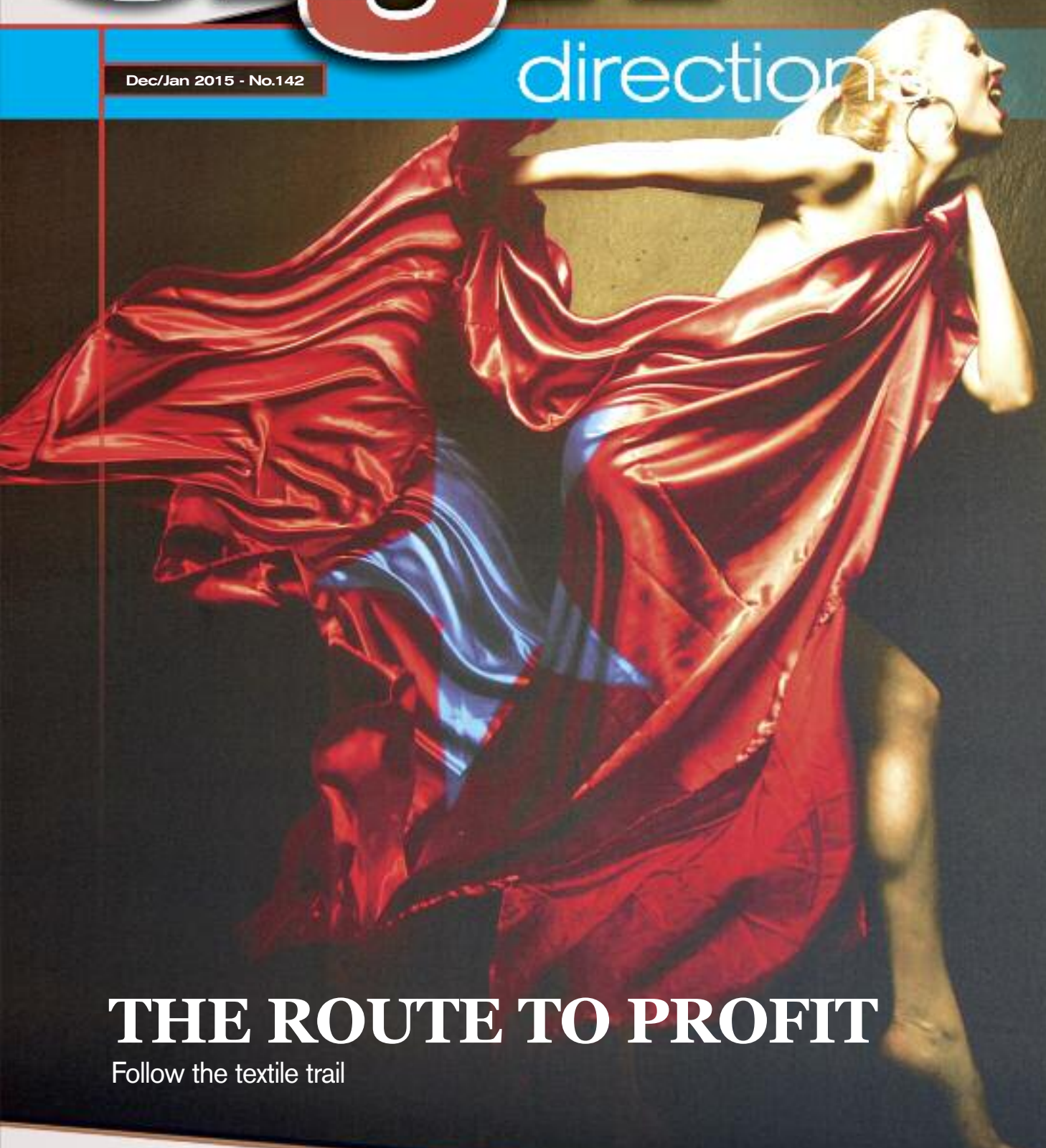


# sign

Dec/Jan 2015 - No.142

directions



## THE ROUTE TO PROFIT

Follow the textile trail

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**OUT OF THE DARKNESS** - SPOTLIGHT ON ILLUMINATION

**OPENING THE DOORS TO INNOVATION** - 3M'S NEW CUSTOMER INFORMATION CENTRE

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EUROPE

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### Sign Directions Hotline:

If you would like the contact details of any of the companies featured in this issue of Sign Directions, please ring

**Tel: 01623 882398** for full company information, or alternatively, e-mail [signdirections@btconnect.com](mailto:signdirections@btconnect.com) for a response by return.

### Coming Next:

The next issue of Sign Directions will be the February/March issue, which will be published during the first half of March and will include a comprehensive preview of Sign & Digital UK



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## Introduction

# setting the scene

It's always good to begin a New Year in the way you intend to continue – by paying as much attention to the little things as you do to the big ones. If you agree, then I'd respectfully request that you immediately visit our website at [www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk](http://www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk), click on the tab entitled 'Magazine' and re-register. This will take you five minutes tops and guarantee continued receipt of Sign Directions for as long as you want to receive it.

Yes, I know that if you are reading this, you are already on our mailing list, but even so, it never hurts to update your details. This is why.

Every time we mail out an issue of Sign Directions we receive between 50 and 100 returns. Some of the magazines are returned because the company concerned has closed or disbanded, or the recipient has simply 'gone away'. Sometimes, a magazine comes back, because frankly, the postman couldn't be arsed to deliver it – perhaps the weather was particularly foul that day and delivery would have entailed trudging an extra half-mile or so in wind/rain/snow – who knows?

However, by and large, the majority of returns relate to companies who have simply moved premises. Since most businesses redirect their post for a period following their move, they will continue to receive the magazine for several months or more thereafter. But eventually, it will wing its way back to us and a quick Internet investigation will then reveal that yes, the company still exists and is happily operating from elsewhere. I'd like to say that whenever this happens, I just chuckle merrily to myself while thinking 'Oh you naughty little tinkers!' but I don't! Over a year, the number of returns probably represents somewhere around £770-1000 in terms of money wasted, and I have to confess that, on occasion, I've been known to get cross enough to turn the air blue!

Of course, lots of lovely companies do ring us direct (on Tel: 01623 882398) or e-mail to [signdirections@btconnect.com](mailto:signdirections@btconnect.com) to advise of changed circumstances, but occasionally, I get an extremely irate call from someone who is very annoyed not to have received the latest issue and who ill-advisedly asks me what I'm going to do about it. On such occasions I always apologise profusely and explain that my ESP isn't always up to scratch – unfortunately, though the sarcasm tends to go right over their heads.

So, in the interests of maintaining a harmonious and peaceful atmosphere in the Sign Directions office, if you could just take a few minutes to re-register as described above, or, at the very least let us know, by post, phone or e-mail when you move, the named recipient leaves, or you want to cancel your subscription, I'll be eternally grateful.



Added to that there's a very special reason why you'll want to keep receiving Sign Directions this year – we mark our 20th anniversary in September and are planning to celebrate with lots of new features and special treats. I particularly want to hear from other companies that are similarly celebrating an important business milestone during 2015, and want to share the details of their journey thus far with our readers. If this is you, ring or e-mail as directed above and we can take it from there.

Everyone will certainly want to receive the next issue of the magazine, which will carry our usual comprehensive preview of Sign & Digital UK, which will take place a little earlier this year on 24th-26th March in Halls 17 and 18 at Birmingham's NEC. Following last year's exceptionally busy and bustling event, the organiser, Faversham House Group, anticipates kicking off this year's crop of spring shows in style. Other upcoming events worth noting are FESPA and European Sign Expo, which will run concurrently at Koelmesse in Cologne on 18th-22nd May.

Moving on to this month's issue, you can discover the route to increased profit on pages 24-31, where Mike Connolly has detailed the latest digital printing innovations, while on pages 38-45 you'll find the spotlight has been cast on lighting. On page 14, 3M opens the doors of its new Customer Information Centre in Bracknell and invites you in for a sneak preview. Elsewhere, you'll find all of our regular news pages, while on page 46 Mark Godden laments that the future isn't what it used to be.

Right now, it's time for me to get to grips with the latest clutch of returns and update the mailing list – have your earplugs at the ready!



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**Twitter:** @Valthemagham

**Web:** [www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk](http://www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk)

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# Sovereign finds a winning formula

**Sovereign Signs has secured the contract to manufacture, supply and install signage and branding to 15 Formula One Autocentres.**

The Hull-based signage manufacturer has agreed to provide large scale Flexface and fabricated fascia signage, external branding and service signs, as well as a comprehensive package of internal branding elements, such as unique graphic walls, TV housing units, plus Health and Safety and service message signage for the autocentres, which are based across the UK.



This deal follows the completion of similar signage projects that Sovereign has undertaken for the Formula One Autocentres over the last few years. ■

# New era for ISO

**The Shop and Display Equipment Association (SDEA) has taken over the International Shopfitting Organisation (ISO). After 58 years as an independent organisation, ISO will be incorporated into SDEA at its headquarters in the UK. It is the first time since the 1970s that ISO has been based in Britain.**

The decision marks an important step in SDEA's current period of growth and development, strengthening business links between shopfitting and display suppliers in the UK and continental Europe.

Current Secretary General, Preben Bailey, who is retiring after 10 years at the helm, said: "We are happy that such a professional industry Association is able to deliver our former members not only similar, but in many ways, better terms of international membership".

Welcoming the decision, SDEA Director, Lawrence Cutler, said: "The incorporation of ISO under the umbrella of the SDEA will add a new dimension to our offer to retail groups, many of which are expanding into mainland Europe. For existing SDEA members and incoming ISO members there will be invaluable opportunities to develop additional cross border trade links." ■

# Customer service rewarded

**The Lincoln based company, Visual Print and Design received the prestigious Customer Service Award at the Lincolnshire Business Awards, recently held at Lincoln's Showground.**

The event, which attracted 400 attendees representing businesses from across the county, saw awards being presented to the winners of 10 different categories. The Customer Service award, which was sponsored by Lincoln College and designed to recognise businesses that provide outstanding customer service was



awarded to Visual Print and Design and to command excellent customer retention and loyalty. ■

# Applelec supports apprentices

**Applelec's warehouse operative Sam Lumb has further developed his sign industry career with the completion of a one-year apprenticeship in signmaking at Leeds College of Building.**

The part-time course, which was the last of its kind to be held at the college, covered six modules, including self-adhesive materials, sign-making

software, vinyl plotter and graphic printer training. A key element of the course was training on self-adhesive materials with projects focusing on the selection of the most appropriate adhesive and method of application.

In addition, students were also required to follow a hypothetical brief, such as a project set by Coca Cola that stipulated the use of Sign Lab

software and also required them to adhere to the specific constraints dictated by corporate guidelines.

A further module enabled Sam to present the work he had completed whilst employed at Applelec. Commenting on the course he said: "Everything will prove invaluable throughout my career, while my improved practical skills, combined



with my ability to follow briefs and work within specified timeframes, has already proved very useful at Applelec!" ■

## FESPA 2015 lifts-off!

**The FESPA 2015 Global Expo, which is urging sign and print companies to 'Discover Your Universe of Print' moves to Cologne, Germany for the**

**first time this spring, where it will run for five days from 18th to 22nd May 2015 and is set to occupy 62,500m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space in the new north halls of KoelnMesse, making it the largest FESPA Global Expo of all time.**

The 2015 campaign's space exploration theme underlines the galaxy of growth opportunities that exist for sign and print companies, and revolves around a dedicated event website at [www.fespa2015.com](http://www.fespa2015.com).

The sold space for FESPA 2015 already equals that of FESPA 2013 and the event continues to attract more exhibitors. As in 2013, visitors will find FESPA 2015 structured around three key zones - FESPA Screen, FESPA Digital and FESPA Fabric, each represented by its own planet on the website and other campaign collateral. The 'planet' device will also be used to help visitors navigate the show.

FESPA 2015's educational programme for visitors will also be the most extensive yet, and provide visitors with the option to join other satellite events under the same roof - for example the co-located European Sign Expo, with its focus on non-printed signage. ■

## New broom sweeps into Signs Express

**Originally formed in 1996 Signs Express (Aberdeen), part of the UK and Ireland's largest sign and graphics franchise, has welcomed a new leader, Olive Hamilton.**

Olive, who has previously run her own successful company, takes over from Jim Gifford who originally established the centre and is now leaving to further pursue his political career.

She commented: "Signs Express (Aberdeen) has a solid customer base, coupled with experienced staff and a fully equipped production unit, which makes it a very exciting opportunity for me. I'm eager to meet both current and new customers and to invest in the



new kit that will help me to further grow the business." ■

## New accreditation for Octink

**Octink has been awarded the Building Confidence accreditation by Achilles in recognition of its continuous efforts to create safe environments in and around construction sites.**

Awarded in November, this accreditation is Octink's fourth within the overall Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) initiative.

The Achilles BuildingConfidence standard, launched in 2007, is a rigorous accreditation process that aims to meet the demanding

legislative and risk management needs of construction clients. The audit process assesses a company's competence and compliance in line with the relevant audit protocol and identifies areas in which the business can improve and reduce potential risks.

In addition to its Building Confidence accreditation, Octink also has accreditations from SMAS Worksafe, SAFEcontractor and Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS), all of which are members of the SSIP Forum. ■

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## Neon wins a reprieve

**The sign industry can now breathe a collective sigh of relieve, secure in the knowledge that the future of neon signs is safe – at least until 2020 – thanks to the efforts of the BSGA and ESF.**

European legislators had intended to include HLDT (handcrafted linear discharge tubes) – better known as neon – within the scope of new RoHS regulations. This would have limited the amount of mercury that could be used and effectively restricted the colour of neon signs to just red.

However, following some tough negotiating with mandarins from the Council of Europe, the British Sign and Graphics Association (BSGA), together with colleagues from the European Sign Federation (ESF), has secured an exemption that will benefit the UK sign industry and manufacturers of neon signs.



The exemption permits neon signs to be made, subject to a maximum of 80mg of mercury being used. This means that neon signmakers can continue to produce a wide palette of colours and supply their customers' needs without fear of breaking European law.

Further details will be released to BSGA Members when available. ■

## Appointments



**Drytac Europe** has appointed **Phil Webster** as its Technical Sales Manager, in a role where he will take on the responsibility for the development and management of all of Drytac Europe's custom coating projects.

Working closely with key accounts, Phil, who has more than 20 years experience in the pressure sensitive adhesives sector, having previously worked for Henkel and Bostik will be instrumental in delivering bespoke permanent or removable adhesive

materials for use in a wide variety of applications.



**Carsten Knudsen** as President.

Udo Panenka joined Esko earlier this year from Kollmorgen, another Danaher business, where he became Vice President & General Manager for Industrial Automation in Europe and India, following several key leadership positions with increasing levels of responsibility.

Carsten Knudsen will continue to

## showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2015

### Trophex 2015

**18th-19th January**

NEC, Birmingham

Organiser: Hill Media

Tel: 01442 826826

e-mail: [alisoncwhite@aol.com](mailto:alisoncwhite@aol.com) [www.trophex.com](http://www.trophex.com)

### Retail Design Expo 2015

**10th-11th March**

Olympia, London

Organiser: Legend Exhibitions

Tel: 020 8874 2728

e-mail: [rachel@retaildesignexpo.com](mailto:rachel@retaildesignexpo.com)

### Sign & Digital UK 2015

**24th-26th March**

Halls 17 & 18

NEC, Birmingham

Organiser: Faversham House Group

Tel: 01342 332104

e-mail: [james.boyd@fav-house.com](mailto:james.boyd@fav-house.com)

[www.signuk.com](http://www.signuk.com)

### FESPA 2015

**18th-24th May**

Koelmesse, Cologne, Germany

Organiser: FESPA

Tel: 01737 240 788

e-mail: [sales@fespa.com](mailto:sales@fespa.com)

[www.fespa.com/fespa2015/](http://www.fespa.com/fespa2015/)

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support Esko and Danaher in an advisory role.

**Blackburns Metals** has appointed **Alan Vigar** as National Product Manager - Plastics, a role in which he will oversee the formation of a plastics division and develop the product ranges of acrylic, PVC foam, fluted sheet and polycarbonate to the sign, print and fabrication markets.

Alan joins Blackburns having already amassed a wealth of experience in a sales career that includes 14 years' working for Amari Plastics, as both a Regional Manager and as General Manager of the Southampton centre, following a stint with Aalco Southampton, where he was Sales and Marketing Manager. ■



*Guy Hammond (left) welcomes Alan Vigar (right) to the Blackburns team*



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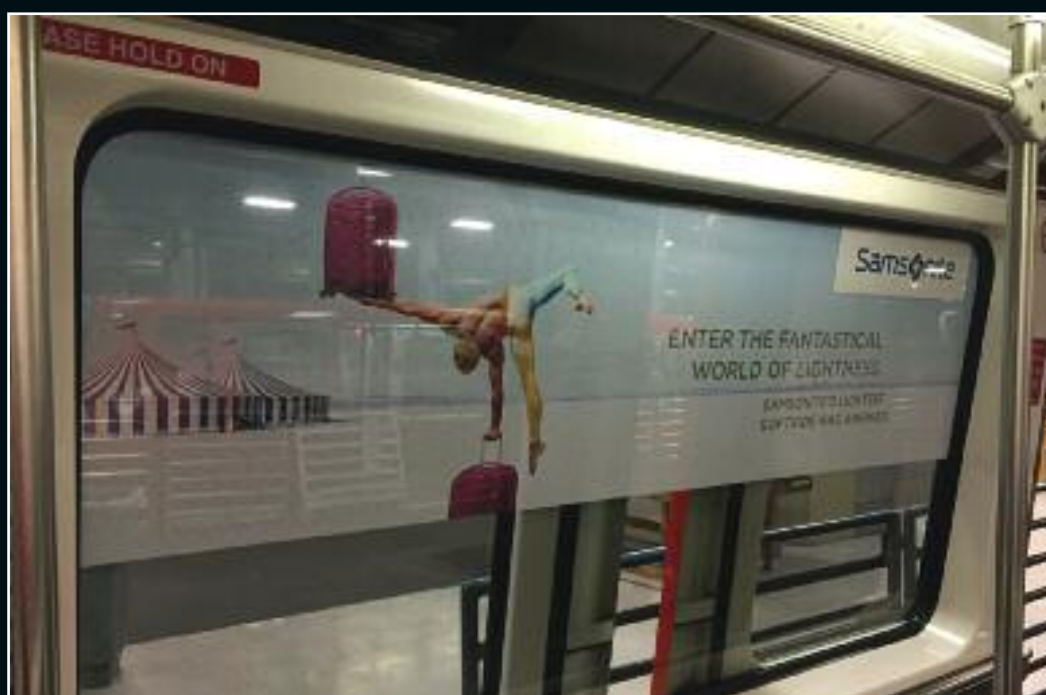
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# new projects



▲ **Contra Vision** supplied the innovative see-through graphics that are now being used at **Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport**, the world's busiest airport in terms of passenger traffic since 1998 and number of flights since 2012.

Working in tandem with **Clear Channel Airports** and its print

partner in Atlanta, **Contra Vision** helped to create the images that are now enlivening the corridor of the main central hub between terminals, which are designed to meet the demands of advertisers, while also providing the requisite degree of see-through visibility to satisfy the airport's security needs.

Contra Vision Performance 20%

was the material of choice as it is easy to apply and remove, while also facilitating the creation of eye-catching advertising images, all details of which can be clearly seen from a 10-metre distance, combined with the necessary

level of see-through vision too.

In addition, it also features on the trains that transport passengers between terminals and throughout the airport, where it is used to advertise Samsonite luggage. ■



▲ **Turkish Airlines** flies to over 98 countries and 200 locations, more destinations than any airline in the world and, in order to visually represent the full breadth of its operations, it chose to create an iconic structure featuring a giant globe, for installation at

**Heathrow**, the world's third busiest airport.

The globe is made up from 16 individual sections, each of which now features graphics produced by **Signs Express (Basildon)** depicting the longitude and latitude points of the world. The

project, which is the largest that Signs Express (Basildon) has ever tackled, took 3,500 man-hours to complete!

Due to the mammoth size of the structure – each section is the size of a house - Signs Express worked on a single piece at a time, taking

great care to ensure that the graphics would align perfectly when the globe was finally assembled. Once installed by **Fab Media**, the company responsible for organising all of the ground works, the globe, which has an impressive 6.5m diameter, was suspended from a 7.5t steel plinth.

Signs Express (Basildon) also added detailing to the five Boeing 777 planes that adorn the globe, each of which has a wingspan of over two metres and is liveried to faithfully represent Turkish Airline's branding. In addition, it was commissioned to produce the illuminated lettering around the globe's base which records the many destinations that Turkish Airlines reaches, plus the digitally printed graphics that curve around the whole of the installation area. ■

▼ Unsurprisingly, Christmas is the time of year when air traffic peaks, which is why **Air Berlin** decided to inject a little festive cheer by providing its planes with seasonally appropriate liveries.

Accordingly, it identified Orjet 3967 Aircraft Graphic Film from **Orafol** as the ideal material for

the job, as its perforated structure makes it easy to apply over the aircraft's undulating curves, while also offering the requisite level of durability in a wide variety of extreme climatic conditions. The end result is a fleet that is Christmassy enough to rival that other well-known Yuletide flyer, Santa Claus! ■



Supplier News

# Zünd re-launches its demo suite

**Zünd UK marked the re-opening of its demonstration suite in St Albans with an Open House event held in collaboration with Canon.**

Visitors to the event were able to see Canon's Océ ColorWave 650 poster printer and Océ Arizona UV-curable flatbed printer as part of an end-to-end workflow, combined with Zünd UK's permanent fixtures in a sleek and modern environment.

Zünd's flagship modular digital cutters, the Zünd G3 XL-3200, Zünd S3 L-1200 and Zünd S3 M-800 with sheet feeder, are available for one-to-one demonstrations with all Zünd tools to showcase all applications in all industries. Every modular system is tailor-made for each user and is designed to evolve as their needs change and thus the demonstration centre offers a valuable opportunity to see the almost infinite combinations in action.

In addition, the suite at Zünd's St Albans headquarters includes two refurbished meeting rooms with software demonstration capabilities to provide both new and existing customers with the opportunity to explore the whole system, plus a range of information to help them visualise how the equipment can work for a wide range of applications.



Zünd UK will be hosting a new series of Open Days early in 2015, which will feature leading industry suppliers such as CMYUK, i-Sub Digital, Spandex and PaperlinX, plus their customers. ■

## The sky's the limit for Axyz

**Building on the success of its previous single-day event in 2013, AXYZ International held two further Open Days during November.**

Held once again at two Royal Air Force Museum sites, which were chosen for both their strategic locations and the fact that they provided an extra visitor attraction, the events were widely acknowledged by all of those who attended to have been of enormous value in determining which of the available routing, cutting and printing solutions best suited their specific production requirements.

At both venues, AXYZ International showcased examples from the AXYZ and Pacer ranges, as well as promoting

the supporting CNCRouterShop online division. Machines featured included a heavy-duty Pacer 4008 and AXYZ 4010 routing options, both of which are renowned for their reliability when used in intensive production environments and for their value-for-money investment quality.

End user feedback from the two open days confirmed the continuing huge appeal of AXYZ International, both as a supplier of high-performance CNC routing solutions and as a resource for essential technical knowledge and ongoing customer support.

Typical reactions included Peter Lightfoot of Lyndhurst Plastic Fabrication (LPF) who commented: "In the last 10 years, we have invested in



two AXYZ CNC routers and are about to invest in a third machine to further enhance our production capabilities via the new hardware and software upgrades that are available. Both of the original machines have proved to be typical workhorse solutions, with excellent ongoing technical support provided by AXYZ International."

Keith Lines of JH Lines provided further approbation by adding: "We have two

3000 x 2000mm AXYZ routers in operation, both of which we have found to be very reliable and value-for-money investments. Whenever we have needed machine maintenance, the staff at AXYZ International have been highly proficient and helpful, but most importantly, they possess a sound knowledge of the machines in a working environment and are able to resolve any issues quickly and efficiently." ■

# Trade Signs opens in Dublin

**Following an increase in the number of its customers in Ireland, Trade Signs has announced that its new office in Dublin is now open for business.**

Commenting on this latest expansion of Trade Sign's operation, Steve Sandford, the company's Head of Sales, who has helped the centre's newly appointed Sales Executive, Keith Byrne to set up the Dublin centre, explained: "With the increasing pace of our

business in Ireland, we thought it was the right time to open a dedicated headquarters there in order to provide our customers with the highest possible level of service and to further underline our on-going commitment to them."

He continued: "The Irish market has been growing for some time and we have already established a very loyal client base there. This latest investment will provide us with the opportunity to

further develop the relationships we have formed and to support our clients through all the stages of any sign related project they are involved with."

Keith Byrne has worked in the sign sector for 20 years and brings of wealth of experience to the new enterprise.

Steve Sandford confirmed that all bespoke manufacture will continue to take place at Sign Trade's UK headquarters in Tring, before observing:



"I have been very impressed with both Keith's level of commitment and his passion for the sign sector, as well as his ability to form close working relationships with customers. We are delighted that he is heading up this new facet of our business and are looking forward to helping all of our Irish customers to enjoy a prosperous and profitable new year!" ■

## MACTac films are REACH-compliant

A leading UK stockist and distributor of MACTac self-coloured signmaking films, Amari Digital Supplies (ADS) has announced changes to the colours (predominantly yellow, orange, red, green, grey and metallic) of the 9800, 8900, 8300 and 9700 Pro series of films, as well as those in the Sublime offering within the MACTac Tuning Film Series.

These changes are due to the new REACH (European Regulation for Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) directive that will come into force in January 2015.

Since the REACH requirement relates only to the manufacturing process, it is still currently permissible to use pre-stocked and/or supplied MACTac materials. From January 2015, however,



all MACTac products supplied by ADS will be fully compliant with the new requirement. The selected new colours will be as close as possible, indeed hardly noticeable, to those they will replace and ADS will be supplying MACTac colour cards and fan swatches that will include both the current and new colours. However, the names currently in use will be retained but the product codes will change due to the importance of not mixing current and new colours for the same application.

Since 15th June of this year, all MACTac products have been free of any heavy metals-based pigments and therefore already fully compliant with the new REACH regulation. ■

## Neschen relocates



Following its recent relocation from its parent plant, Neschen AG has completely rebuilt its showroom, which it plans to further enhance and expand early in 2015.

The showroom, which includes the complete exhibition stand that Neschen used at FESPA 2014, now also features a wide selection of materials, banners and displays, as well as a

collection of Neschen's coating solutions for use with digital print media.

The showroom will be further enhanced with the addition of the Neschen Application Centre, where visitors will be able to see media being printed on site using various machines, so that they can properly assess its suitability for a variety of different applications. ■

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new frontiers

# Opening the door to innovation

3M has opened a new Customer Information Centre at its UK headquarters in Bracknell. Prior to its official opening by the well-known physicist, Professor Brian Cox, 3M held a press reception to which the editors of key trade publications were invited for a sneak preview. Mike Connolly reports.

3M has invested more than £2 million in the centre which is said to be the most advanced of the company's 46 innovation centres worldwide. Managing Director, Paul Keel commented: "This investment has delivered an innovation centre that is seven times larger than the previous one in the UK. It provides a brilliant opportunity to share the 3M story of innovation and collaboration with our customers and business partners and to provide solutions for the future."

3M's reputation for and pursuit of highly innovative products that touch virtually every aspect of modern life has led to the development of more than 55,000 disparate products. To ensure that this culture of innovation continues, the company has been set a target of securing 40 percent of its sales from products that did not exist five years ago.



In addition to providing a source of information and collaboration for its many customers, the centre will also enable local school children to visit and learn more about the application of the various technologies demonstrated to encourage science-based careers. This is an aspiration that both Professor Cox and 3M feel passionately about and one that must be fostered for future generations. In particular, 3M is a strong and active supporter of UK government initiatives to achieve this objective. Professor Cox commented: "It is now widely appreciated that getting more STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) students into our universities is vital to the UK economy and there is no doubt that industry has a very important role to play in helping to encourage them. Being able to bring science to life by demonstrating how technology can change lives for the better has got to be a great inducement for young people to want to be part of that."

As well as the main innovation area, the centre incorporates workshops and a number of breakout areas that offer flexible meeting spaces for 3M collaboration with its customers and business partners. The customer experience begins at the 3M collaboration lounge, a customer reception space and creative zone where 3M staff can meet informally to collaborate with customers. From here, the customer is taken on a tour through 3M innovation and invention within the



multiple market sectors in which it operates, using a series of state-of-the-art interactive displays as well as workshops that provide customers with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience with the product/s and technologies of their choice.

Included in the various spaces of innovation are those specific to the sign and graphics and digital printing sectors, allowing an insight into the many 3M branding and advertising solutions available. These cover vehicle wrapping, and commercial fleet livery, illuminated signs, architectural and interior design solutions, rail industry solutions and floor and window graphics as well as energy-efficient lighting and light management systems.

At the 3M Customer Innovation Centre, customers and business partners can see demonstrations of a range of 3M graphic films through special displays. These include a Dichroic Glass Cube demonstrating a new colour-shift decorative film for the architectural market, an Air Cube showcasing next-generation lighting and DI-NOC Architectural Surface Finishes for interior building decoration. In addition, customers can climb aboard 3M's very own on-site train carriage sporting the



very latest interior and exterior rail-compliant graphics and wrapping films.

On the impact the new centre will have on the commercial graphics market in particular, Richard Davies, Trade Marketing Manager, 3M Commercial Graphics Division, commented: "The new centre is a sensory delight offering a real insight into 3M's collaborative spirit of innovation, which has led to the development of such a vast range of products during the past 100 years. Customers can discover how 3M provides ingenious solutions to customer challenges in so many diverse markets. For sign and graphics businesses, it is reassuring to be able to understand the history of 3M and the scientific engineering behind the 3M Commercial Graphics' range of products that they use on a daily basis."

**To arrange a visit to the 3M Customer Innovation Centre, visit [www.3M.co.uk/cic](http://www.3M.co.uk/cic)** ■

A man with a beard is playing a cello in a dark setting. The scene is illuminated with purple light, creating a dramatic atmosphere. There are glowing purple light trails and lens flares around the cello and the player's hands. The text "Great performance is never luck." is centered in the upper half of the image.

Great performance  
is never luck.

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Equipment &amp; Material

## Invaluable accessories

To lend further support to its customers in the sign and vehicle wrapping sectors, ADS has introduced a full range of tools and accessories, which comprises SOTT application tools and surface cleaning agents that will prove invaluable to vehicle wrappers.

They include the Blue Max Window Squeegee and Performance Handle, described as the ultimate solution for wet application involving heavier-duty films, such as those used for safety signage, solar

window graphics and laminated digital printing applications, and the HeatMaster heat gun for vehicle wrapping and window tinting applications.

The Right Off Adhesive Remover will remove residual adhesive in two minutes, as well as serving as a cleaning agent to eliminate environmental pollutants, such as grease, grime and tar.

The range also includes knifeless tapes in four variations. The first of these will improve material

conformability around vehicle bumpers, door handles and mirrors, while the second option is excellent for vehicle striping by allowing stretching and redirection of the material. The third option is for applications involving perforated window films and is excellent for vehicle and window wraps. The fourth option is Total Seal, described as a fast and easy solution to edge



sealing problems in vinyl applications. It comprises a clear acrylic lacquer containing UV blocking agents and dries in approximately 10 minutes after application. ■

## Street life

Spandex has expanded its family of ImagePerfect materials with the launch of a new self-adhesive outdoor media product, IP2555 StreetApp.

A white, textured, scuff-resistant print medium with a non-slip surface, it has been designed for digital printing on to large format inkjet printers using eco solvent and solvent, as well as UV-curable and latex inks.

ImagePerfect StreetApp has been specifically developed for challenging external surfaces, such as asphalt, tarmac, pavements and concrete, but thanks to its adhesive technology, it is also suitable for use on carpet and wooden flooring too. ImagePerfect StreetApp offers a high level of resistance to scratches and cracking and has an inherent non-slip surface, without the need for additional lamination.

This latest addition to the extensive ImagePerfect digital media range,



which facilitates high levels of print quality with a large colour gamut, delivering colourful images, is perfect for use in outdoor

applications, such as promotional graphics in sports arenas, race tracks and car parks. ■

## A damn fine yarn

HP has introduced a new 100 percent knitted polyester fabric for use with HP Latex Printers that is wrinkle-resistant, soft to the touch and features an excellent colour gamut for a range of high-profile display applications.

The new HP Light Fabric, which has been tested for harmful substances

and is certified according to the Oeko-Tex Standard 100, is REACH-compliant and flame-retardant to B1, M1, and NFPA 701 standards.

Suitable for creating economical, lightweight, high-quality banners and displays, it is crease- and wrinkle-resistant, as well as rub- and scratch-resistant and is available in 42-, 54-, and 60-inch widths. ■







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Equipment & Material

# Introducing Perspex Naturals



**Perspex Naturals, a new cast acrylic range from Perspex Distribution that takes its inspiration from the beauty of nature, is designed for use in retail**

**and interior design applications.**

Simulating the earthy tones and velvety texture of natural stone, it offers a double-sided matt surface,

thus fulfilling the demand for simple, natural looking materials that perform to high standards in demanding environments, whether used to craft POP displays, room partitions, furniture, artworks or architectural features.

Strong, durable and hardwearing and 100 percent recyclable, the Perspex Naturals range is easy to shape and style and maintains its matt surface texture even after thermoforming. Furthermore, its light weight means

that it is easy to handle, transport and install.

It is available in a collection of six colours, including Midnight Black, Mineral Grey, Ash Grey, Walnut Brown, Desert Beige and Moonlight White, in 3050 x 2030 size sheets, and in standard thicknesses of 3mm and 5mm.

Other variations of size and colour can be made to order upon request. ■

## •Anapurna M3200i RTR. Super

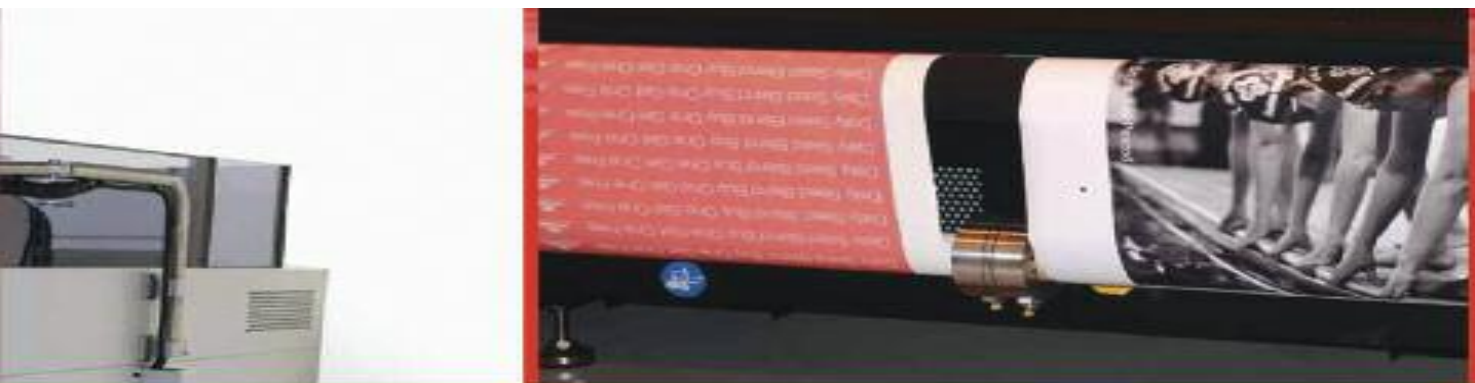
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ASLAN has further expanded its range of films with the introduction of PremiumBlackboard ASLAN BB 910, which maintains its pristine appearance even when it is written on again and again.

Scratchproof and extremely resistant

to solvents, it can be cut into any shape desired and used in conjunction with chalk and liquid chalk pens, without leaving any ghosting or shadows when writing is removed, thus making it the ideal choice for applications in restaurants, cafés, schools, offices or even domestic interiors. ■



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Equipment & Material

## The beauty of Venus

**Brand new and exclusive to W&Co for 2015, the 'Venus' illuminated pavement sign represents a major advance on non-illuminated A-Boards and forecourt signs.**

Featuring adjustable brightness modes, this premium freestanding portable sign enables businesses to deliver effective advertising both day and night.



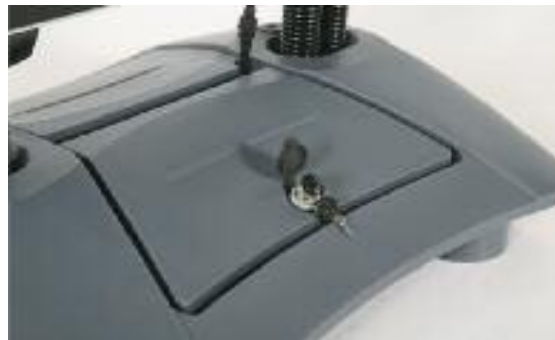
Designed to accept A1 size posters, which can be easily changed and updated using the hinged opening polycarbonate front covers and metal poster clips, once in place, the graphics are fully protected by a secure locking system and weatherproof seals rated at IP64.

The poster is illuminated with a bright LED light panel, which is securely hidden within the base of the sign and powered by a rechargeable lithium battery sourced from the aerospace industry, which combines high power with reduced weight.



The base can be filled with water to provide extra stability if required and is equipped with wheels for ease of

portability and storage and, in order to make the sign even more transportable it comes complete with a wheeled trolley. ■



## Lovely Leticia dispenses wisdom

**Two of Tensator's bi-lingual Virtual Assistants have been installed in Miami International Airport's (MIA) South Terminal (Concourses H and J), where they operate as high-tech virtual shopping consultants and offer a vibrant advertising vehicle for shops and restaurants to effectively reach the passengers passing through the airport.**

Commissioned by MIA Concessions the Virtual Assistants, which feature an interactive push

button panel, help to capture the attention of passengers so that they can make the most out of the 55,000 square feet of concession locations throughout the two concourses.

Unlike traditional signage, the Tensator Virtual Assistant uses innovative HD projected imaging, surround sound and video technology to create the illusion of a real person and is fully customised to deliver specific messaging, and to showcase products. The MIA Concessions'



Tensator Virtual Assistants, named Leticia, offer passengers on demand information in both Spanish and English about where and also what they can eat, and

provide shopping ideas, tips and information about products, stores, restaurants and services within the Terminal. ■

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# Profit through packaging

**As a company in its relative infancy, Stockport-based Image2Print has been producing signage, stickers, pull-up banners and posters since its inception some four years ago.**



However, with over twenty five years collective experience in the packaging reprographics arena, its core speciality remains the production of packaging prototypes and mock-ups.

In common with any growing business, success is often the result of the correct equipment purchases. For Image2Print, such acquisitions have included Canon and Roland roll-to-roll printers, a UV hybrid printer for use on rigid material and, most recently, a CNC cutting table from AG/CAD.

Explaining the rationale behind the acquisition of the latter, Director, Mr. Foulkes said: "Increasingly, we were being asked if we could produce packaging prototypes on various boards and flexible substrates, while we also noted that there was a definite demand for cutting and creasing expertise, especially as it seems that some companies who can offer this service have limited printing and reprographic experience, while others are handicapped by the quality of their machines. We thus spotted a huge opportunity and set about finding an appropriate solution."

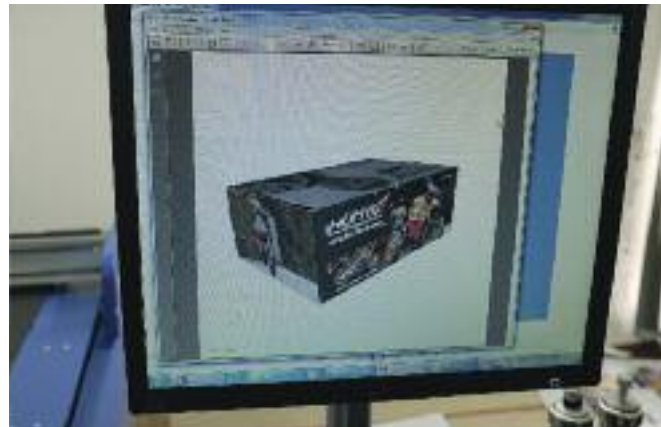
He continued: "We selected the DYSS cutter from AG/CAD as the machine that offered the best overall package at a cost that was affordable for a small business, such as ourselves. The result is that we can now offer a complete packaging service to customers, as well as our printing service. In fact, we have doubled the turnover of our packaging department since installing the DYSS machine. This is because its capabilities

and flexibility enable us to complete a wide variety of jobs that we would have previously been forced to turn away. We are also expanding our customer base as a result of the purchase."

Image2Print was particularly impressed by the robust build quality of the DYSS cutter and its engineering excellence with Mr. Foulkes reporting: "The DYSS build quality is far superior to other machines in the same class and the attention to detail is excellent, as is evidenced by the design and construction of the cutting head, which is machined from a one piece billet of alloy and finished to a very high standard."



Image2Print is now producing prototypes and small batch runs of between one to 50 on substrates such as FBB, B-Flute, E-Flute, Foamex and specialist boards, for applications that include everything from frozen food and cereal boxes, through to intricate cosmetic packaging and POS material for the larger supermarkets, where precision and accuracy is vitally important. For all of these projects and more, the cutter's multi-head tool station can be configured for use with a reciprocating knife, drag knife or a kiss



cut knife and a creasing wheel in any configuration. Additionally, in certain circumstances, the very high accuracy of the AG/CAD K-Cut Vision camera system enables jobs to be cut and creased from the reverse side of the board.

Mr. Foulkes went on to say that the combination of the K-Cut Vision System and the knife tools is also excellent, enabling the company to cut and crease samples with remarkable speed and precision, adding: "We have found

the K-Cut Vision system very easy to use and highly accurate. The customer feedback on the quality of the cutting and creasing has been extremely positive, and we are now able to deliver the high quality samples that are needed for us to win the new business that has been such a major factor in our recent growth. Furthermore, since the AG/CAD machine is supplied with 3D software, we can also now create a 3D image of a design before making an actual sample. It has been an invaluable asset to our business." ■

# A voyage of discovery

Zünd digital cutting solutions recently starred on the Discovery Channel's Innovations series when the science and technology-focused series dedicated part of its recent episode to Zünd's advanced cutting systems and the range of applications for which they can be used.

Introduced by actor Ed Begley Jr and featuring interviews with representatives from Zünd America Inc. and Zünd Systemtechnik AG, the programme travelled from the USA to Switzerland to discover how the machines are built and configured for each individual customer for use in a broad selection of industries, ranging from the sign and display and packaging sectors, to the technical textile, fabric and leather markets, to the area of automotive and aerospace, as well as also being used in the manufacture of awnings, windsurfing sails and hot air balloons!

The show also demonstrated the ease of use offered by Zünd systems and highlighted how their modular constructions enables them to be reconfigured for use in conjunction with new materials and markets. As one interviewee noted, customers often purchase a Zünd cutter with the intention of using it for one sort of application, before recognising its potential to open up



new revenue streams.

Robert Sikich, the Producer of the TV series, said: "Advancements in science and technology continue to revolutionise the way we live and our aim is to inform viewers of these exciting breakthroughs."

Peter Giddings, Sales Director at Zünd UK, added: "We feel that our technology is 'literally on the cutting edge', so it was fantastic to showcase it to a wider audience."

He continued "We've recently re-opened our St Albans demonstration centre, so viewers interested in seeing the systems that

were featured on the Discovery Channel can see for themselves how they can be tailor-made to meet specific needs." ■





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# The route to increased profit

InfoTrends, the specialist market research company for the print sector reported at the end of last year that the market for digitally printed textiles worldwide in 2013 accounted for about 600 million square metres of printed fabrics and, demand is expected to grow 39 percent by 2018 to about 30 billion square metres. And, while the garment market is currently the largest, the décor sector is also growing rapidly, and this, together with the on-going technological developments taking place in the whole area of digital textile printing, is good news for sign and print companies that are looking to diversify into new markets.

In particular, the dye-sublimation process offers many paths to new revenue streams and higher margins, with a single dye-sublimation unit facilitating the production of a vast range of printed output, including soft signage, print wear and promotional products, point-of-sale banners and interior décor. Mike Connolly reports on some of the recent developments in, and applications for, DTP technology.



## The online option



**Web to Print specialist Pixartprinting provides a wide range of materials for digital textile printing applications, many of which are now available online through the company's e-shop facility.**

Products include flag and banner materials, natural and synthetic patterned fabrics and canvases, all of

which provide an excellent finish, high-quality definition and feature a tight weave. A range of print wear and promotional products and fashion accessories is also available for personalisation and/or customisation. Quality and technical performance on these products are guaranteed by the use of Mimaki TX 400-1800 and Durst Rhotex textile printers. ■

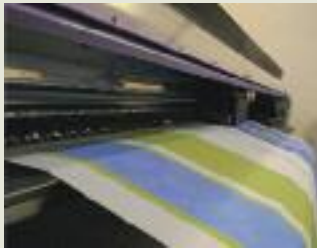






# Going for growth

**It's always refreshing to hear of companies that are reporting positive signs of growth and a general upturn in business and one such company is Lincoln-based Your Print Partner which, as a result of increased demand and an ever expanding product range, has found it necessary to add to its already impressive printer portfolio.**



Originally operating as a print management company, Your Print Partner has been digitally printing banners, flags and outdoor branding products since 2012 when it purchased its first Mimaki direct-to-textile printer. Fast forward to today, and the company is now operating nine assorted print machines, including PVC printers and CAD cutters, while its range of products has grown to encompass over 200 different items, many of which are printed in-house.

Buoyed by this success and its clear vision for the future, Your Print Partner decided to invest in a new Mimaki JV5-320DS dye sublimation printer, which is capable of printing on to 3.2m wide rolls of fabric. As well as improving efficiency, decreasing set up times and reducing fabric wastage, the printer optimises the potential for new product development and brings the company's annual print capacity up to 250,000m<sup>2</sup>.

Commenting on the recent advances, Your Print Partner's Managing Director, Stuart Maclaren said; "This is a really



exciting development for our business. One of our most popular product ranges is the feather flag that you might typically expect to see at sporting events or on car forecourts. With the new Mimaki, which is now our largest printer, we have the potential to print more than 1,000 additional flags every week, which really opens up new opportunities and enables us to compete on much larger tenders."

Your Print Partner has been supported throughout the purchase and installation by its Mimaki reseller, R A Smart of Bollington, Cheshire.

The team at Your Print Partner has been busy developing a new range of display products that are due for

release early in the New Year and all are intended for production on the new JV5-320DS printer, using its 'super-wide' print capacity to create seamless large-scale graphics for exhibitions and trade shows.

Stuart Maclaren continued "The sheer capability of the new Mimaki makes it a key element of our growth strategy and, as a result of the increased capacity it provides, we expect to create five new jobs over the winter period in our Pre-Print, Sales and Customer Service departments."

Images, specifications and prices relating to the new Your Print Partners' product range will appear on the company's website shortly. ■

# New dye sub star

**Mimaki's much lauded JV300 wide format printer has enjoyed strong sales in the sign and graphics sector in its solvent configuration, but it's also proving to be a hit for a variety of customers when commissioned with Mimaki's Sb53 dye sublimation inkset according to specialist Mimaki textile reseller, R A Smart.**

Magnus Mighall, R A Smart's Managing Director, explained: "As soon as we heard about the new JV300 we knew there was significant potential for it within the textile sector and that's already proving to be the case. Its unique combination of speed and quality really comes to the fore, especially when it is used with the Mimaki dye sublimation inks, when it as good as rewrites the rules for performance!"

Affordably priced and available in 1.3m and 1.6m print widths, the JV300 was launched in 2014 when it assumed the flagship position in Mimaki's sign and graphics product range, offering users a top speed of over 105sq m/h. With a powered take-up unit included as standard and an optional bulk ink system, it's designed to be production ready out of the box, something which Magnus confirmed, really appeals to his customers.

He said: "The price for a JV300 starts at just £17,995 so our customers can acquire a volume production machine at a fraction of the cost of alternatives. It features the usual high build quality that Mimaki is renowned for and the complementary inks, which deliver vibrant, durable colour, are suitable for use on a broad range of



applications."

The flexibility of the new printer is something Magnus is equally keen to underline. He added: "So far we have installed machines for a variety of different customers operating within the sportswear, apparel and textile display areas, but in addition, we have also sold machines into the ceramics and promotional products markets too, thanks to the high print quality that it can achieve."

R A Smart is the UK distributor for a variety of heat transfer presses, including Transmatic and offers turnkey packages including the

JV300, a matched rotary calendar press, a textile specific software RIP, heat transfer paper and, if required, a variety of blank products to sublimate on to –including fabric, garments and a wide range of promotional items.

Magnus continued: "The dye sublimation market continues to flourish and, with an increase in manufacturing within the UK, products like the Mimaki JV300 really enable our customers to meet the tight deadlines and high volumes demanded when they continue to fly the 'Made in Britain' flag!" ■

## Retail is detail

**Specialist printable media distributor and manufacturer, Soyang Europe has further increased its already substantial wide and grand format textile offering, with the addition of new lines to its three product ranges.**

Suitable for printing onto almost any dye sub, UV or latex printer, the company's fabrics are renowned for providing high quality solutions for the indoor and outdoor display areas and in the retail, exhibition and soft signage sectors.

"We now have three extremely strong brands in our line-up," commented Managing Director, Mark Mashiter. "Soyang Europe has been Endutex's exclusive UK distributor for nine years and the range of these European manufactured textiles offers extensive options for front and backlit graphics, mesh, seamless wall coverings, flags, canvases and more."

The Endutex range includes PVC and acrylic coated polyester products, typically printable with UV ink, as well as PVC-free dye sub printable recyclable solutions in widths right up to 5m.

Soyang Europe also offers an additional European textile brand, Aurich Textilien, the German vertical manufacturer of knitted and woven dye sub fabrics, including backlit, decorative display,

mesh and flag.

Mark Mashiter continued: "The Impact Prime product is one of our best sellers. As a backlit, it prints beautifully using the direct dye sublimation process, yielding rich, deep colours, dense blacks and with no pin-holing, something that with the advent of lightboxes has become a prerequisite of a quality backlit fabric."

However, the biggest news from the company is the substantial growth in its own So-TeX range. Soyang Europe's Sales Manager, Tim Egerton observed: "This range of Far East manufactured textiles represents a quantum shift in quality and innovation. When it comes to quality control, we expect all of the fabrics we sell to meet the exacting demands of the European market and happily, Soyang's new plant would be the envy of any European manufacturer!"

The company's newly opened production centre near Haining, China takes its knitting, weaving, laminating and coating lines to over 66,000sq metres when combined with its state of the art production and research and development facility in Hangzhou.

Tim added: "The raft of new products coming from the factories, coupled with our substantial stockholding in the UK, ensures we're able to promptly fulfil any request for fabric throughout our ranges



up to five metres wide."

According to Mark Mashiter, the increase in Soyang's product range has not only been fuelled by its new production facility, but by an increase in demand from the retail sector. He reported: "With high street brands systematically overhauling their point of sale display systems and the vast majority now using some form of textile, either in lightboxes, frame systems or suspended displays, the demand has rocketed.

Interestingly, he goes on to suggest that retail chains that don't include textiles as part of their overall point of sale materials, are missing a trick, saying: "There is a danger that their customers will find the shopping experience they are offering less appealing. However, the benefits of textiles aren't simply aesthetic. They are easier and cheaper to transport and install and, perhaps most importantly for the print provider,

the ease and regularity with which they can be changed, can really help to boost sales revenues too!"

Soyang Europe is also seeing a significant shift towards the use of textiles in the exterior signage sector. Tim Egerton noted: "The technical benefits of using a textile are a big factor when it comes to building wraps, soft signage and event branding. Structural aspects, such as rigging and anchorage can be reduced, thus saving both time and the overall cost of installation. Additionally, the use of perforated textiles reduces wind loading, which ensures the installation remains stable and above all, safe."

Soyang Europe's textile ranges are available on next day delivery from the 1.3 million square metres of material that the company holds in stock at its recently opened distribution centre in Lancashire. ■

## Eye-popping colour

**Kiian Digital has introduced new transfer sublimation fluorescent inks in vivid pink, yellow and green colour formulations. These new additions to the Digistar range of inks will add greater vibrancy to graphics applied to sportswear and fashion accessories as well as those used for interior décor.**

In common with the company's existing ink ranges, the new offerings

are said to feature excellent drying properties, high chromatic performance and a wider colour gamut. All of the inks are matched to specific printheads for optimum performance and high-quality results.

Digistar PES HD-One inks (including a 'green' option) are designed and formulated for the first generations of Epson print heads, while Digistar Hi-Pro inks are tailored for the latest

DX7 print heads. They can be used with earlier versions of both and are designed for printing onto light and/or low-coated papers. Digistar K-One transfer sublimation inks are designed for use with high-capacity Kyocera print heads. ■



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## A soft touch

**Developed for textile printers and large-format print houses, the Softjet digital dye-sublimation printer has been launched by Gandy Digital. The machine provides high-resolution printing, curing via sublimation heaters and cutting capabilities in a single integrated production solution for short- to long-run full-colour output.**

This roll-to-roll direct-to-fabric printer is

described as the ideal platform for companies keen to engage with the potentially lucrative soft signage market or those companies already involved but now wishing to expand their service capabilities. The printer is suitable for a wide range of applications, including flags, banners, point-of-sale promotional displays, wall graphics and wall coverings.

The 1200 dpi printer which is available in a choice of print widths (1.88, 2.54



and 3.35 metres) and offers both four- and six-colour print options, incorporates the latest Ricoh Gen 4 and Gen 5 print heads that use dye-sublimation technology for superior colour vibrancy. Thanks also to the use of water-based inks and the low energy consumption of the Softjet, environmental issues are comprehensively addressed in order

to complement those of Gandy Digital customers.

The Softjet also delivers consistent and reputedly superior sublimation control across the entire print width by comparison with similarly positioned DTP solutions. This feature is said to eradicate temperature fluctuations and problems with colour variation. ■

## Textiles the environmental way

**Following the success of its HP Latex Tour, Guandong has introduced the Textile Collection media range for Latex printing. The range has been developed specifically for the flagship HP Latex Series 300 printer.**

The range of HP-compatible new media includes LUS, a polyester flag material without liner, the Frame & Décor system for backlit displays and interior décor applications and

the Elastic & Conformable polyester media for multiple applications.

Supplementing these new arrivals is the latest Cotton Canvas material that offers a higher strength capability by comparison with traditional canvas, Polyester Canvas that provides special application enhancements, due to its particular yarn composition and the new ART Canvas Havana material that is of particular interest to companies servicing the fine art market. ■



## Flying the flag



**When the Swiss company Flag Print decided to expand into the lucrative 3.2 metre-wide sector of the digital textile printing market, it invested in a MTEX 3200 printer. The company has specialised in textile printing for over 15 years and has engaged**

**with a number of disparate textile-based applications.**

Prior to purchasing the MTEX 3200, Flag Print was able to print only at up to 2.5 metres wide but needed to upgrade this to 3.2 metres in order to accommodate larger-format



production requirements, such as exhibition displays, building wraps and large posters and light box displays.

The printer uses water-based inks to increase its environmental credentials and the output generated is suitable for both indoor

and outdoor applications that require vivid and durable colour reproduction. With both screen and digital printing capabilities now in place, Flag Print can undertake a much wider range of work, both in terms of size and specification. ■



# Leading the way

**Digital textile printing involving Epson dye-sublimation machines continues to provide large-format print companies with the opportunity to become more creative in their soft signage and interior décor application capabilities.**

Epson has developed a range of rolled dye-sublimation printers specifically for such applications that enable print service providers (PSP's) either to enter the expanding dye-sub sector or extend their existing production capabilities. The 44-inch Epson SureColor SC-F6000 provides high-quality output on small-format soft signage, banners and customised promotional items, while the 64-inch Epson SureColor SC-F7100 is ideal for fast and economical short-to-medium volume dye-sublimation printing.

Easy to program and operate, both printers offer a low total cost of ownership. Significantly, they are the first dye-sublimation printers in which every component has been designed and manufactured by Epson, thereby ensuring consistently high-quality output, reliable performance and maximum productivity.

Furthermore, Epson's TFP print head, already an established technological device in the dye-sublimation sector, ensures precise repeatable performance and a longer than average working life. In conjunction with Epson DS ink, a specially developed new aqueous formulation, the printhead facilitates the creation of fine image definition, vibrant colours (including intense blacks), sharp contours and smooth gradations. ■



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# Have no fear, the Texart is here!

**An advanced 64-inch dye-sublimation printer is now available from Roland DG (UK). Called Texart RT-640, it offers a choice of four- or eight-colour printing that includes innovative print control technology and powerful RIP software packages.**

The RT-640 incorporates a host of technological advancements that optimise sublimation transfer output whilst minimising running costs. A key innovation is the printer's new ink formulation. Previously, colours sublimated to fabrics could look distorted with dull blacks, missing greys and fuzzy details. The RT-640's variable droplet technology, in combination with the new Roland DG Texart dye-sublimation ink, delivers bold vibrant colours and rich velvety blacks, as well as subtle gradations and fine detail. Adding orange and violet inks increases the colour gamut and facilitates the production of exceptional reds, oranges, deep blues and purples, while light cyan and magenta provide subtle gradations and beautiful skin tones.

The Texart RT-640 incorporates a gold-plated anti-static printhead that is capable of printing seven

different droplet sizes for smooth gradations and dense colour. A newly designed feed adjuster, combined with a more powerful take-up system, ensures added stability for high-speed printing up to 36.2 square metres per hour.

The printer is also equipped with a bulk ink system that uses one-litre airtight-sealed pouches, with the Roland Ink Switching System enabling operators to load a fresh pouch without having to disengage the machine. In four-colour (CMYK) mode, this system provides two litres of each colour and automatically switches to another ink pouch when the first pouch runs out.

There is a choice of two professional RIP solutions: VersaWorks that has been developed specifically for Roland DG printers and ErgoSoft Roland Edition that is provided by the new Roland Printer Assist facility. This is a cutting-edge system that enables machine operators to manage production and test printing and cleaning functions direct from an iPad tablet from virtually any area of the machine owner's premises. ■





# From the bottom to the top



**A leading innovator and manufacturer of DTG (direct-to-garment) digital printers, Kornit Digital offers a range of machine options that will accommodate the requirements of all sizes of business, from start-up operations to those requiring a high-speed 24/7 production capability.**

Key products include the Storm II, the

Paradigm and the high-speed industrial-grade 1.8-metre Allegro platforms. All of these machines benefit from Kornit's Neo Pigment process that accommodates the requirements of virtually any kind of textile without being compromised by the ink chemistry.

The continuous workflow of the Storm II enables garments to be loaded while printing is in progress, while the 1.5-litre bulk ink system facilitates uninterrupted use. With eight height-adjustable industrial-grade Spectra printheads, the machine simplifies printing over zips, buttons and similarly raised objects. The Storm II has a print area of 50 x 70 centimetres and the capacity to produce 150 garments every hour.

Screenprinting operatives wishing to add digital capabilities to their existing analogue production methods can benefit from the Paradigm II platform. Engineered to work in-line with traditional carousels and oval machines, this versatile printer enables complex combinations of screen and digital technologies to be created in a single job so that special effects and

finishes can be merged with high-quality personalisation and variable data.

The robustly constructed and ergonomically designed Paradigm II is well suited to 24/7 production, with its high-volume Spectra Polaris printheads ensuring consistently high-quality results, while automated processing and precise print registration complement transfer between print stations and a fast set-up capability.

According to Kornit, the Neo Pigment printing process continues to transform digital textile printing, with the environmentally-friendly pigment ink requiring no pre-treatment, only minimal finishing and offering the ability to print onto a wide range of different fabrics. ■

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## Make Mimaki's a double!

**Mimaki's portfolio of solutions continues to collect industry accolades, with Viscom having recently presented it with a brace of 'Best of 2014' awards in the Large Format Printing category in respect of its JFX200-2513 and UJV500-160 LED UV printers.**

Mimaki received this recognition when it presented its 'Let's Create... Together' showcase at the three-day Viscom Frankfurt show last year. The award is another 2014 highlight following the pair of European Digital

Press Association (EDP) awards it received at FESPA Digital 2014 for the Mimaki JFX200-2513 wide format printer and the 'Kebab' option for selected models in the small format UJF Series, which provides 360-degree direct printing on cylindrical objects.

Commenting on its latest awards, Mike Horsten General Manager Marketing EMEA, Mimaki Europe, said: "Clearly the judges could not decide between the large format solution and the entry level model and so picked both!"



The JFX200-2513 offers a choice of LED UV curing inks, including white and clear, and prints to an array of substrates for unlimited creative opportunities to deliver unparalleled

results to expand the potential for professional sign and graphics companies.

Similar to the JFX200, energy-saving LED-UV curing with long-lasting LED-UV units is just one feature of the Mimaki UJV500-160. It also offers fast throughput, cost-effective and environmentally friendly curing, and 3M MCS warranted inks. The availability of white inks for roll-to-roll printing further enhances the possibilities. ■

## Seiko comes up trumps!

**Seiko was honoured with a 'Best of 2014' award at Viscom Frankfurt in the Large Format Printing category, in respect of its ColorPainter M-64s inkjet printer, which, since its introduction to the market, has become a popular best-seller for use with both indoor and outdoor applications.**

The judges of the Viscom award programme declared themselves to be impressed by the machine's speed and with the high level of customer satisfaction recorded by its users, together with its unattended printing capability, which can be operated via social networks, such as Twitter.

The ColorPainter M-64s is designed to

fulfill the market demand for fast turnaround, shorter runs and combines a maximum print speed of 66.5m<sup>2</sup>/hr with low running costs and ease of use. It uses the new Eco Ink SX to deliver indoor and outdoor compatible print and also offers unique Seiko imaging technologies, such as Smart Pass 4, Dynamic Dot Printing and M-64s' new automatic optical calibration function that enables anyone to print excellent image quality on PVC, even at 33.1 m<sup>2</sup>/h.

At Viscom Seiko also showcased the new ColorPainter H2P, which impressed visitors with its faster setup times, maximum print width of 104 inch, ink reservoirs of eight litres per colour - CMYK - and reduced ink costs. Integrating the Smart Pass Technology 3 with Dynamic



(l to r): Viscom's Frank Kuehn, Seiko's Stephanie Rohn and Viscom's Frank Jaenschke

Dot Printing Technology, the ColorPainter H2-104s/H2-74s prints higher quality images while maintaining the high print speed of its predecessor. The fastest print mode achieves 50sqm/h in eight-colour mode and 100sqm/h in four-colour mode. It is best suited for use with large format banners and high volume printing in short turnaround times.

Also on show was the smallest of the league, the ColorPainter W-54s with its

unique Neon ink option. Available in yellow and pink, the Neon ink is the first solvent-based fluorescent ink in the world and has been developed for use on the ColorPainter W series wide-format printers. These two colours can be printed not only as spot colours, but also as composite colours with CMYK.

The full Seiko ColorPainter range can be viewed at the headquarters of Signmaster Systems in Shropshire. ■

## Low cost vinyls from HP

**HP has introduced HP Permanent Gloss Adhesive Vinyl and HP Permanent Matte Adhesive Vinyl, updated vinyls with a permanent adhesive that are optimised for use with HP Latex printers and which are REACH compliant and provide both environmental and budgetary advantages.**

Ideal for use in a wide range of indoor and outdoor applications, from event

signage to retail displays, both products provide a wide colour gamut and excellent ink saturation to deliver vibrant, long-lasting images. The new vinyls are also highly opaque to deliver a high-quality finish, while the thicker release liner is more stable and is designed to avoid bubbling and wrinkling during production. The increased thickness also makes the finished prints easier to handle and install.



HP Permanent Matte Adhesive Vinyl has a semi-matte finish, and is ideal for environments where glare is an issue. The matte and gloss versions also

provide outdoor display permanence of three years un-laminated and up to five years laminated and are available in 30-, 36-, 42-, 54- and 60-inch widths. ■



# Perfect Colours expands options

The HP Latex 3000, a 3.2m high volume wide format digital printer with dual roll capability and impressive throughput speeds, now takes pride of place in the Perfect Colours' printer portfolio, following the London-based reseller's latest agreement with HP.

Originally launched at FESPA 2013, the Latex 3000 features a six-colour ink-set, embedded spectrophotometer and latex optimizer, which combine with a 12pl droplet size to produce fine-quality graphics that are ideal for applications that have to withstand the closest scrutiny, including those in the increasingly popular décor sector.

When printing at the highest level of quality, users can achieve print speeds of 77sq m/hour, while banner and other exterior work can be printed at speeds of 120sq m/hour. The Latex



3000 can, in fact, reach a maximum speed of 180sq m/hour but, notably, can process two 1.6m rolls at once, thus providing extra efficiency and profitability, regardless of media width.

Lamination can be applied immediately after printing, although many users opt to skip this step thanks to the output's excellent scratch

resistance, which is comparable to the effect achieved when using a hard solvent ink on PVC banner or self-adhesive vinyl. However, the machine also performs well on heat-sensitive materials and textiles, when it can be used with an optional ink collector, to facilitate the use of unlined mesh, scrim, voile or flag. ■



## Infotrends offers market intelligence

**InfoTrends, the specialist market research consultancy for the print sectors, has published its latest study, entitled 'Who Buys Wide Format Printing?'**

Designed to examine the key market trends driving demand for digital wide format printing, application growth, and technology investment in both Western Europe and the U.S, it provides the information gleaned through surveys and interviews with the buyers of wide format graphics and providers of digital wide format printing and services.

Amongst the topics covered will be the market forces driving demand for wide format graphic applications, pricing trends, wide format buyers' criteria for selecting providers and the impact of online ordering facilities.

It will also reveal buyers' top purchasing criteria, when selecting both output devices and print providers and the products and services that print providers require from manufacturers and equipment suppliers.

Finally, the study will discuss the role of wide format graphics in a cross-media world and the implications of digital signage. ■

# Sure-Color training on tap

**Epson is offering free SureColor signage printer training at its dedicated training facility in Hemel Hempstead on 28th January and 25th February 2015.**

The Epson SureColor Academy intensive one-day sessions have been created especially for SureColor SC-S series users and are worth £300 per person per day.

Each hands-on training session aims to help users to improve the print quality and production process when using

their SureColor SC-S series printers. Some of the topics that will be covered during the day will include maintenance routines to reduce downtime and improve quality; correct RIP and printer settings to improve productivity; effective set-up and calibration; colour consistency and more.

Additional support is offered via the Epson SureColor Academy online portal, which provides tools and information to help SureColor owners get the best from their printer. Once

registered, users can access a library of media profiles and printer setup files to easily optimise their SureColor printer's performance and reliability, while practical tips and tricks, expert interviews, case studies all help improve their skills, results and creativity.

**Session spaces are limited, so Epson urges all interested parties to register their interest online at: <http://www.epson.co.uk/gb/en/vie/wcon/corporatesite/cms/index/10841>** ■



# Worthwhile Investments

Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use

Following a positive year of growth, long-standing Mimaki customer **Rocket Graphics** has added a third **Mimaki JV33-160** to its already extensive print line-up as it gears up for further expansion.



Based in Watford, the company specialises in the production of branding and signage for events, exhibitions and retail uses, all areas that demand high quality work coupled with a speedy delivery.

Rocket Graphics' Production Director, Phil Eames explained: "We have many jobs with a 24 hour turnaround and thus we run our printers continuously, day and night. In this regard our

Mimaki JV33s are a real asset, as they offer an Uninterrupted Ink Supply System (UISS) feature that facilitates the automatic switching between two cartridges of the same colour, enabling unattended print runs overnight. This helps us to double our productivity without doubling our staffing costs, something that makes great business sense."

Rocket's team adopts a fluid and

flexible approach when it comes to the challenges thrown up by its UK and international customers and it was actually a commission from a high profile customer in the USA that prompted the purchase of a third JV33.

Phil Eames continued "We had to supply the printed graphics for a very large sector of an exhibition being held in the States and sent a team of

installers out there to ensure a smooth transition from production to display. In fact, with the help of Granthams, the Mimaki reseller that sold us the machine, we even shipped one of our JV33's along too, just in case there were any last-minute changes to be made. We like to go the extra mile for our customers, and on his occasion, the Mimaki certainly went the extra mile with us!" ■

Leeds based **Digital Plus** is the first company in the UK to install Agfa's new super wide, super fast **Anapurna M3200i RTR** with **Asanti** workflow.

The directors of this inspirational graphic display company flew to FESPA Munich earlier this year to pick up another award to add to its trophy cabinet and to see how it could upgrade its two existing roll-to-roll printers. Whilst exploring the exhibition floor, they saw the new Anapurna M3200i on the Agfa stand and were immediately impressed with the machine's quality and speed.

Chris Stringwell, a Director of Digital Plus, explained: "To be honest, we hadn't realised how far Agfa had come in display graphics. The other machines we looked at were either too expensive, too slow or the quality was not to the standard we required, but the Anapurna M3200i delivers on both the speed and quality fronts and



is also very competitively priced, which is enabling us to achieve a good return on our investment."

Digital Plus, which was founded in 1999 and now employs 20 people, provides a complete imaging, nationwide survey and installation service. A couple of years ago it invested in its own modern premises in Leeds, from where it undertakes an extensive assortment of indoor and

outdoor display assignments for a varied client base that includes many household brand names in the beauty and fashion markets, as well as building societies, utility companies, property developers, shopping centres, travel companies, museums and local authorities.

Chris's fellow Director Owen Russell observed: "With the Anapurna M3200i we took up the dual roll

option, which enables us to print two 1.5m rolls simultaneously. We also considered going down the latex route, but felt that the productivity cannot match that delivered by UV. The image quality of the M3200i is fantastic and very durable, despite the very thin layer of ink. In fact, Agfa inks are the best we have used. You can scrunch up a sheet of printed material and there's no sign of any cracking or flaking. Over the coming months we are also very keen to maximise the potential of Agfa's Asanti workflow."

Both the directors of the company spent many years working in photographic labs, so colour reproduction is second nature to them. With this kind of expertise Digital Plus has built a reputation for quality and service, which is endorsed by many of its customers. This is clearly a company with a focus on building for the future and one, which is also expecting Agfa to be a major partner in its success. ■

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# impact & inspiration



▲ Based in Somerset, **Parkins Interiors**, which was founded in 2010 by husband and wife team Chris and Rachael Parkins, has since become one of the UK's leading suppliers of wall stickers and accessories for the home interiors sector.

Crafted to order from premium quality matt finish vinyl, the expansive range of products, it offers, via its own website, and selected online retailers, can be used to enhance any interior space, but its particular forté is the



range of delightful wall stickers featuring trees and wildlife, which are especially designed for use in childrens' bedrooms.

In line with its increasing volume

of business, Parkins Interiors recently upgraded its printer portfolio, but its choice was somewhat restricted by the fact that, since it was creating stickers



for childrens' rooms, any form of solvent ink was off the agenda, while output from aqueous printers simply wouldn't be durable enough to withstand the challenges posed by sticky little fingers. Accordingly, Chris and Rachael selected an **HP Latex 360 printer** from HP reseller **SMGG**, which delivers durable, scratch-resistant prints that achieve the rare distinction of being both environmentally friendly whilst also remaining toddler proof. ■



▶ A stunning piece of contemporary art has been commissioned and installed in **St Michael's Church, Camden**. Measuring more than 60 m<sup>2</sup>, the large-scale artwork has been produced by artist **Maciej Urbanek** and printed using an **Epson** large format printer and media.

A graduate of Goldsmiths College and the Royal Academy of Arts, Maciej is currently a photography tutor at the Royal Academy Schools, while still developing his art practice producing large-scale printed works. He has used Epson materials and equipment within

the RA Schools' Epson Digital Media Suite since he was a student so knows the technology well.

When Epson offered to let him use its print facility at Hemel Hempstead, he accepted with alacrity but it was by no means a straightforward job. Simply printing the work in strips would have resulted in long vertical cuts that would have detracted from the overall aesthetic, so Maciej instead printed different elements that were cut along the lines that already appear within the image in order to keep faith with the original artwork. This also made it easier to install too, as he was able to put it together one piece at a time.

Maciej divided the work into 27 large pieces, which were then printed on **Epson Ultrasmooth Fine Art paper** using an **Epson Stylus Pro 11880 printer**.

The final artwork, which took 24 hours to print and a further three days to install was unveiled early in December and pronounced to be 'simply stunning' by all who viewed it.

**All images © 2014 Maciej Urbanek** ■



◀ When teacher **Melony Rocque-Hewitt** took over her newly built year three classroom and faced the challenge of creating artwork to enhance its many windows, her solution was to seek the help of **Epson**.

Melony, who gained first hand knowledge of the digital printing sector during her years as the former editor of Image Reports magazine, approached Epson to see if it could help her to create five large-

format window graphics depicting images of ancient Egypt, the designated subject for the autumn term, plus three extra images for the other junior classes, so that they could also benefit from some great window art too.

Epson was more than happy to oblige and the window graphics were printed onto high-performance self-adhesive vinyl using **Epson's 64-inch SureColor SC-S70600 wide-format printer** in tandem with its **UltraChrome GSX inkset** to do full justice to the highly-detailed designs that Melony was using. As well as delivering vibrantly coloured output, the GSX inks are hard wearing, odourless and nickel-free, and are thus ideal for application within the classroom environment.

The finished graphics now form a great backdrop for the childrens' own collections of mummified cats, scarab beetles and papyrus paper.



Melony's next topic is the Stone Age and, as she already has an idea of how she wants her glass display to look, she'll once again be looking to Epson to help her make it happen!

**More detailed versions of these and other articles can be found on [www.decordirections.co.uk](http://www.decordirections.co.uk)**

# Out of the Darkness



Given its subjective nature, lighting used in sign and display applications requires very careful attention to detail as well as special consideration for the environment in which it is to be employed. With the noticeable migration by sign and display companies away from conventional fluorescent and neon lighting to more energy-efficient LED technology, these same companies continue to demonstrate a firm commitment to the use of more environmentally aware and sustainable manufacturing processes. Mike Connolly looks at some of the options available, with explanations as to how these have performed in application



## A bright start

**Following its introduction in November 2014, a new concept in LED tube lighting has made a bright start in the exhibition and display sector for which it was primarily developed.**

Wandlite is a long-life waterproof LED tube lighting system providing 360 degrees of radiated light and offering an ideal solution for modular display systems, including plinths, light walls, light boxes and counters. The system runs off a standard 12v electrical

supply and uses only 1.5 amps per metre of tube. It can be either connected to or run independently of the main supply source or powered by a rechargeable battery or generator.

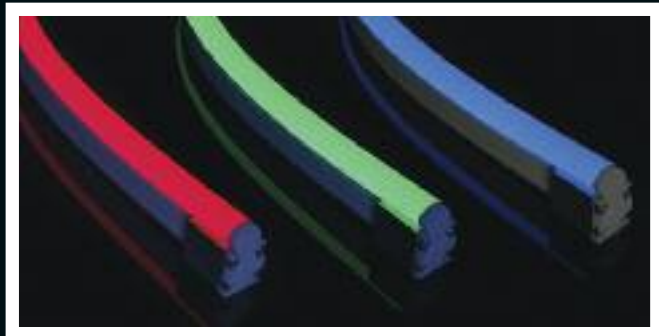
The lightweight tubes, which are virtually unbreakable, are available in a choice of lengths ranging from 400 up to 2000mm. They can be used either as a stand-alone light source in a tower or plinth, or linked together to provide variable light intensity levels contingent upon the application.

Customised lengths and colours and RGB multi-colour light versions are also available to extend the system's capabilities. The spirally-wound LED tape is said to impart a new visual slant to this type of product, while the semi-translucent end fittings enable the light to glow from end to end of the tube.

A recent successful installation of the Wandlite system was its use by Olson Visual in the U.S to create a backlit fabric wall to promote the general release of a major film production. Hitherto, this leading graphics provider had used light boxes made with the T3 system from Tecna Display, which

involved the construction of large PVC tube lights that required labour, plus literally tons of string LED lights, which were attached to the tube one at a time and the large transformers required to power them. These power units would often shut down after becoming too hot, but with the combination of Wandlite and the T3 system, all of these problems were resolved satisfactorily, leading to the use of this integrated solution in a further major film promotion. ■

# An iconic highway feature



Using its Bright Green Matrix product, Bright Green Technology illuminated a spectacular new backlit tower that forms part of the iconic Clydeside Expressway site in Glasgow owned by Forrest Media.

In addition to the backlit advertising faces, the tower structure and landscaping is illuminated with controllable RGB illumination that can be creatively programmed to reflect and reinforce the media impact. Each face displays 50 square metres of high-resolution imagery, illuminated by state-of-the-art LED technology that is said to be 100 per cent brighter than standard backlights. The perimeter features Bright Green Technology's LED Halo lighting, an RGB LED lighting system that is a flexible and vibrant alternative to glass neon. This perimeter lighting offers bright and even illumination that can be set to

any colour to suit the advertiser's campaign.

The standout feature of the site, however, is the illumination of the tower itself that uses DMX programmable RGB LED modules. It is possible to control everything remotely, with 16 million colours and infinite effects available. The strategically located RGB LED lighting also brings the stunning surrounding landscape to life and complements the colour scheme of the advertiser's campaign. This gives a real sense of ownership to any brand utilising the location and provides any advertiser with the potential to dominate this busy stretch of highway in Glasgow.

In a separate development, Bright Green Technology added Bright Green Neon to its range of products. This is an energy-efficient LED lighting system that is a viable and



cost-saving alternative to glass neon. As a linear lighting system, it can be cut, bent and formed on site and is supplied with a range of connectors, fixings and other accessories to enable customisation on behalf of clients. The system provides even

illumination with no hot spots, is extremely energy efficient, has a long working life and is IP68 rated for outdoor environments. It comes in a range of profiles and a variety of colours plus RGB. ■

## Box it up

Originally founded in 1957 to design and develop high-reliability lighting products, the SloanLED Company has since become a pioneer in Light Emitting Diode (LED) technology and offers a broad mix of LED signage and

architectural lighting products, all of which are designed to provide even illumination, easy installation, low maintenance and energy efficiency.

One of its latest innovations is SignBOX II, which is designed for



use with new or retrofit box signs, where it creates the perfect grid of light for optimal, even illumination. Quick and easy to install without the need for special tools, it is available in both single-sided and double-sided options.

Headquartered in Ventura, California with a European sales office in The Netherlands, SloanLED products are available in the UK through its distributor and reseller channels. ■

## The problem solver

Reputedly Europe's largest distributor of solid-state LED lighting products, Vink Lighting Solutions was approached with a particularly complex project that required all of its expertise.

A Hungarian sign manufacturer and aluminium fabricator was given the task of manufacturing and installing a large animated Rubik's Cube to mark the 40th anniversary of its invention by a prominent Hungarian sculptor and professor of architecture. This particular cube was to be installed as part of a new recreational area situated near Budapest.

The cube was manufactured from three-millimetre opal acrylic face panels and measured 2100 x 2100 x 2100mm overall. Each face was subdivided into nine 650 x 650mm squares, each of which was covered in one of six different colours of translucent vinyl and each colour was



illuminated independently by a different coloured LED module, which was required to flash on and off in a seemingly random sequence.

The technical department at Vink had to first decide which LED system should be used and which colour would provide the optimum level of illumination when viewed through the

translucent vinyl. The saturated colours (red, blue and green) were best illuminated by their respective LED equivalents, but white, yellow and orange each required the warm white LED to ensure that they were as vibrant as the saturated colours.

Vink opted for the GE Tetra MiniMAX range of LED modules that were

chosen for their inherent reliability and longevity. The wide range of colour options, including four different shades of white, made it the clear choice for this particular application. Each separate square was illuminated with 20 LED modules, making a total of 1080 modules for the complete installation. ■



## University challenge

Within a six-week time frame, A D Bell Sign Systems created new signage that involved face-illuminated built-up metal letters supplied by Applelec to coincide with the change in name of Leeds Metropolitan University to Leeds Beckett University and the first day of enrolment of the new intake of students.

The built-up letters were constructed in a rim-and-return style with white opal acrylic faces illuminated with SloanLED VL Plus modules. The brief was to create impactful signage with a classic and timeless feel in order to reflect the 190-year history of the university.

With simple white illumination and a subtle colour template, the desired impact was achieved due to the sheer scale of each letter, which exceeds 1.5 metres in height. Powder-coated in silver and featuring large white faces, the signage is equally effective when non-illuminated during the daytime as it is when illuminated at night.

With signs as large as those now installed, each letter required its own power supply, fed back to two purpose-built wiring enclosures where each letter is clearly labelled to assist future maintenance work. Featuring built-up back trays, each letter was secured to the building façade using a chemical resin anchor. ■





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# Solar-powered

**Clear Channel UK has launched its first solar-powered advertising bus shelter situated on Waterloo Bridge in London using a specially manufactured solar LED lighting kit from Zeta Specialist Lighting.**

Four solar panels have been installed onto Transport for London's bus stop, converting sunlight into battery power and enabling Clear Channel to illuminate the courtesy light and advertising panel when it is dark using renewable energy. The solar-powered bus shelter is equipped with an energy management system that knows how much power it has generated and automatically dims the lights if power is running low, or during the hours of daylight, in order to conserve energy.

Zeta Specialist Lighting has also recently worked with IS Group, a leading UK sign manufacturer specialising in customised signage



solutions on two projects - Liverpool ONE, the city's premier destination for shopping and The Pier Head on the Liverpool Waterfront.

At the Pier Head, the ability to illuminate the signs required to extend the wayfinding system from the



in-house, it had the ability to offer a flexible bespoke solution, which provided IS Group with a budget friendly, but highly effective and energy saving source of illumination.

Zeta Specialist Lighting's Bespoke Solar Signage Kit, which can be used to illuminate all types of outdoor totems and monoliths, was confirmed the overall winner of the Sign Product of the Year category at the British Sign Awards 2014 and also received a special commendation in the Exterior Luminaire of the Year category at the 2014 Lux Awards. ■

## A plethora of choice

**Applelec, which is renowned for the manufacture of its fabricated signage and display systems along with its groundbreaking lighting products, including the popular flat lighting unit, LED Light Sheet, has now introduced Borderline.**

A great alternative to neon, Borderline can be cut to any bespoke size and installed in an individual line or shaped at 90° angles. Holding an IP67 rating for outdoor use, it is fitted with fire-retardant LEDs and the strong polycarbonate body withstands extreme weather and, as it is produced in house, it can be constructed quickly to meet tight deadlines.

The neon-like Neon flex is another popular product from Applelec's architectural lighting range, which can be curved and shaped easily on site and cut and installed quickly and simply. This highly flexible LED rope light system, which features high brightness LEDs enclosed in a waterproof and highly durable PVC jacket, is available in red, yellow, blue, green and white.

Applelec's award winning LED Light Sheet is manufactured in the UK to any bespoke shape or size, up to three metres, with the choice of cool white, warm white or colour-changing RGB LEDs. LED Light Sheet is often used within stencil cut panels as an alternative to modules or fluorescent tubes, as is evidenced



by All Round Signs' illuminated sign for the BSW Timber Group where it is used to illuminate stencil cut faces of a tree logo. The slimline

panel can be used to enhance any sign where minimal depth is required and also eliminates the need for a back tray. ■

# A ton of lighting!

Manufactured in Germany by Majert, the Chiplite LED sign lighting solution will shortly be further upgraded by the introduction of a larger number of modules per string to increase the product's competitiveness within the UK sign and display market. This development follows the earlier re-branding of the popular CL-X1 module as CL-XOL to signify the performance-enhancing features made available at that time.

Providing an enhanced optical capability, the CL-XOL system incorporates two SMD LED modules that are constant current driven and soldered to form, for the present, a chain of 30 LED modules. This number will now be increased to 100 modules



as a result of the latest upgrade. The system carries the CE/EN 55015 seal of approval and is RoHS-certified. The CL-XOL also incorporates an IP65-rated transparent housing for optimum safety, reliability and ease of



maintenance.

Of special interest to sign manufacturers is the system's XM module's ability to accommodate more effectively difficult-to-fit corner or serif requirements due its very small size that measures just 30 x seven millimetres.

Special optics fitted within the CL-XO module provides an extra-wide 160-degree angle of radiated light. This enables the system's use in light boxes as well as for the illumination of sign lettering with a very low depth (typically as small as 30mm).

Another significant innovation for UK

sign manufacturers is the Chiplite CL-EL1 module. This was developed specifically for illuminating double-sided light boxes via the grid without the need to illuminate both sides of the light box. Due to its compact size, the system can also be used in double-sided circular banners, with the intensity of radiated light varied simply by either pushing the LED modules together or pulling them apart.

Chiplite LED systems are backed by a powerful and comprehensive five-year performance warranty, a large stockholding capability and 24-hour delivery. ■

## Field Service Engineer

**Location:** Ideally Home Counties (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex) with consideration for surrounding areas (Home Based)

**Sector:** Large Format Printing/Engraving/3D

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**The Company:** Roland DG (UK) Ltd is the UK and Ireland marketing, distribution and sales arm of Roland DG Corporation, Hamamatsu, Japan, a worldwide leader in the sign, graphic arts, commercial print, packaging, labelling, promotional gift, textile, engraving, milling and 3D modelling industries. Founded in 1981 and listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange, Roland DG is the world's number one provider of wide-format inkjet printers for the durable graphics market. Alongside wide-format printers, Roland DG also manufactures high-quality vinyl cutters, 3D scanners, milling machines and engravers. In the UK and Ireland, these products are sold through an extensive dealer network that provides expertise in the different markets we serve. At Roland DG (UK) Ltd we aim to be "the best, not the biggest" in what we do and are proud of the quality of products and services we provide our customers. Roland DG (UK) are Investors In People (IIP) accredited.

**Description:** This is a great opportunity to join a successful and expanding business. Candidates must possess a strong electro-mechanical aptitude and be able to demonstrate skilful experience in the repair and service of Large Format Inkjet Printers and have working knowledge of related software packages. Additional knowledge of milling & engraving products would be advantageous.

**Person Specification** (critical skills the role holder must possess and demonstrate)

- Have a proven background in field engineering/service ideally with a minimum five years' experience
- Ideally have service/repair knowledge and experience on Roland product range
- Must have Full UK Driving license
- Must have a good geographical knowledge of UK and Ireland
- Be able to demonstrate a logical approach to problem solving
- Knowledge of popular graphic design software such as Corel Draw and Adobe Illustrator is essential, to a level of efficiency to test & demonstrate the Roland product workflow

- Ability to work alone but also as part of a team using knowledge sharing to the best advantage for the team
- Strong understanding of customer requirements
- Strong interpersonal skills - collaboration, teamwork
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills together with a high degree of computer literacy
- Accurate and timely record keeping
- Flexible approach to the job & the ability to adapt to new and challenging workloads
- Ability to manage own time effectively.

### Experience & Education

- Ideally educated to O'Level/GCSE standard or equivalent
- Experience of working within a Field Service Environment
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This month, **Mark Godden** opines that today

# The future isn't what it used to be!



By the time you get to read this, the New Year will be well into its stride, so rather than suck on our own exhausts and review what's just passed though, let's get the crystal ball out instead and look at what the future may hold and devise some razor-honed tactics to deal with it.

I used to consider myself pretty adept at calling the future in industry terms and at least getting it right some of the time, but the problem these days is that it's upon us almost before the prognostication has had time to gel. Given that a lot of what comes to pass in this day and age is empowering of individuals sitting on either side of a business transaction, there's an argument to be made that, along with budgeting some of the working day for managing our business, we should also set aside some time to ensure that we stay current too.

One thing I'd advise every practitioner, manufacturer and supplier in the sign and allied industries to keep an eye on this year and beyond is the market for décor. Décor isn't new, but the pace at which it's going digital seems to have a fresh blush or urgency about it. This fascinates me. It's another once independent stream that first meandered its way to no destination in particular, but which is now caught up in the convergent forces that have blurred the distinction between signmaking and the numerous other sectors that orbit around wide format printing.

Decor pulls in a simply huge audience because it's primarily about transforming surfaces and secondarily about embellishing the overall effect. There are many surfaces to transform - walls are not exactly in short supply. Last time I made a serious study of the subject, walls were to be found in business premises, retail establishments, domestic dwellings, government buildings - you get the picture - so too, do walls. Covering them with something other than a microns thick coat of trade-emulsion

or a pasted-roll of clever paper with a pattern that tediously repeats itself now seems to have a greater appeal. I can't say this with any degree of exactness or authority, but the whole décor movement has overcome inertia and is now rolling.

The range of customers to whom décor can be sold, the market if you will, is probably even more fragmented than the one we all attempt to unify under the 'sign' descriptor. You could literally find yourself selling to an estates manager with hundreds of premises in his or her charge, or to the interesting bloke living four doors down who wants a mural with his face in place of the Klingon Chieftain and his mum's where Deanna Troy's rightly belongs,

And, if you're not unduly troubled at wiping out what remains of the bedroom poster industry, then go forth and spread your vision, transforming every bedroom wall in the nation into the ultimate expression of fan devotion. Keep a good database too - they'll need you back again when Justin B is delivering pizza and the mural has to change.

I am way behind the curve in 'predicting' decor but I do think it's reached that point where risk-takers and opinion-leaders have proven the case and where volume now builds at a pace. In volume terms, I think this has the potential to dwarf vehicle wrapping. Practically every wall - and floor - presents an opportunity.

Specialist materials are around to satisfy the need for digitally printed décor, but as many inventive signmakers have already proved, you

can, in some circumstances, use familiar industry staples to achieve a great effect. Specialist materials seem to be mainly concerned with textures and some have what we'd all regard as novel adhesives too. The common goal is good printability and ease of application. Since walls are generally flat and vertical and are mostly indoors in the dry, luxurious working environments abound and margins are probably driven as much by design as bald numbers alone.

Décor, then, is coming to define an accessible sector of the market that practically anyone who casts himself in the role of signmaker could address. Getting a piece of the pie could be as simple as asking for it the very next time you're putting graphics on a window or a sign above a door. Try suggesting it to your customer and follow up with a nifty design and a sample. If you happen to succeed, we here at Sign Directions would like to hear from you. We'll be devoting a whole issue to the subject later this year and you could find yourself starring in it, while also attracting the thousands of designers looking for something new.

Speaking of something new, I read during the holiday that, if you live in some big cities in the USA, Amazon will soon be offering you a one-hour delivery. Before my mailbag fills with protests saying that's actually pretty slow, I ought to point out we're talking atoms here, physical goods, not digital data or bits and, with logistics being the new marketing/finance/HR et al, this got my attention.

Amazon is variously famous and infamous for proposing that it will use

drones to deliver goods at some point in a future that it declined to quantify. That was damn good PR and probably not that far off the mark.

What happens if you take a fusion of Amazon-like logistics and a loose confederation of independent transport units tied together by something like Uber? Rather in the manner Uber currently picks up paying passengers, couldn't something operating on an Uber-like scale form an organism looking just a bit like a wobbly UPS or FedEx, passing little parcels from cell-to-cell and hence, eventually to a destination? This happens - sort of - at the moment but it's the grafted together and dynamic scaling piece that has its appeal. Is an Amazon drone not something a few twists of DNA away from a precursor that actually looks like a bloke in a family car with a notable lack of branding and a smart phone in his pocket? Amazon is going to charge its premium subscribers something like eight dollars to get the goods in an hour. Doesn't take too many of those in a tight locality to have the numbers hanging together for a low cost operator.

Whether events come to bear me out regarding decor and its accelerating pace, or logistic empires with little more than an app holding them together, remains to be seen. One thing's for certain though. The pace of development and the magnitude of change is such that the future definitely isn't what it used to be.

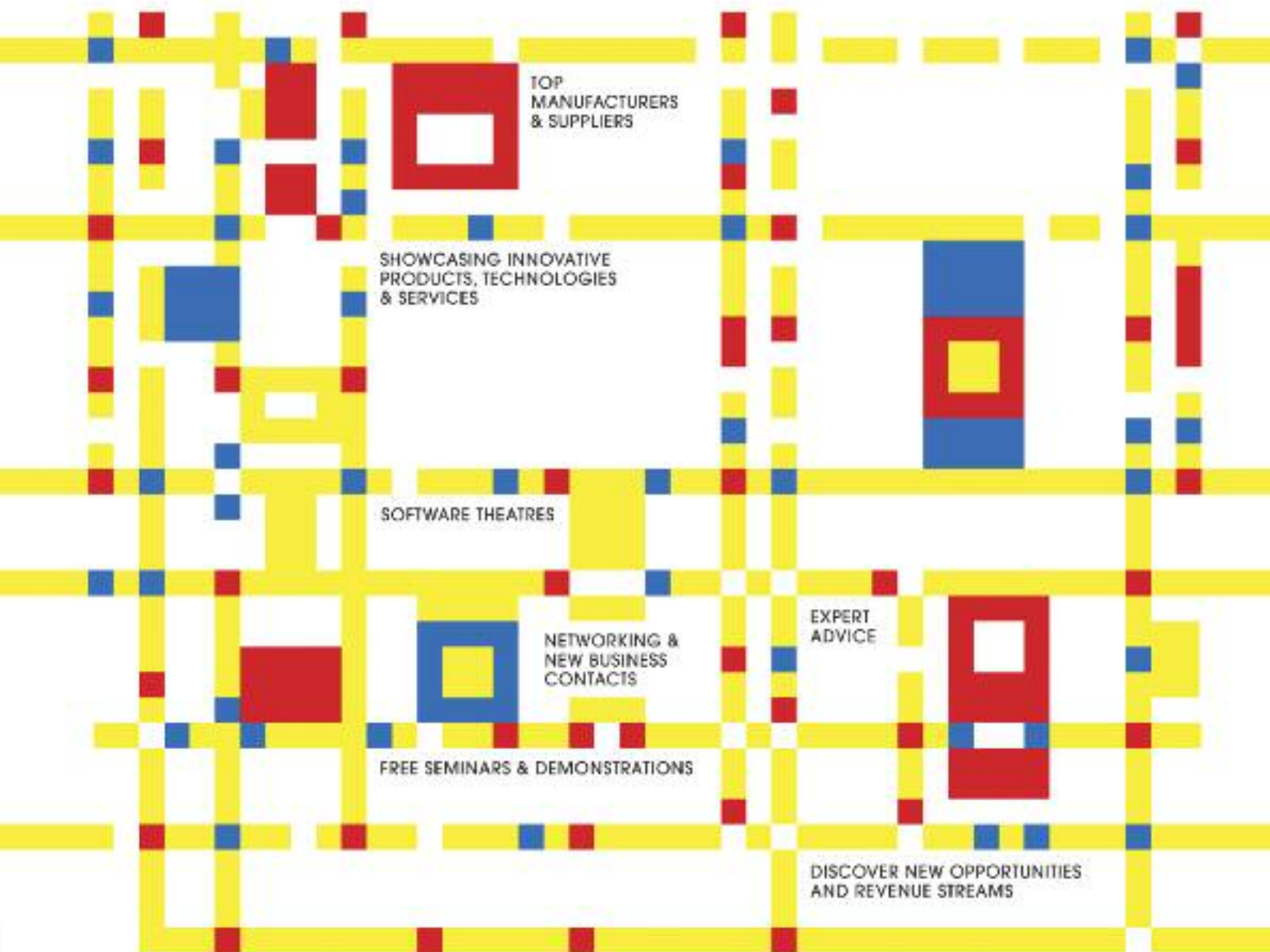
Happy New Year!

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