

Each release is followed by a contest, where professionals and amateurs can submit their own interpretations of the digital works of art, to 'challenge the artists'.

The next work of art, a collaboration between designer Mateusz Chmura and photographer Lucia Giacani (pictured), was available on 10 May.

On the 10 July, September and November, the other files will be available as a free download for 24 hours from www.tenbyfotolia.com.

"Mutoh is very pleased to support the Fotolia TEN Collection project, which promotes innovation and artistic expression around the globe" says

Nick Decock, Mutoh Belgium's commercial marketing manager.

"Many Mutoh wide-format printer users regularly use Fotolia royalty free images for high quality outputs for various applications such as sign & display, photo reproductions and soft signage. At Mutoh we are also using Fotolia XXL images for our wide format printer demonstrations.

"There is a nice link between Fotolia's and Mutoh's activities. Whereas Fotolia

aims at democratising digital art, part of Mutoh's philosophy is to support art projects to demonstrate the quality of our printers and at the same time to introduce the potential of wide format digital printing to a wide variety of artists and professional photographers." says Nick.

www.tenbyfotolia.com
www.fotolia.eu
www.mutoh.eu



Vista System's Double Sided Illuminated Pylons

Vista System International, the 'leader' in Modular Curved Frame Technology (MCFT), recently supplied its 'amazing, double sided, larger than life' Vista Light pylons to Beith Digital, to install at the movie theaters in the Gateway Mall in Durban, South Africa.

The client wanted illuminated sign solutions, together with 'service, quality, availability, versatility and design'. Although some of these factors were fulfilled by other sign companies, Vista System won the

project for its complete solution for this project, according to the company.

Choosing Vista System's Illuminated pylons proved right for the job. The signs 'complement the graphics perfectly' and allow fast graphics change, while maintaining stability and functionality. The whole project from start to finish took three days to complete.

www.vistasystem.com

Quarmby Colour goes to 'great lengths' with stand design

Quarmby Colour's recent exhibition stand installation for hair extension provider, Great Lengths, 'combined innovative new materials with spectacular design to deliver an arresting and visually memorable stand for show visitors'.

When the company was contacted by Great Lengths to produce their stand graphics for the Manchester Central's annual Pro Hair Live event, they knew it was an opportunity to show off their design capabilities. As well as some 'superb' new technology and media. Involving a giant lightbox and innovative flooring using Soyang Europe's recently launched G-Floor product; this project led to an unforgettable stand at the show, according to the company.

Family run Quarmby Colour Studio Ltd is a one-stop graphics service provider based in Leeds, with two generations worth of experience and a large collective of skills, creativity and equipment. Set up in 1994, and run by a father and his two sons, the company occupies 8,000ft² premises and has a workforce of 10 staff, with 'quality, reliability and personal service' at the heart of what it does.

All aspects of the design and print process are carried out in-house, and from working with clients such as Adidas, The BBC and Formula 1, they have invested in high end UV printing technology, including



Quarmby Colour's stand for Great Lengths fused the latest flooring technologies with a stunning backlit backdrop.

a Vutek GS3200. They have a 'strong creative relationship' with leading printable media suppliers, Soyang Europe, who supplied one of the first shipments of the new G-Floor product to allow them to produce the graphic.

The bespoke stand for Great Lengths was the first UK installation of G-Floor; an innovative new printable, clear flooring that can be reverse printed to make sure of a non-slip wear layer to show off the design beneath. A 3m x 5m lightbox with state-of-the-art lighting technology was used as the backdrop for the stand and this seamlessly flowed into a 3m x 5m printed floor area, which was itself illuminated by the lightbox.

"Our customer was over the moon," says Damien Quarmby. "We were all delighted with the effect as it stopped people in their tracks and allowed us to deliver the stand our customer had imagined. G-Floor gives us the opportunity to not just print floor graphics, but beautiful and imaginative graphic floors that help create an all-encompassing show stopper at exhibitions."

"G-Floor gives printers the opportunity to include clients' imagery, brands and surface patterns in their flooring," says sales director at Soyang Europe, Andrew Simmons. "Quarmby Colour's imaginative use of the product delivered a spectacular result for their client. It's always a pleasure to see how our creative partners get the best out of our materials."

www.soyang.co.uk
www.quarmbycolour.co.uk



Soyang G-Floor was used to cover the floor area of Great Length's stand at Pro Hair Live.

PROJECT *News*

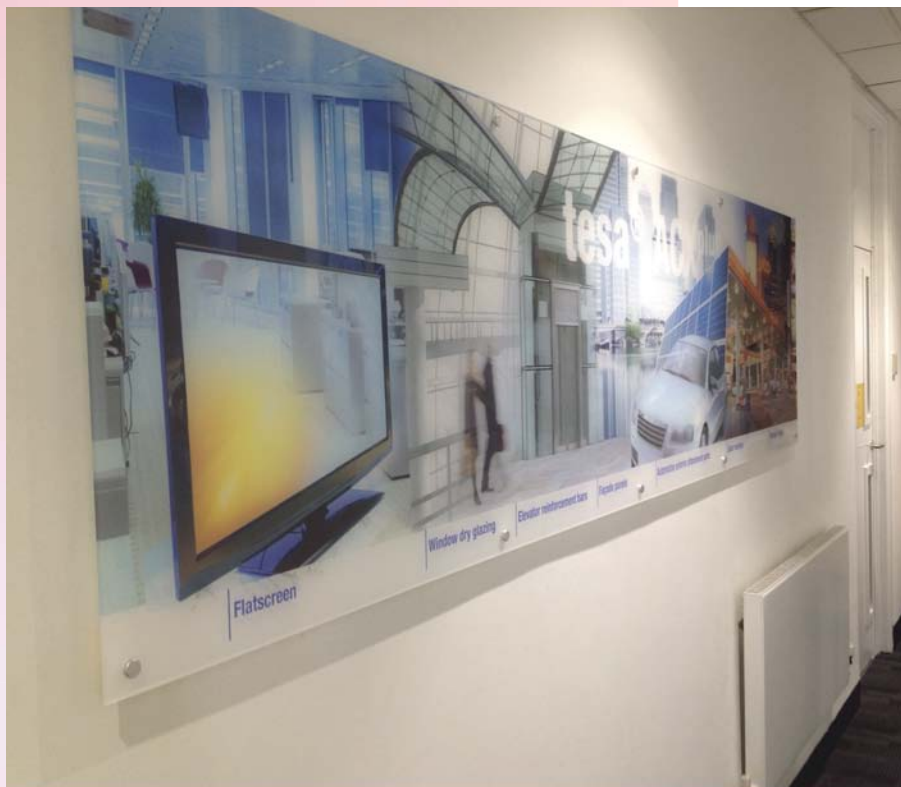
tesacohesion™ is an 'all-embracing philosophy' for tesa UK

tesacohesion™, the customer care programme based around people, products, processes and performance, which was first developed at the company's Milton Keynes UK headquarters, now extends to every aspect of the business, including the 'fabric' of the offices themselves.

The company has recently completed a refurbishment of its premises. From reception to back office, the tesacohesion message is carried on a series of graphics, acrylics and super-size 'speech bubbles' from visitor reception, through the sales office and meeting room to the warehouse.

"We always knew tesa's reputation had been built on its close relationship with customers,"

Marketing Manager Jeremy Smith says the latest initiative is a natural extension of the company's philosophy: "tesacohesion™ isn't something which applies just at the customer interface, vital though that is. It's important that we see it at the heart of



everything we do, and customer service is a continuum which includes efficiency in warehouse and distribution operations, speed and accuracy in the sales office and administration functions, plus the need to keep it at the forefront of our communications, internally and externally."

tesacohesion™ has been 'enthusiastically' adopted throughout much of tesa's global operations and was originally conceived under Steve Plastow, now CEO of tesa's Nordic operations.

The new graphics greeted him on a recent return trip to the UK offices and were a reminder of the origins of an approach, which is now providing competitive edge to tesa customers around the world.

"We always knew tesa's reputation had been built on its close relationship with customers," he says, "but we wanted to extend that unique service philosophy to all our operations. It's a global drive and all parts of the business are committed to maintaining keeping tesa's reputation as the supplier that will go the extra mile in delivering the best all-round customer service in the market."

www.tesa.co.uk



DAEHAN

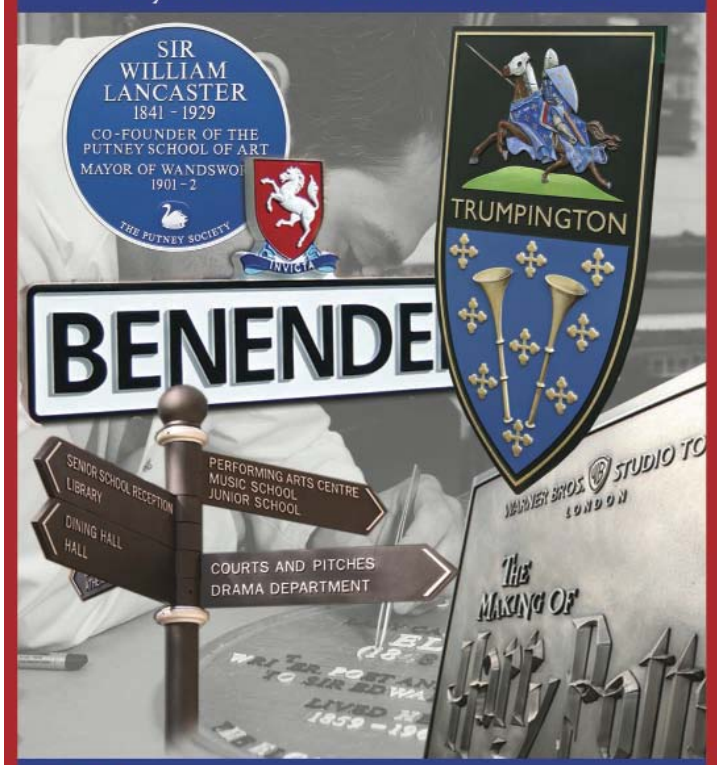
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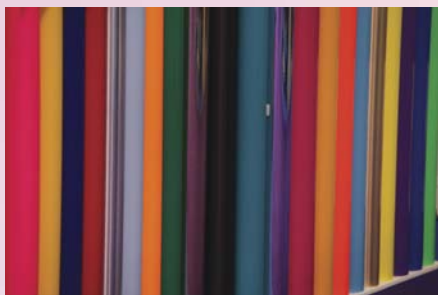
SIGN & DIGITAL *Report*

Sign & Digital UK 2014 report

We came, we saw, we didn't quite conquer but we did hand out a lot of freebies! The sign show everyone's been talking about is over, and it's no wonder as the organisers have reported an 8 per cent increase in visitor numbers from last year (around 6,113 visited this year's show)

This they say confirms its status as 'the UK's leading exhibition for the sign making, display solutions and digital printing industry'.

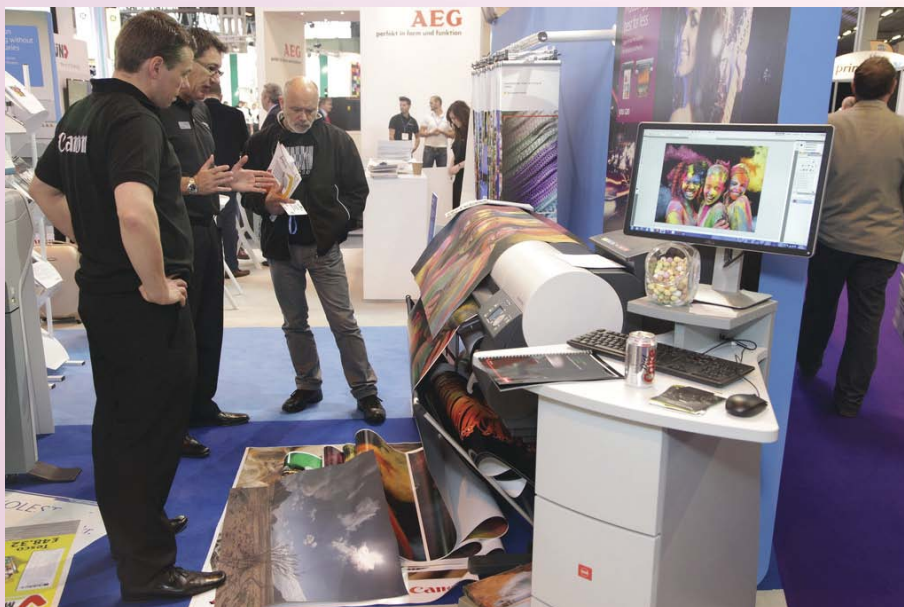
The three-day event took place at the NEC, Birmingham from 29 April to 1 May 2014 and featured national and international



product launches, kit demonstrations, new show features and more than 30 daily seminars and workshops.

Exhibitors were apparently so happy they moved quickly to book stand space for next year, resulting in a 33 per cent increase compared to last year.

In 2015 Sign & Digital UK will move into Halls 17 and 18 at the NEC to accommodate the show's growing demand and takes place on 24 to 26 March.



Rudi Blackett, event director, said: "This year's Sign & Digital UK has surpassed everyone's expectations, with an exciting range of product launches and a wealth of sales across every day of the show. There certainly was that great 'buzz' in the hall that you get with a very successful event, and we are delighted that the show delivered for our visitors, exhibitors and show supporters."

Show visitor Soyeb Ravar director, **Ravar Printing**, said: "I come to Sign & Digital UK to get new ideas to improve my business, like seeing new suppliers and products, and getting ideas for new revenue streams. There's always something to be excited about. Based on the work I do I think I'll come back every year as I know it will always be useful. Sign & Digital UK is definitely the best show for what I need."

Shaun Holdom, business development director for Colorific said: "This has been the best Sign & Digital UK to date! We've found customers are educated in what they need and ready to buy, consequently we exceeded our targets on the first day. We've sold 25 machines already with one exhibition day left."

A selling show

Sales were strong across the three days of the show, with i-Sub making a sale in less than 15 minutes on day one. Perfect Colours sold 20 HP Latex 300 series printers, eight HP Designjet Z6200 printers, two Omega 2s and one Durst Rho P10 160.

Other high performers included Canon, with the sale of Océ ColorWave 900 to Online Reprographics and Standing Stone who sold 14 machines on the first day.

MTEX Technologies managing director Stewart Bell also said he was delighted with their success at the show: "We sold numerous printers from across the MTEX direct-to-textile range over the three days and generated a huge amount of interest that we're now following up. The age of digital textile printing has truly arrived!"

To enquire about exhibiting in 2015, please contact the show team on +44 (0)1342 332000, or email signanddigitaluk@fav-house.com



The Sign Update team had a busy time, meeting many readers and talking tips and techniques. We gave away products from FK Moore, Eurobond and Signclip, which were snapped up and got lots of favourable comments and interest. Our legendary publisher Roger Hinchliffe worked tirelessly on our stand promoting the magazine whilst catching up with the many people he knows in the industry! We also spent much time on the big stands, and it was clear how knowledgeable, professional and friendly the exhibitors were. No wonder so many sales were made. Special mention to Roland who had a complementary bar/cafe on its stand - thanks!



PRODUCT *Choice*

XYZ router helps double production at Porter & Woodman

An XYZ CNC router supplied by XYZ International has helped double the production capacity of West Midlands-based Porter & Woodman. The company is a major consumer of plywood and MDF used for a diverse range of products distributed by the various businesses within the group. This includes point-of-sale and signage solutions such as chalkboards, blackboards, A-boards and menu and poster holders as well as shop fitting and display units.

"I am thrilled with the new machine and how it has helped increase our production capacity"

The XYZ 4010 CNC router recently installed supplements an XYZ machine bought three years ago. The router is part of phase one of a £100,000 investment in CNC machinery that has enabled more staff to be employed and fuelled growth as a result of the new business that has now been secured following the installation.

Sales and Marketing Director at Porter & Woodman Group, Mike Hodgetts said: "We are delighted with the new router and how it has helped double our production capacity. Towards the end of last year we experienced a bottleneck in our workflow that has now been comprehensively resolved by the introduction of the second router. This has enabled us to keep up to speed on existing work whilst allowing us to secure new business



The CNC Machining Shop at Porter & Woodman that now includes the XYZ 4010 router as part of a major new investment in CNC machinery.

to boost future growth."

Manager of the CNC Machining Shop, Colin Inchley said: "I am thrilled with the new machine and how it has helped increase our production capacity. It is much quicker and more efficient but perhaps of greater significance it has assisted the group's expansion and secured new jobs. The addition of the 4010 router means we can split the workflow between the two machines to ensure that at no time either is tied up on a specific job."

The XYZ 4010 router is part of the 4000 Series that is recognised as one of the most popular and robust routing, cutting and drilling solutions currently available.

It provides a work area width of 1,524mm and lengths starting at 1,220mm, with incremental increases of 610mm. The machine can handle materials in excess of four feet wide by virtually any length, while the 150mm gantry clearance will accommodate thicker substrates.

The XYZ 4010 router installed at Porter & Woodman incorporates a seven-tool Automatic Tool Change (ATC) facility.

In common with all XYZ routers it can be supplied with a host of optional production enhancements. Most recently, these have included new servo drives and the latest helical rack and pinion drive system that includes multiple gear teeth to ensure a more even distribution of the workload whilst reducing machine wear and increasing material feed rates. These production enhancements are further supplemented with the latest A2MC Smart Console that eliminates 'bounce' and vibration caused by sudden acceleration or deceleration often experienced with other control systems.

And with the XYZ Auto Zone Management System it provides a greatly improved material hold-down capability as well as reducing or eliminating material wastage and machine downtime caused by incorrectly set vacuum valves.



www.axyz.com
www.porterandwoodmangroup.co.uk

SP Design chooses Fujifilm's Acuity LED 1600

Specialist POP and prototype developer, SP Design, has installed a Fujifilm Acuity LED 1600 to take its print performance to the 'next level' and explore new business opportunities.

Founded in 2009, the company originally focused on display design. But three years ago they introduced a print capability into its business to 'increase its competitiveness'. Simon Todd, managing director at

SP Design, explains: "We've developed an integrated process including design, print and delivery to become an end-to-end display solutions provider. Fujifilm's Acuity LED fits perfectly into our workflow and maximises our productivity.

"We used to print flexible materials and apply them to rigid substrates to create finished displays. However, we realised that we needed to improve our efficiency to meet

increasingly time sensitive market needs."

SP Design was on the lookout for an inkjet device that would allow them to save time and increase capacity, printing directly onto rigid materials such as cardboard and corrugated plastic, as well as flexible media. Simon said: "We evaluated the market proposition and Mayday Graphics helped us to identify the Acuity LED's unique attributes and its ability to meet our specific needs. We were keen to invest in the technology as we were aware that it guarantees low energy consumption along with the capability to handle a wide range of roll and rigid materials including heat-sensitive film and non-PVC media. The Acuity LED was the perfect solution for us."

Simon 'particularly appreciated' the sharp print quality and the opportunity to apply six ink colours plus white or clear ink in a single pass to produce a premium high gloss finish. He said: "The machine's ability to apply spot UV varnish was pivotal in our decision making process, as we knew that this feature would open up new creative opportunities. We are now able to produce slick POP solutions, highlighting selected areas with varnishing details."

He said: "We loved what we saw in the product demos and so far we haven't been disappointed. The Acuity LED 1600 is a solid and reliable piece of equipment that has allowed us to save time and increase our profitability and we're looking forward to building on our position in the display market."

www.fujifilm.eu/eu/products/graphic-systems



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PRODUCT *Choice*

JCT choose Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV

JCT Visual Communications chose Screen Europe's newest wide-format printer, the Truepress Jet W3200UV, for its first flatbed printer. The investment in the highly-productive mid-range machine, launched at Fespa in 2013, comes on the back of strong growth at the Bournemouth-based specialist in retail and exhibition graphics. The company explain that turnover has doubled each year since managing director Julian Turner founded the company in 2011.

Julian originally started JCT to provide clients of his contract graphics fitting business with consistently high-quality display print. "Too often the graphics we were asked to fit were poorly printed," he explains. "So we decided to take greater control of the product and give clients a complete, reliable service." Contract fitting is still part of the portfolio but under the umbrella of the JCT Visual Communications brand. Clients include leading retailers Pret A Manger and Pizza Hut.

As well as providing the fast-growing business with essential extra capacity, the

W3200UV enables JCT to meet clients' demand for printing on board up to 50mm thick. It was this that led Julian to embark on an 18-month exploration of the flatbed printer market, and finally to the Screen machine. "We looked at a number of different printers, and showed the results to customers to gauge their reactions. Some models couldn't match the print quality and colour fidelity our customers demand, while the running costs of others were too high."

Productivity was a key factor in the decision in favour of the Truepress Jet W3200UV. With a maximum throughput speed of 85sqm/hr, the printer can comfortably cope with the deadline-critical long production runs that enable large retail clients such as Pret A Manger to roll out promotions simultaneously across multiple outlets.

Dependable service support was similarly critical when dealing with major brands, says Julian. "Inca Digital and Screen have an excellent reputation. Screen has a large service organisation, backed by remote diagnostics that effectively

give us 24-hour support. The fact the W3200UV is manufactured by Inca Digital in Cambridge also helps us assure clients that we know what we're doing. All in all, buying this machine shows clients we're serious about the business."

Designed and built by Screen subsidiary Inca Digital, the Truepress Jet W3200UV handles media up to 1.6 x 3.2 metres and up to 50mm thick. As standard, the printer takes CMYK inks but four additional channels provide options for light cyan and light magenta and/or two sets of white inks. JCT opted for the top-of-the-range configuration with light cyan and magenta, as the wider colour gamut renders improved skin tones.

Julian said: "We, and our clients, are delighted with the quality, the productivity, and the new business the machine has brought in — we're already handling several thousand display boards a month and it's likely we'll be moving into new, larger premises pretty soon. We're also considering buying a second W3200UV."



Julian Turner, left discusses test prints with operator Paul Newman.

Superior Creative boosts wide format capability with an Inca Onset S40i plus Fujifilm Uvijet OC inks

Superior Creative has yet again strengthened its production environment with an Inca Onset S40i supplied by Fujifilm. The machine will support the existing Onset S40 installed two years ago at the company's premises in Melksham, Wiltshire.

Richard Blueitt, commercial and operations director at Superior Creative, explains: "The increasing demands for wide format applications prompted us to extend our investments in this area. We have been extremely happy with the quality and productivity offered by the Inca Onset S40, so investing in a second and similar engine was a natural progression for us."

Superior Creative has purchased an Onset S40i with automation utilising the latest Fujifilm Uvijet OC inks, which produce solid and vibrant colours. Richard said: "We have been using the Uvijet OZ inks for the last few years and they have given us greater flexibility to print on different substrates, together with expanding our business opportunities on larger volume projects."

"The most recent Fujifilm Uvijet OC inks, which are ideal for the indoor applications particularly requested by our clients, will add value to our market proposition."

The retail sector is a key target for Superior Creative, which prints predominantly on corrugated and fluted board to produce POP & displays. "The Onset S40 has allowed us to achieve greater efficiency and cost savings, and the investment in a new Onset S40i will pay off just as equally. The training and the technical support provided by Fujifilm and Inca is nothing short of excellent and this will certainly contribute to reaching these positive results," says Richard.

Richard is keen on underlining the next project Superior Creative is focusing on: "2013 was a great year for our company and we are sure that 2014 will not disappoint us."

Along with the acquisition of an additional piece of equipment, we have built a new 800m² extension to accommodate a dedicated hand-finishing department, which reinforces our capability to meet the demands of the retail sector.

"We will also be looking into a revamp of our litho division which can only turn into yet another positive step for our business."



Inca Onset S40i

The Onset S40i supplied by Fujifilm produces superb POS-quality display graphics economically at throughput speeds of up to 560 sqm/hr, equivalent to 112 full bed sheets/hr (3.14 x 1.6m) and onto substrates up to 50mm (2 in) thick. A choice of uni-directional, bi-directional and super high quality print modes can be selected depending on the specific job requirements. As a result, it is ideal for the production of single and double-sided display POS, exhibition graphics, backlit/frontlit displays, outdoor signage printing and cosmetic/fashion graphics etc. The Onset S40i is compatible with Inca's flexible automation system which offers customers the choice to operate manually or with semi or three-quarter automation from the same configuration. For those requiring the ability to incorporate variable data printing as simply as possible, the Onset S40i also supports Inca's Print Run Controller (PRC) software module.

www.fujifilm.co.uk
www.incadigital.com

Mamas & Papas makes colour management child's play with GMG

Mamas & Papas, who sell nursery, baby and childcare products, has invested in GMG ColorProof and GMG ColorServer software solutions to provide 'higher quality, consistent print and proofing across the board'.

Mamas & Papas' creative, artwork and repro teams combine to operate on the lines of a full service agency but based in-house at its headquarters. From idea generation and concept brief through to print-ready artwork, they are responsible for the management and co-ordination of multiple projects, from photography to design and artwork production. The design briefs range from national advertising and in-store POS to product packaging and catalogues.

Brand identity and the control of brand colour is of 'utmost importance' to the company. Print is placed throughout the UK across an approved roster of print suppliers

from digital, to litho and web offset, so the need for controllable print is paramount. Mamas & Papas Studio Print and Production Manager Samantha Gayford said: "We take colour matching very seriously and the ability to establish a colour standard for the brand that can be communicated consistently to our print partners is something we strive for."

"The main reason we came to GMG was a need for standardisation and achieving colour consistency across our print processes," says Samantha. "We needed a way to reference the output characteristics of all our printers to allow us to deliver consistent results regardless of which machine or media the job was printed on."

"We had been using EFI Color Verifier for some time but found it limiting. Our in-house Senior Retoucher had experience of using

GMG software before joining Mamas & Papas and recommended their products to us."

For more than 20 years GMG ColorProof has established itself as the premier software solution for the production of high-accuracy digital contract proofs. Key to GMG ColorProof's success in the proofing market is its unique 4-D colour transformation engine that ensures the 'highest possible quality and production reliability'.

"Since the installation in September 2013 the results have been impressive," says Samantha. "Using GMG software gives us absolute confidence that colours will be the same across the board. It has enabled us to operate with greater efficiency, reducing the time taken to produce each job, with complete peace of mind that colours will match."

www.mamasandpapas.com

PRODUCT *Choice*

New Mimaki for Stika.co

When Weymouth based Stika.co invested in a Mimaki CJV30-60, the young company already had a substantial sales presence on eBay and needed to expand its production capabilities to meet a 'rising demand' for its unique, digitally printed product. Stika.co's popular merchandise ranges from light switch stickers to health and safety labels.

"Having seen the Mimaki at an exhibition, we decided it was exactly what we needed"

Stika.co began in 2012 when Alex and Cristina Smith created a light switch cover sticker featuring a cartoon character for their young daughter. Smith already had extensive printing experience as a director of a local print company. After a couple of months after the purchase of the Mimaki, Stika.co moved into new premises as it continued to expand.

"It wasn't long before we realised we'd come up with a unique idea that was going to



be very popular," says Alex Smith. "Within a year we had sold over 10,000 stickers through eBay alone and we now regularly despatch 150 orders per day through our website."

Analysing its workflow, Stika.co determined investing in a new printer would allow them to offer faster turnaround, high quality

finishes and one-off production. Working with Mimaki reseller, PaperlinX, it invested in a Mimaki CJV30-60 integrated printer-cutter. "The Mimaki perfectly suits our application, with its vibrant colours and high print detail," says Smith. "It then seamlessly cuts to shape without the need for an operator to intervene – which is ideal for smaller businesses where one person may be carrying out multiple jobs."

"Having seen the Mimaki at an exhibition, we decided it was exactly what we needed. We have limited space at our premises, so having a printer-cutter in one was a real bonus, especially one that doesn't compromise on print quality," he said. "Our customers are delighted with the stickers and how great they look – our client base is growing all the time." Using Orajet® 3164 100mic vinyl, Stika.co has developed an impressive portfolio of light switch stickers, ranging from cartoon based images for children's bedrooms, through to abstract art and stylish interior décor pieces. The company is also beginning to expand its range to include mobile phone skins and covers for television remote controls too.

The CJV30 Series printer-cutter is a multi-award winning integrated print and cut solution from Mimaki and offers flexibility with its four sizing options from 60cm through to 1.6m. Combining high performance with superior print quality, the Mimaki CJV30 has print speeds of up to 17.5m²/h and runs with Mimaki's SS21 fast drying, outdoor durable inks or ES3 eco-solvent options.



www.stika.co
www.hybridservices.co.uk
www.paperlinx.co.uk

Banksy Posters printed on Aslan DFP40

Printed Wardrobe has embraced a popular trend of wall transfers by creating a remarkable collection of removable self-adhesive Banksy posters.

The Surrey based company has had 'immense success' selling Banksy designs over the years, so they are always on the look out for new ways of printing the graffiti artist's work. Their online store boasts a collection of Banksy t-shirts, phone covers, canvas prints, mugs and coasters. Now with their discovery of the ultra-removable film from Doro Tape they have added a range of contemporary posters. With the benefit of being easy to apply and remove without causing damage to decorated surfaces, they are perfect for most interior walls.

"We chose this film to use on our wide format Versacamm. We were impressed with the print quality versus price."

Available in both glossy white (DFP40) and clear (DFP41), this ultra-removable film can be applied directly to indoor surfaces; wooden or varnished finishes; emulsioned walls and is great for use on glass. It has a special acrylic pressure sensitive adhesive, which allows the film to be removed without leaving any residue and if kept clean, to be



used time and time again. It is therefore ideal for short term promotional use in the display, retail and hospitality sectors. Developed by the German company Aslan, the idea for the film embraces the continuing trend for wall transfers and stickers, in fact, it is perfect for any application where a quick and easy 'makeover' is required.

Nick Khani from Printed Wardrobe said: "We chose this film to use on our wide format Versacamm. We were impressed with the print quality versus price."

The DFP films are compatible with all common solvent, eco-solvent, UV and Latex printers, and offer plenty of creative scope for transforming walls and surfaces into real 'head-turners', whether it be for exhibition stand constructors, window dressers, wall decals or promotions.

Available as 1370 width rolls for wide format printing, the products can also be cut down to accommodate any width of printer.

www.dorotape.co.uk

Graphic Station first across the line with Mimaki JFX200 order



Paul Fox from Graphic Station and i-Sub Digital's Emma Plant shake on the deal at Sign and Digital UK.

Graphic Station 'signed on the dotted line' to buy the first Mimaki JFX200-2513 in Europe within minutes of the machine going on display at Sign and Digital UK 2014.

Director at i-Sub Digital, Emma Plant, had been working with Graphic Station ahead of the show to find the perfect flat-bed printer to join its existing roll-to-roll Mimaki JV33 printer and accompanying cutting system. The new Mimaki JFX200 ticked all the boxes so Fox agreed to wait until the system's European launch this April, seeing it for the first time at Sign and Digital UK.

The Mimaki JFX200-2513 2.4m x 1.2m LED UV flatbed printer offers white, clear and primer ink options plus CMYK, producing vibrant, high-quality output at speeds of up to 25sqm/hr.

Thanks to its ability to print onto a vast range of media up to 50mm thick, Graphic Station is now looking beyond its standard signage, hoardings and high-quality photographic work towards the home décor market: printed wall tiles, wood and skirting boards for kids' bedrooms are all in their sights.

i-Sub Digital and its sister company i-Sub Ltd gave a flavour of its extensive product line at Sign and Digital UK with a showcase of wide-format, textile and packaging printing equipment, with a further selection on display on the stand of exclusive Mimaki UK&I distributor Hybrid Services across the aisle.

www.i-subdigital.com

www.thegraphicstation.co.uk

PRODUCT *Choice*

MTEX direct-to-textile print investment turns Cover Up into 'exhibitionists'

Cover Up, one of Ireland's biggest print houses, has invested in a new MTEX 5032 direct-to-textile printer in order to expand their offering for exhibition and display companies.

Cover Up knew that their growth in the exhibition market was being held back by the fact they could only produce applications such as lightboxes up to 1.8m wide and only on matt polyester.

Thanks to their purchase of an MTEX 5032, they can now print as wide as 3.2m and work with the newer and bigger display units that are available today.

"We've seen the industry picking up over the last two or three years, and we're feeling very confident in growth for the future."

Cover Up started out in the 1970s as a cover manufacturer, and the family firm with branches in Sandyford and Clondalkin grew to become specialists in printed textiles such as flags, banners, awnings and bunting, signage and lightboxes, vehicle covers and canvas backdrops.

From an initial purchase of a 3.2 metre PVC printer, they now have a stable which includes a 5m HP UV 5100, a flatbed HP 6200, a 3.2m solvent, two DGen dye-sub 1.8m flag machines, an FB700 flatbed and a 54" Mimaki. They do all their own finishing with three high frequency welders for finishing PVC and mesh, and machinists for stitching.

"When we decided to go with the MTEX, the difference that put it above other units was the quality of print and the punchy colours," says Anthony Byrne.

The new MTEX 5032 was installed in mid-March. The company had moved into new premises in December and had a space earmarked on the ground floor.

"The installation and training was great," added Anthony. "Installation took a day, then we had the training from the MTEX team and the printer was up and running jobs within around three days."

The new generation MTEX printer offers a 'superb' all in one direct-to-textile solution, printing up to 1440dpi and speeds up to 62m²/h using a waterbased inkset that delivers vibrant consistent colours.



The textile is then advanced to the in-line fixation unit where it sublimates into the fabric.

Stewart Bell, MD of MTEX Technologies Ltd. Said: "We're very excited that Cover Up are the first company in Ireland to install an MTEX 5032. Cover Up has a deep understanding of the market and this sale further demonstrates the growth in demand for textile printing."

The Cover Up team is now looking at entering the export market and working with companies outside of Ireland. "We can now

produce the larger exhibition panels from start to finish under the one roof, and exporting fabric is easier, cheaper and more reliable as you can fold it up rather than having to keep it flat.

"We've seen the industry picking up over the last two or three years, and we're feeling very confident in growth for the future."

www.mtex.eu
www.coverup.ie

F1 Graphics choose Tekcel

One of the UK's 'most innovative' signage companies, F1 Graphics Ltd, have just received the latest Tekcel VSR 1540mm x 2540mm CNC routing system. This complements its recent investment in a state of the art, large format flatbed inkjet printer.

Darren Ware, owner of F1 Graphics Ltd said: "We had researched the CNC Router market long and hard, over many weeks, but no system came near to our requirements than the Tekcel router. Not only for its superior build quality and immense material hold down, but we all felt that having a system with proven ballscrew and digital servo motor drive technology was a must for high performance, accuracy and reliability. We were also very impressed with the set up at Complete CNC Solutions which in turn, filled us with confidence for on-going support, customer service and their wealth of industry knowledge."

A visit to Sign & Digital UK show in Birmingham was enough to secure a deal and the order was placed there at the Complete CNC Solutions stand, the exclusive UK and European distributors for the Tekcel CNC routers.

Knowing how important the drive technology of a router is to the overall accuracy and performance of the system, F1 were impressed to learn that all Tekcel routers feature class leading, ballscrew digital servo drive systems on every axis giving unrivalled accuracy and repeatability every time. The VSR also features a neatly placed multi tool change system that combines a choice of up to six tools with a powerful HSD 8Kw spindle motor. Their new system is also fully equipped with the very latest "Cut to print" camera registration technology; print finishing features; and all out sign making capa-

bilities, which they say makes the Tekcel router the most complete industry all-round cutter on the market.

Based in Derbyshire, F1 Graphics offers a huge range of high quality commercial sign and display products. With many years of experience in design, manufacture and installations the company will utilise these skills already in place, to offer its customers a "Turn Key" solution for premium products and services at extremely competitive prices. According to Darren Ware, "We see it as our job to provide innovative solutions to these problems and employing advanced production technology like the Tekcel router and the inkjet printer enables us to do just that." Combined with the high quality solid carbide router tooling, also supplied by Complete CNC Solutions, F1 Graphics can now produce fast, efficient and superior edge finished routed products, straight from the machine, without the need for any additional

edge cleaning processes.

Julian Sage, Managing Director of Complete CNC Solutions said: "We work hard to provide a comprehensive CNC router solution for all our customers, whatever their individual system requirements may be. The delivery, installation and full commissioning of the Tekcel VSR router was completed in just one day, thanks in part to the excellent preparation of essential services such as power and air requirement installed by F1 Graphics. With their router up and running so quickly, the F1 production team were able to use the subsequent two days of onsite training we provided to maximum effect and by the end of the second training day, were running live jobs. All this said, our customers tell us that Tekcel routers continue to be the most productive CNC router in the sign, print & display industry today."

www.f1banners.com
www.completecnc.co.uk



Graham & Brown buys HP Latex 360



CWE director Darren Walker with Paul Tarnowski (left) and Julian Kellett (right) from the Digital Applications Department at Graham & Brown.

Graham & Brown, which operates internationally at the 'cutting edge' of design and colour within the wall decoration market, has invested in a HP Latex 360 from City and West End Solutions (CWE).

Paul Tarnowski from the Digital Applications department at Graham & Brown said: "The improved ink technology in the HP Latex 360 gives us the ability to print colourways for products we're designing onto our own production substrate."

"We've not been able to do this in the past so we're hoping this new printer will become an important part of our development process."

CWE Director Darren Walker, who made the deal at Sign and Digital UK, said: "We're really excited about the range of opportunities these new HP Latex printers can offer."

"The new inks give outstanding durability with superior scratch resistance on vinyl and banner and enhanced quality and performance on a wider range of medias. The high ink density options further extend the superior detail and vibrancy to backlit media and textiles."

www.cwesolutions.co.uk/products-services/printers/hp-latex-300-series-printers/

www.grahambrown.com

ACRYLIC (perspex - including gold & silver) (10mm: white black & clear)

no minimum order

Height	100mm	150mm	200mm	250mm	300mm	350mm	400mm	450mm	500mm	550mm	600mm	700mm	750mm	800mm	900mm	1200mm
3mm	0.70	1.10	2.03	2.74	4.00	5.50	6.31	7.25	8.02	9.19	10.66	14.76	21.63	30.34	38.32	42.28
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)

no minimum order

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
Brushed	1.96	3.28	4.39	6.12	8.83	9.85	11.15	13.16	15.28	16.77	19.08	23.61	26.10	31.50	39.00	56.92

MILL FINISH ALUMINIUM (Comes in its raw form ready for coating) no minimum order

Height	50mm	75mm	100mm	125mm	150mm	175mm	200mm	225mm	250mm	275mm	300mm	375mm	425mm	500mm	600mm	700mm
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

Options Add 10% for locators and layout Add 25% for Cladded facia drawing

MOULDED ACRYLIC LETTERING (Including locators and paper template) * including gold and silver

Height	152mm	203mm	254mm	305mm	380mm	457mm	610mm
Colours*	4.45	6.98	10.92	12.40	16.40	20.80	34.90

Stock Styles: **HELVETICA BOLD, TIMES BOLD, & CLARENDON MEDIUM**

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Expanding horizons through digital printing

Whether it's to move into new sub-markets, improve product quality or simply to increase output, investing in a digital printer is a step that many sign makers will consider taking as their business evolves. Jemima Codrington caught up with experts to learn more about the benefits of investing in a digital printer, as well as ways to maximise the returns on this investment.

When making the move into digital signage, selecting hardware and software that work harmoniously is key according to Phil McMullin, Sales Manager of Professional Imaging at Epson.

"The primary thing to think about is that the printer, RIP software and ink all need to work in unison," he says. "Make sure the package is fully compatible."

This is where working with experienced resellers can be invaluable, as they are able to provide honest advice, and help sign makers navigate the plethora of options that have flooded the market. When considering a system, Phil advises that there are a couple of key things to consider. "Ease of use is a big one, depending on the level of skill of the operators. If you're starting from scratch, it can be quite daunting to learn everything there is to know about reproducing colour print with a wide format printer, so investing in the initial training and ongoing support should be a primary consideration."

Other important elements to think about include productivity and flexibility. Sign makers should consider how much is needed in terms of production on a weekly and monthly basis, as well as the type of substrates that will need to be printed on to. Investing in a digital printer can open up a wide range of markets, all of which call for

different materials to be used, from standard vinyl to banners and soft signage, textiles, reflective media, pop-up media and a wealth of others. "It's important to consider this range of media when taking the initial step so that you can invest in a printer with suitable ink compatibility. For example, eco-solvent ink is incredibly flexible and will print onto virtually anything, whereas latex ink takes a lot of heat to settle. While it's good for vinyl, it's not ideal for other heat-sensitive medias," says Phil. The "two Cs" – consistency and colour – should play large roles in the decision making process. If a sign maker is investing in a digital printer to move into new market areas, such as creating POS materials, they will need to make sure the printer has a wide enough colour gamut to meet the demands on accurate colour reproduction. "Look at your customer base and where you might want to expand, and think about going beyond the simple CMYK," he adds.

When thinking about the environmental repercussions of investing in a digital printer, a reduction in energy and thus carbon emissions may spring to mind. But while this is part of the equation, the environmental impact is in fact three fold. Sign makers should be sure to consider:

- The environment in which they are printing
- The amount of power the printer will use
- Safe waste disposal options

If investing in a printer that utilises heavy solvent inks, companies should be aware that these contain carcinogenic substances,

which can prove hazardous to the health of system operators. If planning to purchase such a printer to have on site in their own print room, sign makers should ensure a viable extraction system is also in place. That said, installation of such systems can be expensive, a cost that should be taken into consideration when weighing up the pros and cons of a full solvent printer. Noise pollution is another factor, and it's important to consider if any safety equipment such as ear protectors will need to be purchased along with the printer.

Operating costs are also something to be mindful of. "Eco-solvents tend to use less electricity, because the temperature to outgas the solvents is less, which in turn means a reduction in electricity consumption," says Phil. Looking at the bigger picture, sign makers should have a plan for the safe and environmentally-responsible disposal of materials. Owing (in part) to how easy they are to recycle, soft signage materials have seen a significant boost in popularity, especially since being used extensively in signage throughout the London 2012 Olympic venues. "The big opportunity for sign makers over the next few years involves making the most of the expanding textile market, and to offer this service to their customers," says Phil. "You can get into that business for only a £5-10k investment, which not much in the grand scheme compare to the returns available".

A "sure" choice for sign makers

The Epson SURE brand offers a wide range of products for signage and graphics, ranging from flatbeds to ink and software.

In the past two years, Epson has brought ten professional print products in the SURE line to market, and aims to introduce a further ten over the next eighteen months. These products will enable sign makers to tackle an array of jobs, from external signage to POS products and even products in the photographic sector. The products are a result of continual research and development, on which Epson spends over £1.2 million a day. This is to provide sign makers with a comprehensive solution for digital printing and graphics that will suit not only the business needs of today, but also those on the horizon. "The future is very bright for the Epson product range," says Phil, "so for anyone that wants to invest in a manufacturer that has an upright path and a bright future, Epson is a solid choice."

www.epson.co.uk



Epson spends over £1.2 million on R+D a day.

According to Gareth Parker, Strategic Marketing Manager at Ricoh UK, sign makers should research the benefits of eco-solvent versus latex inks before deciding on a digital printer.

A sure benefit of latex ink is the versatility of the colour gamut, which has led to an increase in sign makers opting for latex in recent years, especially in the colour white. "This is becoming increasingly popular in the retail sector, and so sign makers looking to move into this area show significant interest in our machine." The machine in question is the Ricoh Pro L4160, a latex wide format machine that makes up part of the Pro L4100 line. In addition to standard CMYK inks, the Ricoh Pro L4160 can also print with popular colours for retail applications such as green, orange and white. "White in particular increases the impact of certain substrates," says Gareth, "and is an interesting way of producing a high-quality, bolder, sharper finish."

The latex ink available for use in conjunction with the L4160 is water-based, odourless, contains a low VOC level and has a low curing temperature of just 60°. This allows sign makers to print onto a wide range of substrates without damaging them. These substrates can be anything from PVC to tarpaulin, paper, textiles and even film.



Printers in Ricoh's Pro L4100 can accurately reproduce colours such as orange, green and white.



Products in Ricoh's Pro L4100 line can be used in a wide range of applications.

How to make the most of an investment

Gareth notes that making the most of a digital printer comes down to analysing the full life cycle of each job, and making an investment in hardware and software that can meet these demands.

"You can either adopt the technology and be a generalist, or you can adopt technology and be specific about how that technology is going to reach the demands of your customers."

"The thing I see most often is either commercial printers or sign makers underestimating the full cycle of a particular application, whether that's vehicle wrapping, a traditional billboard or a retail application," he explains. "They're concentrating on the production and delivery, which is obviously important, but in different ways all of these projects require an end of life process." Success in these sectors requires more than just winning the brief, taking the business and completing the job, something Gareth notes sign makers should always be mindful of, as failing to do so can lead to unsatisfied customers and result in invariable extra costs.

Another way to maximise the return on investment is to do plenty of due diligence and research to ensure the printer bought today can service potential clients in a few years time. "It ultimately comes down to getting the best information and advice available from your technology provider, and not being swayed by price point alone," adds Gareth. "You can either adopt the technology and be a generalist, or you can adopt technology and be specific about how that technology is going to reach the demands of your customers."

Throughout the year, Ricoh will focus on adding a number of additional profiles for different media to meet market demand, as well as upgrades to the RIP software all while providing ongoing client support.

www.ricoh.co.uk

Expanding horizons through digital printing

Loic Delor, Managing Director of Josero, reveals that the most common issue he encounters among sign makers is the most basic one of all: selecting the wrong printer.

"Buying the wrong printer is a surprisingly common mistake," he says. "They are either well over-specified, or don't actually do all the things the sign maker requires."

As quality printers require a substantial financial investment, many sign makers opt to search out cheaper alternatives, even buying used printers on eBay. Something Loic describes as a "very common mistake," buying printers from unverified sources will inevitably cost sign makers hundreds of pounds to fix, often resulting in the maintenance costs being higher than the purchase price. "To avoid this situation, sign makers should speak to suppliers they know, shop around, talk to suppliers at exhibitions and most importantly don't forget to use their common sense!"

With the right advice, sign makers can invest in a machine that puts them firmly in control of the quality and output of the work produced. Investing in a printer gives a sign maker far greater control and flexibility, allowing them to ensure the print quality matches what is required, and if necessary to generate prints at 3am if that is what the job demands. Without having to outsource, sign makers can be firmly in control.

To steer clear of the common price pitfall (and to narrow down the many options), the first question a sign maker should ask himself or herself is simple: What do I actually want to print? It's important to clearly identify the objective to invest in machinery that can do the job to a high standard.

"If 80% of the work is going to be car wrapping, then there's no point getting a printer with Eco or Solvent inks that will require degassing," says Loic. "At the same time if your



The Mutoh VJ1638X from Josero can be configured for use with two different ink types.

business is all about sign making, then there's hardly any point in paying out lots of extra money for a Latex printer, as a good eco-solvent solution would be far more suitable."

Sign makers should also decide between a print only, or a print and cut solution. For simple jobs like stickers, a print and cut is the ideal solution. However, if you need to be cutting on a regular basis, Loic recommends buying a separate cutter plotter, so that the cutting time doesn't infringe on the printing time and slow production down.

Deciding on inks for a digital printer: is OEM best?

Due to significant market expansion and the introduction of latex, sign makers have plenty of choice to either opt for OEM products, or third-party inks. There are pros and

cons to both, and this is one area that requires a lot of research, as both manufacturers and third parties will present a strong case for their inks. But – like inks – it's not all black and white.

"Some third party suppliers have excellent products and offer a lot of support and warranties," says Loic, "There are, however, other suppliers who base their offer on low prices and in those situations you get what you pay for. One important thing to be aware of though is that most printer manufacturers do not produce inks... so they must buy their inks from somewhere."

For sign makers keen to reduce costs without compromising on quality, the Triangle line of inks have proven to be a popular choice. Triangle has been manufacturing inks for over 20 years in technically advanced R&D facilities in the USA. The inks are competitively priced against the OEM inks, and offer sign makers excellent value for money.

Where Josero is concerned, there are two major expansion areas going forward, Loic reveals. Firstly, there will be a focus on strengthening the wide format products offered, with the possible addition of a new printer and a new cutter in the pipeline. "We are also planning a big move into industrial printing solutions," says Loic. "At the very top end of the market, companies are looking at establishing production lines rather than more and more printers. It's how the printers integrate into the production of the signs that makes all the difference."



The Engico Aqua 250 available from Josero can be used with water-based inks.

www.josero.com

Rob Goleniowski, Business Manager, Sign & Graphics at Roland DG (UK) Ltd., advises against buying a machine solely on price point, and encourages sign makers to seek advice from suppliers – and each other.

"If you're going to have one machine, you need to make sure it works at least 99 times out of 100," he says. "In addition to doing the research, I'd advise sign makers to go online, look at the forums available and interact with other sign makers and existing customers. You get a real sense of things like the quality, consistency and reliability of a machine from your peers."

As far as the machinery itself is concerned, sign makers should look at suitability in terms of the intended applications. Talking to others in the industry as well as dealers such as Roland can be hugely beneficial, helping businesses to get the maximum number of possible uses out of a printer, and therefore the maximum possible number of customers. "Material suppliers and dealers can help you identify growth areas, popular markets, and open your mind to enter other market areas and try things you weren't doing before," adds Rob.

Roland is one of the leading suppliers of ECO-Solvent printers and cut machines. Products in the Versacamm range, for example, enable sign makers to do everything from backlit displays to direct to garment



Dubbed "The Red Monster", the new SolJet Pro4 XF-640 printer is Roland's fastest yet.

printing, and even window graphics with white ink. In fact, Roland were the first to manufacture eco-solvent white ink, as well as a metallic ink that can be used to create a wide range of products.

Points to ponder when selecting a printer

Making the move to a digital printer is no small step, and so Rob advises considering the following factors when looking for what's available:

- Make sure there is enough capacity in the machine to grow the business with it
- Ensure you understand the potential of the machine (for example, is the manufacturer committed to R&D, and continual development?)
- Make sure you get the training to use the machine with a variety of different materials
- Make sure you partake in the exchange of knowledge with other sign makers to get the most of out your printer

Whether it's through online forums or at trade shows, by swapping tips and learning from peers, sign makers can discover new ideas and market areas, maximising their return on investment.

www.rolanddg.co.uk



The VersaCAMM VSi Series 540-640 proves popular with sign makers.



Expanding horizons through digital printing

Investing in a printer means more than just investing in the hardware, says Dominic Fahy, Business Group Manager, Display Graphics Systems and Imaging Supplies, Canon (UK & Ireland).

By choosing a manufacturer that is committed to providing excellent support, sign makers are by proxy investing in the people behind the machinery as well.

"For a lot of sign makers doing these things for the first time, while they've got the right tools, they haven't yet had the success in these markets to build their confidence to really expand"

"We're really geared up to look after our customers," says Dominic, adding that in the UK market alone, there are 16 dedicated Canon technicians capable of servicing the Océ Arizona flatbed. Launched in 2007, the Arizona has since become the best-selling flatbed of all time, with over 4,000 installations worldwide so far. In addition to having service technicians that can be on site within as little as six hours, Canon also have a team of specialist applications manager that work with users to help them get the maximum amount possible out of their printer. "The support side of things is one of our biggest focus areas.

The technology is obviously very important, and you need a system that's versatile, but you also need it to be reliable," adds Dominic.

Many Canon customers that have invested in an Océ Arizona flatbed printer have found that the product has enabled them to develop their businesses and expand into new markets. There are many contributing factors that have lead to the popularity of the Arizona, such supreme cost and ink efficiency. "It's probably one of the most ink-efficient machines on the market," says Dominic, adding that it costs roughly £1 a square meter for ink. The output quality is also superb, producing a small dot size of just seven Picoliters.

Opening the doors to new markets

In a competitive market, evolving towards digital allows sign makers to diversify and expand the horizons in terms of potential revenue.

Aside from traditional signage, there are many sub-markets that are blurring category lines, reinventing what it means to be a sign maker. "Someone that for example, may have only specialised in safety signage can then begin to print products for retail POS systems," says Dominic. "Now, is that merchandise printing or sign printing?"

In addition to retail, the lower cost and speed at which soft signage can be developed is making this another market worthy of investigation. According to



Dominic Fahy, Business Group Manager, Display Graphics Systems and Imaging Supplies, Canon (UK & Ireland).

Dominic, the team at Canon has seen a "significant" move towards soft and temporary signage.

Investing in a digital printing solution reduces costs associated with outsourcing, and gives sign makers the opportunity to hone more creative and technical skills themselves. As such, this can lead them to navigate submarkets that are perhaps further removed from standard signage, yet lucrative just the same, such as interior design products and acrylic prints. But while the software and hardware to achieve a wider range of jobs are all there, sign makers will fail to capitalise on the market opportunities without one crucial element: confidence.

"For a lot of sign makers doing these things for the first time, while they've got the right tools, they haven't yet had the success in these markets to build their confidence to really expand," says Dominic. "For this reason, it's so important to rely on guidance from application specialists, and never be afraid to ask questions. After all, we're only limited by our own imagination."

www.canon.co.uk



The Océ Arizona flatbed from Canon has become the best-selling flatbed printer of all time.

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Revamped Digital2Business website

Antalis UK has revamped its Digital2Business website to provide digital printers, service providers and users with more access to a 'information, advice, consultancy and insight into the digital print world'.

The company wants to provide a 'hands on' platform to share information, where users can engage and interact, share knowledge and get expert input. As well as keep up to date with events and all the latest technology developments through close links with third party OEMs.

New to the website is 'Ask the Experts', where users can pose questions or seek advice via a live link to the digital team at Antalis's centre of excellence for digital printing and technology.

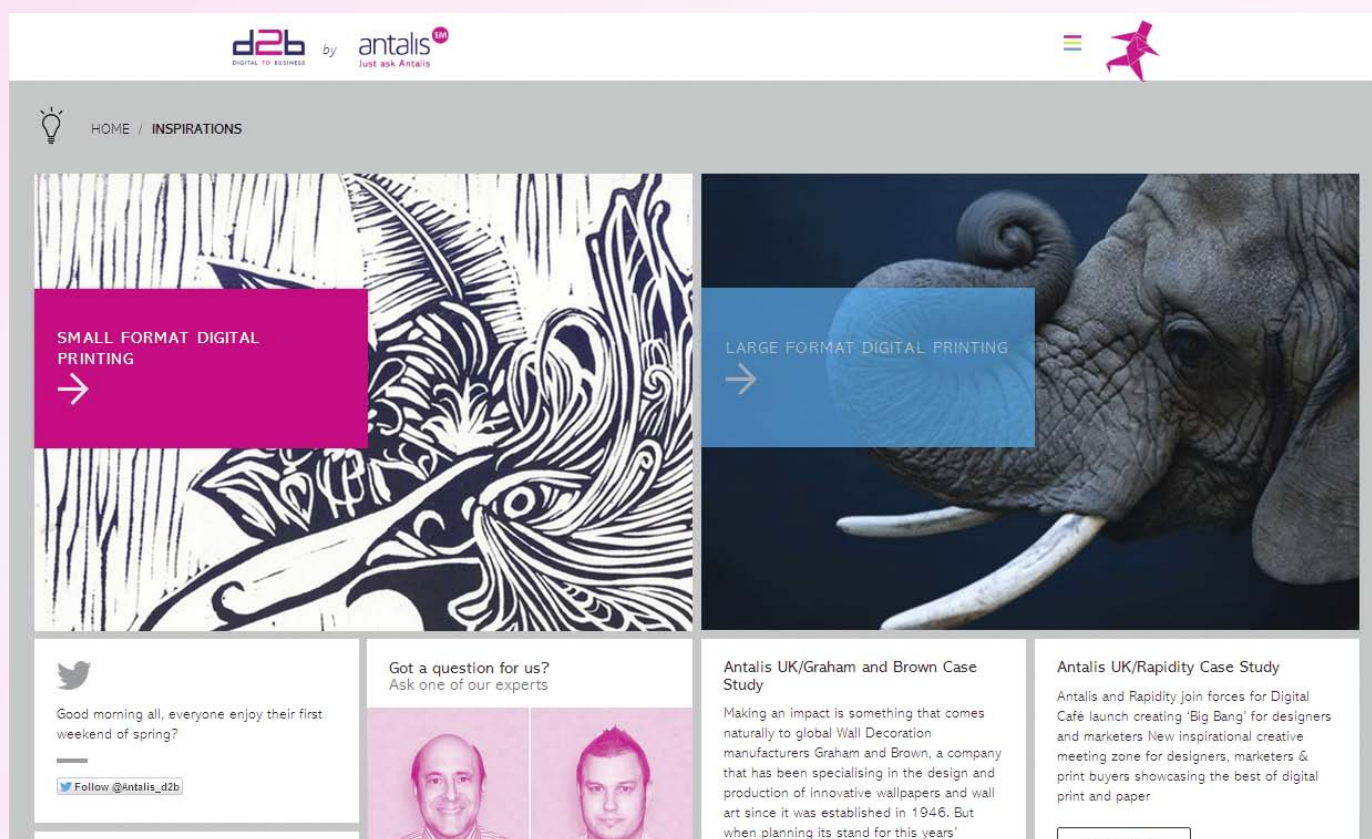
The site also provides lots of technical knowledge and advice, a gallery of innovative and inspirational case study applications, useful downloadable reference content as well as a FAQs section covering a range of useful topics.

Users can also gain access to Antalis's entire digital product portfolio from one cen-

tral location, giving them an insight into the very latest innovative substrates on offer.

Rebecca Chandler, Marketing Executive said: "The revamp and relaunch of our D2B website reflects the Antalis approach to digital printing. We are very much 'hands on' – we don't just supply digital media, we have technical advice ready for customers to download, a dedicated digital catalogue and experts online ready to answer your live questions."

www.digital2business.co.uk



New GMG reseller in Ireland

GMG Color has appointed Reprocentre as a fully-accredited GMG solutions provider in Ireland.

"Reprocentre is Ireland's market leading supplier of equipment and consumables and has a tremendous reputation for delivering first rate products and service to its customers," says Toby Burnett, MD, GMG UK.

"This is a strong partnership that unites GMG's proofing and colour management solutions with Reprocentre's wealth of technical knowledge in all aspects of proofing and the printing process."

Reprocentre's customers are split between the lithographic and sign and display markets. Addressing their proofing needs over the years, supplying DuPont Cromalin in all its analogue and digital variants, has given Reprocentre an 'understanding of the important role a standardised proof plays in the printing process'. Reprocentre acknowledges that GMG has become the 'gold standard' of the industry and will introduce their professional colour management solutions to customers alongside their proofing software.

Brian Crawford, MD, Reprocentre, says: "We are delighted to have been appointed to represent GMG in Ireland and we see it as a great opportunity to help our customers produce top quality product by attaining a recognised international standard. Consistency of result will bring savings and strengthen their relationship with their clients."

www.gmgcolor.com,

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THE VEHICLE SAFETY MARKING SPECIALISTS

MTEX Technologies Ltd opens UK office

MTEX Technologies Ltd has been formed to focus on the sales, support and servicing of all MTEX direct-to-textile products across the UK and Ireland. They are based in Leicestershire and headed up by managing director Stewart Bell.

"The sales of MTEX digital direct to textile printers have seen unprecedented numbers since FESPA London. We successfully distributed the products through my company Digital Print Innovations, investing many months in research and development to navigate our way through the world of textiles and digital textile solutions to help our customers," says Stewart.

"However, we felt that the MTEX brand should have a bigger presence in the UK, so we set up MTEX Technologies Ltd to help drive sales and focus on supporting customers at a local level with UK based sales, spares, training and technical business support staff."

The Technical Business Support division will be headed up by Rick Kwicien and includes a number of highly trained technicians including MTEX specialist James Brunton. It will offer both technical and business support for those with MTEX products and those interested in moving into the digital textile market.

MTEX Technologies' new UK training and demonstration centre will be centrally based in Leicestershire and is due to open in the early summer. The centre will offer open days and training sessions for MTEX users and those wanting to find out more about digital direct to textile printing options.

Eloi Ferreira, CEO of the Portuguese-based manufacturer MTEX says: "MTEX Technologies has been born out of a need to increase the focus and support on direct-to-textile digital print sales in the UK and Ireland. With more than 16 installed bases already in a growing market, the dedicated input of Stewart and the team will be a great boost."

www.mtex.eu



Stewart Bell (left) with Eloi Ferreira.

Sales achievement for City and West End Solutions



HP awarded City and West End Solutions (CWE) the award of leading reseller for latex printers sold throughout the Europe, Middle East and Africa region, which recognises 'their outstanding sales success'.

CWE's Commercial Director, Graham De Kock says: "This award cements CWE's status as the number one supplier of HP's industry leading latex printers and is a testament to the value we place on building strong customer relationships, providing technical excellence and high levels of on-going support."

To acknowledge their commitment to the latex portfolio and proven successes with this product range CWE were awarded sole distribution of the HP premium product, the Latex 3000.

CWE continue to be the only HP Preferred Partner in the UK allowed to sell the full HP Wide Format portfolio.

www.cwesolutions.co.uk

LUMAIRE powered by VINK

A strategic partnership between LUMAIRE and VINK, who are Europe's largest independent distributor of modular LED lighting systems for signage applications, was unveiled at the recent Sign & Digital UK Birmingham NEC Show.

Speaking of the alliance Carl Hodgson, managing director of LUMAIRE said: "This is an extremely exciting move for us. We see the relationship with VINK as a very significant move for both companies. We are now able to provide lighting solutions through a larger network of signage customers through the extra avenues that will be created. For us it is both an endorsement and a vote of confidence that we have developed our LUMAIRE product to be at the forefront of the market place. And now VINK have embraced this opportunity to carry on from our successful inroads into the sign industry and really drive it forward, providing the distribution platform it deserves."

David Foreman who is the head of VINK here in the UK said: "Some time ago, VINK identified an opportunity in the market place to supply edge-lit illuminated light panels. But until now have not been able to find a product with sufficient quality or a reliable supplier who could provide the necessary support to turn this opportunity into a successful business."

Simon Berry from LUMAIRE explains how the newly formed partnership came about: "It was through word of mouth, having called upon many of our sign making customers that VINK got to hear about LUMAIRE. I met with Paul Robinson and Jamie Bonser from their head office. Through their enthusiasm for the product we were able to approach David Foreman

who saw a real opportunity in VINK adding LUMAIRE to its portfolio of products. It was never a deliberate marketing strategy, but an extremely beneficial outcome nonetheless.

Since its launch back in September 2013, LUMAIRE has 'enjoyed a very warm' reception from sign makers as a versatile and bright alternative to LED modules and fluorescent lit fascia signs. The extra thin profile of only 30mm required without the need for rear back trays has meant that sign makers are now able to install faster and offer brighter, more contemporary looking signs with a much greater profit margin. LUMAIRE is outdoor rated to IP67 and is warranted for two years, but its greatest attraction has been the speed in which it can be manufactured. It takes three working days! As all of the components are based at their factory in Leicester, then it is only a matter of cutting the required custom sizes, assembling the parts and sending it out to our customers who are delighted with the improved lead times. LUMAIRE is not an off-the-shelf product that has to be ordered in vast quantities from the Far East. It is made here in the UK and our customers are reaping the benefits of that."

David said: "within the UK, VINK enjoy sole distributorship of the two main brands within this market sector, GE and Osram. When LUMAIRE developed their edge illuminated product, it came as no surprise that VINK showed great interest, and a partnership was very soon established to take full advantage of each company's individual skill sets."

Carl agrees: "LUMAIRE is a company that is at the forefront of the illumination market. We only use high quality compo-

nents that will give us the confidence to provide a high quality service, to our expanding customer base. All our products face vigorous testing to make sure they are always superior to the market average. We are continually striving for improvement and have major ongoing investment in place, to develop more products and services in the foreseeable future. With VINK as our ally along with their other high quality brands that they offer, we are perfectly placed to expand our innovative range and offer them to the sign industry."

Simon highlights the rapid changes since the launch: "Already within four months of launch we have seen the LUMAIRE light panel undergo some improvements, such is the rapid progress in this market sector. Our LED strips are now 20 per cent brighter, a crisper white at 6500K and the reflective technology on the rear sheet has increased to 98 per cent effectiveness which has enhanced the overall effect noticeably. We won't go higher than 6500K colour temperature as this tends to make whites bluer. We want to ensure brand consistency and we will offer the same colour temp across our range of our products as they develop."

LUMAIRE was a 'great success' at the Sign & Digital UK show with a huge amount of interest shown and VINK were pleased to be able to demonstrate the profitability that LUMAIRE can bring to any sign maker, from their stand and will be following up the interest over the coming weeks. Expect to hear much more from VINK and LUMAIRE in the coming months!

www.lumaire.co.uk
www.vinklighting.com



Kornit Digital 'realigns' its UK installation and service

Kornit Digital has appointed the Dennison Group to handle its service and support cycle for new and existing customers. This is to 'streamline its after-sales operation in the UK and Ireland'.

According to the Kornit Digital, the Dennison Group's high level experience in providing specialist services for users of industrial and commercial ink-jet printers fits their precise requirements. This new agreement will provide customers with experienced staff to care for machine installations, hot-line support, site visits and preventative maintenance. Engineers from Dennison have gone through a training and certification program at Kornit Digital and are officially authorised to work with the company's technology.

"We want to be in the position to react and respond quickly to any type of queries and installation requests. Using a specialist company with long-term experience in industrial ink-jet devices fits in perfectly with our customer care objectives," says Nikolaus Nowak, Service and Logistics Manager, EMEA, at Kornit Digital Europe.

www.kornit.com



Nikolaus Nowak, Service and Logistics Manager, EMEA, at Kornit Digital Europe.

Screen partners with DPI to sell the Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV



Screen Europe has partnered with wide-format company Digital Printing Innovations Ltd (DPI) to sell the range of Screen Truepress Jet W3200UV flat-bed printers in the UK.

"DPI has the right breadth and depth of experience and expertise to sell and support the Truepress Jet W3200UV," says Bui Burke, Vice-President, Sales, Screen Europe.

"This printer ticks all the boxes for companies looking to upgrade their production facilities with a fast and flexible solution and it fits very well into DPI's portfolio of wide-format printers."

Manufactured by Screen subsidiary Inca Digital, the six-colour + white Truepress Jet W3200UV is a new printer that combines high-quality and versatility with high productivity and is available in a choice of two speeds: 85sqm/hr and 150 sqm/hr. With the ability to print onto a wide range of rigid and flexible media up to 3.2 x 1.6m in size and up to a maximum 50mm thickness, the printer meets the multiple demands of the POS, signage and décor markets today, including for lenticular and multi-layer applications.

Ricoh extends its support for textile, 3D and graphic innovators of the future

Ricoh Europe is expanding its ability to support the 'growing demand' for its industrial ink jet print heads, used in wide format graphics, textile and 3D printing, with the launch of a new European Ink Jet Technical Centre. Ricoh has supplied print head technology and licensed patents to companies around the world for over 30 years.

The new centre, based in Telford, UK opened its doors in April 2014 and offers localised technical support for OEM ink jet innovators across EMEA. It has laboratories

for providing internal testing, evaluation and external training. They are fully equipped to assist European integrators with their design, evaluation and validation of Ricoh's Ink Jet components – from product development through to the subsequent product introduction – for wide format graphics, direct to garment, 3D printing and other industrial applications.

Graham Kennedy, Business Development Manager, Industrial Print, Ricoh Europe, said: "Ricoh's inkjet print heads present many exciting opportunities

for the future and innovative developers now have expanded opportunities to use our competence and support facilities and push their imagination to the limits. We are excited about the possibilities, whether that is to see our print heads being used in functional prototyping and advanced additive manufacturing, or to produce bespoke clothing on demand or to support the graphics and signage needs of the future."

www.ricoh-europe.com/ink-jet-solutions

Multipanel UK Ltd brings manufacturing to UK

Multipanel has moved the production of its Alupanel® aluminium composite panels back to the UK from China. Supplied by Perspex Distribution, Alupanel® is suitable for the print, sign-making, architecture and interior design sectors. It is available in a wide range of standard PE colours, which come

with a five-year guarantee for both internal and external applications.

Following 18 months of preparation and construction, the new, 'cutting edge', high speed production line in Kent has the 'most advanced production technology in the industry'.

The multi-million pound project includes warehousing, administration and production facilities with an annual capacity to produce 5 million square metres of Aluminium Composite Panels. The site has also created over 50 new jobs in local area.

According to the company, this move will enhance the already high standards of Alupanel® products thanks to the use of the very best raw materials from European suppliers; reduce delivery times; and enable the company to respond more quickly to market demands.

Managing Director, Andrew Cock, said: "The UK is renowned for its quality manufacturing and we are delighted to be opening this facility in Dover. Alupanel® will be the only product of its kind to be made in the UK and manufacturing here will enable us to provide our customers with an unrivalled product in terms of quality and service."

Alupanel Aluminium Composite is distributed in the UK by Perspex Distribution Ltd. "We are delighted that Multipanel have chosen to take advantage of the quality manufacturing available in the UK," says Craig Dodson, Perspex Distribution Director. "Our business depends on providing customers with a quality product when they need it. This new facility will provide an additional stability to stock levels as well as reducing manufacturing times for special lengths by up to 75 per cent!"



Primex display solutions appoint UK Distributor

Digital Print Innovations (DPI) is expanding its team after becoming sole UK and Ireland distributor for Primex display systems.

DPI is already 'established as leader in the industry for spotting trends and supplying innovative products' to the signage and graphic display market. This was apparently key to winning the Primex solutions distributorship in the UK and Ireland. Primex is one of the leading suppliers for large for-

mat print, signage market and partner for frames and lightboxes.

DPI will also continue to concentrate on the sales and support of associated products such as fabric sewing and finishing solutions for exhibition and display graphics; as well as wide format print solutions from Mutoh and Seiko and RIP solutions.

Primex's tension fabric systems (TFS)

include lightboxes and frames for the large format signage, retail and interiors markets including events and exhibitions, restaurants and cafes, public buildings and offices and museums. The lightboxes are suitable for internal use and have fabric both sides rather than using an aluminium composite back sheet, which means they can be broken down into small packages, to save on transport.

Their 20mm Light Guided Panel is 'perfect' for interior aesthetics as well as practical considerations. Double-sided and made from a light guided panel, an acrylic sheet and edge lit LEDs, it's available up to 2m x 1m, with a 50mm option going up to 3m x 1.2m. Both offer even luminosity across the whole panel and no hot spots. Where larger panels are needed, the LED module and LED chain options, where chains of LEDs are attached to the support bars, can be used to make a lightbox big enough for any interior.

"As the UK and Ireland distributor, we will be able to offer customers the chance to visit our showroom to see the possibilities offered by the Primex solutions. We'll also be able to facilitate fast and reliable delivery from our warehouse to anywhere across the UK and Ireland. More staff are being put in place to help support our customers on the ground in specifying frames, quotes and bespoke cutting services," said DPI director Simeon Wicks.

www.dpi-uk.com
www.primex-displays.com



Bronze for Sign 2000

Sign 2000, one of the UK's most successful signage companies, was awarded the Investors in People Bronze award for going 'above and beyond' in the way they develop, support and motivate their staff.

The Bronze award is achieved by just over 5 per cent of Investors in People recognised organisations in the UK, all of which have demonstrated an additional 26 or more pieces of evidence in the Investors in People core Standard.

The Investors in People framework, which is suitable for organisations of any size and in any sector, 'transforms business performance through people', helping companies to achieve their objectives by

'targeting specific priorities within the organisation'.

Steve Spackman, Marketing Director at Sign 2000 which has some 80 employees, said: "Achieving this award is extremely satisfying - it's an upgrade on our previous award and is judged by the Investors in People personnel randomly interviewing various departmental members of staff. Maintaining an appreciated and happy work force stimulates efficiency and growth which will always lead to increased profits.

"Organisations that have achieved the Investors in People Standard generally have lower staff turnover and sickness

rates, lower recruitment costs and a reduced likelihood of litigation. In addition, they tend to have increased levels of profitability, employee engagement and productivity."

John Telfer, Managing Director of Inspiring Business Performance Ltd (BP), who delivers Investors in People for London and the South, said: "Sign 2000 should be very proud of their achievement, particularly as they have gone beyond the core requirements of the Standard. I hope other organisations will look to them as an example of what can be done when staff and managers work together."

Signs Express announced as finalists

Signs Express have been confirmed as finalists in the British Franchise Association, Franchise of the Year Awards. The news comes as Signs Express is beginning to launch celebrations to mark 25 years in business.

The franchise first opened doors back in 1989 when co-founders David Corbett and Frank Eliel had the vision to start a sign franchising business in the UK. Since then the company has grown to include 70 production centres across the UK and Ireland, with the head office still remaining close to its roots in Norwich.

Craig Brown said: "During the economic difficulties that all businesses have suffered during the recession, we wanted to protect our franchisees as much as possible. Our mission was to encourage feeling of 'we're all in this together.' By working as a team, one big franchise family, we are all able to not only help ourselves, but help each other also.

"We are all communicating better across the group – not only the necessary news but also the good news that often gets over looked but actually is a great motivator. We, (as directors) are making more vis-

its to our franchisees and offering even more support from our head office, which boasts a wealth of knowledge not only in the signage industry but also in IT, marketing, HR, business management and finance.

We are delighted to have had all our hard work acknowledged and to be announced as finalists in this year's BFA Franchisor of the Year award."

Opportunity

As Signs Express celebrates its 25th year in business, it is also looking at expanding its franchise offering to include a new business model; dual branding with existing print businesses to create a print concession opportunity.

The dual branding opportunity will be open to printers and other similarly sectorised companies who are looking to expand their product offering to include signs and graphics.

Without losing the identity of their own brand, these companies will work with Signs Express to expand their businesses, with the advantages and benefits that come from the support and security of joining such a 'respected franchise'.

The team at Signs Express will advise on equipment and materials and train staff members on the new offering. But the biggest benefit for any print business will be to take advantage of the company's 'marketing collateral and expertise in online marketing, driving enquiries and resulting in a mutually beneficial dual branded company'.

signsexpress.co.uk



Positive outlook confirmed by latest SDEA survey

The half-yearly survey from the Shop and Display Equipment Association reveals that there is tangible evidence of a 'positive upwards climb within the retail display industry'.

The survey found that 57 per cent of respondents benefited from an increase in sales during the second half of 2013 compared with the first half of the year, while a further 24 per cent registered similar results.

Many shop fitting and display companies expect to do more business in the second half of the year, so the survey also compared sales with the same period the

previous year. These figures too were encouraging with 43 per cent of respondents reporting increased sales year on year and a further 33 per cent indicating no change. The average increase reported was 18.6 per cent.

The future too looks promising. Over 50 per cent of respondents expect sales to increase during the next six months and the figure rises to 76 per cent for the long range, 12 month forecast.

Other indicators, such as employment, also suggest high levels of confidence. 19 per cent of respondents had taken on

additional employees during the last six months and some 52 per cent said they expected to take on more staff over the next six months.

"There has been a real turn around with genuine growth of 26 per cent compared with our last six monthly survey and 18 per cent growth year on year", said SDEA Director Lawrence Cutler. "Overall, these figures reveal a degree of business confidence not witnessed in the UK shop fittings and display industry for several years."

www.shopdisplay.org

30 Years of Mida Sign Services UK Ltd

This year, Mida Sign Services UK Ltd are celebrating their 30th anniversary in business. The company was formed in January 1984 by current Director, Mike Smith, who learnt about the trade from working as a Sign Fitter's mate and qualifying as an electrician.

Over the past three decades they have steadily developed to become one of the industry's 'leading Sign and Graphics installation and maintenance companies within the UK'. The time has brought them the knowledge and experience that they utilise effectively today. When the company was first established most of the work completed was the installation of signage and lighting to public houses, which has now widely expanded to installing a wide variety of signs and graphics.

Mida 'aspired to keep up with client demand' and to maintain their position within a constant changing industry. In recent years they've seen more demand for the installation of digital graphics such as digitally printed wallpaper, window graphics and interior retail promotions. As well as large external signage such as flex-face, built up letters and large banner promotions.

In June 2013 the company relocated to bigger premises, about three times the size of their previous location. This has enabled them to develop and expand their trade production department, storage facilities

and office space whilst being closer to motorway links. In recent months Mida have also welcomed new members of staff to help with the increase of demand.

Company director Mike Smith said: "My business has grown considerably from being run in a little office aka as my small bedroom at my mum and dad's house to a large unit on a business park. I have a strong team and many of my employees have been with me for many years and some from the very early days. This has given me the confidence to take on new challenges whilst adapting to changes within the industry."

As a result of technology advances over the last thirty years Mida Sign Services has adapted to enable easier and effective management of the company. "As each year passes we are using the latest technology for every day running. The crews on site can communicate with us via their smart phones and are able to take photos of the job and email them direct to our client immediately. We endeavour new ideas and practices to keep up with the industry, such as using Social Media sites to keep our clients up to date with recent news and to find out what the new trends are within the industry. We are finding these sites are an effective marketing tool, therefore it is vital to stay on form when it comes to new technology and ideas," says Mike.

Over the past three decades Mida has been involved with many prestigious projects. "In the last 30 years I have built strong relationships with sign companies throughout the UK that have used us as sub-contractors for their sign installations. We have been involved in many memorable projects that have left us extremely proud to be a part of. In 2012 we completed the installation part the famous Olympic Rings on the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle, in addition to the supply and full installation of the Community Shield Banners at Aston Villa Football Club." For two years running Mida have also won the contract to supply and install the Chinese New Year banners in Trafalgar Square in London in preparation for the Chinese New year celebrations.

"Three decades in the sign and graphics business has been a very exciting ride, yet very challenging to say the least", says Mike. "I have gained great work relationships and friendships throughout my duration of Mida. If it wasn't for their support and trust in our company, we wouldn't have been able to achieve this big milestone."

Mida Sign Services UK Ltd are based in Greater Manchester offering nationwide signage and graphics, installation and maintenance services.

www.midasignservices.co.uk

Atlantic Tech Services have been appointed as the sole UK distributor for the new range of AEG professional printing equipment and supplies. The new range of AEG products includes a family of UV Printers, UV Inks, Solvent Inks and both Inkjet and Laser media products.

Voyager 2050 UV Printer

The Voyager range of UV printers offer high quality, high performance hybrid printing, 'ideally suited for all sign and commercial print companies'.

Ensemble UV and solvent premium inks

The AEG Voyager PRO has a patented dual media transport system, which keeps a firm grip on even the very smoothest of media, such as vinyl, whilst minimising the danger of residual dirt or marking. The Voyager PRO is one of the first commercially available printers to use the new Xaar 1002 print heads, featuring improved drop placement accuracy and variable drop technology, capable of producing drop sizes between 0 and 18pl.

Atlantic appointed AEG distributor



Atlantic also offer the exciting range of Ensemble Premium UV and solvent inks. Ensemble Premium inks are formulated to be compatible with HP, Mimaki, Mutoh,

Roland, Seiko and other wide-format printers using Epson DX4 / DX5 print heads.

www.atlantic-ts.com

Caldera celebrates recognition from readers

Caldera has walked away with recognition for its software suite 'tailored' to the needs of wide-format print houses, after Wide-Format Imaging (WFI) held its Readers' Choice Top Product Awards for the ninth year. Modular option Print Standard Verifier and full packages Caldera v9.2 and Flow+ 2.0 were all winners in their individual categories, each elected by the magazine's readers.

"With so much of Caldera's research and development reliant upon customer feedback, reader-voted awards pay us a huge compliment," says Sébastien Hanssens, vice-president marketing and communications.

"We are delighted to have met the expectations of WFI's discerning audience yet again, and aim to do so for years to come." Flow+ 2.0, released last summer, has become a 'major market force in helping wide-format print houses optimise their

businesses'. The suite enables users to link applications across their business suite, creating a workflow that can be visualised and optimised.

Print Standard Verifier's victory in its category is its first major industry award. PSV enables printers to match their output to IDEAlliance, G7 and FOGRA specifications using a simple 'traffic light' system. This helps them determine whether or not they would pass certification to these increasingly important sector standards. Caldera sees the WFI award as 'recognition of its forward-thinking approach to helping printers achieve standardisation'.

The version 9.2 update of the Caldera suite, which is the framework for popular wide-format packages GrandRIP+ and VisualRIP+, won in its category. Advanced preflighting, color management, user interface and nesting tools are implemented



throughout the Caldera package, to make it easier for users to print faithful output first time round.

Epson UK to double range of "Sure" brand inkjet printers for professional print applications by 2016

Epson UK aims to launch over 10 new inkjet printers for a range of professional print applications over the next 18 months. This programme is part of their strategy to 'deliver a comprehensive choice of affordable, high-quality print solutions to signage, décor, textile and photo print specialists'.

Over the last two years, Epson has introduced 10 professional print products under the 'Sure' brand. These have included several 'firsts' such as its first signage/POS wide-format printers (the SureColor SC-S range), dye sublimation printers (the SureColor SC-F range), and direct-to-garment textile printer (the SureColor SC-F2000).

"Epson's strategy is quite simple – but very ambitious," says Phil McMullin, Sales

Manager ProGraphics, Epson UK. "We want to provide the market with the best combination of printer and ink technology to deliver high quality, superb reliability and the best all round return on investment for the broadest range of professional print applications."

Technology

The core of Epson's print technology is the Micro Piezo inkjet printhead. To achieve the quality demanded by the commercial print industry, it was necessary to develop the thinnest possible piezo element for maximum control over drop size. The result was the 2007 launch of Epson Thin Film Piezo (TFP). Since then, TFP

has been Epson's flagship technology for large-format printers, where fine image quality is required to create graphics with 'outstanding detail, colour expression, and increased productivity'. Last year, Epson took another 'leap forward in the evolution of its thin-film piezo technology' with the launch of PrecisionCore.

Epson is the 'only company to develop and manufacture the full range of aqueous, solvent, resin, UV, dye sublimation and textile inks'. As a result, every component of an Epson solution; hardware, printhead, ink and software is 'optimised' to deliver the best possible performance.

www.epson.co.uk

Early opportunity to try out the new Mimaki

Graphic Printing Technologies (GPT) is inviting potential customers to be among the first to get a close-up view of the new Mimaki JFX200-2131 flatbed UV printer. After its official debut on Hybrid Services' stand at Sign & Digital UK, GPT are one of the first companies to buy a demonstration unit for its own premises in Reading.

Jason McNulty, Sales Manager for GPT, said: "As one of Hybrid's leading resellers, we are delighted to be among the

first companies to have a demo unit on site. We invite all our customers and potential customers to come and see the printer. We are happy to run test files and can answer all your questions and enquiries."

The Mimaki JFX200-2513 has a bed size ideally suited to the UK and Ireland's 8' x 4' rigid sheet market. It offers 'good productivity' and Mimaki's 'typical high quality of output at a good price point'. It has a choice of vibrant process colour inksets as

well as white, clear and primer ink options to enable coloured or clear substrates to be printed to.

McNulty said: "We are really excited by the JFX200-2513. It offers an unbeatable combination of productivity, quality, flexibility, ease of use and GPT is offering the printer at an amazing price to deliver a versatile and powerful business solution."

www.g-p-t.co.uk

Insight Signs created most efficient LED yet

"In the seven years we've have been selling LEDs," says Richard Rinn, managing director of Insight Sign Systems, "we have never been asked if lm/W is the most important specification in a LED system". The lm/W (lumens per watt) specification, otherwise known as efficacy, tells you how much brightness you get for each watt of electricity consumed. A bit like miles per gallon for a car. Which he feels is 'a vitally important piece of information'.

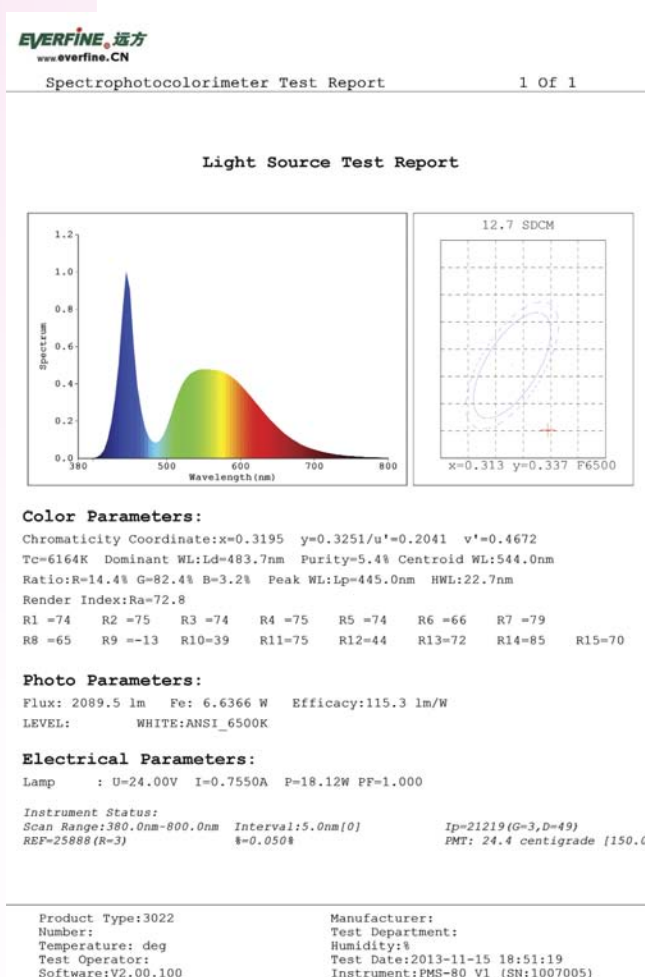
Over the past 14 months, Richard has been developing and testing a replacement for their Luminescent Superbright LED strip, which they've been selling for almost six years. "During that time we have had no failures caused by the LEDs, and the test unit outside our premises is still producing 74 per cent of its original lumens. This is after being in use 12 hours per day, seven days a week, 365 days per year, which over six years adds up to over 26,000 hours."

When introduced, Superbright was the 'best in its class' with an efficacy of 76 lm/W. To keep ahead, in June 2014 Insight is changing over from Superbright's 12V to a new 24V Superbright system, which offers a leading 117 lm/W at 1400 lm/m. To compare Richard says in SloanLED's Spring 2013 brochure, their closest comparable product Slimliner is 83.3 lm/W at 604 lm/m.

An even brighter option will also be introduced, known as Hyperbright (see light source test report), producing 2050 lm/m, with efficacy at 115 lm/W. Richard said: "To our knowledge this is by far the brightest LED strip available." The third option will be their Eco-bright, which will provide 100 lm/m at approx 120 lm/W.

All three variations are produced using the exact same high quality 10 mm wide PCB backed with 3M VHB fixing tape (not just 3M tape as is fitted on all other brands of LED strip) This 'removes the potential need for return trips to site to re-adhere the strip which may not stay in position'. All three variations have 3022 LEDs, 126 per metre, the only difference is brightness and consumption. These will be fitted in all of Insight's illuminated product range, and will come with a five year warranty when fitted by Insight.

www.insightsignsystems.com



The light source test report, which shows the increase in lumens per watt of their new LED systems.

Octink awarded Investors in People Bronze accreditation

West London-based signage and large format print specialist Octink has been awarded the Investors in People Bronze award in recognition of the company's 'commitment to continually developing, supporting and motivating its staff'.

Mike Freely, Managing Director of Octink, said: "At Octink our people are at the heart of everything we do – whether that is producing signage for an event or project managing the creation of a property marketing suite. As a result, we constantly strive to put our people first. We have held Investors in People accreditation since 2004, so to have had our commitment to our people recognised with the Bronze award makes us really proud."

The Bronze award is achieved by only 5 per cent of Investors in People recognised organisations in the UK. It is awarded to organisations that demonstrate an additional 26 or more pieces of evidence above the core standard.

According to Paul Devoy, Head of Investors in People: "Achieving the Investors in People Bronze standard is something that any organisation should be truly proud of. It is the sign of a company which is truly committed to good people."

Octink, which produces signage, graphics and decorated interiors for clients in the retail, live event and commercial and residential property sectors, was first accredited by Investors in People in 2004 and

has retained this accreditation throughout the intervening 10 years.

The company supports learning and development, as well as offers staff at all levels opportunities to work across different areas of the business and take on new responsibilities. One of the ways in which the company maintains high levels of motivation is through regular and transparent updates to the staff about business development and future plans. As a result, Octink employees 'not only enjoy working at the company, but they also trust their colleagues and are enthused about its future'.

www.octink.com

YPS puts customers and applications first in online revamp

Your Print Specialists (YPS) has has updated its website, to 'reflect the company's capability to supply and assist printers in a cornucopia of markets, such as retail and sign and display'.

The website makes it simple to identify and register interest in any product from their broad portfolio. Leading on its wide-format digital ink-jet technologies from Mimaki, Epson and Canon, it also reflects their commitment to the ancillary products for this market, as well as consumables for screen and litho production.

Particular to YPS's online refresh is the link between products and markets. "For YPS, it's never been about moving boxes; we identify the right equipment and offer continued support for the customer's precise need," says Garry Brown, managing director.

"Our new website sets out our stall in a clear and accessible manner by showcasing our heritage across a diversity of application areas."

Other additions to the site include customer stories and a 'meet the team' page, focusing on YPS's belief that it's the people in wide-format who truly 'make the business'.

"We love to see the fruits of our customers' investments and their ongoing collaboration with YPS, and we're delighted that they're willing to let us tell their stories in conjunction with our own," says Hazel George-Sowerby, finance director.

"Our team is full of knowledge and experience, and we felt it appropriate to make more of that in alignment with our brand moving forward."

www.yourprintspecialists.co.uk



Spring sees new faces at Applelec

Applelec welcomes four new recruits to the company across the sales, design, operations and marketing departments.

In staff developments planned to improve customer support, new employees have all joined Applelec from previous roles in the signage and visual communications industries. Matty Bullough joins Applelec in the newly created role of design engineer; Gary Middlemiss joins as operations manager; Conor Bradley is the latest addition to the signs sales team; and Lois Edwards joins Applelec as marketing assistant.

Ian Drinkwater, Applelec managing director, said: "Our latest recruits each bring new skills and ideas to our already great team

and I'm delighted to welcome them all to the company. Matty's new role of design engineer is a significant step for Applelec and means we can offer a more robust service for customers requiring design support for complex sign projects. In operations, Gary brings valuable and relevant experience that only somebody time-served in the sign industry can bring."

Gary Middlemiss joins Applelec from roles as an estimator in the sign, sheet metal and glass industries. As operations manager, Gary will focus on health and safety training along with project management of the more unusual or complex projects that Applelec does. In these projects Gary will liaise between Applelec's sales teams and the factory floor to make sure work is achieved to specification.

Matty Bullough has 10 years' experience in design engineering within the sign industry and a degree in product design. Matty specialises in design for manufacture and will be involved in both new product design at Applelec and customer design support. In product design Matty will work from concept generation to reality in creating new products to further enhance Applelec's range.

Lois Edwards is Applelec's new marketing assistant, and joins the company from GAP where she was a regional visual merchandiser. With a degree in fashion marketing, Lois will be looking after day-to-day marketing activities and brings experience of event management to the role having spent one year as marketing executive for a London lifestyle magazine.

Conor Bradley has worked in the sign industry since beginning an apprenticeship five years ago in metal fabrication and welding which covered steel frameworks, letter building and sign manufacture along with CNC router and laser operation. With five years' factory floor experience, Conor is now putting practical knowledge to good use in his move to a sales assistant role.

www.applelec.co.uk



The photo shows L-R: Conor Bradley, Applelec managing director, Ian Drinkwater, Gary Middlemiss, Lois Edwards, Matty Bullough.



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For more information:
www.signupdate.co.uk/gavwk

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www.signupdate.co.uk/ssek

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www.signupdate.co.uk/sinNW

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For more information:
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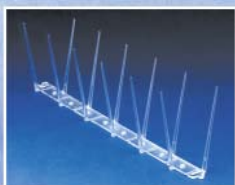
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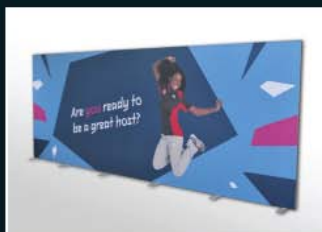
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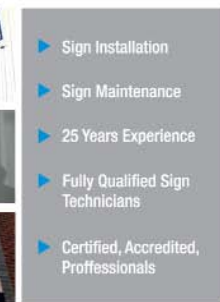
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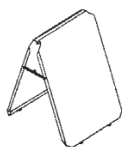
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www.applelec.co.uk

Trade suppliers of proven LED lighting solutions and manufacturers of the flat lighting unit, LED Light Sheet. Energy efficient, award winning LED lighting modules in a variety of colours including RGB (colour changing) are available for both indoor and outdoor applications. Applelec offer unrivalled service and after sale technical support for our LED solutions to ensure customers receive continued assistance.

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White & coloured LED modules in 4 sizes and LED ribbon - bright or super bright. 12v power converters, RGB controllers, together with a range of connectors. For full details on our range, prices and for images, check out our website & online shop. Competitive prices guaranteed!

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We offer a wide range of LED products from market leading manufacturers Sloan LED, LED Light Sheet and Toshiba. This includes a diverse selection of quality LEDs, including ChanneLED Modules, SignBOX Light, PosterBox Modules, Border Tubing and accessories. This combined with dedicated product management, estimating and sales team means Paperlinx - Robert Horne is well placed to offer best advice.

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Chromasign launched at Sign UK. We offer a complete range of ChromaForm Letters with Halo Lighting not available anywhere else. Ring Susan or Lesley for details and samples.

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The favourite online LED supplier to the sign, display and shopfitting trade. Large stocks carries, experienced sales people, no nonsense ordering. Orders can be made online, over the phone and by email. Use Code: EX10 for 10% trade discounts.

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Studlands Park Avenue, Newmarket,
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Fax: 01638 662770

info@arken-pop.com

www.arken-pop.com

arken provide a comprehensive range of light boxes for both internal and external use. Our new Purelite LED light boxes are great value, offering fantastic light dispersal, whilst being very economical to run. Our light boxes are made to order so can be customised to a specific size or colour or can be expertly designed to meet your individual brief.

BRIGHT GREEN TECHNOLOGY LIMITED

Unit 3 Oyster Park, Chertsey Road,
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info@brightgreentechnology.com

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Bright Green Technology specialises in LED systems that dramatically improve the quality and performance of backlit media, illuminated signage, retail displays and architectural features. Our tension fabric LED light boxes are fitted with the optimum LED system to meet your specific requirements.

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Fax: 01482 380901

sales@browningsltd.co.uk

www.browningsltd.co.uk

Brownings is one of the largest TRADE ONLY suppliers of signage products in the UK. The Company manufacture everything from poster frames to flex-faced signage. We have our own extrusions for the manufacture of acrylic-faced light boxes and can supply as lengths, in kit form or as ready-made up signs. All to your individual, specific requirements in terms of size, colour or shape.

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One of the largest independent stockholders of semi-finished plastics in the UK. Offering a huge range of both branded and own label products including Perspex, Marlon, Foamalite and Veka. A next day delivery service on cut to size and polished products is available. Also, manufacturers of light boxes, sign frames and specialist fabricated items.

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Fax: 01903 750444

sales@simplexltd.com

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Simplex are a trade only supplier of metal fabrications and sign systems. With an in house CNC router, 3 metre guillotine, brakepress and rollers, full welding equipment and much much more we are able to turn your ideas into reality!! From basic trays, to fret cut and illuminated fascias, oval lightboxes, built up metal letters, right up to 7 metre monolith signs we've pretty much made it all!

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Gloucestershire GL54 5EB

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Fax: +44 (0)1242 621529

malcolm@mirrortechnology.co.uk

www.mirrortechnology.co.uk

Producer of high quality mirror coatings. The process allows coating on flat and moulded surfaces up to 3m lengths. The mirror coating is usually applied to the inner or rear surface of transparent acrylic, giving the best protection to the mirrored surface. Coloured varnishes can be used to achieve a variety of dramatic effects.

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Fax: 0121 344 4558

marketing@righton.co.uk

www.righton.co.uk

Righton Ltd is the UK's leading supplier of semi-finished plastics to the sign industry. our extensive range includes: Cast and extruded acrylic available in clear, opal and a full range of colours. Polycarbonate, Foam PVC, PET-G, Aluminium Composite Sheet, Painted aluminium sheet, Aluminium extrusion, Ultrafine stainless steel sheet. In house cutting and coating as well as 24 hour delivery service.

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Fax: 01934 852816

sales@signscape.co.uk

www.signscape.co.uk

Serving the Sign Trade for over 40 years, we are a leading manufacturer of modular sign systems, notice boards & information displays. Our systems create a wide range of sign solutions including: post and panel, flush panel and curved panel signs; wayfinding signs, wall directories, monolith and fingerpost signs. Other products include exterior notice boards, poster/menu cases, and letter boards.

SIMPLEX LTD

Unit 3 - 16 Peter Rd, Lancing Business Park, Lancing, West Sussex. BN15 8TH
Tel: 01903 750333
Fax: 01903 750444
sales@simplex ltd.com
www.simplex ltd.com

Simplex are a trade only supplier of sign systems and metal fabrications. We offer a range of Pole & Plank products for post and wall mounted signs, fingerposts and mini monoliths. For versatile curved interior directories our System 4 is unbeatable whilst as an approved convertor for the Accord 15 "slat" type system and a recognised supplier of MSS we really hope we can help with all your needs.

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Fax: 01603 616781
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www.mercuryphillipsigns.co.uk
Suppliers of moulded acrylic pans and logos up to 2800mm x 1500mm and other types of press and vacuum forming in PVC and HIPS. Specialists in fabricated plastics for POS displays with full screen print, graphics and CNC routing capabilities.

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www.signindustries.com
SIGN INDUSTRIES are specialist TRADE MANUFACTURERS of etched Stainless Steel, Brass, and Bronze. We also Laser Engrave Plastics and Wood as stand alone products as well as moulds for castings. SIGN INDUSTRIES normally work with 3 mm thick material, and can etch bend and weld Stainless Steel up to 3 metres x 1.5 metres, and down to small sequential tags for wiring looms.

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sales@signscape.co.uk
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www.brettmartin.com

Brett Martin is a leading manufacturer of plastic sheet products for signage, interior design, shop outfitting, POS displays and fabrication. Products include Foamalux, the extensive foam PVC range in bright White, Satin and Gloss colours and an environmentally friendly Recycled material in addition to Polycarbonate, PVC, Acrylic, aPET, PETg, SAN and Styrene sheet.

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Fax: 01245 232801
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Perspex Distribution offer unique access to many of the principal plastic sheet products for the sign industry from their regional distribution centres in the north, midlands and south. With a comprehensive stock-holding in many colours and finishes, Perspex Distribution can deliver any material for any application when it is required.

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plastics.tkmuk@thyssenkrupp.com
www.thyssenkruppmaterials.co.uk
ThyssenKrupp Materials are stockists of Plastics and Aluminium for the Sign industry. Experienced staff and an extensive product range give customers the flexibility to cover all requirements. Products include Orogas Cast Acrylic, Marlon Polycarbonates, Marcryl Extruded Acrylic, Forex Foam PVC, Dibond and Etalbond Aluminium Composite, Bayer Petg and Quinn Products.

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Fonteyne Signs & Displays

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Fax: 01727 898828
studio@fonteynesigns.co.uk
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Manufacturers of all types of polystyrene cut letters, graphics & 3-dimensional models. Virtually any logo, graphic or shape can be cut in polystyrene. Especially useful for short term exhibition, conference or promotional use (All polystyrene has a fire retardant additive). Polystyrene can be faced with vinyl or inkjet prints. Fitting service nationwide. Established 1976.

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info@arken-pop.com
www.arken-pop.com

arken provide a comprehensive range of quality poster displays for both internal and external use including, poster frames, poster cases, light boxes, and pavement signs. Products are available off the shelf, can be customised to a specific size or colour or can be expertly designed to meet your individual brief. All our products are manufactured at our factory in the UK.

BROWNINGS LTD

5 Williamson Street, Hull, HU9 1ER
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Fax: 01482 380901
sales@browningsltd.co.uk
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Brownings is one of the largest, TRADE ONLY suppliers of signage products. We manufacture poster frames, menu cases, slimlocks, signtrim, troughlights, acrylic-faced light boxes, flexfaced signage and now our new Texsign frames for internal use. The two versions of poster holders, the slimlock and menu case are both thin, lockable and hinged. They are available in any practical size and colour.

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Fax: 01489 895899
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www.sign-holders.co.uk

Poster Cases and Poster Holders for all commercial and retail applications. Our extensive ex stock range includes snap frames, lockable poster cases, outdoor notice boards. Call our sales team or order online - apply for your Trade Login for reseller pricing.

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67 Dykehead Street, Queenslie Industrial
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Tel: 0141 774 5990
Fax: 0141 774 6653
sales@insightsignsystems.com
www.insightsignsystems.com

Insight is a trade only manufacturer, offering a made to measure service, with in-house powder coating. A wide range of options is available for displaying posters and transparencies (panels not included), including back-lit or non-illuminated, wall mounted or free standing etc. Hinged opening front provides access for maintenance. Rubber gaskets and slam locks provide security. Suitable for outdoor use.

ONTHECASE

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onthecase are providers of a high quality range of showcases, noticeboards and postercases for both internal and external use. A wide selection of models, sizes and finishes are available. New developments include vitrum, an outdoor back illuminated case for post mounted or wall applications using LED technology, and solar powered cases and light posts.

SIGNSCAPE AND SIGNCONEX LTD

Pear Tree Works, Bath Road, Upper
Langford, Bristol BS40 5DJ
Tel: 01934 852 888
Fax: 01934 852 816
sales@signscape.co.uk
www.signscape.co.uk

Serving the Sign Trade for over 40 years, we are a leading manufacturer of modular sign systems, notice boards & information displays. Our Avenue poster case provides high quality yet affordable, external poster display. Sizes from A4-A0, in wall, post, and rail mounted versions, with headers and sign panel options. We also manufacture illuminated menu cases for hotel and restaurant settings.

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Brownings is one of the largest, TRADE ONLY suppliers of signage products in the UK. We manufacture poster frames, menu cases, slimlocks, signtrim, troughlights, acrylic-faced light boxes, flexfaced signage and now our new Texsign frames for internal use. The aluminium frame are available in two widths, 25mm and 38mm, can be supplied to your specification and can even be illuminated.

GREEN MAGIC CO. UK LTD

Waltham Business Park, Brickyard Road,
Swanmore, Southampton SO32 2SA

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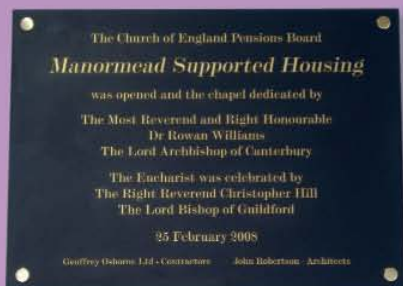
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