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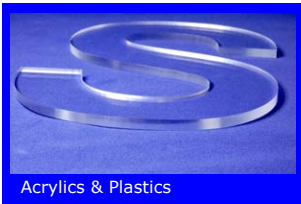
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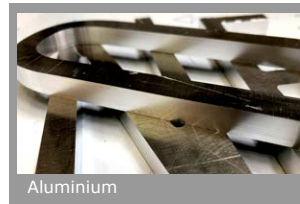
Taking the guesswork out of CNC routing



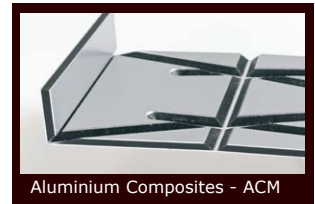
Acrylics & Plastics



Woods & Composites



Aluminium



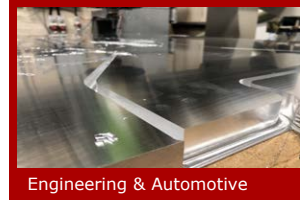
Aluminium Composites - ACM



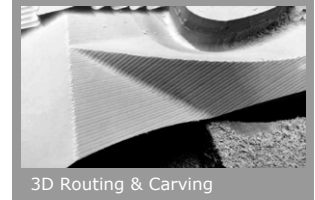
Foams & PVC



Copper, Bronze & Brass



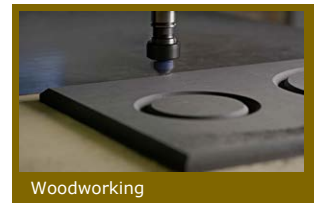
Engineering & Automotive



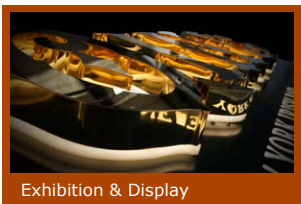
3D Routing & Carving



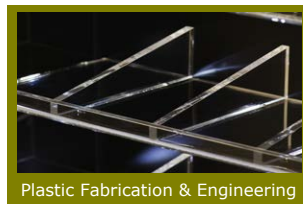
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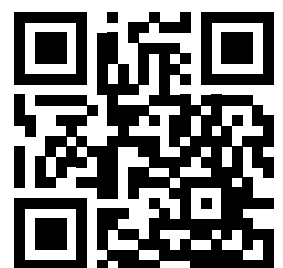
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200 Not Out!

Happy New Year to you all. We hope you had a lovely Christmas break and are looking forward to what looks like being another unprecedented and eventful year. Despite all the uncertainty over Covid, the latter part of 2021 certainly seemed very busy for our industry and long may this continue.

I am delighted to be invited to write this column for a very special issue for Sign Update. This is our 200th edition of one the industry's oldest and most-loved publications. Personally, I have very fond memories of welcoming Roger to press events and the like way back in the 1990s when I was a fresh-faced PR person. At that time, I was more used to the suit and tie world of IT and software and Roger, like many of his peers, was like a breath of fresh air. A true character that knew his stuff, was engaging, funny and often charming.

Roger was a sign-maker himself and when he started Sign Update as a twice yearly publication way back in 1990, it was side by side with his sign-making business. Sadly, crumbling vertebrae meant he struggled to hold a paintbrush over shoulder-level long enough to continue as a sign-maker, but he certainly made his mark with a magazine that over many years has stood the test of time.

Now published, edited and designed by his multi-capped son Martin, Sign Update continues to bring the latest from the industry to the loyal and informed readership of sign-makers, graphic artists and anyone else involved in this lovely old industry. It is a privilege for me to write regularly for Sign Update and long may we continue to serve you through all the ups and downs of signs, graphics and life.

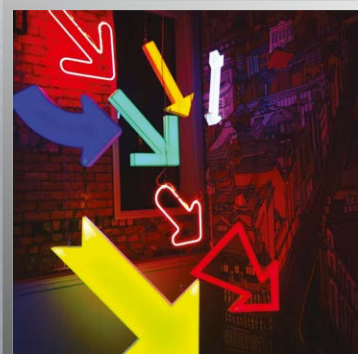
We mark this first issue of 2022 with a special gift as part of our Sign-makers tools special. The good people of Signgeer have provided a Scrapewer in every issue as a free gift for all our readers. There is more about this lovely little product on page 13, but in a nutshell it's a very handy tool for removing adhesive materials from metal and other substrates. The clever design is kind to your hands and fingers, helping keep you comfortable and safe when performing this necessary but tricky and time-consuming task. Thanks Signgeer!

You can also read more about their products and others in our special feature on sign-making tools. We also cover the specialist art of chemical etching, talking to the main trade suppliers in the industry.

We hope you enjoy this special issue and, as ever, welcome your comments and feedback.

Happy Sign-Making!

Jack



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AAG makes metal work better with latest purpose-built CNC router

In keeping with its known predilection for supplying purpose-built and industry-specific CNC machining solutions, AAG has now added the latest XYZ METALWORKER routing/cutting system to its burgeoning range of bespoke machine options. From the ground up, the METALWORKER has been designed to process small- to high-volume sheets of non-ferrous metals, aluminium, metal and aluminium composites (MCM/ACM) and alloys such as copper, zinc, brass and bronze using a range of special-purpose production tools.

The METALWORKER is available in a choice of nine different-sized models, the most popular of which include the 1.5 x 3m and 2.1 x 3m models, with other sizes available if required. The machines are powered by AAG's proprietary MOVE machine control software via a 22-inch multi-functional touchscreen control panel.

In addition to the now familiar single-piece solid steel frame construction designed to withstand the most vigorous machine operation likely to be encountered, coupled with a stress-relieved gantry to minimise vibration, standard design features of the XYZ METALWORKER include direct-to-drive servomotors with built-in encoders, an aluminium T-Slot zoned vacuum deck for maximum



- Powered by AAG MOVE™
- Robust Machine Construction
- Designed for Metal Fabrication
- Direct-Drive Servos with Absolute Encoders

material hold-down efficiency, a special tool length sensor to ensure consistent routed/cut depths and the latest XYZ helical rack and pinion drive system. This latter feature incorporates a multi gear teeth configuration that helps spread the workload more evenly, leading to faster throughput speeds (up to 35m/min), radically reduced machine wear and material wastage and ultimately a longer than normal machine life.

These features are supplemented with other optional machine enhancements that include a variable-station ATC (Automatic Tool Change) system and a choice of five, 10 and 15hp routing spindles and ISO30 and HSK-type tool holders.

For further information, telephone 01952 291600

www.aagcnc.com

ITC Composes New Routing Line

For the effective machining of galvanised steel composite panels and magnetic whiteboard materials, Industrial Tooling Corporation (ITC) has now introduced the latest addition to its cutting tool portfolio, the Cupro coated 1001-6F Series of routing tools.

As the UK's leading manufacturer of cutting tools to the sign making, print and digital display industry, the Tamworth manufacturer is continually evolving its product portfolio and reacting to the demands of industry to develop the most productive, innovative and cost-effective tooling solutions for industry. As part of this relentless R&D strategy, ITC has expanded the popular 1001 Series to incorporate the new Cupro coated 1001-6F Series.

The single flute routing tool for steel composite panels and

magnetic whiteboard substrates has been coated with ITC's innovative coating technology that demonstrates exceptional tool life when processing challenging materials. The solid carbide single flute routing tool is already revered as the tool of choice in the sign-making industry and the new Cupro coated variant provides exceptional heat and wear resistance to perform at the highest possible cutting parameters. At present, the new Cupro coated 1001-

length of 50mm.

This geometry maximises rigidity and performance to provide surface finishes that are the envy of the industry.

Capable of creating high-quality surface finishes that are a credit to the 1001-6F tool geometry and coating, end users can drastically reduce the requirement for time-consuming secondary hand finishing operations. With the solid carbide single flute upward spiral 30° helix on a reinforced 6mm shank, the new 1001-6F demonstrates performance that exceeds the capabilities of competitor product lines.

6F Series is available with a 6mm cutting diameter on a straight shank with an 11mm length of cut and an overall

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Viking UK distribution deal with Enimac for adhesive tape application machinery



Viking Industrial's conversion manager Darren Milner demonstrates one of the new Enimac adhesive appliance machines – the XT Light 1000

The sign and point of sale industry has been identified as a keynote target market by tapes, adhesives and sealants distribution specialist, Viking Industrial, as it seals a UK-wide distribution partnership with Italian-based Enimac to market and sell its five-strong stable of adhesive tape application machines.

Viking has created an in-house demonstration suite at its headquarters in Keighley, West Yorkshire, to showcase the Enimac range to potential clients across a multi-application end-user market.

In what represents a £50k investment, the company has installed two tape application units – the XT Light 700 and XT Light 1000 – which are being used to demonstrate the latest technology for applying multiple strips of tape at up to 50 metres a minute on flat surfaces such as paper, cardboard, plastic and metal.

The machines also have the ability to apply tape to correx, foamex, acrylic sheet, plastic extrusion and aluminium composite – and can also be adopted to apply magnetic strip.

Viking's sales and marketing director Colin Bennett regards the deal with

Enimac, based just outside Milan and part of Biemme Adesivi, as a major coup. Both firms are premier tape distributors for 3M, with Viking remaining the global technology giant's leading online partner in the UK.

He explained: "We clinched the deal with Enimac because of our industry knowledge, our web presence and our long-time partnership with 3M. We are both family-run companies, with over 80 years' combined experience in our specialist sectors and a joint goal of achieving tape application automation.

"The Enimac range of adhesive tape application machines is both versatile and flexible, offering speed and precision accuracy to improve productivity, to cut and apply all types of adhesive tape via touchscreen inputs.

"Specialist features include the ability to accommodate the largest formats of offset printing and many formats of digital printing and up to six independently programmable patented "paste and cut" applicators.

"The machines require limited space, are fully mobile, operate using standard

electric and, unlike some others, do not require compressed air, so reducing maintenance costs. The current 130% super deduction on capital expenditure until 2023 also comes into the equation.

"We feel confident the range will appeal to the sign and point of sale industry in what is essentially an emerging market in the UK. Early interest from potential customers via our website is encouraging."

The Viking range of long length double-sided tapes for the Enimac machines come in 500m, 600m, 1000m, up to 6000m lengths, with either standard or oversize liners for easy removal included in the packages.

Colin explained: "A key component is the latest 3M "Go To" tape GPT 020 – the next generation of thin bonding tapes, offering greater design possibilities, with a high grab long lasting acrylic adhesive that will stick to most High and Low Surface energy materials without the need for special primers. 3M have now added 3800 and 5000 metre rolls ideally suited to the versatility of the Enimac machines, with speeds of up to 50m per minute."

Viking has been supplying a range of products to the sign industry since its formation over 30 years ago and throughout this time has been a main distributor for 3M. It also offers an in-house tape slitting facility, again well utilised by the sign and point of sale sector.

Demonstrations in the in-house showroom can be arranged on 01535 610373.

www.vikingtapes.co.uk



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Trade Service

Innotech expands range of recycled, PVC-free banner materials

Innotech Digital, has announced the expansion of its Vertex Marine range of PVC-free fabric display products made from fully recycled PET yarns, with two brand new products. Having been the first company to launch fully recycled PVC-free materials to market, the availability of these new products means Innotech now supplies fabrics made from recycled PET yarns for the majority of large format printing applications.



Kieran Dallow, Marketing Manager for Innotech Digital, says, "Using PVC-free products made from recycled materials has become an essential requirement for many more businesses and applications. Over 5 years ago Innotech saw the signs that PVC Free medias would eventually take over PVC materials and were the first to launch a comprehensive PVC-free media range. 2 years ago, we also saw the increasing demand for materials made

of recycled yarns, and were the first to launch a range made from recycled PET. We are continuing this innovation with an exciting new range of products that makes us the obvious choice for anyone looking for the best possible PVC-free materials for their graphic display projects."

The new products are part of the Vertex Marine range of 100% polyester fabric made entirely from recycled plastic bottles.

This means the Innotech Vertex Marine efficiently conserves natural resources and reduces the burden of single use plastics on nature – especially marine life. They do this without losing any of the qualities of a virgin polyester yarn, to ensure there is no compromise to a quality print finish

when using dye-sublimation, UV-C or Latex printers.

Dallow adds, "We believe Vertex Marine is one of the most eco-friendly print materials the wide and grand format print trade has ever seen. These products are ideal for large tension displays, promotional textiles, such as table cloths and flags, exhibition and stage backdrops and a range of frontlit applications."

The new PVC-Free fully recycled products from Innotech

The Vertex Marine range currently includes the R-PET Display Textile, which is a 100% recycled polyester fabric that is fire rated to both B1 and M1. It is ideal for display frames, pop-up systems or table clothes. It was recently complemented with the addition of the Vertex Marine R-PET Recycled Flag Textile is a 110g/m2 material that is fire rated to B1 and is ideal for flags applications.

The latest to arrive includes Vertex Glacier R-PET Backlit Display Textile, which is a 180g/m2 material designed for backlit tension fabric displays. Fire rated- for B1, it is ideal for high traffic areas where point of sale of information signage is required, such as retail spaces, airports car showrooms and museums. It is completely crease-free for easy application and provides a consistent diffusion making it an excellent option for backlit applications.

Vertex Texture R-PET PVC-Free Coated Polyester Grey Back is a 240g/m2 is another addition that is fire rated to B1 and ideal for one-piece wall coverings, hanging displays, exhibitions and canvas frames.

Kieran Dallow concludes, "All of our Vertex Marine products are made using recycled plastics. It takes approximately 10 plastic bottles to produce 1 square metre of fabric. With width availability up to 3.2m, that's an awful lot of plastic being recycled thanks to Innotech."

www.innotechdigital.com



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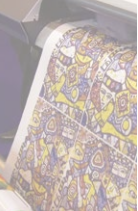


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“Roland DG Connect” adds new features for communications and creativity

Roland DG, a leading manufacturer of wide-format inkjet printers and printer/cutters, today announced the release of Roland DG Connect version 1.1, which includes new features to increase the visualisation of printer operation status and profitability for an expanded range of products.

Introduced earlier this year, Roland DG Connect was developed with the aim to improve customer satisfaction and success by providing a more comfortable and stable operating environment, improved workflow efficiency, increased business development and profitability, and to enable people with different skills, goals, and requirements to collaborate and share ideas.

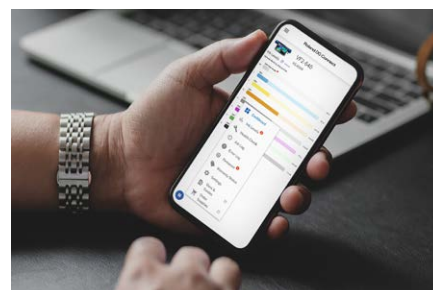
With this update, a new printer monitoring function is included, allowing customers to check the operational status of multiple printers in real time. This makes it possible to operate printers more efficiently and supports the improvement of productivity in printing operations. It also features a “business dashboard” that allows users to perform simple profit and cost calculations by entering the unit selling price of the output and the prices of ink and media.

The system helps foster increased profitability by setting appropriate sales prices and increasing cost awareness.

The software is now available to an even wider range of customers, with the tool now compatible with the VersaUV LEC2-330/640 UV-LED printer/cutters and the LEC2 S-series printers with flatbed/belt transfer system.

“Roland DG Connect is a valuable free service that greatly expands the creative possibilities of our customers by connecting them to a wide range of people and resources over the Internet,” said Johan Struyfs, EMEA Service Director at Roland DG.

“Customers tell us that being able to



easily observe the operating status of their printers has led to the implementation of appropriate maintenance for stable product operation and the realisation of increased efficiency and profitability. We will continue to add new features, services, and supported printers to generate an even more compelling creative ecosystem among our customers worldwide.”

Roland DG Connect is currently available for all TrueVIS models including the VG2-640/540, SG2-640/540/300, VF2-640, VG-640/540, SG-540/300, as well as VersaUV models including LEC2-640/330 and LEC2-S series. Updating to the latest firmware is required. Supported products will be expanded in the future.

www.rolanddg.eu

Drytac launches ViziPrint Deco +

Drytac, a leading manufacturer of adhesive-coated products, has expanded its high-quality portfolio of printable media solutions with the launch of ViziPrint Deco +, a 50µ (2 mil) optically clear gloss PET film with a permanent acrylic adhesive.

Designed to adhere to virtually any smooth flat or curved surface, including glass, plastic and metal, ViziPrint Deco + scratch resistant window film is ideal for high end architectural and building requirements and custom decorating applications. It has also been designed for the creation of stunning graphics and window decals with vibrantly rich colours for retail storefronts and POP or backlit displays.

Replacing the existing ViziPrint Deco SR product, ViziPrint Deco + has been upgraded to be compatible with a wider range of printers and offers users greater flexibility when producing work for a host

of markets. The film has been certified for use with HP Latex 300, HP Latex 500, HP Latex 700 and HP Latex 800 Series printers running HP Latex Ink – including white ink – and is also compatible with other resin inks from the likes of Ricoh and Epson.

In addition, the release liner has been changed from clear to opaque, enabling the media to be registered on a wider range of devices.



Professionally applied, the printable film delivers stunning crystal-clear graphics. ViziPrint Deco + is very durable and has been designed to remain in place for up to seven years, making it ideal for long-term indoor and/or outdoor window and building graphics.

On the introduction of the product, Shaun Holdom, Global Product Manager at Drytac, comments: “ViziPrint Deco + is a very versatile product that can be used for many applications. It is particularly suitable for creating powerful long-term image displays and window decals within a building space – for example, in conference and meeting rooms with glass walls, which require more privacy – and can also be used to create stunning graphics for retail storefronts and POP or backlit displays.”

www.drytac.co.uk

Signgeer introduces Scrapewing

There's a new hero in town and every time a new character arrives in Signgeers Printropolis, a brand-new product line comes with them. This time they welcome Scrapewing, a revolutionary new 4 sided, ergonomically designed scraper with optional soft touch grip.

If you've ever stripped a vehicle, you'll know how difficult it can be and going through handfuls of tiny blades isn't exactly forgiving on the hands. Signgeer aims to remedy this with their new design.

It's great for removing pressure sensitive materials such as vinyl and tapes from a wide range of surfaces including metal, paint, plastic, glass and more with a greatly reduced risk of scratching in comparison to metal blades.

Featuring four edges for longevity of use the scrape wing saves time spent changing blades in comparison to traditional double-edged blades. Each corner has a different angle, allowing you to get into almost any area with ease. This fusion of curved and straight edges provides you with the ultimate tool for maximum leverage on any removal job.

No bigger than 45mm square, this handy little scraper is extremely ergonomic and fits comfortably in any sized hand. The back of the Scrapewing is totally flat, allowing you to get right up underneath the material to be removed with ease.

Available in a choice of shores to suit any application, the green Scrapewing is a general purpose soft and pliable tool which is great for removing adhesives, labels and stickers, vinyl graphics and lettering, window films, bug and grime build up on vehicles prior to signwriting. Use on curved panels as well as rigid. The blue Scrapewing is rigid and again safe for almost any surface, and although it is a medium shore is still pliable but will maintain its edge for longer than the green, recommended for flat or slightly curved surfaces. The white scrapewing is Teflon and has the highest chemical resistance and is our most rigid Scrapewing. This rigidity makes it highly suited for hard, flat surfaces such as glass, windows, unfinished wood and rigid surfaces.

For those of you who like the finer things in life, we went that extra mile and created



the Soft Grip edition. The Soft Grip has a comfort grip infill on the front for next level ergonomics. Reduced fatigue and more comfortable working. Particularly good when working with glue removers or vinyl removal fluids for enhanced grip and in turn, better pressure.

Each Scrapewing material has been specially sourced and carefully tested to suit different surfaces and withstand the effects of glue and vinyl removal fluids used in the sign industry.

In this issue of Sign Update Signgeer have kindly included one of their standard range Scrapewings to try out in support of the Sign Tools feature this month.

www.signgeer.com

Signage installations directory launched

Graphics & signage installation workflow software provider Vism has launched a new free tool for finding freelance and subcontract installers for signage or graphics companies in the UK. The Signage Installations Directory helps printing companies search for the right installers for their projects and deal with one of the most commonly recognised bottlenecks in their workflow.

"We're asked almost daily to recommend installers for our customers and industry contacts, so we figured we'd build an easy way for people to find who they need, where they need them. Having been in this game for several years, we know that installations can often be the most challenging part of getting the job done, and finding good, available fitters is a common problem," said Dan Tyler, CEO at Vism.

Since its launch a week ago, Vism has had positive feedback from across the industry. The database is growing quickly, with 30+ installation providers already registered and new printers & signmakers making

searches every day. The database covers all regions of the UK with plans to expand it to other countries.

Dan added "We're big believers in harnessing, and sharing, the power of our network and want to help other companies benefit from it, helping them to build long-term partnerships"

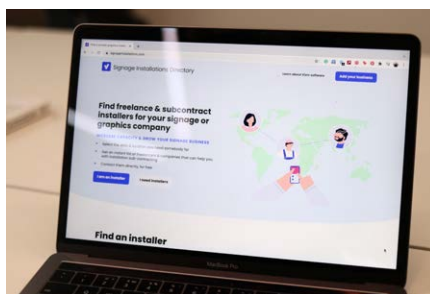
"This tool is a win-win for both parties involved. Printing companies can now find an installer or subcontractor according to their specific needs, whilst signage installers and subcontract companies have

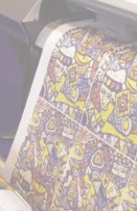
an opportunity to promote themselves and grow their business."

The tool offers an easy to use interface and free access for everyone, whether you are an installer or are looking for one. Printers can search by relevant skills, such as vinyl application, POS, signage maintenance, site surveys, vehicle wrapping, signage or graphics installation, and by location, to get a list of freelancers and subcontractors matching their needs.

Since being established in 2018, Vism has produced a number of initiatives to contribute to the development of the wide-format print industry in the UK by helping people connect to industry peers and build strong working relationships. They recently held the inaugural UK Graphic Awards, bringing the industry back together for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, to celebrate some of the UK's most exceptional visual projects and the impact they have on the wider commercial and social community.

www.signageinstallations.com





Avery Dennison partnership offers Organoid self-adhesive natural surfaces

Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions EMENA has formed a strategic partnership with Organoid Technologies GmbH, and will become the sole distributor of Organoid self-adhesive natural surfaces to the Graphics Industry in Europe, Middle East and North Africa (EMENA). It means that the 100% natural face materials is now available to the Avery Dennison distribution network.

Offering authentic handcrafted materials with self-adhesive backing, Avery Dennison Organoid Natural Surfaces enable endless unique and nature-inspired interior design possibilities. All with direct bonding to surfaces ranging from smooth, plastered and painted walls through to textured concrete surfaces and windows.

Peter Viegner, product line manager Signage Avery Dennison Graphics Solutions EMENA, said that the new partnership with Organoid Technologies GmbH opens up new possibilities and allows designers and installers to bring the outside in, making every space a truly unique experience:

"Our partnership with Organoid Technologies GmbH is another important step in pursuing our ambitious goals to help the architectural industry grow with innovative, sustainable and authentic products. Interior designers, decorators and architects now have - for the first time - a truly unique, natural and authentic handcrafted decoration solution for interior walls or windows."

The unique naturalness and authenticity of Avery Dennison Organoid Natural Surfaces' decorative coverings mean that building occupants and visitors can experience natural raw materials with most of their senses. The surface is untreated, preserving natural scents. Hotels, offices and homes can create a nature-inspired theme, choosing from seven different natural surfaces (Skelett Leaves, Rose Petals, Sunflowers Petals, Moss Bright Green, Moss Dark Green, Mountain Hay + Marguerites, Original Alpine Hay). All materials are produced with organically and regionally produced raw materials wherever possible, to avoid further processing via conventional production

and rely on regional partners and short transport routes.

Florian Föger, CEO of Organoid Technologies GmbH: "Our cooperation with a renowned enterprise like Avery Dennison will open new and exciting possibilities and increase Organoid® brand awareness within the graphics industry and beyond. Together with Avery Dennison and their existing sales network we will be able to boost the amount of natural surfaces used in interior architecture and biophilic design."

www.graphics.averydennison.eu/organoid



ITC offers a new route for composite machining

For the machining of challenging materials such as glass fibre composites and carbon fibre composites, Industrial Tooling Corporation (ITC) has now introduced its new 9001 series of multi-flute routers. The new solid carbide 9001 Series from ITC has a multi-flute right-hand cutting design that efficiently removes material whilst reducing the potential for delamination. The innovative geometry also incorporates a plunge cutting edge that enables customers to apply this new series for a multitude of applications.

Depending upon the materials being machined and the

application, the 9001 Series is also available with a diamond coating to enhance tool life and performance when cutting the most abrasive and

challenging of material types. Glass and carbon fibre composite materials are inherently difficult to machine and the combination of the innovative multi-flute geometry and the diamond coating that is added to the solid carbide tools provides performance enhancements that

make this new introduction the industry benchmark.

The 9001 Series is available in diameters of 3, 6, 8, 10 and 12mm with an overall length of 64, 75 and 100mm. To enhance the rigidity and performance of the 9001 series, ITC has optimised the new routing tools with an overall length of cut that ranges from 20 to 40mm depending upon the diameter selected. For further details on the impressive new 9001 series of routing tools from ITC, please contact your local representative.

www.itc-ltd.co.uk



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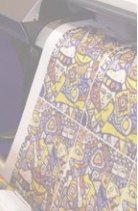
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SETTING NEW STANDARDS



Exhibition Update

Printwear & Promotion LIVE! The unmissable reunion

Printwear & Promotion LIVE! returns to the NEC in February with an unmissable reunion for the UK's garment decoration industry.

With there being no show in 2021, for the first time in 30 years, there is a really strong desire among both visitors and exhibitors to be back in force in February. In view of the results of a recent survey of 2020 visitors, in which over 75% advised they are definitely going to or very likely to visit, together with the fact that the show regularly attracts over 2,000 first time visitors, it is expected that visitor numbers will be similar to those of recent years, which have been in excess of 5,500!

Printwear & Promotion LIVE! is regarded as the annual launch pad for new garment decoration equipment, accessories and clothing lines. There are currently over 100 stands booked, including the vast majority of the major equipment suppliers, clothing distributors and printwear clothing brands.

Show director Tony Gardner comments: "The positivity from the industry for the 2022 show started back in the Spring, following the cancellation of the 2021 show, and these good vibes have continued through to the results of our recent visitor survey, hence the show's tagline of 'The Unmissable Reunion'. We are now pleased to announce that since registration opened in November, we

have had a record first month of visitor registrations!"

Industry leading suppliers will be showcasing the very latest in garment decoration technology, including long-standing exhibitor, YES Group (stand G10). John-Paul Burton, director, cannot wait to return, saying: "Now that COVID-19 restrictions have lifted, we look forward to once again showcasing YES Group at P&P LIVE! 2022. The fact is, Your Embroidery Services has been a constant attendee since 1996, and it is a true testament to the organisers and the exhibitors that this event is once again safely on track."

In 2022 the exhibition will be one of the first places in the UK where visitors will be able to see a number of new and exciting direct to film printing systems demonstrated live. Stands to head to, to see this equipment in action include TheMagicTouch (stand J40), Resolute DTG (stand B20) and R A Smart (stand A1).

Not only this but a number of first-time exhibitors will also be in attendance, including The Brick Factory (stand B30); a fully integrated workflow and commerce solution that empowers merchandise producers to grow their businesses at every level, and software developer CADlink (stand P22). Jennifer



Visitors can touch and feel the latest styles from key printwear brands at P&P LIVE! 2022

Blacow of CADlink explains why they are exhibiting in 2022: "There has been significant growth in the digital printing specialty markets recently and Printwear & Promotion LIVE! is the ideal platform to present our solutions. I'm most looking forward to bringing the CADlink team, from all over the world, together again for a professional event."

As usual the show will provide a vibrant, dynamic and interactive event for the garment decoration industry. In addition to hosting a vast number of exhibitors who are eager to showcase their new products and garments, Printwear & Promotion LIVE! also offers a full seminar programme. Topics will be announced later in the year, with sessions to cover all aspects of garment decoration, including embroidery, direct to garment printing and dye sublimation.

Printwear & Promotion LIVE! 2022 presents the first opportunity in two years to see the latest product launches, to meet all of the major suppliers and if you're new to the garment decoration industry to learn more from the industry experts. The show is the ideal opportunity to network with likeminded professionals and is certainly not to be missed!

Register now for the unmissable reunion!

Registering in advance is the only way to ensure that visitors can get straight into the action on the day of their visit – and it couldn't be easier!

Simply fill in a quick registration by heading to www.printwearandpromotionlive.co.uk, to receive a unique visitor barcode, which will grant visitors their free fast-track entry badge upon arrival at the NEC in February.

www.printwearandpromotionlive.co.uk.



More than 6,000 visitors attended Printwear & Promotion LIVE! 2020

Printwear *LIVE!*
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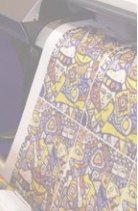
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Exhibition Update

Demonstrations and practical workshops to remain key element to SDUK in 2022

Sign & Digital UK (SDUK) – the leading event for sign, print, and visual communications professionals – will return to Birmingham's NEC with new features, new and returning exhibitors, and cutting-edge product launches.

Discussing the show's return, Jenny Matthew, event director, says, "After an almost three-year hiatus SDUK will celebrate the value of face-to-face, in building those all-important business connections in person and seeing things live. With so many business owners and industry heads under one roof, all wanting to develop their knowledge and expand their business, it's the best place to make valuable connections for anyone in visual communications".

Speaking about how the show has evolved over the years, she added, "SDUK visitors are keen to see what's possible in terms of output and to be inspired by creative applications on show. It is no longer a visit to see what kit and materials are available, it's also about what you can



do with the output from those products. Demonstrations and practical workshops remain key elements of the show. There is also a real demand for business advice and inspiration. We're creating a space for informal advice exchange, where visitors can ask an expert, share experience and get involved with topical discussion".

Sustainability is also on the agenda with the creation of the 'Sustainability Trail'. Visitors can follow this trail and meet the exhibitors with environmentally positive products and solutions.

SDUK has also teamed up with HEXIS to host this year's Battle Wrap Contest. With two heats and a semi-final taking place on the show floor each day, participants will compete in timed, 10-minute heats. The winners from each day will go head-to-head in the grand final, on SDUK's closing day - Thursday 24 March.

Visitors can expect to be inspired by the unveiling of technology innovations, to experience a wide range of products and learning opportunities, and to benefit from exclusive show deals and offers.

Sign & Digital UK 2022 takes place at the NEC, Birmingham from 22 to 24 March and is free to attend. Register online, or to view the full list of exhibitors and details of all show features.

www.signuk.com



22-24 March 2022, Hall 2, NEC, Birmingham

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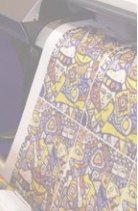
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Chemical Etching

What can you do with Chemical Etching?

Chemical etching is a process that has been used to create decorative images into metals for thousands of years. It is also known as chemical engraving, because just like engraving, it creates recesses in the metal, but with much finer detail, and for sign making it has many advantages over mechanical engraving. If you have a lot of detail to engrave, it is a lot quicker, and therefore cheaper than mechanical engraving, and leaves a smooth and attractive surface with no unsightly machining marks.

The three principal uses for chemical etching in the sign industry are for higher quality wayfinding signage, such as in apartment complexes or hotels, business nameplates such as the traditional brass plates often seen at the entrance to solicitors, dentists and accountants, and for commemorative plaques for opening ceremonies and bench memorials. Chemical etching also makes high quality labels, which is something often forgotten by sign-makers, which are used for everything from point of sale display to engineering nameplates. These are after all just miniature signs.

Colin Edge, Managing Director of Multitechnic, based in Northumberland, explains, "Most sign companies sub-contract their chemical etching requirements to specialists, for a lot of very good reasons. It requires a lot of specialist equipment, and unless you want acidic vapours destroying the rest of your equipment, it needs to be in a dedicated wet room with good ventilation. Chemical

etching just creates the images in the metal, nothing more than empty holes, so you also need specialist skills to fill those holes with paint. If you don't do it the right way, that paint is going to come back out again pretty soon."

He adds, "The chemistry of the etching process isn't as simple as you might think, and if you start to etch a mixture of brass and stainless steel, you will soon find yourself in all sorts of trouble. You also have to consider storage and disposal of quite large volumes of acidic liquid, and if you start washing acidic rinse water down the drain, you might get a visit from a man in a suit asking some very awkward questions."

Just because you leave chemical etching to specialists does not mean that you shouldn't get to know how it all works. According to Edge, it is actually quite simple. "All chemical etching does is make holes in the surface of the metal. The surface is either etched or it isn't, so any image that works in black and white can be etched. This even includes photographs, because you can reproduce photographic images from lots of tiny dots. Once you have made the holes in the metal, you usually then fill them with paint, which can be any colour. Creating complex designs in lots of colours is perfectly feasible, and you can even have colours fading into each other."

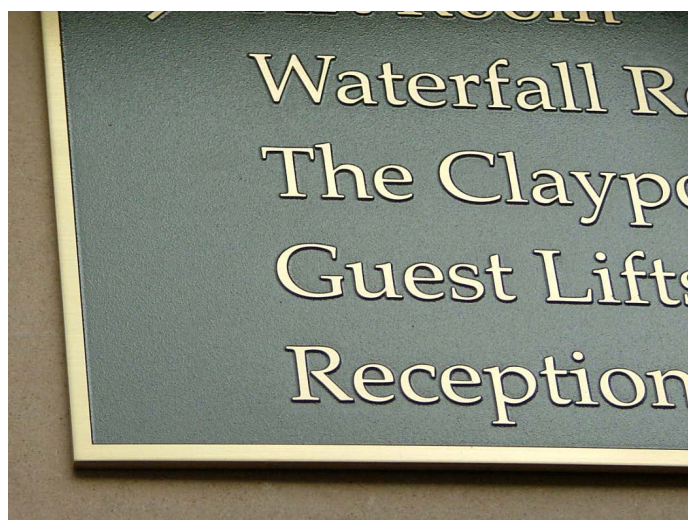
He continues, "At Multitechnic Ltd, we are celebrating our 50th anniversary this year. There is nothing about etching of

signs that we don't know. If you want an easy to read summary of all you need to know about chemical etching, just have a look at the guide on our website <https://multitechnic.co.uk/services/chemical-etching> and in less time than it takes to drink your morning cup of coffee you will be as much of an expert as you need to be."

Colin Edge answers key questions for chemical etching

How deep can you etch? This depends on how fine the detail is. When you etch into metals, the image etches sideways as well as down, so the deeper you etch, the less crisp the image is. Multitechnic have special etching machines made to their own designs, which gently wash the etched panels in a fine mist and can achieve incredible detail. Most designs work best at a depth of around 0.1mm, which doesn't sound a lot, but gives by far the most pleasing appearance. Etching deeper doesn't achieve anything, and for most designs doesn't look as nice. The other extreme is deep embossed signs, and Multitechnic have a specially developed process that can etch to 1mm deep or more, and brass rubbing plates can be etched this way while retaining fine detail. Bear in mind that deep etching creates a dirt trap that is difficult to clean, so for choosing the right depth, it is best to leave it to the experts.

What metals can you etch? By far the most popular metal for etched signs is stainless steel, then brass, but it is also



Some lovely effects can be achieved such as this brass reverse etching



Stainless steel is clean and stylish and works well for apartments

possible to etch other copper alloys such as bronze, or even copper itself. Some of the coloured stainless steels from Rimex will etch, some won't, so check with the experts before you go designing anything exotic, and they will advise which colours can be used. Aluminium does not etch well enough for signage. It just doesn't look nice, and that really is all you need to know as far as signage is concerned.

of coloured signage, not just etching or engraving. CMYK is fine for digital print, but not for paint. HEX & RGB are for television & monitor screens, and depending on how your customer's screen is adjusted, you could end up with a colour that is far from what your customer imagines it should be. For these colours it is always worth printing what you think the colour should be on your own printer, get your customer to approve it, then match it to the closest Pantone, BS or RAL.

Colin Edge concludes, "The main point to remember about chemically etched signage is when to use it, and when not to. If your customer wants

some stylish stainless steel wayfinding signage for upmarket apartments, then etched stainless steel will work superbly and your customer will be delighted. If they want some swimming pool signage and insist that it must be etched stainless steel, explain that the paint won't last long with chlorinated condensation on it all day and night, and if they still won't take no for an answer, just make sure you cover yourself so there is no comeback when it all inevitably goes horribly wrong. Brass signage for a hotel is exactly what chemical etching is there for, but a large safety sign in a playground is unlikely to be a sensible choice. As for any other specialist sign product, if in doubt, ask the experts. They will always be happy to talk, and if they aren't, then maybe you are talking to the wrong experts."

www.multitechnic.co.uk



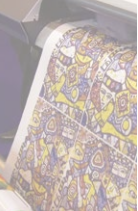
The etching process can be easily be used for tags and labels

Can you put etched marine grade stainless steel by the sea front? In a word, no. The stainless steel will be fine, and Multitechnic only use 316 marine grade stainless steel. The etched stainless steel may be fine, but no paint survives long in a marine environment, certainly not the sorts of paints that can be used to fill etchings or engravings, and the signs are useless without paint. For signs by the sea, on the decks of ships, and also for swimming pool and sauna signage, Multitechnic have developed their digital anoprinting to create signage solutions for these difficult environments.

Can you match specific colours? Pretty much anything RAL, BS or Pantone can be matched, even many of the metallics. If your customer specifies HEX, RGB or CMYK colours, you might end up in trouble, and this applies to all sorts



Brass signage is ideal for hotels



Chemical Etching

The largest Zinc Engraving Facility in Europe

Photocast Products Ltd started life in 1988 from the corner of a rented warehouse with a small zinc etching plant and an assortment of bench tools, and a small paint booth. According to the company's Director, Pauline Hill, the main style of business at this time was the production of machine ID/nameplates and labels as well as small painted plaques. "Whilst we still have a large involvement with these items it was the development and our involvement with the zinc photoengraving process that has enabled us to produce deep etched plates while retaining highly accurate detail that has escalated our business and continues to dazzle."

There is a phrase often used in photoengraving 'if you can draw it, we can etch it'. That certainly rings true with all the plaques and panels produced at Photocast, which is all achievable thanks to their highly skilled in-house team of image manipulation artists.

Pauline explains, "Our business growth was dependent on the size and scale of our etched plate production and all of the associated techniques. Investment in three 210 litre etch baths, large format paint and finishing equipment, together with embracing all of the latest artwork and film production hardware and software enabled us to produce ever larger and more detailed plaques and panels."



"By adding foundry facilities we can also push the casting boundaries even further"



Colour provides a great effect

To facilitate all these developments, Photocast also had to move to new purpose built 6500 sq. ft. premises. "This move has allowed us to have continued developing our etching and finishing techniques and broaden our product range. This has led inevitably to an increased and more varied customer base," she says.

Pauline continues, "From our original plaques and labels work we moved into golf signage and large interpretive panels, blue plaque schemes, personal and memorial plaques and dedications as well as a newly created product range of donor or dedication walls and panels."

Magnesium etching

Photocast also invested in a new Magnesium etching plant. This enables the company to deep etch tooling plates for several interesting industries. "We use deep etched magnesium plates for detailed casting patterns that we send to our foundry for traditional sand casting. We then finish the castings on site in Liverpool. We also moved into the printing

world and created a new company call 'The Blockshop', which uses all our in-house capabilities to produce letterpress printing plates, hot foil stamping blocks and embossing and debossing stamping tools. This is a great addition to our product range and a stand-out company in a shrinking market," says Pol.

Acquisition leads to greater capabilities

Further developments for Photocast were made in March 2020 when long time business friends Charles H Coward Ltd of Sheffield acquired Photocast. CHC Group Sales Director Chris Hogan explains, "We had worked with Photocast for the production of their bronze and aluminium sand casting of plaques for over eight years and when the opportunity came up to take over the ownership of the business and offer all of our full capacities and experience in metal technologies seemed the right thing to do. It was immediately clear to all involved at Photocast that we had squared the circle to become, perhaps, the only group that now has

the skills to create cast products from conception to completion."

Hogan continues, "With adding our foundry facilities to the Photocast armoury

we can also push the casting boundaries even further. After much development work we now have the ability to combine etched patterns with CNC sections to create a range of bas relief plaques, which enabled Photocast to compete with the much more labour intense and costly fine arts casting."

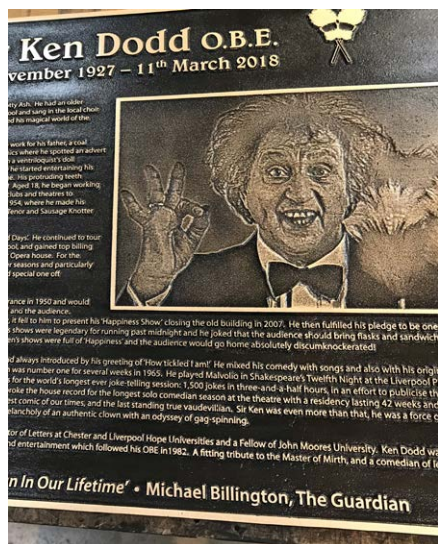
Photocast's customer base continues to grow from individuals and small sign outlets to some of the largest organisations in the UK and Europe. "We have been involved in projects for The National Trust, English Heritage, The British Legion, The War Graves Commission, The Plymouth Mayflower 400 year project along with Liverpool and Arsenal Football Clubs," he says.

Chris Hogan concludes, "As our technical skills evolve, we are always looking to develop new and innovative products as well as working alongside our customers and partners to achieve attractive, practical and fine art pieces."

www.chcsheffield.co.uk



Smart etching displays looks great for traditional reception areas



If you can draw it, we can etch it



Photocast Products Ltd is Europe's largest manufacturer of Zinc etched plaques and panels. Together with our Block Shop division which specialises in Magnesium & Zinc etched plates for letterpress printing and hotfoiling.

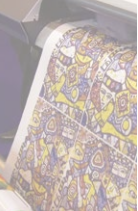
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Chemical Etching

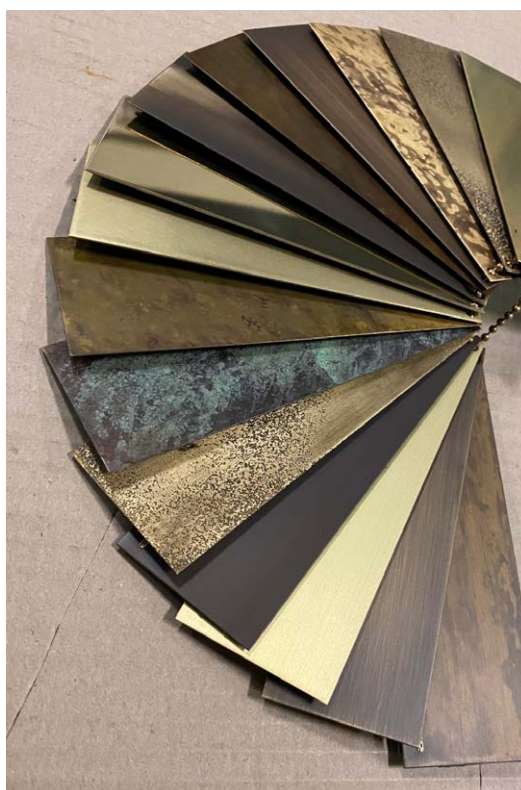
Chemical etching on a range of metals

Now approaching the 10th anniversary since the company's formation in 2012, Trade Etching Direct has established itself as one of the UK's leading chemical etching companies

Managing Director, Anthony Dullaghan, says, "By partnering with TED, sign companies are able to offer their customers access to a first class chemical etching service, increasing their revenue without the need for capital investment in equipment. As a dedicated 'trade only' supplier, our longevity has been forged by building long term relationships with sign companies and delivering consistently high quality products, and a service that they can trust and rely on time and again. We want our customers to feel as though we are their own etching department. We offer very responsive quotes and fast turnaround times including same and next day deliveries where possible. We take great pride in the quality of our work and understand that by the nature of our company our customers' success is our success."

The chemical etching process

Chemical etching is a complex multistage process requiring a range of equipment, skilled labour and space. For many sign companies it is not convenient or cost effective to set up in-house. TED allows sign companies to offer a broad range of chemical etched products to their customers, without the large upfront cost of setting up an in-house etching department and the steep learning curve



Patinas come in a huge range and variety

that comes with mastering the process. In a nutshell the chemical etching process involves thoroughly cleaning the metal prior to laminating with a UV sensitive film resist.

A photo tool of the desired artwork is printed on clear film and placed on the material before being exposed under UV

light. The UV light passes through the clear areas of the photo tool hardening the laminated film. The sheet is then chemically developed to wash away the unexposed portions, leaving behind a very precise mask of hardened photoresist. The material is then placed in a conveyorised spray etching machine.

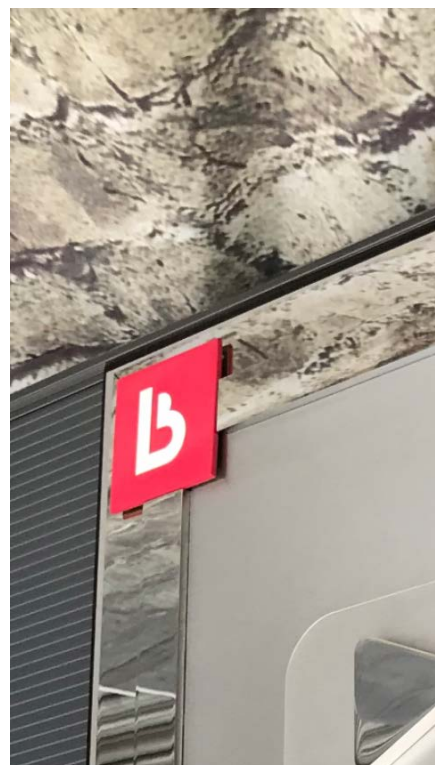
High temperature acid is sprayed at high pressure onto the surface and etches the areas left unprotected by the photoresist to create the desired image. Depth of etch is controlled by the speed of the conveyor. After etching, the photoresist is stripped in a heated bath and the material is then ready for any post etching processes that may be required such as colour infilling, patination, bending or forming.

Versatile and comprehensive for multiple applications

"We are able to etch a wide variety of metals including Stainless Steel, Brass, Copper, Bronze, Zinc, Aluminium and more. A typical working week can see us etch everything from patinated brass signage for a high end hotel development to



Trade Etching can etch photographic quality to brass and other metals



Multi layered plaque made of wood, laser cut brushed and mirror stainless steel with etched detail. Made up of 16 parts



Chemical reverse etching and patination creates a range of amazing looking finishes

stainless steel nameplates for oil rigs. Other products we produce for customers include commemorative plaques, memorial plaques, wayfinding signage, corporate awards, donor walls, architectural panels, interpretation boards and safety signs," says Dullaghan.

He continues, "In addition to chemical etching we offer a number of supporting services inhouse, including CNC routing, UV printing, metal patination and chemical milling. UV printing provides our customers with a great low-cost option for back of house signage and also offers designers the ability to incorporate full colour and UV printed braille elements into their designs."



Etched Patinated Brass is suitable for high end applications

Dullaghan adds, "We have continued to invest heavily in equipment to meet the evolving needs of our customers, whether this be advanced lithography equipment allowing us to etch incredibly detailed photos in metal or larger etching machines further increasing our production capacity and allowing us to handle wide format etching projects. In addition, we put a lot of resources into research and development to open up new possibilities for designers, and we instil a can-do attitude in our team. Much of our innovation is driven by customer demand and we take pride in finding the solutions to make their designs a reality."

What is patination?:

Patina is a natural tarnish that forms on the surface of brass and other metals. While natural patina usually occurs over an extended period of time, you can speed it up by chemically processing the brass, to give it a very desirable aged look.

The art of reverse etching

Trade Etching has developed in-house techniques for etching coated materials, such as the entire Rimex T22 range, which opens up a wealth of options and finishes. "We specialise in the art of reverse etching, a method whereby the background is etched away to leave a raised text, and again we have developed methods to allow us to etch deeper without

deforming the material or compromising image quality. We are also able to replicate the look and feel of cast signage by our unique technique of combining laser cut elements alongside chemical etching to offer an attractive alternative at lower cost. Our metal patination work has continued to become a bigger part of our business as our reputation has grown. We are able to offer our customers a huge variety of bespoke patina finishes on metals such as brass, bronze, copper and more," he explains.

Anthony Dullaghan concludes, "As we prepare to celebrate our 10th anniversary year in 2022, we will continue to build for the future by adding a fourth etching line. This will further increase our capacity, improve lead times and make TED one of the largest dedicated etching facilities in Europe. Looking forward we are excited to explore the potential around incorporating augmented reality and near field communication elements into our work and how we can use emerging digital technologies to push the boundaries of the traditional chemical etching process."

www.tradeetching.com



Reversed etched Rimex opens up a wealth of options and finishes

Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED from Josero helps Freestyle Designs boost output

Bath-based branding and signage business Freestyle Designs has been established for 14 years, specialising in a range of services from standard shop signage projects to large rebrands, vehicle graphics, wallcoverings and vinyl graphics, and more. Founder and Managing Director Jayson Godridge loves to keep the business moving forward, whether that's staying up-to-date with the latest technology and investing in new kit, or targeting larger scale, higher volume work. "We knew we weren't going to be able to achieve that with our current machinery," explains Jayson.

The search was on for the right piece of equipment to help Freestyle eliminate bottlenecks and pursue those higher volume projects. They were after something faster, higher quality, with increased output. With a machine size and a couple of manufacturers in mind, after a special summer event at the Agfa showroom in Rugby, Jayson soon ended up setting his sights on a larger model – the Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED.

"It was bigger than the machines we were originally looking at," says Jayson, "but when I went to see it in action at Agfa it was clear that it would fit just fine, and that it was definitely the machine that would help us grow and push into different areas and different types of work. As soon as I walked in and saw it printing, I knew I wanted to go for it!"

Freestyle had a longstanding, trusted relationship with the Josero team, purchasing their first roll-to-roll application table from Josero and having known Consumables Sales Manager Mitch Anstey for many years. Jayson explains: "We were initially talking to another company about the same machine, but having had a good experience with Josero in the past, the trust was there and I felt much more comfortable working with them on the purchase than anybody else." The final sway for Jayson was perhaps the fantastic price point on the model, which he describes as a 'bargain'.

The Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED is now up and running at Freestyle Designs, following a smooth installation process from Josero. "The installation was great. Steve, the engineer, was very knowledgeable, and the fitting went without a hitch. Josero even helped us

with a part exchange on our machine, the team came within one day, took our machine away and replaced it with the new one, with very little downtime. The whole process was seamless."

Jayson is satisfied that support from Josero doesn't end there: "When we wanted a bit more training they were happy to come and help, bringing support from Agfa with them as well. It's quite a lot to learn when you get a new machine and the RIP is different and everything, but Josero are just at the other end of the phone whenever we needed them, and always very helpful."

The machine is already earning its keep and helping Freestyle meet its goals, as Jayson says: "The bottleneck doesn't exist at all anymore. The machine is a beast, and is just churning through the work. It's very reliable and working really well." The work going through the Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED includes exhibition graphics, display boards and POS projects, and it's helping Freestyle to promote their eco-friendly range of products as well.

New possibilities are also opening up to Freestyle thanks to the Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED, as Jayson explains: "We're using different media, and we're able to work with wider media because it's a

hybrid machine. We can print rolls, which we couldn't do before on our flatbed, so we're now printing rolls up to 2.5 metres wide which has massively increased our output."

There are also other new opportunities brought about by the new kit that have pleasantly surprised Jayson and the Freestyle team, as detailed by Jayson: "We've been approached by other sign companies that have heard we have the machine, and we've been producing work for them when they're over capacity themselves, so we're seeing unexpected advantages. I really wasn't expecting trade work to be coming off the back of this new machine, especially so quickly. We've done a few decent sized jobs from it, and those companies were really impressed by how quickly we could turn it around."

For Jayson Godridge and the Freestyle Designs team, the investment in the Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED from Josero has exceeded expectations by delivering on their original requirements and delivering unanticipated business benefits as well. Would Jayson work with Josero again for any future equipment needs? "Definitely," he says. "I'd be happy to work with Josero again – they've been so easy to deal with."

www.josero.com



(Left to Right) Josero Consumables Sales Manager Mitch Anstey, Freestyle Designs Managing Director Jayson Godridge, Josero Managing Director Sarah Winterbottom at the Agfa showroom in Rugby with the Agfa Anapurna H2500i LED



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Humphreys Signs targets sustainable signage with the new HP Latex R1000

Family-run sign-making business Humphreys Signs has said that the purchase of a new HP Latex R1000 printer has enabled it to make significant progress with its environmentally friendly goals and take on more sustainable signage work.

Based in Denbigh in North Wales, Humphreys Signs specialises in the production of signage boards for Estate Agents, while also offering a wide range of other printed solutions including banners, posters, health and safety signage, builders' boards, graphics for the retail and exhibition sectors and more.

While Humphreys Signs' production facilities were already backed by a portfolio of HP Latex printing equipment including an HP FB500 UV Printer, an HP Latex 360 and an HP Latex 560, the company was keen to expand its production capabilities with an additional flatbed machine.

The company opted to purchase an HP Latex R1000 printer, which was installed in

June 2021 by HP reseller Papergraphics. This flatbed machine offers a host of excellent eco credentials, not least the fact it runs UL ECOLOGO certified water-based HP Latex Inks that produce odourless prints and are kinder to the environment than their solvent and UV equivalents.

Will Humphreys, Owner of Humphreys Signs, said the printer's environmentally focused features were a key factor in the decision to purchase the machine as they fit in with its long-term goals of taking on more sustainable signage work and projects.

He explains: "We loved the fact that the HP Latex R1000 uses more eco-friendly inks. Not only that, it's also faster than many other printers, can print a gloss or matte finish and even has the ability to print white ink.

"We are working to be more eco-friendly and producing more sustainable signage

using recyclable media; the HP Latex R1000 printer was the obvious choice when we were looking to add a flatbed option to our production line-up."

The HP Latex R1000 is incredibly flexible and can run at speeds of up to 56sq m/hr in outdoor mode. The printer also has a dedicated speed setting for high quality indoor work at 15sq m/hr, as well as standard indoor at 28sq m/hr, white spot at 25sq m/hr and white overflood at 11sq m/hr.

Will Humphreys concludes: "We were already running two HP Latex roll-to-roll machines and were really happy with the print quality that they were producing, so it made sense to turn to HP for our flatbed solution.

"The new HP Latex R1000 flatbed printer has already been put to work on a number of new projects."

www.humphreys-signs.co.uk



The HP Latex R Printer Series are true hybrid solutions, equally strong in both rigid and flexible media.

Adding the wow factor through creativity

Brand Consortia has invested in its first swissQprint Nyala flatbed printer to elevate print quality, open doors to new markets, boost revenues, and increase productivity.

"We felt it was time to bring more advanced flatbed printing in-house," says managing director Brad Tupman. "It has since taken price completely out of the conversation when talking with



Brad Tupman from Brand Consortia

customers. Their priorities are to obtain the highest quality products, with minimal environmental impact, and then price - in that order," he says.

Working in partnership with many of the UK's leading design agencies, this family operated sign company designs, fabricates, installs and maintains signs, graphics and branding for shops, retail and leisure parks, educational buildings, offices and industrial premises throughout the UK.

Sustainable future

Brand Consortia takes its ISO14001 environmental credentials seriously, and works closely with customers to develop sustainable signage schemes to help them to achieve net-zero emissions. The company was the first in the UK create a Sustainable Sign Scheme for its customers where the CO2 released in the manufacture and installation of signs and graphics is offset using an accredited

Carbon Offset scheme, such as planting new trees in the same geographical region where the signs have been installed.

"The Nyala, with its low-maintenance pollutant-free LED technology and minimal power consumption, is the perfect fit for our company," Brad affirms. "It will go a long way in helping us attain our goals to be an even more sustainable business."

Innovation is the watchword

Brad believes that creative applications are the key to unlocking potential new business revenues for a more profitable future. "We are already looking at ways we can further wow our customers with creative raised 3D effects and textures to make prints seem more tactile, and we can now offer signage that includes braille for the visually impaired. This is giving us a major advantage over our competitors."

www.swissqprint.com

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"A very professional team, and really happy with the product quality and reliability. Will definitely be ordering again!" - Sam Topham

ECOLUX **The sign fitters' choice - Ecolux Mini.**

Ecolux Mini is the UK's Number 1 best-selling trough light system, ideal for retail, brewery and restaurant signage programmes. The best things are always simple and this LED sign light is jam packed full of new ideas and innovative design.

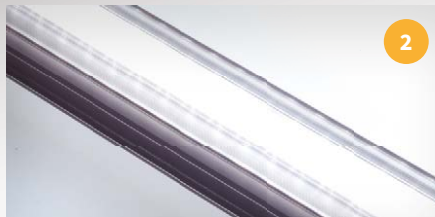




Ecolux Mini is the UK's Number 1 best selling trough light system.



Smart new cast end caps with rear entry cable glands tidy and conceal unsightly cables from view.



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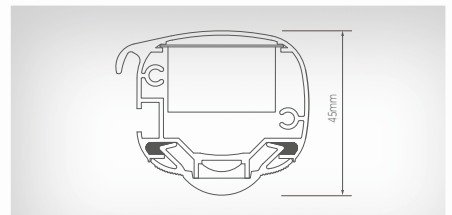
The brilliantly designed Multi Bracket is double slotted, allowing the fitter in an instant to orientate the back plate fixing position from horizontal to vertical.



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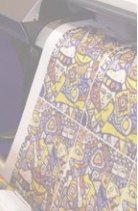
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Lamination

Which laminator is right for your business?

Matt Manteit, International Sales Manager at Neschen Coating GmbH, outlines how to ensure you are investing in the right laminator, highlighting the most important factors to consider.

What to focus on:

Rollers

The Rollers are the most important part of a laminator; their properties and behaviour have a crucial influence on the operator's efficiency and the quality of the final product.

First off, make sure you check the diameter. As a general rule, bigger is better, as rollers with a bigger diameter tend to bend less, provide equal pressure and during operation apply less tension on the laminating film, which is beneficial when working with cast vinyls or standard laminating films.

A laminator with a bigger roller diameter has a positive impact on the possible amount of shrinkage of the over-stretched laminating film at the latter stage. Shrinkage, caused by over-stretching during the laminating process, usually leads to bleed at the end of a graphic, as well as bending of the laminated boards, lifting corners and edges of the graphic or lifting the graphic from the corrugation.

In addition, a roller with a bigger diameter is better when it comes to laminating onto soft substrates. A bigger roller distributes pressure equally and over a wider area and, therefore, the substrates have less of

a tendency to twist.

When considering the roller parameters, also check the thickness of the material. Thicker metal will provide much better stability than thinner steel, even with the same roller diameter. For this reason, stronger and more stable rollers are important for laminating onto harder substrates like MDF and glass.

Another useful parameter to check is the weight of the roller. Good and reliable rollers have a weight of approximately 40kg, meaning two rollers in the machine will weigh about 80kg in total. So, when you see a laminator datasheet and the total weight of the machine is 150kg including the frame, you know what to expect – a less than robust machine.

The last part of the roller you should focus on is the soft coating. This should be thick enough to resist possible grinding of the coating in the future, while the rubber coating should also provide perfect geometry, ideally with a crown shape on one of the two rollers.

Heating

Next up, you should consider the heating of the roller. Even for pressure sensitive adhesives – or so-called cold laminating films – we suggest using a machine with a heated top roller. The temperature should be up to 70°C, with the option to make continual adjustments in small steps. Heated rollers allow the adhesive to flow and, depending on the materials being used, this can have a big influence on the

quality of the lamination results.

As heat helps the adhesive to flow, this also helps to prevent or reduce silvering. Typically, a quite difficult application is laminating onto acrylic sheets, but having heat assistance helps a lot. You will appreciate the higher temperatures above 50°C, either when running thicker laminating films or already-laminated graphics through the laminator a second time, in order to improve the silvering.

During the second run, you can afford temperatures much higher than during the first run because the material has already been laminated. Therefore, you can run the material through the machine even faster.

Pressure setup

Each material you work with needs a different pressure setup. For example, laminating cardboards will mean you will minimise the pressure, whereas for laminating thick floor graphic films, this will require as much pressure as possible

Most of the machines on the market offer manual pressure setup, which can cause many problems with pressure distribution and when laminating longer runs.

Pressure settings and the achieved work results, for most of the machines with a mechanical setup, are very inaccurate. This means that if there is a pressure measurement available, it is not always reliable.

At Neschen, our laminators offer a pneumatic pressure system, allowing for both repeatable and exact pressure adjustments. The pressure you see on the manometer display is the actual pressure the rollers are delivering to your graphic, meaning much more accurate results.

Controls and Ergonomics

The control panel on the machine should allow for rotation, changing of speed and direction of the rollers from both sides of the device. This holds especially true if only one operator works with the laminator, as the machine can be easily operated without having to walk around to the other side to reach parts of the control panel.

Coaxial and Torsional Stiffness

All of the rollers and axes have to be exactly parallel on a laminator. This, together with high torsion stiffness of the machine chassis, ensures accurate



Lamination

guidance of the material, even for full roll-to-roll jobs at high speed. If you expect your next machine to run full-roll laminating jobs, make sure to test it on your new laminator before making a purchase.

When discussing chassis strength, there are numerous machines on the market – usually very low-budget machines – which will provide the necessary construction stiffness for the first few months of ownership, but in time, the chassis weakens.

It is for this reason that Neschen offers machines with a sturdy and robust construction. Keep in mind, a laminator is a tool to enhance your business' profit and it should never be an afterthought to buying a new printer.

To provide a stable, robust and reliable machine construction, Neschen builds its range of laminators with sidewalls made of heavy steel plates instead of a thin metal plate.

Unwinding and Reeling of the Material

Brakes on the unwind and wind-up shafts must be easy to access and to handle,

as well as resistant. Inserting the shafts into the machine has to be an easy and smooth process, so consider the weight of the shaft, including the full roll, and ensure that the material slides into the machine quickly.

The measuring scale on each shaft, with the "0" being in the middle of the shaft, is a very helpful tool for setting-up the media and the alignment to the windup shaft.

Ready for Testing?

Last but not least, once you are ready for the testing of your laminator, you should focus on a series of key criteria during the demonstration to ensure it matches your requirements.

First, use greyscale pictures for the test and let the operator laminate at least 20 linear metres. Ask the operator to stop the machine in the middle of the laminating process and check the line on the graphic afterwards; there should be only a light stripe visible – or better still – nothing visible. For a roll-to-roll full-length test, you can use and laminate standard coloured vinyl, ideally in black.

Next, watch the speed of alignment, accuracy and efficiency of the demonstrated machine, and also be sure to test paper together with lamination. Paper is more inclined to wave than self-adhesive vinyl and remember that this effect will disappear during the day, but some will occur within a few days later, so take your time to evaluate the laminated material.

For machines with a working width in excess of 160cm, you should test laminating onto sheet material, ideally onto PVC foamed boards that are more than 800mm wide. With these formats, you will realise the advantages of a stiff crown being on the top roller as, otherwise, bubbles may occur on the board, even up to a few days after application.

Finally, you should check the safety system. Does it work properly? Are the light-bar, the snail mode and foot switch, as well as other features, working in favour of the operator? Keep in mind, the safety system is there to protect the employee and your business.

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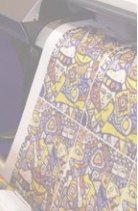
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Front Cover

Spectron LED on the evolution of trough lighting

"Illumination is a driving factor for creating beautiful signage to enhance brand identity and customer recognition," says Ivan Lew, Managing Director of Spectron LED. "Statistics show that 76% of consumers will enter a shop they've never visited before based on the strength of the signage; and more importantly 52% said they would be reluctant to enter a shop if the signs or lighting were not well done."

"At Spectron LED we work closely with customers, using over 40 years of experience in the signage industry and our expertise in LEDs to design and invent the best LED products possible. Our main aim is to continue to improve how business signage can be illuminated to help you grow your customer's brand and image."

"Through the years, our customers have found that one of the best ways to get their signage and brand noticed is simply to illuminate it. Years ago, one of the most effective ways to do this was to use spotlights, but as the name suggests this lighting tends to focus on a single 'spot' and couldn't effectively cover a full sign, wall or billboard."

"To overcome this, the fluorescent tube was created to give improved, even lighting. This was put inside a cover together with a multiple ballasts creating what we now know as the trough light."

"The issue was that this was initially very large. It was so heavy that it needed two people to carry it, so fixing it securely required large, indiscreet brackets and even to this day the common trough light uses a heavy industrial grade bracket."

"Fast forward to the inception of LED; the trough light evolved from using a 25mm diameter fluorescent tube, to requiring just a few millimetres of LED light so the size of the trough could dramatically reduce. Suddenly, companies started buying readily available off-the-shelf LED light sources and producing trough lights of their own."

"However, Spectron LED are always looking to improve products for customers, so naturally we've been working hard to further improve the trough light; reducing the bracket size, making it easier to install with less labour required, and producing more light coverage than ever before."



"We have made all of these improvements with our latest product; Spectron LED's own Lumenlinear-Twilight."

"This breakthrough lighting product is the most powerful, efficient and cost-effective way to illuminate shop signage; advertising billboards; exhibitions; pictures and feature walls. Our unique LED modules replace the common LED strip to provide an unparalleled blade-like beam of light with a minimum projection from the wall, resulting in the most versatile, powerful and even light coverage on the market."

"Projecting brackets are not required because the Lumenlinear-Twilight clips directly onto the wall. With a 73mm projection and only 28mm thick, it is the most discreet product of its type available and our exclusive clip-on fixing method means you can quickly and easily fix it to a wide variety of surfaces as a down or up light."

"Spectron LED's own designed and manufactured LED trough light, the Lumenlinear Twilight, can connect up to 10 metres of light with a single driver. It also features custom-produced injection moulded optical lenses which can flood a wall with uniform light, and a specially produced plug-in driver rated IP67. Best of all; it's at least 25% cheaper than comparable products."

"Spectron LED also manufactures a wide range of stunning, bespoke illuminated signs and letters in stainless steel, acrylic faux-neon and LED neon flex with fast turnarounds of approximately 10 days."

IP67 rating

Something with an IP67 means it can be dropped into a body of water up to a meter deep for half an hour.

For more information on the unique Lumenlinear Twilight, or for any other LED components, contact Spectron LED.

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Lighting can be joined together with IP67 rated waterproof connections.

Signbox hails impact HP Latex printers following win at UK Graphics Awards

Surrey-based architectural signage solutions provider Signbox has praised the role its duo of HP Latex 300 Series printers played in an innovative project that helped the company scoop a host of major honours at the 2021 UK Graphics Awards.

The project saw Signbox, in partnership with HLW Architects and BW Interiors, produce a wide range of signage and interior décor for Pernod Ricard, the company behind world-famous drinks brands such as Jameson, Havana Club, Beefeater, Malibu and Jacob's Creek.

Signbox was tasked with delivering a brand experience to various meeting rooms and areas throughout the new Pernod Ricard UK headquarters at Chiswick Park in West London. Pernod Ricard moved to the 85,000sq ft facility in September 2020 and most of the work was conducted during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The project included a range of 3D lettering and signage alongside of stunning wallpaper backdrops – all of which were printed on Signbox's HP Latex Series printers. Signbox printed the designs on Digimura wallcovering media, a product selected for its environmental credentials and fire-retardant qualities.

"The HP Latex printers produce first-class quality print on any job we run, and this was no exception," Signbox Managing Director Mark Bartlett said. "The HP Latex inks conform so much better to Digimura than other inks; we don't get the issue of ink sitting on the surface and it doesn't crack.



The project saw Signbox, in partnership with HLW Architects and BW Interiors, produce a wide range of signage and interior décor for Pernod Ricard, the company behind world-famous drinks brands such as Jameson, Havana Club, Beefeater, Malibu and Jacob's Creek.



Signbox's Mark Bartlett picked out the Beefeater Gin room, in particular, to showcase how the HP Latex technology allowed the company to innovate.

"We're also really happy with the colour gamut of the HP Latex Series. Even if you are running pieces from the same job on two different machines, the colours will always match."

The flexibility of the HP Latex Series meant Signbox was able to create all sorts of clever effects for each room. Mark Bartlett picked out the Beefeater Gin room, in particular, to showcase how the HP Latex technology allowed the company to innovate.

Here, Signbox was able to create an incredibly realistic effect that made it seem as if the wall was whitewashed brick, whereas in fact this effect had been created using the HP Latex printer. Signbox was also able to create accent details. Thanks to some clever creativity, it appeared that a gold signature ran from the wall directly across the raised 3D brand slogan.

"All but one of the walls in the project featured large-format printed graphics, and we were able to produce all of these on our HP Latex machines," Mark Bartlett said.

Such was the success of the project that Signbox won two 2021 UK Graphics Awards in recognition of its work. In addition to the 'Branded Interiors Project of the Year Award,' Signbox scooped the highly coveted 'Best in Show Award' for the Pernod Ricard project.

Signbox in fact went away with four awards on the night, also picking up the 'Innovation Award' and 'Wide-Format Print Company of the Year (30+ Employees)', celebrating its other work and efforts throughout the past year.

"We were absolutely gobsmacked to win the four awards," Mark Bartlett said. "We were incredibly humbled by the wins and real credit has to go to our team of dedicated staff."

Signbox's wider work in the past year or so included a significant amount of social distancing print and applications, produced during the difficult days of the pandemic when other work slowed down.

The HP Latex 300 Series printers switched from their usual interior design work to output hundreds of metres of social distancing graphics, with both machines running at full capacity to satisfy huge demand from multiple sectors.

"The HP printers were absolute workhorses when we were supplying the social distancing graphics," Mark Bartlett said. "In fact, we produced so much that around 25% of our total turnover last year was social distancing work – and the majority of the printed vinyl went through the two HP Latex devices."

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5mm	1.56	1.98	2.34	2.88	3.62	4.40	5.38	7.00	8.19	9.53	11.11	12.70	15.24	18.42	21.26	22.87	29.86	30.11	57.16	73.61
10mm	2.84	3.40	4.49	5.58	6.96	8.91	10.67	14.97	16.21	19.65	22.51	26.83	30.57	35.56	39.92	44.91	62.38	91.08	117.27	151.58

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3mm	1.28	1.87	1.97	2.13	2.30	2.67	3.37	4.06	4.59	5.13	6.60	8.13	9.20	9.89	11.85	13.97	18.56	29.17	33.59	38.25
5mm	1.35	1.85	2.29	2.81	3.39	3.99	4.57	5.03	5.84	6.65	8.29	9.74	11.08	11.81	13.73	15.65	24.37	33.23	36.92	40.47
10mm	1.70	1.98	2.70	3.74	4.37	5.04	6.19	7.20	8.22	9.15	11.02	13.10	15.60	17.16	19.24	22.36	27.04	31.20	47.32	56.00
19mm	2.80	3.95	4.58	4.99	6.66	7.80	9.36	10.92	13.21	15.50	16.64	19.44	22.36	24.75	26.83	30.16	38.48	41.60	55.64	84.50

3mm ALUMINIUM COMPOSITE (Dibond, Alupanel)

£20 + VAT minimum charge + carriage

Height	75mm	100mm	125mm	150mm	175mm	200mm	225mm	250mm	275mm	300mm	350mm	400mm	450mm	500mm	550mm	600mm	700mm	800mm	900mm	1200mm
Coloured	1.93	2.48	3.09	3.65	4.32	5.57	6.80	8.15	9.39	10.43	12.68	14.21	17.30	19.78	21.01	25.33	30.28	43.26	56.86	77.87
Mirror (silver)	2.58	3.24	4.49	5.62	7.30	8.99	10.11	12.36	15.17	17.98	19.66	22.47	26.40	29.78	31.46	36.52	42.70	53.37	57.30	108.43
Mirror (gold)	2.84	3.56	4.94	6.18	8.03	9.89	11.12	13.60	16.69	19.78	21.63	24.72	29.04	32.76	34.61	40.17	46.97	58.71	63.03	119.27
Brushed	2.14	2.69	3.50	4.37	5.08	6.22	7.50	8.89	10.80	12.71	14.62	16.52	20.34	22.24	24.79	27.96	36.05	49.56	62.27	85.79

MILL FINISH ALUMINIUM (Comes in its raw form ready for coating)

£20 + VAT minimum charge + carriage

Height	50mm	75mm	100mm	125mm	150mm	175mm	200mm	225mm	250mm	275mm	300mm	375mm	425mm	500mm	600mm	700mm
2mm	3.28	4.59	5.20	6.95	7.85	8.77	9.91	11.42	12.69	13.95	15.41	19.15	22.72	32.50	43.50	56.43
3mm	3.84	5.34	6.11	7.50	8.65	9.67	10.81	12.34	13.80	15.90	17.75	22.76	27.22	38.03	53.42	79.20
5mm	4.20	5.86	7.00	8.40	9.41	10.81	12.22	14.24	16.40	18.89	21.31	27.57	31.80	44.21	62.33	85.92

EXTERIOR MDF

£20 + VAT minimum charge + carriage

Height	50mm	75mm	100mm	125mm	150mm	175mm	200mm	225mm	250mm	275mm	300mm	375mm	425mm	500mm	600mm	700mm
6mm	0.58	1.10	1.72	1.92	2.84	2.99	3.47	4.15	4.78	5.67	7.25	10.24	11.81	13.39	15.70	47.78
12mm		1.90	2.23	3.11	4.46	5.15	5.99	6.74	8.03	10.08	11.03	12.81	15.23	18.48	20.74	62.95
18mm		2.70	3.42	4.46	5.57	6.77	8.35	9.35	11.60	13.39	15.96	18.27	22.31	24.05	31.45	94.11

MOULDED ACRYLIC LETTERING (Includes locators and paper template)

Height	152mm	203mm	254mm	305mm	380mm	457mm	610mm
Colours*	7.12	10.70	16.82	18.39	24.94	29.56	51.91

Discounts Available ...over £50 - 3% over £100 - 4% over £300 - 5%

Quotes on request for extended type-styles, logos, flame polishing and spraying

Add 20% for locators and paper template

Add 30% for double sided tape

Add 30% for 3mm letters

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trade cut-outs and moulded lettering

Suppliers to the trade

Aluminium Composite Sign Trays

(folded ready for install)

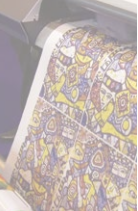
0.3mm aluminium skin with 50mm returns

Contact us for your exact requirements.

Size (mm)	White	Colours
2350 x 500	£123.85	£142.82
2750 x 750	£135.62	£169.10
4000 x 1000	£202.52	£239.28



Check out our website - www.mercuryphillipssigns.co.uk
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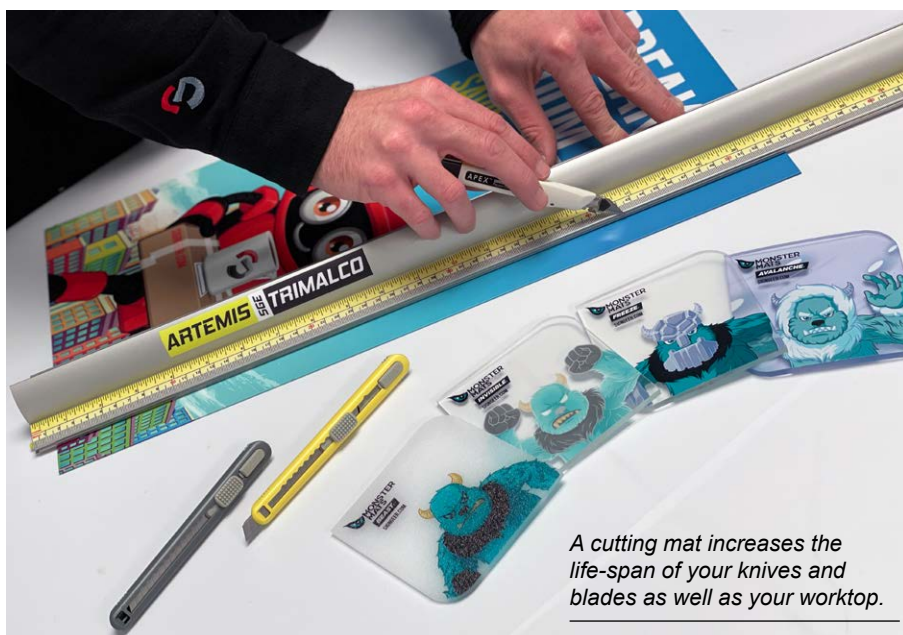
Tools & Gadgets

The Tools of the Trade

Being in a very visual, deadline driven industry, the professional finish on any signage small or large is critical to retaining customers and maintaining profit margins. Signgeer has recommended a few of the basic tools you should have in your kit and why you need them.

Signgeer was originally founded in 1986 and offer high quality performance sign tools, gadgets and essentials to the sign and print industry for both newcomers to the trade as well as the experienced professional, Super Tools for Sign Heroes. Louise Gardener, Managing Director of Signgeer, says, "Finishing the job effectively and professionally is the key to increased profits. Working with some of the most innovative sign tool developers in the world, Signgeer prides itself on being a committed team of knowledgeable and resourceful individuals passionate to deliver the best and most extensive range of specialised sign-making tools in the UK. Covering all areas of the industry including general sign making, wrapping, tinting, ppf application, fabrication tools and even industry specific furniture for your workspace."

A good safety straight edge is an essential tool in any sign production environment to assist in the safe cutting of many of the materials used in the modern Signage and Graphics industry. A good quality straight



A cutting mat increases the life-span of your knives and blades as well as your worktop.

edge will have an anodised or stainless steel cutting edge to protect the tool itself from the blade cutting into it and damaging the profile. This ensures a smooth straight cut.

The Artemis safety edge is a good example of this with its curved profile to protect your hand from the cutting blade and a guaranteed accuracy of 0.4mm straightness over the length of the safety edge. The Artemis has been specially shaped to focus downward pressure and enable clamping of the work piece whilst protecting the fingers against any tool slippages. A full-length metric/imperial scale is fitted along the front edge and a press fit stainless steel bead helps to

protect the aluminium edge from blade damage. The underside features two full length silicone inserts to assist gripping and to provide essential protection for sensitive surfaces. The Artemis is available in 6 sizes: 60cm (24"), 100cm (40"), 150cm (60"), 200cm (80"), 250cm(100"), 300cm (120").

Gardener adds, "To assist in those perfectly straight cuts, Signgeer would also recommend investing in a cutting mat. Their special construction and self-healing characteristics protect your tabletop and ensure the perfect clean cut every time - a self-healing cutting mat will prevent the knife from slipping into the grooves of previous cuts. This in turn increases the life-span of your knives and blades as well as your worktop."

"Cutting knives, like a squeegee, are down to personal preference. There's the tried and tested Swann Morton and Olfa knives and in addition to this, Signgeer offers the NT Cutter range, which includes a wide choice of quality, cost effective handles along with quality Japanese blade sharpness. NT Cutter is popular with vehicle wrappers as they offer a good choice of plastic handles (and metal too!) with smooth contours reducing the possibility of damage to vehicle paintwork as well as super sharp blades in 30 and 58 degree angles – please remember that a blunt blade can cause more damage than a sharp one!" says Gardener.

She continues, "A good all-rounder knife is the Apex cutter from Signgeer. Offering an Ergonomic handle design and accepting 30° or 58°, 9mm blades along with a shielded cutter that allows you to cut Knifeless Tapes, string, cord etc. even when the blade is retracted. It's great for comfort, speed and safety."



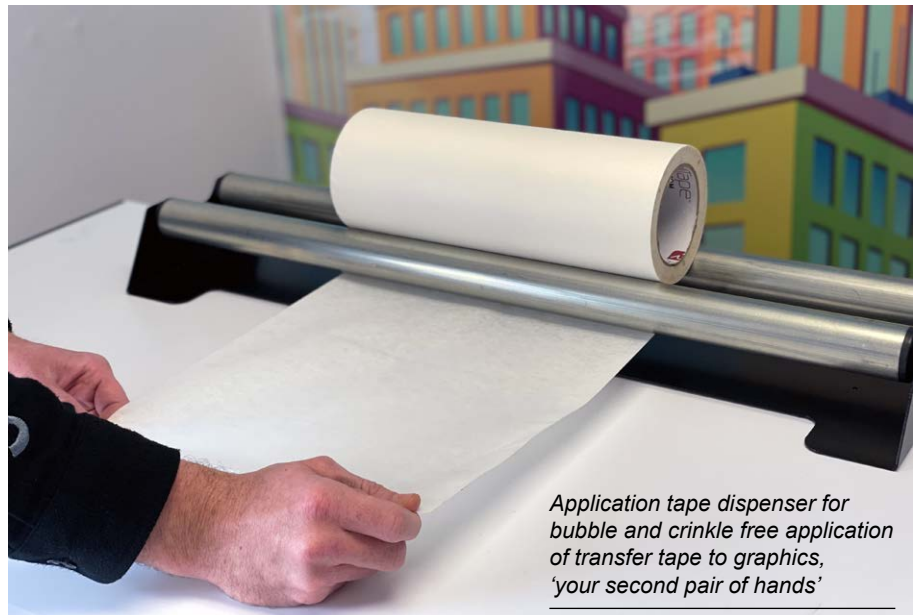
Signgeer offers a huge range of tools, including rollers, knives, squeegees, tape dispensers, mats and more.

What are the tools that make life easier for sign-makers?

Louise Gardener explains, "If you struggle to apply application tape and need an extra pair of hands, pair yourself up with an application tape dispenser. Available in widths to accommodate up to 1500mm wide media this tool will allow you to tape up graphics every time with no creases, wrinkles or bubbles. The Application Tape Dispenser from Signgeer can be either screwed to the worktop or a pair of removable anchor points allow it to sit on the edge of the worktop and be easily moved when not in use."

Static which attracts dust and particles is an age-old enemy in vinyl applications. She explains, "To prevent unwanted contamination under prints and vinyl during application we would recommend a Signgeer Dust Magnet. The Dust Magnet is a tried and tested well established sign-makers' tool, which you will find will soon pay for itself by avoiding the costly and time consuming scenario of reprints due to contamination between the vinyl and board during application."

The Dust Magnet's roller has an embedded anti-static agent which helps to eliminate static load whilst at the same time sweeps up all particles of dust from the board or substrate prior to application. With its superior elastomer roller it removes all debris from the substrate and transfers it to the adhesive pad, with



Application tape dispenser for bubble and crinkle free application of transfer tape to graphics, 'your second pair of hands'

no adhesive transfer. Especially good for neutralising and reducing static on freshly cut acrylic panels which are prone to holding static and swarf. The roller can also be doubled up as a high quality application roller. Available in 6", 12" and 24" wide.

Signgeer also stock a wide range of other antistatic tools such as cutting mats, squeegees and antistatic cleaners.

Gardener adds, "Temperature is the key to success in applying and removing vinyl graphics and a good investment tool

especially this time of year would be the Inferno Infrared Heater from Signgeer. It's a great aid for generalised preheating of panels prior to sign-writing as well as a big time saver in the removal of vinyl graphics. Simply set up the heater on its stand at the desired height, direct the heater towards the panel, leave for ten minutes whilst you do something else. The panel is now either warm enough for vinyl to stick or if stripping graphics you will find the vinyl adhesive soft and pliable making it much easier to remove."

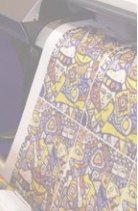
She adds, "Reaching maximum output within seconds and multi angle head adjustment, uniform heating of large areas is a breeze. With no fans or blowers, it means there is no dust - it's the perfect piece of kit for the signmaker with the added bonus from a health and safety point of view that there are no fumes, smell or gas. The Inferno is lightweight and can be used either handheld or on its stand. The inferno stand can be fine tuned to any height on its optional 1.8m stand with 4 castors included for easy mobility. There's a twin slide and lock bracket available for mounting two heaters - double the heating power in less time."

Louise Gardener concludes, "So if you're looking for some advice, whether if there could be an easier or quicker way to do the job with a specialist tool or you're not sure even where to start on a project, always get some advice from the industry leaders to help point you in the right direction. There is no such thing as a silly question!"



The Inferno Infrared Heater from Signgeer is a great aid for generalised preheating of panels prior to sign-writing or removal

www.signgeer.com



Tools & Gadgets

What is the best way to cut foam board?

7 Rules to choosing the best foam board cutter

Printers and sign-makers need to cut and finish foam board or Foamex quickly and cleanly. Effective foam board cutting speeds up production, reduces waste and increases profitability. Cutting your own foam board is easy and gives you control over quality, supply, and costs.

Debbie Pendergrast is Business Development Manager at Keencut, manufacturer of precision manual cutting machines for the sign-making, digital printing, and wide-format printing industries. She says, "We have used our experience to detail the essential points to consider when choosing your method and machinery for cutting foam board."

Here are Keencut's essential points to successful foam board cutting:

1. Buy a versatile cutter

Invest in a cutter that cuts various materials and can cut foam board up to a thickness of 13mm. Your business requirements and opportunities may change over time, and the more versatile your cutter, the less need for repeated capital expenditure. Look for a cutter bar that will cut a range of materials such as foam board, banner materials, cardboard, plastics, fabrics, papers, films, even aluminium composite panels. Buying a cutter that can cut rigid, semi-rigid and flexible materials will increase your flexibility.



Every aspect of the cutting machine should be designed to ensure your safety

2. Cut foam board with an accurate, clean, perfect finish

Ultimately, quality counts. There is no point in creating a great signboard and trimming it badly. The quality finish of a

Look for a cutter bar that will cut a range of materials



packed box of uniformly cut foam board signs always impresses the customer. You need a smooth, clean cut. Poor foam board cutting leaves jagged edges, dust, and debris. Make sure the quality finish is perfect irrespective of the thickness of the board. You also want a cutting process that does not leave dust and debris all over your finished boards, especially if laminating, or your workshop. Perfect finish and precision accuracy reduces waste and so increases profit.

3. Speed up production with a better foam board cutting process

Cutting and trimming foam board can be extremely time-consuming. Choosing a cutter that quickly completes the cutting process is essential, but only if it cuts accurately and cleanly. The dramatic increase in production speed offered by a quality machine comes from the material set-up and alignment speed. It is the ease of set-up that has a direct impact on productivity and so profits. It is not about slicing as fast as you can. There can be a tendency to execute the cut too quickly,

which can result in a ripping action. To cut foam board, you need a steady cutting action and for the board to remain in place. The blade will act like a wedge if you cut too quickly, leaving a rough, uneven cut. Also, remember that cold boards do not cut as well, so bring them to room temperature before cutting.

You need a machine that allows you to accurately align the material, cut perfectly and then move quickly to the next board.

4. Clamp foam board securely without damaging the surface

Your printed foam board needs to be held securely for cutting but in a way that does not damage the printed surface. You need a precision cutting machine with a clamping system that holds the board firmly without marking the surface. You also want to be able to make fine adjustments, so the clamp needs to lower and then hover just above the surface of the material before you fully engage the clamp.



Keencut machines have unique market-leading features which improve your production process

5. Effortlessly cut even thick foam board

Cutting foam board is a repetitive task, so comfort and ease of cutting are vital. Even with the thicker boards of up to 13mm, you should be able to cut with minimal effort. Your cutter needs to offer a smooth passage up and down the length of the cutter bar, with zero sideways movements to ensure a perfectly straight line.

You should be able to adopt a posture that effectively uses your body weight to aid the cutting process. The cutting tool head should be comfortable in your hand for pushing and pulling actions, whether you use your left or right-hand. Look at the effort required for each cut and how the cutting head feels in your hand - remember you will be using this machine all day every day.

6. Cut foam board safely

This sounds obvious, but you need to be safe. Using a metal rule and hand knife is both risky and less accurate than using a professional cutter. Every aspect of the cutting machine should be designed to ensure your safety. Look at whether the blades automatically retract, and how easy and safe is it to change blades. Look for magnetic blade cartridges that can speed up the interchanging of blades of different depths.

7. Buy a cutter bar that will last

You need to be confident in the durability of the cutting machine you choose. This unit will become the workhorse of your workshop, and it should be built to last and remain accurate.

There are some essential features to consider. The cutting track should be heavy-duty steel, and the interchangeable tool heads must have steel bearings to maintain accuracy and ensure durability. The whole unit should be manufactured from the highest quality materials and always look for a good guarantee and a guaranteed accuracy rating.

Quality cutters from Keencut

Pendergrast adds, "Keencut has a range of machines for those working in busy production facilities or areas with occasional cutting needs. With Keencut cutters, you will cut and finish each board cleanly and accurately, with no debris. Our cutters have zero sideways movement and rigid blade clamping to provide the perfect blade control required for an exact straight line and spot-on accuracy - there's no expensive wastage."

She continues, "The majority of Keencut cutting machines have a stated and guaranteed level of cutting accuracy for the entire length of the cut. The cut and finish are achieved in a single action, with only the thickest materials benefiting from a two or three pass score and cut. We also manufacture all our components in-house so that we can ensure quality and offer a 5-year guarantee."

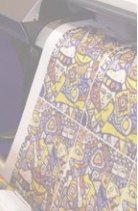
With Keencut cutters, everything from setting up the cutter, aligning the material, ensuring accuracy, and quickly moving to the next cut has been considered. Debbie Pendergrast concludes, "From the heavy-duty strength of the vertical Keencut SteelTrak cutter to the innovative Lift-and-Hover system of the Keencut Evolution3 range, Keencut machines have unique market-leading features which improve your production process."

We invite you to visit our website and watch our informative customer case studies to hear how quickly and dramatically Keencut products increased their productivity and improved quality."

www.Keencut.com



Cutting foam board is a repetitive task, so comfort and ease of cutting are vital



Tools & Gadgets

Sign Trade Supplies – The right tool for the job

Having the correct tools in your kit bag is absolutely vital for producing the required end result. This is true throughout most industries including the sign, graphics and wrap sector.

With new tools and accessories being produced and released all the time it is hard to keep up with the most valuable advances in the area. Sign Trade Supplies has put together a 'must have' list of tools to help your installations go as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Take a look at the list below and see how your tool kit compares:

Clean it right with a heavy chemical sprayer

No matter the job, the starting process usually begins with getting the area clean. There are some brilliant cleaning fluids out on the market which work fantastically to clean your substrate prior to application of self-adhesive materials. However, the cleaner is only as good as the application, so that's why first on the list is a fully solvent safe pressurised sprayer. The generic pressure sprayer often used to fail in a short amount of time due to the harsh cleaners breaking down the pump process. Our top tip would be to spend a little more for a sprayer that will last



First on the list is a fully solvent safe pressurised sprayer

Safe cuts with a vinyl guard knife

There is nothing worse than accidentally cutting through the media you intend to

install. A Vinyl Guard Knife is the key to keeping your vinyl safe and cutting through just the backing paper. Used both in wrapping and the workshop a vinyl guard knife can be used to cut through just the liner of the self-adhesive material. Available with an extra long reach handle, it is also great for trimming prints and vinyl off a roll when working on a bench.



A vinyl guard knife only cuts through the backing paper

It's all in the buffer

Squeegees have been the installers best friend since self-adhesive applications began and there is always much debate over the best application squeegee for the job. The new talk now surrounds the best squeegee 'buffer' or replacement felt. With different shapes and styles, squeegee buffers have become very popular. MonkeyStrips being one of the original creators of replacement felts they are a favourite among vehicle wrap installers and sign makers. The choice of buffer has now increased to include wet installation buffers, Teflon coatings and more. Choosing the right buffer for the installation can really help provide a flawless finish.



Cut right, cut once with a 5-way tool

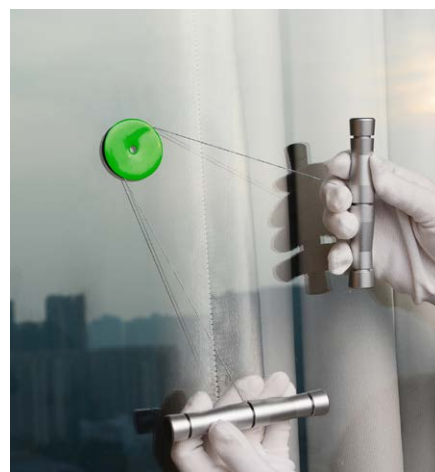
Perhaps a lesser-known accessory is the 5-way tool, used predominantly for window graphics and frosting installation the 5-way tool helps you trim the film neatly against the seals and reduce the classic cut wobble when trimming along borders on continuous runs. With a nice handle and multiple cutting edges, the 5-way tool guides your blade alongside the seals and keeps the material tight to the borders. A must have for any installer working with glazing and office portioning.



The 5-way tool is great for window graphics

Emblem Removal Tool

A great little vehicle wrap preparation tool. Allowing for easy and safe removal of car badges, emblems and lettering. The emblem removal tool has two handles and a thin braided line. Used like a cheese wire, the braided filament passes behind the vehicle badge and cuts through adhesive holding the badge to the car.



Make the material magnetic with a wrap patch

Standard magnetic grippers are brilliant for holding graphics onto vehicles while positioning, however when positioning vinyl onto glazing, aluminium, plastic bumpers or fibre glass the magnets have no power to hold. In these instances, a magnetic wrap patch is just the thing you need. With nano technology the non-adhesive pad will hold onto any flat clean surface and allow your standard magnets to grip. A lifesaver when applying repeating patterns onto glazing or fleet graphics onto windows.



Precision cutting with OLFA TS1 – top sheet cutter

The OLFA TS-1 is a unique cutting knife that has an adjustable pressure tip to only cut the top layer of vinyl on the backing paper. This is a great tool for finishing small prints that require simple contour cutting without putting the graphics through the plotter. The TS-1 allows you to cut even the thinnest films without going through into the paper liner.



Clean panel edges with Hilka deburring tool

Mounting self-adhesive vinyl to aluminium and aluminium composite panels is best suited to nice clean edged panel cuts, unfortunately many of the cutting tools and saws can leave the edges of the panels uneven, rough or with burrs. To save filing or block sanding edges the best tool to use is a "deburrer". Low cost and yet so effective the Hilka deburrer has a swivel blade that is run along the edge of the sheet removing the nasty edge and leaving a nice, rounded corner.



The Hilka deburrer is low cost and yet so effective

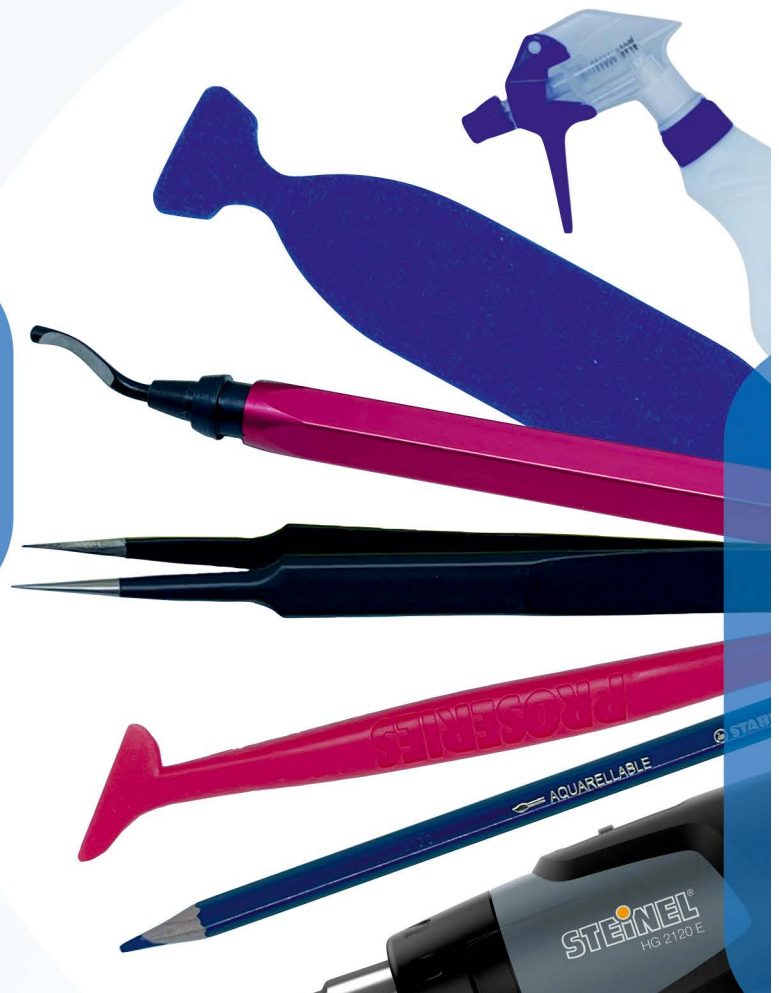
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Roland DG reopens revamped showrooms to meet and support its customers

Roland DG has announced the reopening of its new and upgraded physical showroom in the UK and Denmark, with Spain to follow before the end of 2021. Together with the existing ones in Italy, Germany and France, the three revamped spaces feature all-new digital technology, which brings Roland DG's offerings to life, and helps customers and potential buyers choose the right solution for their own business needs.

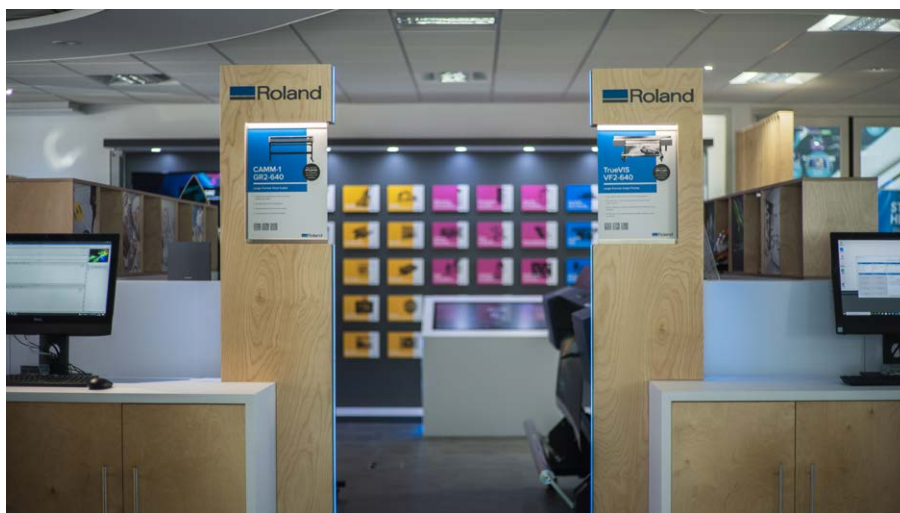
Customer-first approach

Roland DG continued to put the customer first when the pandemic forced the company to close its showroom doors at the start of 2020. As well as supporting customers through the pandemic remotely, the company set to work upgrading its showroom spaces in Bristol, Barcelona and Copenhagen, getting ready to welcome and meet potential customers back with brand new features and technology. Building on Roland DG's philosophy that ideas grow where people can meet and connect the dots, these spaces are a dynamic, 'happening' hub that bring together technology, colleagues, dealers, partners and customers.

All three upgraded showrooms share the same look and feel, so every customer can have the same first-class "Roland" experience wherever they are.

Cutting edge technology

The showrooms use new digital technology to enhance and showcase Roland DG's solutions and help customers choose the right options for them.



The innovative RFID wall features interactive tiles which help customers to understand more about the huge range of applications to help launch or grow their business. An easy to navigate interface supports self-guided or assisted exploration of substrates, industries, technologies, and printers. A showroom visitor can place the detachable tile on the RFID reader to view a wealth of information on the chosen topic, including detailed descriptions and high-definition photos and videos of Roland DG solutions. Showroom visitors can also use a touchscreen to interactively view 3D models of Roland DG machines, and explore their features and benefits. Excitingly, the technology is updated in real-time and with localised content meaning a new application or idea can travel from one location to another in seconds.

Virtual Showrooms for the digital-first customer

To provide the same interactive experience to customers digitally - throughout the pandemic and beyond - Roland DG also recently launched its virtual showroom. The showroom enables potential buyers to view and explore beautiful, crisp 360-degree digital renderings of Roland DG's flagship products that cover a broad range of industries and applications - all from the comfort of their own device. They can also utilise an immersive augmented reality tool for viewing a virtual model as it would appear in the relevant workspace.

"At Roland DG, we pride ourselves in putting our customers first, and tailoring our services to meet their individual needs," comments Stephen Davis, Marketing Director at Roland DG EMEA. "While we made it a priority to stay in contact with and support our customers remotely throughout the pandemic, we understand that for many of our potential buyers, being able to experience our machines in-person and receive face to face advice is important. As a result, we were determined not only to reopen our showrooms, but to improve them."

"At the same time, we recognise that many print businesses have made the leap to digital during the pandemic: we're proud to offer our virtual showroom to customers who cannot reach our physical spaces or simply prefer a digital experience, for the same immersive insights into our broad range of offerings."

www.rolanddg.eu



Josero becomes Vism partner

Wide-format solutions specialist Josero has announced it has been appointed as a Vism partner, enabling the long-established equipment reseller to further support its customers' growth by helping them improve the efficiency of their install operations through using Vism's software.

Effective 18th November, the two businesses will work together to support Josero's growing customer base.

Vism has been developing specialist software for printed graphics and signage companies since 2018, with its apps now used to manage installations for businesses in the UK, Europe, Canada and the US.

With cloud-based software that is purpose-built, easy to implement and use, and

continuously updated with new features and improvements, close to over 800 people in the UK now use Vism to run installations.

Commenting on joining the fast-growing startup's partner program, Sarah Winterbottom, Managing Director at Josero said "We are very happy to be partnering with Vism, their product is very niche and specific to our industry, it brings together great innovation giving far improved efficiency to the headache of organising installations for our customers."

Dan Tyler, CEO at Vism added "Having known Sarah and Loic for several years, I've always admired Josero's reputation as a straightforward, knowledgeable partner to their print & signage customers in the UK, and this made them an obvious



choice for one of our first partners. We're delighted to be working with them."

Sarah concluded "The initial response from customers is excellent and having spoken to people already using it, they wonder how they managed without it."

This product allows us to work closer with our customers to offer them solutions to fix pain points in their business."

www.josero.com

ArtSystems wins ONYX Thrive achievement award for EMEA

ArtSystems, the Nottingham-based UK trade distributor for ONYX Graphics' range of RIP and Print Management software, has won the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) award for the most ONYX Thrive Conversions in 2020, the last full trading year.

The award was presented at FESPA 2021 in Amsterdam and was one of five awards ONYX Graphics presented to its partners.

Rigte Groenbroek, General Manager for the EMEA region, at ONYX Graphics presented the award to Caroline Savage, Head of Sales at ArtSystems. Following the presentation, Rigte commented:

"We're thrilled to present this award to ArtSystems in recognition of their ability to showcase the benefits of ONYX Thrive to their customers."

"To have achieved this during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic is outstanding."

ArtSystems' Caroline Savage adds: "Everyone had a challenging 2020 so to be able to win this award really shows the strength of the ONYX partner channel. We'll be looking to build on this and do even better this year!"

www.artsystems.co.uk



From left to right: Rigte Groenbroek General Manager EMEA Onyx Graphics Inc.; Caroline Savage, Head of Sales, ArtSystems; and Nirav Patel, Key Account Manager, ArtSystems.

Ian Farrand joins CMYUK as Northern Regional Sales Manager

Ian Farrand has joined CMYUK as Northern Regional Sales Manager (Materials Division). His role is the direct result of a restructure within the consumables sales division overseen by Damien Clarke, who was promoted to CMYUK Sales Director (Materials) last September.

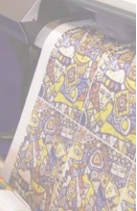
Ian, former Northern Sales Manager at Drytac Europe, is a highly experienced

print professional with a solid 25-year career. Based in West Yorkshire, he has many well-established and long-standing relationships with digital wide-format PSPs in Scotland and the North of the country.

"I am very pleased to be joining the CMYUK team for many reasons," said Ian. "The amount of traffic that it generates through marketing, the expansion that it has undergone in the last 5 years, the

number of seasoned and well-respected industry staff that work there, and the fact that it has continued to grow and innovate throughout the Pandemic says something about this business. I'm looking forward to introducing CMYUK's impressive range of eco materials to the many customers I know, and the new ones that will come onboard."

www.cmyuk.com



Another 4,000 trees planted for the Young People's Forest

Premier and their guests once again joined forces with the Woodland Trust to create new native woodland in the Derbyshire countryside as part of the Carbon Capture® programme.

On the 25th November, Premier teamed up with some of their customers, Sylvamo, Link Publishing, the Outdoor Guide and BBC presenter Gemma Hunt to brave the cold and plant saplings with the Woodland Trust, at the Young People's Forest in Mead, Derbyshire. Guests from around the UK, from Southampton to Glasgow, travelled to take part in the day and help with this amazing project.

Guests were welcomed with hot breakfasts, teas and coffees; and after introductions from Premier's Marketing

Director, Dave Jones and the Woodland Trust's Ollie Cannon, promptly took to the fields to begin planting. The target for the day was to plant at least 3,000 trees that are native to the area including holly, silver birch, alder and oak. By the end of the day an incredible total of 4,000 indigenous saplings were planted, despite a few cold hands.

Young People's Forest Mead is located just south of Heanor and Smalley in the heart of the Derbyshire countryside, the 162-hectare site is steeped in history with ties stretching back to the Norman conquest and the Vikings, over 1,000 years ago. Coal mining began in the area during 16th century and the land was used as an open cast mining site. In 2015 however, mining ceased and the

Woodland Trust plan to plant 250,000 trees, helping to create a safe and educational outdoor space for generations to come; as well as bountiful habitats for endless species of insects, foxes, deer, hare, owls, sky larks and badgers.

Premier's work with the Woodland Trust began ten years ago. What started off as a simple idea to give a few businesses the choice to mitigate the CO₂ emissions from the materials that they buy has truly blossomed into something very special. Premier's Carbon Capture programme has grown to become the industry's leading environmental initiative with well over 600 customers fully signed up and committed to the cause; from printers to sign makers, local authorities to banks and other corporate organisations, all directly supporting the creation and maintenance of local native woodland throughout the UK. To date Premier and their customers have raised in excess of £1.3m for the Woodland Trust, planting over 330,000 trees and capturing over 80,000 tonnes of CO₂; and the best part is 100% of all money raised through the Carbon Capture® programme, goes directly to the Woodland trust!

www.paper.co.uk



Antalis is recognised with a Sustainability Advocate Award

Antalis is delighted to announce it has recently been awarded the reputable Sustainability Advocate Award at the Independent Print Industries Association (IPIA)'s recent Expo event and Recognition Excellence Awards held in December.

The IPIA is a not-for-profit trade association focused on helping its members grow and develop their print related businesses. It delivers ongoing value, support and counsel to members through a comprehensive range of benefits, services, events and publications. In particular, the IPIA assumes a crucial role as an industry ambassador championing print, both at Government level and to major print buying sectors.

"This award endorses our systematic work to achieve a sustainable substrate offering and corresponding practices which enable customers, and their clients, to meet their own environmental objectives. Sustainability is key to Antalis' business and is central to our continued developments in broadening our environmental portfolio to offer a choice when choosing substrates. Antalis has also developed the Green Star System™ to aid the selection of sustainable media. The system categorises our portfolio with a rating approach to rank products based upon their environmental credentials, which can also be complemented by our innovative carbon offsetting schemes," said Simon Fisher, Commercial Director for Antalis Print, Publishing, Office and Visual Communications.

"We were honoured to be part of the awards ceremony and to meet so many talented industry friends and experts all celebrating the print industry," added Simon.

www.antalis.co.uk



HP present the award to Katie Farr and Jeff Gill from Antalis

ISA-UK announces Chris Coward as new General Manager

The ISA-UK powered by BSGA, the leading independent trade association for the UK sign, graphics and visual communications industry, is delighted to announce the appointment of Chris Coward as its new General Manager, with immediate effect.



Chris Coward replaces Craig Brown, who has been serving as Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ISA-UK since July 2021.

The ISA-UK's council is made up of experienced and inspirational industry professionals who endeavour to support the ISA-UK's work. As General Manager, Chris will work with ISA-UK members from around the UK, offering expert advice and guidance on how to grow their business in the post-pandemic period, as well as providing specialist support on any other queries they may have.

A passionate and energetic leader, Chris has in-depth experience as a director of multi-site small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as first-class communication skills and the proven ability to produce results within a fast-paced environment.

Chris has worked in a number of senior positions during his career, including a five-year spell as Operations Director at Notcutts Garden Centre, which runs 18 individual garden centres at locations all across the UK.

The addition of Chris Coward to the ISA-UK team will see Craig Brown step

down as Interim CEO. Craig took on the temporary role in July 2021 to help guide ISA-UK during the summer months whilst a permanent replacement was sought.

On Chris's appointment, Sam Armstrong, founder of Make it Happen signage consultancy and the President of ISA-UK, comments: "Firstly we'd like to thank Craig Brown for stepping in as the interim CEO. His work is very much appreciated.

"Following an extensive search, we're delighted to welcome Chris to the team. He brings a wealth of experience of running SMEs and will be instrumental in guiding our members to successfully navigate this post-pandemic period."

As the only trade association for the signage industry within the United Kingdom, ISA-UK seeks to raise industry specific standards, communicate best practices, and increase and support the development of a diverse and inclusive signage community.

uksigns.org

New videos for marketing and application of ASLAN mirror effect film

ASLAN, the German specialist in self-adhesive films has been manufacturing, for many years, what they claim to be the best quality mirror effect films in the market. ASLAN, in association with the WrapInstitute, has produced two new videos available on the ASLAN YouTube channel. These were made to support distributors in their marketing of the mirror effect films and explain to the end user the application process more fully.

The video "Inspirations" <https://youtu.be/proZziUEJoI> showcases many ideas during its short run, such as where the scratch-resistant mirror effect film can be used and why it's so special in brilliance and application. In addition to marketing,

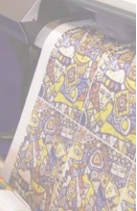


2 videos on YouTube – one for inspiration and one for application

this video is excellent for sales teams, as they can simply and virtually demonstrate the advantages of this polyester film to their customers.

In the second video, "How to use..." https://youtu.be/3lc4ejFu_4 it is expertly explained how to simply apply the MirrorEffect AntiScratch ASLAN SE 75. By following these instructions, the double-sided mirror effect will be displayed at its absolute best. This video has been produced especially for those applying the film and reveals all the tips and tricks for working with the MirrorEffect AntiScratch ASLAN SE 75.

The self-adhesive mirror effect film with its highly brilliant double-sided effect and unbeatable scratch resistance and durability, is available in silver and gold. To request sample of the film, simply go to www.aslanfolien.de



Sign & Digital UK open for registration, and floorplan expanded for 2022

Sign & Digital UK (SDUK) has announced registration is open for its much-anticipated return to the NEC, Birmingham, with Roland DG, Epson, Premier Paper, Hybrid Services/Mimaki, Hexis, The Magic Touch, Trotec Laser, PrintMAX, William Smith Group 1832, Graftyp, Zund Plotting Systems, Signwaves, Inktec Europe, Perspex Distribution and Your Print Specialists amongst the brands confirmed for the show.

The exhibition, taking place 22-24 March 2022, will also welcome many first-time exhibitors. Companies include SwissQPrint, Brunel Engraving, Adivin Beach Flag, Mr Clipart, DNX Design, OneVision Software, IQ Australia, and Unify Office Group.

Other exhibitors already confirmed to exhibit at SDUK include Eurobond Adhesives, Sign Making Tools, Award Crafters, R A Smart, Soyang Europe, Very

Displays, Trade Etching Direct, Arken POP, Doro Tape and many more.

Jenny Matthew, Sign & Digital UK event director said: "The floorplan is packed! We are thrilled such a large number of exhibitors have returned for 2022; that so many of those have increased their presence, with stand upgrades, and that we have welcomed so many new exhibitors. It really is testament to the industry's confidence in SDUK and the

show's continued role in bringing the industry together to do business".

"We have recently conducted an extensive research campaign to gain greater insight into our visitors' needs and plans for the event – the results have been overwhelmingly positive; new features are being developed and we expect a big turnout in March".

www.signuk.com

22-24 March 2022, Hall 2, NEC, Birmingham

sign&digital UK

SIGNAGE | PRINT | DISPLAY | DÉCOR | DESIGN

ArtSystems goes interactive with new Virtual Demo Suite

ArtSystems, a specialist systems distributor and service provider, is delighted to announce the launch of its brand-new Virtual Demo Suite, allowing customers to experience in-depth product demonstrations from the comfort of their own offices.

The ArtSystems Virtual Demo Suite makes it even easier for customers to gain an insight into the wide array of high-quality products and services available from ArtSystems. Hosted from ArtSystems' existing demonstration facility in Nottingham, the new suite has been equipped with a full audio visual (AV) system, allowing for interaction with specialist ArtSystems' staff during live demonstrations. There are also pre-recorded virtual demos, available on-demand, via the site.

Booking a session in the virtual demo suite removes the need for customers to have to travel to ArtSystems' physical demonstration facility and instead allows them to view expert demos remotely. For those customers that want to see the equipment in action first-hand, they can still book in for a live demo at the ArtSystems existing demonstration facility in Nottingham.

According to Andrew Edwards, Applications Division Manager, at ArtSystems: "In these post-pandemic times, we understand that people are not always comfortable travelling to different destinations to access print solutions. Time constraints can also be an issue. We've listened to our resellers and customers and are bringing the demonstrations to them, virtually.



"We look forward to welcoming visitors to our new online suite."

Bookings for the new virtual demo suite are open now.

www.artsystems.co.uk

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The role involves travelling nationally installing signs and graphics for many well known high street, grocery and bespoke brands. Previous experience and a practical mind, as always, are essential.

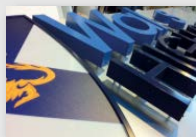
It would be great if you were a team of two experienced sign fitters who wanted to join us together to form a whole additional crew - however sole applicants to work with our existing teams and other applicants are definitely welcome too!

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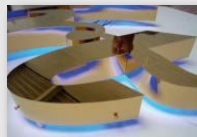
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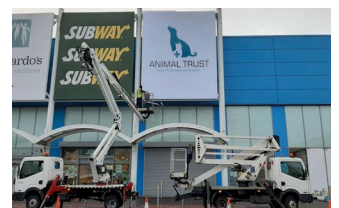
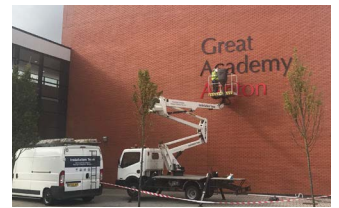
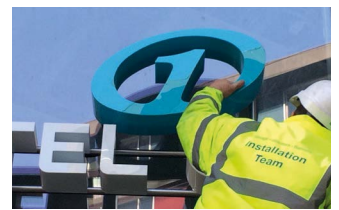
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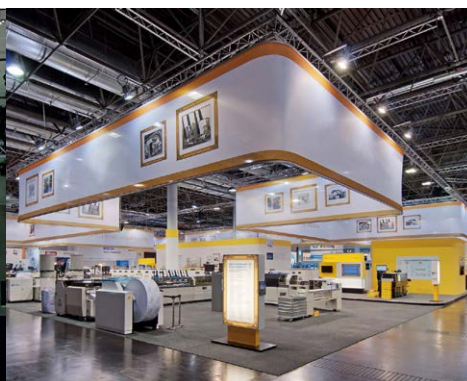


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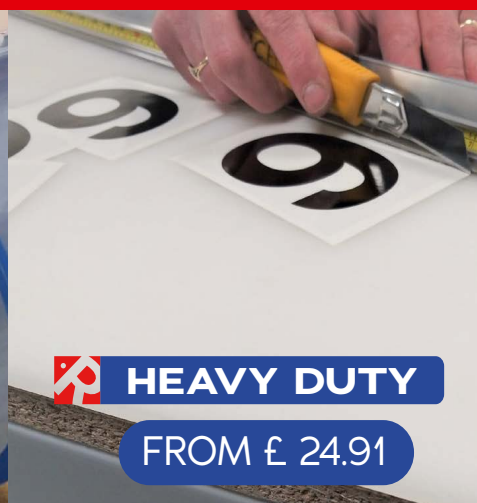


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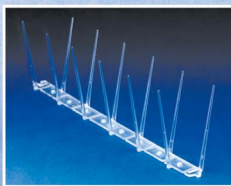
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