

# sign

directions

Jan/Feb 2014 - No.136



## Making the most of materials

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**EVERY SURFACE COVERED** THE RISE AND RISE OF SOYANG EUROPE

**SIGN AWARDS ARE BACK!** BSGA LAUNCHES NEW COMPETITION

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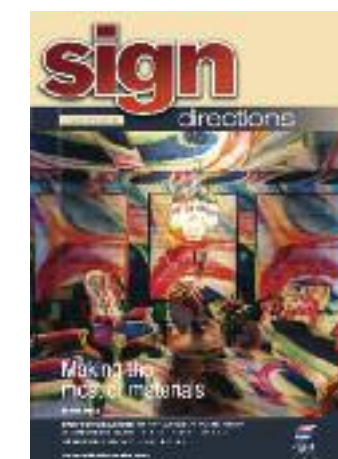
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### Sign Directions Hotline:

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 March issue, which will include a Special Feature on Décor



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Introduction



# setting the scene

Even though I've always regarded my main hobby as shopping – the only activity at which I truly excel – I have to confess that, in the run up to last Christmas, I eschewed the high street in favour of the internet and bought 90 percent of my presents online. And, according to the retail sales figures that were released in January, it seems that I wasn't alone, as stores with a strong online presence did far better than those without.

Unsurprisingly, most people, when faced with the hassle of driving to the nearest shopping centre, coupled with the tedium of finding an often eye-wateringly expensive parking space, plus the nightmare of actually battling through crowded shops, chose the easy option and let their fingers do the walking. In addition, as well as the convenience angle, Internet shopping often offers the further incentive of special money-saving bargains in the form of flash sales and special discount days.

However, this growing preference for the virtual experience is taking its toll on traditional retailing opportunities, with the many major high street names that have already established a successful online presence now reducing their total store inventory and retaining only those flagship outlets that attract the most customers and the largest turnover. The convenience of the internet is also affecting the banking sector too, with Barclays recently announcing plans to close up to a quarter of its branches, due to the popularity of online and mobile banking methods.

All of this, alas, is bound to have a knock-on effect for the sign and display sectors, as fewer shops means not just fewer external signs, but also fewer internal graphics too and in a further knock-on effect, a high street depleted of the major brands, inevitably leads to a lower total footfall with often disastrous consequences for the shops that remain.

On a more positive note though, it might just mean that with a smaller estate to maintain, retailers will be more inclined to pull out all of the stops when it comes to ensuring that the shops that serve as the all-important showcase for their products are as spectacular as possible. To guarantee their continued online success, they will need to retain a strong and

memorable corporate identity that properly reflects the ethos of their brand, while also offering shoppers an enjoyable experience that they will want to repeat again and again.

If this proves to be the case, it's time for sign and display companies to dust off their creativity. Now, all of those wonderful design-led ideas for wild and whacky signage that were previously rejected on the grounds of cost, can have their moment and instead of the homogenised one-size-fits-all schemes that were necessary to by-pass the planning edicts of multiple local authorities, perhaps it will be possible to produce more customised sign packages to suit the regional idiosyncrasies of different planning offices and customer demographics. In-store graphics can also be tailored on a more individual basis to suit the varying buying demands of shoppers in different geographical areas, and, in order to keep things fresh and exciting, the whole lot will need to be changed much frequently.

Who knows? The famously exacting demands of retailers might take a turn for the better, when quality rather than cost becomes their watchword, or failing that, sign and display companies can begin to explore the new opportunities offered by other markets, a topic that we'll be revisiting next month when we highlight the delights of décor!

One thing that should unite all signmakers and their clients, retail or otherwise, is the announcement that the BSGA has re-launched Sign Awards. The new competition, which is designed to recognise and reward the industry's skills and creativity, will culminate in a lunchtime awards ceremony to be held at Aston Villa's Holte Suite on 30th October next. Open to all UK sign and display companies, the competition will follow very

much the same formula that proved so successful between 2001-2008, and field a total of 12 different categories. To learn more, turn to page 17.

In an issue that focuses on signmaking materials, it seems to be a wholly appropriate moment to highlight the meteoric rise of Soyang Europe, which is the subject of our supplier spotlight feature. The Bury-based company's secrets are spilled on pages 28-29, while on page 40, our special signmaking materials feature kicks off with news of MetaWrap MD-X, a new vinyl from Metamark that is especially designed to help to make vehicle wrapping easy, followed by the lowdown on the latest crop of signmaking substrates. Those looking for creative inspiration should turn to pages 32-35, where CATdigital and Signwright reveal the full extent of their artistry and elsewhere, you'll find all of our regular news pages, while on page 50, Mark Godden confesses: "I didn't know it could do that!"

If you have anything you'd like to contribute to our Décor feature next month, whether it's an observation or an application story, please contact me on Tel: 01623 882398 or e-mail: signdirections@btconnect.com when I'll be delighted to hear from you.



Right now I have to dash – it's time to exercise my fingers once again, as there's a special blue cross sale that I simply can't miss!

**Val Hirst** – Editor  
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## Sign & Digital UK steams ahead

Following last year's unexpectedly successful show, Sign & Digital UK is expanding its floor plan by 20 percent due to an increase in demand, with organiser Faversham House Group reporting that over 120 exhibitors have already booked their space.

The exhibition, which will take place on 29th April-1st May, is already larger, in terms of floor space sold, than the 2013 show, and, it seems that although there has been an increase in booking across the board,

there has been particular interest from companies selling wide format printers, sign and display systems, lighting and digital signage systems, such as i-Sub, Multipanel/Perspex Distribution, One Digital Solutions and Sloan LED.

2014 will also see the return of leading brands such as Fujifilm, Graphtec and Inktec/Jetrix, while other confirmed exhibitors include Canon, Colourgen, Epson, Grafityp, HP, Hybrid Services, and Perfect Colours.



Commenting on the brisk stand sales, Rudi Blackett, Sign & Digital UK's Event Director said: "Despite the ongoing tough economic climate, we're delighted at the industry's commitment and enthusiasm for the show, which is already bigger than last year and is shaping up to be

better than ever."

Attendance at Sign & Digital UK is free and registration is now open.

For further information and to register online visit: [www.signanddigitaluk.com](http://www.signanddigitaluk.com)

## NSI fit for purpose

NSI has been honoured with an outstanding service award from Fitness First, following the successful completion of a project that required it to produce a new range of signage in time for the company's conference in October.



In a letter of thanks, Martin Seibold, Fitness First's UK Managing Director and Harry Kay, its Property Director, said: "NSI did everything it could to ensure all works were completed on time to welcome delegates from around the world and it was great to know that we

had a team working with us that we could depend on 100 percent!"

For further information, visit [www.nsi-limited.co.uk](http://www.nsi-limited.co.uk)

## Two for the price of one!

With a significant number of new companies exhibiting for the first time and existing exhibitors requiring more floor space at FESPA Digital 2014, FESPA has increased the size of the show by 4,000m<sup>2</sup>, bringing the total exhibition space up to a staggering 37,000m<sup>2</sup>.

With five months still to go until the doors open, FESPA Digital 2014, which will take place on 20th-23rd May at Messe Munich, is the biggest FESPA Digital exhibition to date, being 10 percent larger than the sell-out Hamburg event held in 2011.

It will run alongside European Sign Expo, which will be taking place for the second time following its introduction last year when it was twinned with FESPA 2013 at London's ExCel Exhibition Centre. Occupying 2,602m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, this year's event will offer signmakers, plus sign buyers and their influencers, a focused environment in which to explore innovations in all aspects of non-printed signage, ranging from



channel lettering, LED and neon signage, through dimensional signage, engraving and etching, to digital signage networks.

Visitors will also be able to see latest developments in equipment and materials and enjoy a series of tailored conference sessions, live demonstrations and networking opportunities, with European Sign Federation (ESF) once again supporting FESPA with the development of the content programme, The event will also play host to the ESF Awards.



For further information on FESPA Digital 2014 visit: [www.fespadigital.com](http://www.fespadigital.com)

For further information on European Sign Expo visit: [www.europeansignexpo.com](http://www.europeansignexpo.com)

## Signs fit for a Queen

Signs Express (Aberdeen) has received a Royal Warrant of Appointment following its on-going provision of signs and graphics services to Balmoral Castle.

The Aberdeen signmaker has been working with the Royal Estate for over five years and has provided numerous signs over that period, including large format print displays showing original photos of the Royal Family, which take pride of place at an annual exhibition at the estate that provides the general public with the opportunity to explore the castle and

grounds.

Jim Gifford, owner of the Aberdeen centre commented: "It's wonderful to be able to call ourselves Royal Warrant Holders and we hope to continue working with Balmoral for many years to come!"

Signs Express (Aberdeen) is currently renewing Balmoral's signage and is also working on the provision of a solution for removable visitor signs.

For further information visit: [www.signsexpress.co.uk](http://www.signsexpress.co.uk)



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## Appointments



**Durst** has recently announced two new appointments.

**Barbara Schulz** has been appointed as CEO by Durst Digital Technology in Lienz, Austria and will join the Executive Board of **Durst Phototechnik Digital Technology**.

She succeeds **Klaus Schneider**, who died in a fatal accident last spring.

Barbara Schulz previously worked for Ipsen, the German-American global market leader in thermal process technology, where she was the CEO of Ipsen subsidiaries in South East Asia and India. This role followed various management positions at ESK Ceramics GmbH, a leading manufacturer of high performance ceramics.



**Bernd Würth** takes on the role of Marketing Manager for Durst Industrial Inkjet Application GmbH, which specialises in the manufacture and international sales of industrial production lines for intelligent surface printing.

Bernd Würth has worked in the print technology sector for many years, firstly with Steinemann Coating where he was Manager of Sales and Marketing, before moving to Polytipe AG, where he was responsible for marketing digital printers for use in applications using glass, metal and stone.

Durst Industrial Inkjet Application GmbH is a 100 percent subsidiary of Durst Digital Technology and is headquartered in a newly completed building in Lienz, Austria.



**Zeta Specialist Lighting** has appointed **Tony Smith** as Account Manager and **Alison Preston** as Marketing Assistant,

who will both report directly to Sales and Marketing Director Adrian Dennis,

Tony has gained over 30 years' experience in the lighting industry, having previously worked with companies including Thorlux, Cooper Lighting and more recently, DFX Technology.

Alison joins the company from marketing and PR agency Manor Marketing and has clocked up several years' of B2B marketing experience, working both in-house and in agency.



**Darrell Barrs** has joined **Applelec** in the newly created role of Business Development Manager. Having

previously worked for the commercial and domestic LED lighting supplier Ledridge Lighting, where he managed a sales team of five, Darrell is an expert in LED technology and bespoke LED solutions and has experience across the LED industry, including supplying the wholesale market.

He will be based in the Midlands and will focus on component supply and solutions driven manufacturing for Applelec's three main business areas; signs, displays and lighting.

**EFI** has announced two executive appointments designed to strengthen its management team and drive further global growth.

**David Reeder** takes up the role of Chief Financial Officer, while **Marc Olin**, has been appointed to the newly created position of Chief Operating Officer.

David Reeder most recently held the position of VP, Finance of Cisco's System's \$16 Billion Enterprise Networking Division, where he was responsible for all financial aspects of Cisco's largest business group. Prior to that role, he served at Broadcom Corporation as Vice President & Managing Director, Asian Operations, after serving as Controller for Broadcom's U.S. Manufacturing and Operations.

Marc Olin, who has served as the

## showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2014

### Printwear & Promotion Live

**23rd-25th February, 2014**  
Hall 12, NEC, Birmingham  
Organiser: Data Team  
Tel: 01622 699173  
E-mail: tgardner@datateam.co.uk  
www.printwearandpromotion.co.uk

### IPEX

**24th-29th March 2014**  
ExCel, London  
Organiser: Informa  
Tel: 0207 017 7818  
www.ipex.org

### InPrint

**8th-10th April, 2014**  
Hannover Messe, Germany  
Organiser: Mack Brooks  
Tel: 01370854  
e-mail: marcus.timson@mackbrooks.com  
www.inprintlive.com

### Sign & Digital UK

**29th April-1st May 2014**  
NEC, Birmingham  
Organiser: Faversham House  
Tel: 01342 332000  
e-mail: signanddigitaluk@fav-house.com  
www.signanddigitaluk.com

If you would like your event to feature on this page, please send full information via e-mail to Val Hirst at [signdirections@btconnect.com](mailto:signdirections@btconnect.com)

Company's Interim Chief Financial Officer since September, 2013, has been appointed to the newly created role of Chief Operating Officer. A search is underway to fill Marc Olin's previous position as General Manager, Productivity Software Business. He joined EFI in 2003 when the Company acquired PrintCafe, where he was CEO and Co-Founder, an acquisition that launched EFI's entry into the commercial print software market.



**Signs Express (Peterborough)** has recently appointed **Paul Errington**, a vehicle graphics specialist, to help it further expand its team in light of increased customer demand.



**Stanford Marsh Group** has appointed three new staff to bolster its Scottish sales operations.

**David Murchie**, who has been appointed in an internal account manager capacity, worked at HP for a number of years in corporate and public sector imaging and printing account management roles.

**Yvonne Reilly**, an experienced IT sales professional, who also previously worked for HP, has joined the Stanford Marsh field sales team.

The second new member of the field sales team is **Mark Timoney**, who was previously employed by Equinet, where he enjoyed much success selling IT services and solutions.

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BMW | Yamaha Tech 3 Moto GP team | Rolls Royce Royal Ghost | Paddy Power | Enniskillen Presbyterian Church

# new projects



▶ Having worked successfully with **BMW** on previous projects, **W&Co** was invited to assist with the refurbishment of the basement handover bay at its flagship showroom on London's Park Lane.

As BMW wanted to brighten up the otherwise gloomy basement area with large format graphics, W&Co selected its 'FabriliTe' fabric face light box as providing the ideal solution to cover the

large plain white walls. Accordingly, a range of units was built to custom sizes, the largest being a whopping eight metres wide! W&Co worked closely with the BMW design team in order to produce a range of creative graphics that give the impression that the customer's new car has driven straight out of the design!

**For further information visit:** [www.w-co.uk](http://www.w-co.uk)

▶ As sponsors of the **Yamaha Tech 3 Moto GP team**, **Dewalt UK** commissioned **Signarama Slough** to help it highlight its involvement by wrapping 15 of its Tough System mobile storage systems. This was actually a much more taxing project for Signarama than it seemed, as the storage systems had to be wrapped in such a way that the graphics were able to withstand the rigours encountered while travelling around the world with the team during the Moto GP Season.

Accordingly, Signarama selected LG Ultra TAC digital vinyl, which is durable enough to stand up to both the extremes of temperature the boxes were subjected to during the course of the season, as well as the knocks and bumps



associated with constant transportation all around Europe and as far away as Australia!

**For further information visit:** [www.signarama.co.uk](http://www.signarama.co.uk)

▶ **Premier Vehicle Wrapping**, which specialises in providing full wraps for prestige cars, was commissioned to create a colour change wrap for a **Rolls Royce Ghost** that would enhance the vehicle's appearance.

It chose 3M's 1080 Series Aluminium White, supplied by **William Smith**, for the roof, bonnet, boot and window area of the car, but as the specific shade of metallic purple required for the lower part of the wrap couldn't be found in any standard materials range, Premier Vehicle Wrapping printed the required shade of metallic purple onto 1080 Series Aluminium White.

The wrap, which was finished with gloss overlaminate, to simulate the



appearance of a custom paint finish, duly satisfied the client's exacting specification for an aesthetically pleasing result, while also protecting the valuable

vehicle from the inevitable battle scars of every day use.

**For further information visit:** [www.vehiclewrapfilms.co.uk](http://www.vehiclewrapfilms.co.uk) or

[www.williamsmith.co.uk](http://www.williamsmith.co.uk) and [www.premiervehiclewrapping.co.uk](http://www.premiervehiclewrapping.co.uk)



▶ Hull based signage, shop fitting and engineering firm **Strata Holdings** has recently undertaken a national contract with bookmaker **Paddy Power** to refit more than 160 branches throughout the UK.

Strata Holdings comprises three companies, **Sovereign Signs**, **Ark Shopfitters** and **Pearlgreen Engineering**, which were collectively responsible for

producing the shop fascia signage, illuminated signage, counter signs, wall signs and section headers. and also created a new concept, in the form of in-store booths for "Fixed Odds Betting Terminals" (FOBT) that are designed to provide privacy to customers betting in-store.

**For further information visit:** [www.strataholdings.co.uk](http://www.strataholdings.co.uk)



▶ When a newly built church hall at **Enniskillen Presbyterian Church** required a stylish interior signage scheme that would complement its modern design Northern Ireland sign company **L.E. Graphics**, chose **Applelec's I-Sign Flex system** as providing the perfect solution.

Working to a tight five-week timescale, L.E. Graphics found the I-Sign Flex display frames extremely versatile and easy to use.

The company used a combination of wall mounted display frames and hanging signs in matching silver anodised aluminium to create a striking wayfinding



scheme that enhances the building's contemporary architecture.

Although the ability to change graphics was not a primary



objective, since the halls will be used to accommodate various recreational activities and events, the unique opening mechanism of I-Sign Flex will enable temporary posters to be changed quickly and easily when the need arises.

In addition to the interior wayfinding system, Applelec

supported L.E. Graphics with the creation of the building's exterior signage where flat face built-up letters were enhanced by the soft halo illumination provided SloanLED V180 Mini LEDs.

**For further information visit:** [www.legraphics.co.uk](http://www.legraphics.co.uk) and [www.applelec.co.uk](http://www.applelec.co.uk)



Supplier News

## XYZ Open Day a huge success

According to XYZ International, its recent Open Day event in London proved to be a huge success, attracting a large number of both existing and potential new users of XYZ and Pacer routers.

Demonstrations of the XYZ 4010 router incorporating the latest AVS-IP camera registration system and the latest Pacer high-performance CNC

router delivering a superior cut edge on acrylic were of special interest.

Other product developments demonstrated included the XYZ Smart Console hand-held machine interface that offers a host of production enhancements, the next generation A2MC control system for smoother motion control and improved performance and the latest helical rack and pinion drive system



for optimum accuracy and repeatability. The XYZ CNCRouterShop online tooling and accessories division was also

promoted.

For further information visit: [www.xyz.co.uk](http://www.xyz.co.uk)

## Realignment for Mutoh

Mutoh has announced an organisational realignment across its EMEA business units, which is designed to strengthen its go-to-market model, optimise efficiency and performance in its logistics structures and to drive profitable growth.

Starting from April 2014, the Japanese wide-format printer and cutting plotter manufacturer will unify its EMEA warehousing and logistics activities, in a move that

will see all Mutoh hardware manufactured in Japan, including consumables, supplies and spare parts, being warehoused at Mutoh Belgium for direct shipment to all authorised Mutoh resellers across the EMEA business area.

In line with Mutoh's global strategy, all core product marketing, commercial marketing and marketing communication activities for the EMEA territory will, at the same time, be centralised at Mutoh Belgium.

The individual Mutoh business divisions Mutoh Belgium, Mutoh Deutschland and Mutoh North Europe will remain responsible for all sales, after-sales service, technical service, local marketing and sales support activities in their respective sales territories.

Commenting on this move, Arthur Vanhoutte, Mutoh Belgium's Managing Director, said: "This plan will provide us with opportunities for further optimisation of our cost structures and more effective

## MUTOH

brand building and marketing communication activities, whilst at the same time increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of all Mutoh business units in Europe. These steps will create a more powerful organisation to demonstrate the strength of 'One Mutoh' and will lead to a better customer experience."

For further information visit: [www.mutoh.eu](http://www.mutoh.eu)

## Antalis guides the way

Antalis UK has launched a new 120-page guide, which is designed to showcase its full range of sign and display products and aims to help sign and display companies to select the most appropriate substrates for specific applications.

The guide covers everything from PVC and large format papers, to plotter vinyls and various sundry items and includes all of the familiar brands represented by Antalis, such as 3A, Drytac and Orafol as well as its pan-

European Coala range of large format digital media.

In addition, it presents visual representations of the possible applications for each substrate, thus enabling users to identify how each product can be printed to obtain the best possible results.

Commenting on the launch of the new Guide, Michael Crook, Sign & Display Product Manager said: "We have worked hard to build a strong portfolio of sign and display products

so customers can source everything they need, quickly and efficiently from one supplier. This Guide demonstrates exactly what we are trying to achieve and we hope that it will become the number one reference point for anyone in the industry."

To obtain a hard copy of the guide contact the local Antalis Sales Office or Tel: 0870 607 9014.

A full downloadable version of the brochure is available at [Antalis.co.uk](http://Antalis.co.uk)



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Supplier News

## The Viking has landed!



**Ian Graham, Viking's new South Yorkshire branch supervisor, opened its first branch office in Rotherham, to coincide with its 25th anniversary year.**

Originally launched in Keighley in 1989, Viking has already established a solid commercial footing across West, North and East Yorkshire, and is now

**Viking, the specialist UK supplier of tapes, two-part adhesives and sealants, has, in conjunction with 3M Tapes and Abrasives, opened its first branch office in Rotherham, to coincide with its 25th anniversary year.**

mounting an assault on neighbouring South Yorkshire, which it regards as one of the fastest-evolving heartlands of the UK manufacturing sector.

The company, one of 3M's leading tapes, adhesives and abrasives distributors, will be concentrating its initial efforts across Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley, and Sheffield, while also firmly setting its sights on further penetration into Lincolnshire and North Derbyshire.

Viking's Managing Director Colin Bennett explained: "We already have a number of sign accounts in this part

of the world and have identified a gap in the market for a specialist tapes, adhesive and abrasives distributor. Our aim is to provide the region's rapidly expanding manufacturing industry with quality products and cost-effective solutions.

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

Colin Bennett added that Ian Graham, of Wakefield, who has clocked up 30 years' of experience in the sign sector specialising in tapes and adhesives, has been appointed as Branch Supervisor.

Viking, which has been dealing with 3M since 1989 and remains a strategic partner of the global technology company, is the leading online supplier of 3M products in the UK and ranks among its top three performers overall.

**For further information visit: [www.vikingtapes.co.uk](http://www.vikingtapes.co.uk)**

## Eurobond celebrates a big birthday!

**This year, Eurobond Adhesives marks its 30th anniversary of supplying high performance adhesives and tapes to the sign industry and to celebrate its three decades in business, it plans to run a series of special promotions and new product launches throughout 2014.**

Eurobond's owner and Managing Director, Simon Dearing explains: "Since the company was formed in 1984 we have amassed a huge amount of experience and knowledge in many different aspects of signmaking and over the years our technical experts have designed specialist products that include Penloc our two-part

structural adhesive and our EB range of structural tapes, which meet the exacting demands of just about every sign making application."

He continues: "I take great pride in our company ethos, which is to listen, specify, train and equip our customers with the products and skills they need to carry out their job in a quick, efficient and professional way. Over the years we have worked in partnership with many thousands of sign companies, both big and small, throughout Europe. It has always been our aim to provide first class, high performance and cost effective products, backed up by

excellent customer service and technical support. Now, in order to kickstart our 30th year in business 'promotions' we are giving away to any new or existing Eurobond customer that spends over £150 on one order in March\* a FREE pot of 100 heavy-duty, lint free surface cleaning wipes. Eurobond's specially impregnated wipes are ideal for cleaning the surfaces of any potential contaminant prior to bonding, thus promoting better and stronger adhesion."

Simon Dearing added: "We would like to thank all our customers for their loyal support over the last 30 years and look forward to working with them and forging new



business partnerships in the years to come. Look out for some inspirational new Eurobond product launches on the run up to the Sign & Digital UK Show in April!"

**For further information visit: [www.eurobond-adhesives.co.uk](http://www.eurobond-adhesives.co.uk)**

## Nova's moving forward

**Nova Aluminium Systems, the Bristol based trade supplier has recently added another vehicle to its ever-expanding fleet to ensure its impressive delivery record is sustained.**

The company has seen continuous growth since its launch in 2005 and

feels that this is partly due to its impressive level of customer service, which includes 90 percent of deliveries being made via its own vehicles and drivers.

The newest vehicle is a commissioned MAN 12 tonne curtain sider 12/250 sleeper,

complete with air suspension. It also has a payload of 5.8 tonnes, something that is necessary given the increasing amount of business generated by Nova's strategic partner, Amari Plastics, which is a reseller of Nova's extensive range of sign systems.



**For further information visit: [www.nova-aluminium.com](http://www.nova-aluminium.com)**

# The next big colours have arrived.



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# The Sign Awards return!

Anyone who remembers the series of supremely successful Sign Awards that took place during 2001 to 2008 will be delighted to learn that they are back! The BSGA has announced its successor to the much loved event with the launch of the BSGA British Sign Awards, which will take place in the Holte Suite at Aston Villa Football club in Birmingham on Thursday 30th October, 2014.



Designed to celebrate the skills and creativity of the UK sign industry, the competition is open to all UK signmakers, regardless of whether or not they are BSA members. Entries, which are invited from sign companies of all sizes and denominations, will be judged by a carefully selected panel of industry experts who will be completely independent of the BSGA.



awards ceremony, will be reasonably priced and attendees will also be able to enjoy additional entertainment and opportunities for plenty of useful networking.

Explaining the BSGA's decision to resurrect the awards scheme, David Catanach, Director of the BSGA explained: "We had a close involvement with the awards events held from 2001 to 2008 at venues such as The Botanical Gardens in Birmingham, the Ricoh Arena in Coventry and Aston Villa, where the awards ceremony was held in 2007. These previous events proved to be a high point in the Sign Industry calendar, which is why we have retained the original organiser to work with us to organise and stage what we anticipate will become a regular annual event that will offer the same level of excitement and prestige as the earlier occasions."

Tickets for the new lunchtime event, which will include a four-course lunch and a keynote speaker, followed by the

The Awards will be presented in a total of nine individual signmaker categories with the winning entry from each category going forward to be judged for the most prestigious award of all – The 2014 Sign of the Year.

Additionally, there will be a Sign Industry Product of the Year award that is designed to recognise an innovation in equipment or materials that has made a real impact.

**For further information on award categories, the venue, ticket details, and sponsorship opportunities, see the copy of the BSGA Newsletter circulated with this issue, or visit: [www.britishsignawards.org](http://www.britishsignawards.org) or [www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk](http://www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk) ■**

## The Awards

### Architectural Sign of the Year

The winner of this category will be a structural sign with an element of engineering involved in its design and construction

**Illuminated Sign of the Year** Entries are invited for signs that have used either traditional or more contemporary sources of illumination to create a real impact.

**Wayfinding Scheme of the Year** This should demonstrate a combination of clarity and creativity and blend sympathetically with the surrounding environment, while still providing all of the vital information required for easy navigation.

**Interior Sign of the Year** This could be an outstanding corporate sign or a themed scheme of signs and graphics running throughout a building.

**Retail Sign of the Year** The judges will be looking for a sign (or signs) that accurately reflects the aims and ethos of the retailer and helps to increase total footfall.

**Vehicle Graphic of the Year** The winner of this category will be a livery that combines

visual impact with application skill.

**Roll-out Programme of the Year** This category will honour the implementation of a single scheme across a minimum of three separate sites.

**Digital Sign of the Year** This will be an outstanding, unusual and impactful sign that illustrates the efficacy of digital printing technology.

**Small Signmaker of the Year** This category is the province of companies employing between one and five employees. However, small sign companies are also encouraged to enter their projects in any of the above relevant categories too!

**Sign Industry Product of the Year** This award, which will be judged by a separate panel of signmakers, will consider nominations from a selection of industry experts plus nominations from any manufacturer and/or supplier who wishes to put forward their own innovation.

**BSGA Special Achievement Award** This, the BSGA's own special award, is within the gift of the BSGA Council

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## Equipment & Material

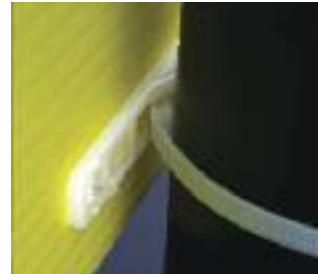
### Sales up, prices down!

Designed for the temporary and disposable sign markets, SignClip TF, which was introduced at Sign & Digital UK 2012 by Wyzrds, has since enjoyed remarkable success.

An innovative clip product, it is designed to firmly fix corrugated plastic signs to poles and thus eliminates the problems associated with the self-inflicted damage caused by cable-tie fixings.

Sales of SignClip TF have now reached a level that has enabled the manufacturer to increase production volumes and reduce the unit cost. Accordingly, Wyzrds is reducing the price of a single TF clip to just 20p.

Commenting on this move, Pat Lennard, Wyzrds' Managing Director said: "Twinflute has long been the perfect low-cost material for temporary signage, yet there has



never previously been a tool available for flat fixing a board to a pole. SignClip TF was designed for precisely this job, and in common with other innovations, such as the Tetra pak milk carton, it is very much the kind of product that should sell in tens of thousands at an attractively low price and rely on sales volume for its profitability. We are determined to play our part and keep prices as keen as possible in order to encourage volume sales."

He continued: We are optimistic the SignClip TF will become the every-

day fixing method of choice for signmakers and that it will help them to extend their professional services and realise increased profits as a result."

Having received such an enthusiastic response in the UK, SignClip will

shortly be launched into the North American market and is featured in the 2014 Catalogue of 'Image 1 Impact' the number one supplier of signage materials to Sign Trade Distributors in the USA, Canada and Mexico.

**For further information visit: [www.SignClip.co.uk](http://www.SignClip.co.uk)**

### A new world of possibilities

Snap&Fix is an innovative new product from Eurobond Adhesives that dovetails seamlessly into the Eurobond range of adhesive tapes, offering the signmaker a whole new world of possibilities of permanently or temporarily fixing two materials together.

Snap&Fix is a fastening system that works on the principle of interlocking plastic 'mushroom heads' that provide a solid connection when pressed firmly together and can be fastened and released as often as required, either lengthwise or crosswise. The extruded mushroom heads are supplied in a roll length format with a high performance, pressure sensitive acrylic adhesive backing.

In addition to roll lengths,



Snap&Fix will be supplied in small rigid plastic blocks and squares with countersunk holes drilled in the middle to mechanically fix them to walls or hard surfaces and act as fixing points that can then be mated with another block to form permanent or temporary mounting of sign boards, hoardings, fascias and panels. It can also be used in applications such as bonding sign channels,

other composite material instantly, without any distortion or read through from the surface. It will bond together most metals, including modern composites, wood, glass and many different plastics, and can be easily disassembled when required.

When Snap&Fix fastening systems are pushed together, they form a very strong and durable bond

between two substrates, as has already been discovered by some of the world's leading car manufacturers, including BMW, Ford, Volvo and VW.

**To book a free site visit and demonstration contact Eurobond's technical team on Tel: 01795 427888, email: [sales@eurobond-adhesives.co.uk](mailto:sales@eurobond-adhesives.co.uk) or visit: [www.eurobond-adhesives.co.uk](http://www.eurobond-adhesives.co.uk)**

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Equipment & Material

## The smart solution

**A new roller banner film manufactured by Kernow Coatings is now available in the UK from leading materials stockist and distributor Amari Digital Supplies.**

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

manufactured by HP, Epson and Canon.

The 200-micron film features a textured surface, a dimensionally stable polyester film base and aspecial instant-drying non-porous coating that eliminates the need for lamination, thus making it a more economical and faster solution for the printing of roller banners. The anti-static grey back also provides an outstanding light-blocking capability, while banners are

imbued with brighter colour tones and stay flat under all conditions when compared with conventional laminated roll-up alternatives. The film is available in a sheet size of 914mm x 30M.

In total, HydroJet Textured Lightblock Film F200CTL provides a smarter and faster solution to the digital printing of roll-up banners.

**For further information visit: [www.amaridigitalsupplies.com](http://www.amaridigitalsupplies.com)**



## More for less

**Perspex Distribution has extended its SloanLED V180 range with the addition of large and mini sizes to its popular low profile LED lighting system.**

Ideal for use with shallow channel letters and cabinets, it provides innovative, efficient and even illumination, while using up to 50 percent fewer modules.

V180 modules feature a patented LED array, comprising three diodes placed in an optimal orientation to provide a 180 degree overall viewing angle. The wider viewing angle facilitates wider

spacing between rows, which in turn results in bright, evenly illuminated signs using fewer modules, thus reducing both installation time and energy expenditure.

The V180 Standard and Large modules also come complete with stretched spacing options to make installation quick and easy and the additional wire lengths between modules, make it easier to fit in even the most complex letter shapes.

Perspex Distribution is offering a free LED estimating and layout service at all of its branches and signmakers are



cordially invited to discover for themselves what a difference the SloanLED V180 range can make to their projects.

**For a free LED estimate or further information, contact Perspex Distribution on Tel: 01827 263900 or visit [www.perspex.co.uk](http://www.perspex.co.uk).**

## A flexible friend

**Any signmaker who wants to reduce costs and lead times without compromising on quality, should consider Nova Aluminium's Novaskin, a 30mm deep non-illuminated flex system that is ideal for use in projects of almost any size.**

The product skin is tensioned and held in place by tapping an extruded plastic strip into its seating channel, thus providing a rapid and simple method of skin installation. As the skin requires no finishing, it can easily be printed in-



house whilst the frame is fabricated and, with its 'flat pack' assembly facilitating easy delivery, transportation issues become a thing of the past.

Available in the same range is the Novaskin Trim section, which has been specifically designed for use on the high Street; it easily transforms both Novacase and Novaslim boxes into



flexcase systems in both single and double-sided formats.

**For samples and further information, contact Nova on Tel: 0117 9556463 email: [sales@nova-aluminium.com](mailto:sales@nova-aluminium.com) or visit: [www.nova-aluminium.com](http://www.nova-aluminium.com)**



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## Vink brings together the very latest in LEDs and Digital Signage



Premium quality, high technology solutions from leading brands, plus expert application knowledge.

Join us on stand F20 at Sign & Digital UK, to explore our exciting new range of state-of-the-art Digital Signage solutions, as well as the latest developments in LED lighting. Members of our expert technical team will be presenting on-stand demonstrations and answering your application queries.



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See us on Stand F20





## Equipment & Material

### A plethora of products

As an established supplier of high quality LED lighting solutions for sign and display applications, it is no surprise that Vink has entered the digital signage market place and will be using this year's Sign & Digital UK exhibition to showcase its new product ranges.

The company will also be presenting on-stand demonstrations covering LED lighting technology, colour perception and measurement, as well as providing practical advice on how this technology can be used to enhance corporate branding.

Vink's digital signage range has been assembled to offer easy to apply, pre-integrated solutions, using premium products from world class manufacturers, such as Philips, Q-Lite, Wallflower and Peerless-AV.

The company's aim is to help signmakers to confidently enter the digital arena without the risks normally associated with embracing a new technology.

The range includes a wide choice of monitors and displays, media players, software and mounting solutions. Both internal and external applications are catered for – from stand-alone displays to large format LED panels or video walls, as well as networked multi-site programs.

Charles Murray, Vink's European Business Development Manager for Digital Signage summed up the company's ethos thus: "We've chosen our supply partners carefully to offer a digital signage range that will meet different needs in terms of budget and functionality, without compromising quality. Above all, we believe that the time we've invested in understanding the technology will pay dividends in the level of application and specification support we can provide."

On the LED lighting side, Vink will be using the show to introduce its latest modular systems from market leaders and innovators, such as GE Lighting Solutions, and Osram.



Visitors to the Vink stand will also be among the first in the UK to see GE's new Tetra Minimax MS system, which is specifically designed for use with narrow and shallow built-up letters, as well as the Tetra Contour system that provides the only viable alternative to Neon with all the benefits of LED.

sign illumination, will also be available on the stand.

A copy of Vink's highly acclaimed 'Lighting for Signs & Display' text book, which provides practical support and advice on all aspects of

**For further information contact Vink on Tel: 01902 409205 or visit [www.vinklighting.com](http://www.vinklighting.com)**



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## Roll up, roll up!



**Innotech Digital and Display has launched two new additions to its popular roller banner series, the Origin Carbon, which is available in 80cm and 85cm widths and the Frontier Carbon, which**

reliability, while the new black carbon finish is a welcome addition to Innotech's portable roller banner range. They feature a graphic height of two metres and a snap clip rail that facilitates ease of graphic installation. They are also individually bagged and boxed for maximum flexibility.

is 85cm wide.

The banners are featured in Innotech's latest Platinum Book which is an essential buyers guide for both visual communication specialists and specifiers.

**To request a free copy contact Innotech on Tel: 01530 512 731 or email [sales@innotechdigital.com](mailto:sales@innotechdigital.com)**

**For further information visit: [www.innotechdigital.com](http://www.innotechdigital.com)**



Equipment & Material

## Enhanced sign illumination

Sign makers will welcome a further enhancement to the popular Chiplite LED module CL-XI. Following further optimisation, this is now branded as CL-XOL. It will be formally launched at European Sign Expo to be held in conjunction with FESPA Digital 2014 in Munich at the end of May.



to form a chain of 40 modules. The CL-XOL also carries the CE/EN 55015 seal of approval, is RoHS-certified and also incorporates an IP65-rated transparent housing for optimum safety and reliability. Of special interest to signmakers is the system's ability to accommodate difficult-to-fit corner or serif requirements

due to the special optics that provide an extra-wide 160-degree angle of radiation. This enables the system to be used in light boxes and for the illumination of sign lettering with a very low depth (typically as small as 30mm).

Further optical improvement, at no additional cost to users, now facilitates a 160-degree light distribution capability making it possible to illuminate a square-metre 200mm-deep flexible-face light box using only 16 CL-XOL H3 modules via a grid area of 250 x 250mm.

The upgraded system incorporates two SMD LED modules that are constant-current driven and soldered

Another important innovation for signmakers is the CL-EI system that has been developed specifically for illuminating double-sided light boxes. These can be illuminated 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. Available as a soldered chain of 30 LED modules, the light intensity of the CL-EI system can be varied either by

pushing the modules together or pulling them apart.

For further information visit: [www.chiplite.de](http://www.chiplite.de)

## A bonding experience

The continuing quest by signmakers for lighter, thinner, 'greener' and ultimately cheaper materials has driven the research and development of key products at adhesives and bonding specialist Innova Solutions.



One of the UK's foremost corporate sign manufacturers, Sign 2000 is a prolific user of Innova's products that have featured prominently in a number of major high profile re-branding projects undertaken on behalf of some of the most instantly recognisable brands.



optimum performance on applications where ultimate bond strength is not critical and where price is a motivating factor.

A typical example of the innovative products developed by Innova Solutions and its key partners in the sign industry has been the NovaBond XS range of adhesives. These have met the special bonding requirements of powder coating and paint systems and the wider use of recycled substrates. Collectively, these can exhibit very low and often inconsistent surface energies that make them difficult to bond and the adoption of NovaBond XS has effectively resolved the problem.

Other key products include NovaBond SignFix high-strength bonding tapes, NovaBond SG and Novafix high-performance double-sided tapes, NovaWeld structural adhesives, NovaLok re-closable fastening systems, NovaMag adhesive and non-adhesive media and NovaHead alternative mechanical fasteners. All of these products can be used successfully on a wide range of commonly used sign substrates, including steel, aluminium, glass, acrylic and composite materials.

Another noteworthy development at Innova Solutions has been the NovaBond OP range. This is a group of selective products designed to deliver

For further information visit: [www.innovasolutions.co.uk](http://www.innovasolutions.co.uk)

## Louise lightens the load

Tensator is helping to improve traveller safety at King's Cross Station with the introduction of a Virtual Assistant that is advising travellers with heavy and awkward to handle baggage to use the lift rather than the escalator.



Tensator's Virtual Assistants, which use cutting-edge technology to project an image and create the illusion of a real person – the one located at Kings Cross has been christened 'Louise' – are fully customisable and help to bring messages to life by engaging with passengers and providing clear and consistent directional and safety announcements.

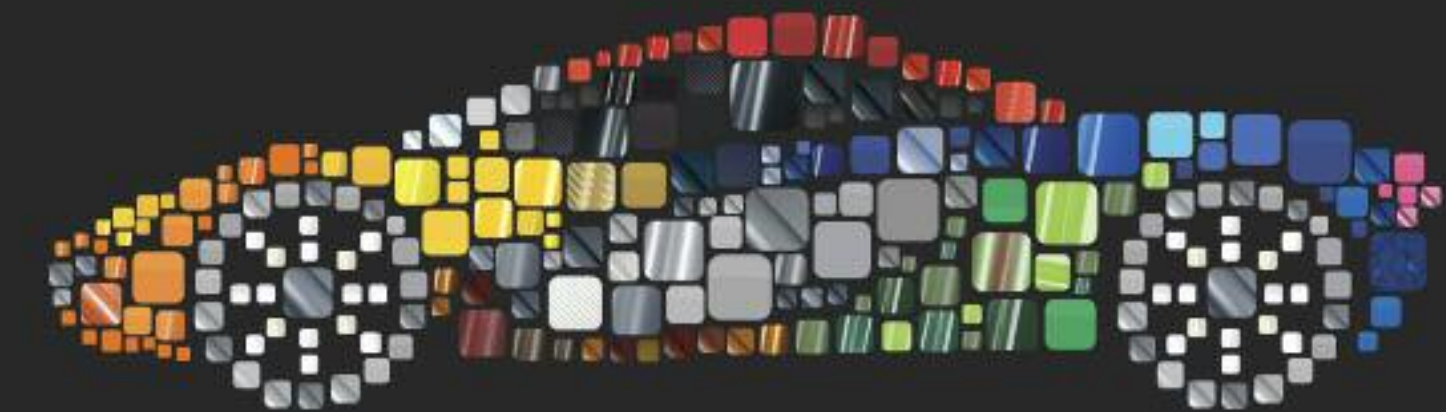
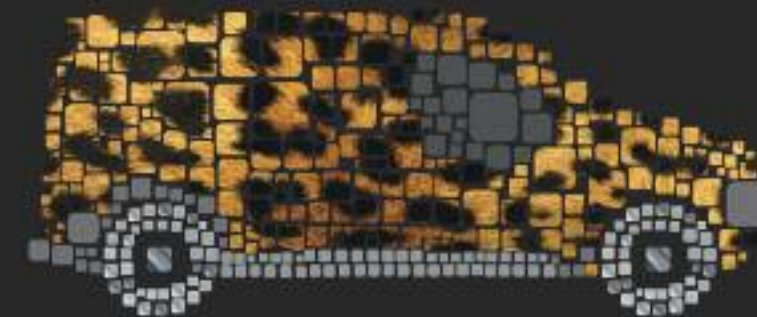
Tensator worked alongside telecommunications and security systems integrator TEW Plus to supply, configure and install 'Louise',

and, during her six-week trial, there was an increase of over 260 percent in the number of passengers using the lift.

For further information visit: [www.tensator.com](http://www.tensator.com)

For instant industry news updates visit: [www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk](http://www.signdirectionsonline.co.uk)

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# Every surface covered

If your perception of Soyang Europe is that it's purely a purveyor of value for money laminate banner from the Far East, then you couldn't be more wrong! In fact, as well as providing its customers with the highly sophisticated range of substrates produced by its Chinese-based partner, the Manchester based materials supplier now also offers a stunning range of products from the most prestigious European manufacturers too. Val Hirst reports



When Mark Mashiter first established Soyang Europe in 2005, it was to fulfil what he perceived to be a gap in the market, namely the provision of a wide variety of grand format media that combined high quality with a competitive price. And, having identified the Chinese company Soyang International as being a manufacturer that was not only capable of providing such a range, but was also one that was eager to further enhance its product offering to meet the exacting standards of European consumers, Mark revealed his willingness to take the sort of calculated risk that always seems to be synonymous with the most dashing and successful entrepreneurs. Engagingly, he readily admits that when the first consignment of substrates arrived from Soyang, he had to pay the VAT bill with his credit card, but happily it was a risk that has more than paid off.

Now a mere seven years later, Soyang Europe operates from a 25,000sq.ft warehouse in Bury that is literally crammed to the rafters with a total materials stockholding amounting to 1.3 million sq.metres, and includes a substrate for every conceivable application, ranging from wall and floor graphics to banners and building wraps, plus everything in between. This mammoth inventory is something that Mark maintains is essential if the company is to live up to its reputation of being able to provide its customers with the widest possible range of substrates for use with all of the commonly used digital printing technologies.

"I loathe the term 'one-stop shop'," observes Mark, "But in essence, when it comes to printable materials, that's what we are - whether you're using an entry level wide format Mimaki, Mutoh or Roland printer, or something like a grand format Agfa, Durst, HP or VUTEK, we can



provide the perfect substrate for practically any application you care to name and we can do it on a next day delivery basis too!"

Mark and his Sales Director, Andrew Simmons, both come from an industrial textiles background; something that has uniquely equipped them to understand the demands placed upon the products they sell to the sign and display sectors and the need for media to keep pace with the on-going developments in digital printing.

"R & D is something that is very important to us," says Andrew, explaining that Soyang has an R & D Centre that boasts a staff of 20 people, who are constantly re-examining the relationship between structure and performance and who strive to maintain the necessary balance between quality and price.

Mark adds that as the business has grown, the materials portfolio has also expanded to encompass products from such companies as the Portuguese



manufacturer Endutex and the German textiles specialist Aurich, with the former supplying the non-PVC materials that are becoming increasingly desirable as many brand leaders address the demand for more environmentally friendly signs and graphics and the latter catering for the growing interest in soft signage and decorative textiles with its range of fabrics for use with dye-sublimation printers.

He says: "Initially 100 percent of our inventory came from Soyang International, but nowadays Soyang products account for around 50 percent of the portfolio, with most of the rest

coming from Europe. We are always very selective about the partners we choose preferring to stick with companies that control every aspect of their production so that we can be sure that the highest quality standards are upheld all the way along the chain."

Mark goes on to add that it's an equally important part of the Soyang ethos to partner with manufacturers who are receptive to the feedback that the company can provide, remarking: "The big challenge for manufacturers is to keep abreast of what's actually happening out there in the market, because it's all very well for a material to perform in the laboratory, but it's how it performs out in the field that really matters!"

Andrew agrees, observing that since he and the five-strong sales team probably deal direct with just about every grand format digital print company in the country, Soyang is perfectly positioned to provide the level of market intelligence that enables its manufacturer partners to fine tune their existing products and devise new ones to meet changing demands.

In fact, it could be said that Soyang's two latest arrivals, AlumiGraphics and G-Floor Graphics, do just that.

Mark and Andrew proclaim their excitement regarding these two new additions to the portfolio, with Mark saying: "Both products enable sign and display companies to add extra value and thus realise extra profits, by enabling them to further extend the scope of their services."

He predicts that signmakers will love AlumiGraphics, which, as its name suggests, is a flexible aluminium-based signmaking material that comes in two different options, Grip and Smooth, to facilitate the easy application of signs and graphics on ground and wall surfaces that would previously have provided something of a challenge.

AlumiGraphics Grip, which has a non-skid finish, has a specially formulated adhesive that enables it to be used as an outdoor durable floor graphic that offers a lifespan of several months, even when subjected



to harsh climatic conditions. In addition, any area left unprinted offers a pleasing reflective quality, which is further heightened when placed under a bright light and can be used creatively to enhance the decorative effect of any design. Equally efficacious in terms of its tenacity and reflective qualities, is AlumiGrip Smooth, which is designed for application on walls, and is conformable enough for use on even heavily textured brick work, requiring nothing more taxing than roller and/or finger pressure to aid its adherence. It requires no overlaminates and, in common with the Grip version, it is quick and easy to remove without leaving any unsightly residue.

The second new arrival, G-Floor, will, claims Andrew, re-invigorate the market for floor advertising and promotional graphics. He says: "Traditionally, this has been an area fraught with problems, as durability and practicality have always been issues when longer term applications are required, which is what makes G-Floor such a find!"

This high tech new media, which was originally developed in the USA, is based on a high-density clear, flexible PVC substrate, which can be printed on the underside, using either UV or solvent inks on a grand-format printer. The genius of this is that the image is automatically protected from scuffs, abrasions and every day wear and tear by the thick vinyl layer above it. Furthermore G-Floor offers a choice of different surface finishes, is easy to install and reposition and meets the strict hygiene requirements stipulated by hospitals and food



preparation areas, as well as featuring excellent load-bearing capabilities. It also exhibits low-noise and sound absorbing characteristics too. G-Floor is available in widths up to 3m and thicknesses to suit virtually all flatbed, roll-to-roll or hybrid grand format printers, and in order to tick every box, a solid white version is also available for surface printing via four colour process.

Andrew continues: "The applications it opens up are endless - it can be used in any sort of retail space, hotels, restaurants, bars, fitness clubs and spas, car dealerships and just about any public space, providing any company that owns a grand format printer with myriad new business opportunities!"

In fact, so limitless are the possibilities that Soyang is keen to nurture creative partnerships with both their grand format customers and their customers and influencers in order to fully capitalise on the product's potential.

In order to accommodate both these two new additions and further new arrivals in the future, Soyang Europe is currently planning a move to new

premises - a 70,000sq.ft facility that is conveniently situated within a mile from the M65 near Accrington. In order to minimise disruption to customers, the move, which is being planned with military precision, will be staggered, with stock gradually being transferred over a three-month period, starting in April.

"We'll have more space for everything, including a proper showroom," says Mark with satisfaction, "and we'll also be able to provide a much nicer working environment for the team, which, due to the rapid growth we've experienced over the last couple of years, is now squashed into one office to provide enough warehousing space."

Soyang Europe has certainly come along way since Mark acquired his first container load of substrates but he warns: "We've still got further to go - there's a lot I want to achieve on the supply front and in Accrington, we'll have the extra space and resources to do it!"

Definitely a case of 'Watch this space!'

**For further information visit:**  
[www.soyang.co.uk](http://www.soyang.co.uk)



# A winning combination

**As a company that has invested over £750k in the last 12 months, Runcorn-based PS2 Print has evolved from being a repro and design business to one that can fulfill virtually all print demands, following its entry into the wide-format print arena five years ago.**

In fact, the company's large format work has recently grown significantly, so much so, that last January, PS2 invested in an 8' x 4' OCE Arizona flatbed UV printer, which was swiftly followed by the installation of a DYSS X7 2616C flatbed CNC cutter from AG/CAD in April 2013. Explaining the reasoning behind these two acquisitions, Director Simon Langford said: "Previously, we were using roll-fed printers to produce everything from exhibition displays and external graphics to POS, which wasn't always efficient or cost effective, but once we had the OCE flatbed in place, we realised that we also needed the DYSS X7 if we were to become more competitive."

He continued: "Before I started to

research the available options, DYSS wasn't a name that was on my radar, but as soon as I saw a demonstration of the machine and the software, I was sold on the complete package it offered."

Simon continued: "Now, the DYSS is used daily to produce jigsaws, boxes, counter top displays and cut-out figures for use at exhibitions - all jobs we couldn't previously accommodate. It also enables us to trial new products and do in-store development work, thus helping us to expand our client-base and increase the volume of work we receive from our existing customers too."

He added: "Furthermore, in a price sensitive environment, the DYSS has significantly reduced the cost of many jobs, making us more competitive and thus more profitable, whilst also enabling us to provide a better service. For example, many of the jobs that we finish on the DYSS come direct from our roll fed printers and one regular batch of 100 banners, which used to take us two days to cut by hand, now takes just four



hours!"

Whilst many of the company's larger print runs are cut on a Heidelberg Cylinder, the DYSS copes perfectly with smaller runs, especially complex boxes and shapes. Recently PS2 produced 50 presentation folders and 100 bespoke boxboard cubes that were printed on the OCE and transferred straight to the DYSS, where they were creased and cut, thus significantly reducing the overall production cost.

The DYSS X7 incorporates three cutting

heads that can accommodate routers, knives, creasing tools and kiss cut tools, which can be programmed for each job and material type. In addition, the easy tool levelling system calibrates tool height offsets automatically to reduce operator input. This system works in synergy with the K-Cut Vision System that records distortions that are commonplace in most print and media jobs and calculates optimised cutting paths to deliver precise cutting and to reduce waste.

In order to fully illustrate the efficacy of



these features, Simon described how they have enabled PS2 to take on work that it couldn't have previously considered. He said: "We have a frequent print run of 200 posters that we also has a roll feeding set-up. The K-Cut Vision System automatically calibrates the cutting path and guarantees 100 percent accuracy, resulting in fewer errors and less wastage. What's more it only takes an hour to complete the work!"

From a profitability perspective, Simon believes the DYSS will deliver a return on investment in just 12 months as previously, the company was outsourcing £30,000 worth of cutting work that has now been brought in-house, a move that, as well as improving

both its productivity and profitability, also enables it to offer faster lead times.

Supporting this ability to react to customers is the KASEMAKE software. Simon continues: "With KASEMAKE we can design and display our products within a virtual in-store environment for customers to view, something that has definitely helped us to win work. It also offers hundreds of templates for boxes, folders, displays and all types of shapes that can be easily manipulated to suit our precise needs. This has reduced both the time taken to deliver a concept to the customer and, to produce it following approval."

Highlighting how the DYSS has improved the throughput of work at PS2 Print, Simon concludes: "It has been a revelation! Not only can we cut, crease



and bend forms, we can also cut acrylic, Di-Bond, boxboard, Foamex and other materials in thicknesses beyond 10mm, that we couldn't have accurately processed by hand. We are also very impressed by the level of technical expertise and support provided by AGCAD. As far as we are concerned the DYSS and OCE Arizona combination is a

winning one that will help us to further grow our business!"

**For further information on PS2 visit: [ps2print.co.uk](http://ps2print.co.uk)**

**For further information on AGCAD visit: [www.agcad.co.uk](http://www.agcad.co.uk)**

# Thrice as nice!

**Blaze Neon has recently taken delivery of its third Tekcel 2m x 3m router. Supplied exclusively by Complete CNC Solutions, the new Tekcel system was installed last December at Blaze Neon's Broadstairs manufacturing site, alongside its previous Tekcel 2m x 3m router.**

Established in 1981, Blaze Neon designs, manufactures, installs and maintains all types of signs for many of the best known high street names in the retail and banking sectors. As a result, it is constantly managing major signage projects throughout the UK and across Europe and has recently successfully completed a re-brand for

one of the major high street banks. To ensure its clients always receive the highest levels of quality and service, Blaze operates two manufacturing sites, incorporating Cygnia Maintenance and as a Group employs a workforce of 300 highly skilled people. Continued investment, in both personnel and cutting edge technology means that Blaze can undertake all aspects of sign work in-house, an approach that has kept it at the top of its game for the past 30 years.

In 2008, Blaze updated the existing CNC routing facility at its Birmingham base with the installation of a Tekcel 2m x 3m CNC router, which delivered a

range of new production features that Blaze had been unable to access with its previous CNC machines. These included a powerful, 10hp HSD spindle motor, capable of changing its tools automatically, digital servo technology and ballscrew drives on all axis, thus enabling the Tekcel router to deliver and maintain pinpoint precision and optimum production speeds over their entire lifetime. Having been in situ for over six years, the Tekcel router has more than lived up to its reputation of being a 'high production workhorse' often operating around the clock.

Based on this performance record, Blaze ordered a second Tekcel VSR 2m x 3m router in 2011, in order to update



the CNC facility at its manufacturing base in Broadstairs, Kent. However, in addition to all the features Blaze had been accustomed to, the new machine was also fitted with the Tekcel Opticam 'Cut to Print' registration camera system option, to assist with the accurate profile cutting of digitally printed sheet materials.

Due to an anticipated increased workload this year, Blaze subsequently ordered its third Tekcel VSR 2m x 3m



router from Complete CNC Solutions, which was delivered, installed and commissioned all in one day, and is now operating alongside the previously installed Tekcel machine in a purpose built router room, where its 1Kw brushless digitally encoded servo motors on all axis, now drive the ever

reliable and accurate ball screw technology. Other new features include a fully automated dust foot, vacuum hold down, tool length sensing and extraction and mist coolant features, together with its newly released motion control system. Designed and built in-house, this

unique motion controller takes care of the most demanding data processing tasks and boasts the most advanced router technology control system available.

Both Tekcel routers now also benefit from the high performance solid

carbide, single flute tooling, cutters and accessories also supplied by Complete CNC Solutions, which help Blaze to maintain its high standards of edge quality finish when cutting materials which range from acrylics, ACM, PVC Foam and MDF to wood and aluminium.

Unsurprisingly, with such a potent combination of technology and experience, Blaze's services are much sought after, but with its enhanced CNC facility Blaze is ready for whatever new challenges await it in 2014!

**For further information On Blaze Signs visit: [www.blaze-signs.com](http://www.blaze-signs.com) and [www.cygniamaintenance.com](http://www.cygniamaintenance.com)**

**For further information on Complete CNC Solutions: visit: [www.completecnc.co.uk](http://www.completecnc.co.uk)**



# The outstanding option

**When Gordon Speirs was looking for a wall saw for his Lincoln sign and graphics business, The Sign Shop, he found several cheap but poor quality machines, and many very expensive machines, but few options in between.**

Established in 1996, The Sign Shop specialises in the production of signs, vehicle graphics, labels, printed promotional gifts, flatbed printing and exhibition materials, serving a wide range of businesses located in the Lincoln area.

Until mid-2013, Gordon had relied on buying Dibond, Foamex and other sheet materials cut to the sizes required for each job, an approach that was workable, but also had its limitations. He explained: "Having sheets cut before delivery, particularly for smaller orders, was causing delays and that was a real problem, so much so, that I quickly realised that it would be much quicker for us to buy standard sheets for these jobs and cut them in house as we needed them."

Gordon already had two fixed-blade cutters, but even so, The Sign Shop struggled to cut aluminium composites and, since it was seeing an increase in the use of such materials, he was keen to put a more capable system in place.

Realising that a wall saw would be the best tool for the job, Gordon used the Internet to research the options, but quickly ran up against an unexpected problem. He recalled: "There seemed to be plenty of cheap saws of pretty poor quality and, at the other end of the scale, some frighteningly expensive machines that were way beyond the budget of smaller signmakers like us."

In fact, Gordon found only one range of saws in that all-important middle ground, that offered the requisite combination of excellent quality at a price he could afford: Sagatech's Koolkut range.

The Koolkut range caters for various sizes of sheets, with the smallest model, the KK12, cutting up to 2.5m x 1.25m and the largest, the KK21, up to 3.1m x 2.1m. All



Koolkuts feature an immensely strong steel frame, a moving column for easy, compact operation, innovative sealed bearings running on linear shafts (which makes them ideal for operation in dusty environments), plunge and bevel cutting, and simple and compound angle cutting to the full length and breadth of the sheet.

Installed in the summer of 2013, The Sign Shop's Koolkut KK12 wall saw is already having a significant impact on the business. Cutting a mix of Dibond, various thicknesses of Foamex, acrylics,

MDF and plywood, it has greatly improved workflow and the company's ability to respond nimbly to customer requirements. Gordon noted: "We aren't cutting huge amounts, often just a few sheets a day, but it's making a big difference. It's great to have the ability to cut materials as and when we need them!"

**For further information on The Sign Shop visit: [www.signshoplincoln.co.uk](http://www.signshoplincoln.co.uk). For further information on Sagatech's Koolkut range visit: [www.sagatech.co.uk](http://www.sagatech.co.uk)**

# Cutting it in the retail sector



**An investment in large format print capability would be limited without a complementary investment in cutting edge finishing, which is why London-based Colouration purchased the ESKO Kongsberg XN24 from CWE Solutions to become an integral part of its digital expansion programme.**

Colouration is one of the UK's leading creative agencies and specialises in the production of large format graphics and

point of sale applications for luxury brands and the retail environment.

Initially set up as a litho print company approximately 13 years ago by Managing Director Tony Dennington, the company found it was outsourcing enough work to warrant an investment in large format printing and accordingly, Operations Manager Dave Mays joined Colouration team in 2012 to lead its digital team.

However, after acquiring a portfolio of large format printers, including a couple of HP Designjet Z6100s, Océ Arizonas and a Chromira for continuous tone photo print, Colouration realised that it needed a cutter capable of working with a wide variety of media.

Dave Mays explained: "We considered all of the alternatives, but in the end we felt that the Kongsberg delivered the best and most accurate cutting for any application, while also offering top class speed too." He went on to say that another deciding factor was the machine's robust build quality and superior software, plus the level of support provided by ESKO and CWE Solutions.

The Kongsberg XN24, which is a very versatile cutting machine, uses i-cut vision pro software and laser recognition hardware and also offers a

maximum cutting area of 3.2M x 1.68M.

Dave continued: "We work with a vast array of different materials ranging from vinyls and paper to corrugated board and plastics, and recently, we've also been using cardboard to produce 3D point of sale materials and the Kongsberg just eats it all up and makes many jobs, such as short run work, much more cost efficient. In addition, the range of ESKO software also offers substantial workflow streamlining, and that, together with the Kongsberg's ease of operation and tool changeovers has easily helped to make it the best choice by far."

**For further information on Colouration visit: [www.colouration.co.uk](http://www.colouration.co.uk). For further information on CWE Solutions visit: [www.cwesolutions.co.uk](http://www.cwesolutions.co.uk)**

# Axyz offers upgraded option

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

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

A key new enhancement has been the addition of the AXYZ Auto Zone Management function that ensures material being processed is held securely throughout the entire cutting cycle to provide optimum accuracy

and a perfect edge finish. The system provides three different vacuum hold down modes, Live Deck, Pendulum and Independent Switching. Live Deck will automatically activate and deactivate vacuum zones according to the live position of the cutting head, while the Pendulum mode, as the most popular for panel fabricators, enables the vacuum to switch between two virtual zones, usually the front and rear halves of the router, to facilitate continuous operation for maximum productivity.

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



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

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

**For further information visit: [www.axyz.co.uk](http://www.axyz.co.uk)**





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Various Shilo images – Shilo Engelbrecht www.shilo.net.au



'Modern Folk' - by Emma Neuberger for publication Print/Make/Wear. Creative projects for digital textile design by Melanie Bowles, publisher Laurence King 2015, photographer Simon Pask



Rachel Mimiec flags – Artist Rachel Mimiec (community flags at the Helix 2013)



'Rafmanpeckham fullroom' produced by American Medium, photograph by Vartivar Jakiian.

# Short but sweet

Established in 2000, CATdigital, the commercial arm of the Centre for Advanced Textiles (CAT) at Glasgow School of Art, specialises in the creation of customised and bespoke printed fabrics for the fashion and interior design markets.

Using a pair of seven-year-old Stork Sapphire digital inkjet printers, CATdigital works with current Glasgow School of Art students, the college's graduates and established designers at global names like Topshop and ASOS.

Its services are recommended by design courses across the globe with orders regularly arriving at the Glasgow campus from remote Scottish islands to Australia and even the most northerly location reached by DHL, namely a Norwegian address within the Arctic Circle!

CATdigital prints on over 40 different types of natural fabric in lengths up to 100 metres and has recently invested in new steaming and washing equipment for its finishing department, because as Alan Shaw, CAT's Industry Coordinator explains: in "There's no point in being able to print 100 metres of fabric if you can't finish it."

However, as a design-focused enterprise it also proudly offers design samples as short as half a metre. With Alan observing: "Larger companies

wouldn't take on such short-run work, as they perceive such jobs to be a waste of their time, but although the industry has grown and technology has moved on, people still need half-metres printed."

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

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

and finding them unsatisfactory, word-of-mouth recommendations led it to Quality Print Services (QPS), with Alan Shaw commenting: "There are certain things that only need doing every six months or so and since QPS does these on a daily basis it makes sense for them to handle it."

Alan puts CAT's success to date down to its high level of customer service born of the traditional design backgrounds of each of the print room staff. He says: "We don't just receive a file and print it; we can tell you exactly what's wrong, if something does go wrong and can give help to those who need it." However, he adds: "Our academic roots and on-campus home do not mean we can rest on our business laurels. We are a commercial enterprise and thus we need proper commercial back-up if we

are to continue to realise our ambitions."

CAT's aims for 2014, include plans to upgrade to a new textile printer to accompany its finishing kit investment and once again, it will be looking to QPS for both its technical support and as a leading supplier of Nazdar alternative wide-format inks, new and reconditioned wide-format printers from top brands, Neolt laminators and printers, RIP software and media from Ilford BioMedia, Phototex and Hydrosol. QPS is also an Authorised Roland Dealer for dye-sublimation applications.

**For further information on CATdigital visit: [www.catdigital.co.uk](http://www.catdigital.co.uk). For further information on QPS visit [www.qualityprintservices.com](http://www.qualityprintservices.com) ■**





# Creative by Design

Modern print technology and media presents a rich palette for creative sign production companies. Signwright Chobham is making the most of it. Mark Godden reports

principle that it would strive to deliver signs that embody a powerful identity. As seen through the eyes of Mike, a trained illustrator, this means paying proper attention to detail, quality and creativity and happily, this ethos meshes perfectly with a powerfully configured Mac-based design system built and managed in-house by Ed, and through a recently acquired Roland SP540i printer, which yields exceptional results for the company's customers.

Now, head-turning window graphics announce the business in style. Combining patriotic overtones, expert use of type and layout and some cartoon styled characters, the sign is effective and undeniably attractive. Colour, swept in density and tone gives the sign's elements an impression of depth accentuated by diffused holding shadows. The effects are perfectly resolved by printer and Metamark media.

Signwright used a novel construction technique to produce the sign and turned to Metamark MD-Class print media, continuing a long-standing supply relationship originally entered on the recommendation of the engineer who installed its printer.

The sign is applied inside the shop's glazing and was produced by printing the detail on the print-receptive surface of clear, Metamark MD-3. A second layer of MD-3, white this time, was then laminated to the printed face of the clear MD-3, using the white material's adhesive. This technique yields a sign with sub-surface printed detail, visible through a clear adhesive face. Once applied to the inside of the window, the optical connection with the glass causes the printed graphic to 'pop' showing the deeply saturated colour for which Metamark media is known, to its best advantage.

Mike takes the sensible view that signs are about getting noticed. Thus, a bad or indifferently made sign will get noticed for the wrong reasons or worse, won't get noticed at all. Do the job well though and a sign acts as a beacon for the business it promotes. Something that radiates quality and that provides a solid identity that firmly cements business's foundations.

Signwright works with many customers who have a prescribed design or identity but thanks to its reputation and skills, it is often given free licence to create something from scratch. It's at such times that Mike and Ed both agree that Signwright is at its creative and technical best, something borne out by an attractive job it recently produced for a newly opened local fish and chip shop.

'Gary's Fish and Chips' was nothing more than a name and premises before Signwright created its identity.

The creative options available to today's well-equipped signmakers are practically without limit. For once, the old adage about imagination being the confining factor might actually be true. The current crop of wide format inkjet printers, and the substrates they use, can form the basis of countless novel alliances and when a dash of creative flair is added the end result can be sensational.

One such company that exemplifies the creative approach is Chobham-based Signwright, which is run by Mike Tropia and Ed Pearse. Signwright has built itself a reputation both locally, and in the wider market, for delivering signing and other graphic solutions distinguished by strong design foundations and a mastery of media and technology.

The company, which has been in business since 2009, was founded on the deceptively simple business



Gary's Fish and Chip shop sign has produced numerous referrals for Signwright and appears to confirm that Mike and Ed's strong design ethos is ultimately a profitable one too, as is their determination to extract the best possible performance from hardware and materials, while also providing the customer with a sign that will endure, in addition to an identity statement its delighted with.

Give an illustrator a palette as rich as that represented by modern materials and media and interesting things may result. For instance, Mike, who is a keen marksman, was approached by a fellow member of his shooting club, who asked if he could wrap a gunstock. A metre or so of Metamark CF4 and some application skills later, one carbon fibre gun stock was produced and delivered, representing a departure from the usual sign-related project, but a good example of how skills travel.

The lifespan of a sign is such that a customer may not return for perhaps five years or more after a successful installation. However, one of Signwright's regulars operates on a more frequent basis, coming to Signwright annually for a change of window manifestation. Baines Simmons is a world leader in Aviation Safety and Signwright provides it with aviation-themed window décor.

Metamark MD-3 clear material was used to produce a design resembling a tree with leaves formed from aircraft silhouettes. EcoSolvent inks render the subtle colouring with transparency and clarity and the MD-3's adhesive doesn't betray its presence. As a manifestation exercise, the design once again shows its worth. It provides the coverage the application demands, admits the passage of light, and is well connected with the overall theme of Baines Simmon's business.

Drawing on creative reserves involves taking applications to places beyond solutions arrived at by intuition alone. The very basis of sound design is supposedly rooted in contrasts, but seeing things from the polar opposite end of the telescope recently

helped Signwright create an undeniably attractive vehicle livery for its client NDC Garage Doors.

Signwright used the panel colour of NDC's vehicles as the basis for creating elements within its livery design. Visualised as a large reflection of NDC's logo, on the vehicle's flanks, the livery's dominant design element only contrasts minimally with the vehicle paint surrounding it. The effect though, is eye-catching and novel.

Signwright chose Metamark MD7 to produce this element of the livery. The process involved using the Metamark 'Brick' colour swatch to locate a close match for the base paint, and then in turn matching it with digital print produced on the Roland printer. The colour isn't an exact match and that's the point. Minutely 'tweaked' by Ed, it creates a convincing illusion of a structure reflected in the vehicle's paint. The whole effect, taken with the crisp typography and layout elements is one that's tightly 'on grid' in terms of NDC's corporate ID, but that radiates innovation though design.

In interpreting and presenting it, Signwright may style itself as a signmaker, but it's using media, materials and print technology that elevates its value as a company to the customers it serves. It takes the brief a yard or more further than invited and, in doing so, it creates signs that carry with them a sense of real character and enduring identity. To Mike and Ed, the materials they have access to and the creative potential of the production system they've built provide endless combinations of o ideas and solutions that ultimately distil into highly individual signs and graphics. The results are clearly producing happy customers and their number is growing.

For further information on Signwright visit: [www.signwright.ltd.uk](http://www.signwright.ltd.uk)

For further information on Metamark media visit: [www.metmark.co.uk](http://www.metmark.co.uk)

For further informaton on Roland printers visit: [www.roldandg.co.uk](http://www.roldandg.co.uk)



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## Eco-friendly options from Ricoh

Ricoh has announced that its new Ricoh Pro L4100 latex large format printer series, which comes in 130cm or 160cm widths, and supports up to seven colours in various configurations, will be available within the UK in March.

Ideally suited to use by the specialist signing market, the Ricoh Pro L4160 and L4130 deliver high print productivity and quality as a result of technological innovations that include the Ricoh piezo electric print heads. The series also meets the demand for products that reduce the

environmental impact of printing through use of aqueous latex ink and low power consumption.

The Ricoh Pro L4100's latex ink is an water-based ink that contains a low level of VOCs and has no odour, while the low curing temperature of 60°C facilitates both quick drying for fast turnaround, and has the ability to print on many heat-sensitive substrates without damaging them.

The extensive array of available media includes PVC, tarpaulin, synthetic paper, coated-paper, uncoated paper,

film and textiles. In addition, it enables the use of lighter weight substrates, thus reducing overall costs, including transportation.

Ricoh plans to further increase the range of compatible substrates through its continuing media profiling and testing programme in partnership

with Colour Concepts, an industry standard for media validation.

For further information visit: [www.ricoh.co.uk](http://www.ricoh.co.uk)



## Getting connected with EFI

EFI's Connect 2014 Users Conference, the largest in Connect's history attracted 1500 attendees, one third more than the 2013 event, thus reflecting the increased customer interest in the high-level business and technical training the conference provides.

Now in its 15th year, Connect was held at the Wynn Las Vegas and offered more than 150 educational sessions, including technical expert training for MIS/ERP workflow, web-to-print, eCommerce, digital front end print

management and inkjet production printing using EFI's product portfolio. This year's conference also featured a business development track developed and led by senior consultants from industry analyst firm InfoTrends.

Frank Mallozzi, Senior Vice President of Worldwide Sales and Marketing at EFI, commented: "We worked harder than ever before to make this year's Connect a world-class conference and a must-attend event for print professionals looking to stay ahead in a competitive market and the fact that we reached

maximum capacity indicates that there is significant appetite in the market for a focused, comprehensive, educational event that provides attendees with tangible information on improving their businesses."

In addition to the increased attendance, EFI also recorded growth in partner activity, with 100 percent of Connect's available exhibit space selling out in the weeks leading up to



the event. Attendees were also able to see some of EFI's most-advanced technologies, including EFI Wide-Format and VUTEk printers, EFI Fiery print workflow products and EFI Productivity Software MIS/ERP, web to print and eCommerce software.

For further information visit: [www.efi.com](http://www.efi.com)

## Two-year warranty for SureColor

Until the end of March, Epson is offering a two-year commercial warranty, worth up to £2,000, including replacement printhead cover, to companies investing in any SureColor SC-S Series wide-format printer.

The SureColor SC-S signage and POS range of printers have been designed

from the ground up to offer efficient and environmentally-friendly production at the lowest total cost of ownership and to enable sign and display companies to expand their service offering.

For further information visit: [www.epson.co.uk/signbye Epson](http://www.epson.co.uk/signbye Epson)



## Mimaki scoops second award

The Mimaki UJF-6042 received 2014's 'Most Pioneering Product' award at the recent Trophex exhibition held at Birmingham's NEC during January, a year after its smaller sibling, the A3 format UJF-3042HG won the 2013 award, thus further underlining the efficacy of Mimaki's small format flatbed

range in the promotional products and awards sector.

The UJF-6042 adds increased bed size to the smaller 3042 unit, offering an A2 (610 x 420) format vacuum table and 150mm head height, which facilitates its use with a wide selection of substrates. One such application, which was demonstrated at Trophex, was the decoration of various promotional items, such as pens and iPhone covers, as well as acrylic photo blocks

and awards. Forming part of I-Sub Digital's Digi-Foil system, where traditional foil techniques can be replicated within a digital workflow, the Mimaki delivered spectacular foil effects onto trophies and plaques, which clearly impressed visitors.

The affordable Mimaki UJF range, which is distributed exclusively in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services, is priced from just £16,995 and uses white ink, a unique digitally printable primer and a clear varnish, together

with vibrant process colours. With the UJF-6042 capable of achieving up to 1800dpi photo quality output, the printers combine excellent quality and productivity across a broad variety of markets.

For further information visit: [www.hybridservices.co.uk](http://www.hybridservices.co.uk)



## Summa updates the DC5

Summa has launched the successor to the DC5, its thermal transfer resin printer/cutter, with the release of the DC5(sx).

At 137cm, the DC5 series is the world's widest thermal transfer resin printer/cutter and delivers prints with an outdoor durability of up to five years without the need to dry or laminate. Furthermore, it also produces accurate contour cut graphics, while the automatic resin ribbon changer can combine process colours with a wide range of spot colours and mirroring metallic foil printing to produce highly original and eye-catching graphics.

A true environmentally friendly printing solution, since there is no chemical waste, VOC exhaust or noxious solvent fumes,



the new DC5 printer/cutter offers a wide variety of performance-enhancing features, including more media widths, an Ethernet port and a new user interface. The available widths for the DC5 are now 50cm (new), 61cm, 75cm, 100cm (new), 122cm (new) and 137cm, while the widths for DC5sx are 50cm (new), 61cm and 75cm.

A modern styled user interface has been



added to the DC series in order to meet operator needs for ergonomics and safety and a touchscreen facilitates quick and easy navigation through the menus and displays a broader range of information on the screen.

The Summa DC5 series now also offers an alternative option in the form of the DC5sx, which, despite its compact build

and affordable price, offers all of the usual DC5 advantages of durability, print quality and production speed. The racking and cutting features are also identical to the DC5, thus ensuring the same spot-on accuracy that Summa owners have come to expect.

For further information visit: [www.summa.eu](http://www.summa.eu)

## Screen launches Truepress

Following the demonstration of a prototype at FESPA 2013 last year, Screen Europe formally launched the new Truepress Jet W3200UV wide-format printer at an Open Day at the Cambridge headquarters of Inca Digital, a Screen subsidiary company and manufacturer of the new printer, which was attended by both resellers and prospective customers.

The Truepress Jet W3200UV is a new generation, mid-range flatbed inkjet printer that incorporates several features that are usually found in more expensive machines. It can process rigid board or paper sheets up to 3.2 x 1.6m format and up to 50mm thick, or

multiple smaller sheets at once. The W3200 can produce production print at 10, 14, 18 or 22 passes, depending on the speed and quality required. The printer uses vibrant and flexible Truepress inks, which deliver high-definition, wide-colour gamut print quality with excellent resistance to the bending and cutting of media. Users can also specify colour options to suit their specific needs, selecting from CMYK + LcM, +LcLmWW or +WW.

During the Open Day, sign and print companies and resellers toured the Inca factory to see at first hand the quality build process and the detailed testing the Truepress undergoes before delivery to ensure that high

print quality is achieved at 85 sqm/hr maximum productivity.

This was followed by a talk by Mike Willis, Managing Director of inkjet consultancy Pivotal Resources, when he spoke about the rapid evolution of wide-format inkjet technology and the development of commercial markets for these printers over the past decade. Giorgio Damiano of The Larger Profile, the world's first user of the Truepress Jet W3200UV, then gave an account of his company's experience of using the

printer for a variety of work, especially quality sensitive, 'solid colour', display and wall panels for retailers and work on clear acrylics, for which the high opacity white ink is essential.

For further information visit: [www.screen europe.com](http://www.screen europe.com)





# Worthwhile Investments

Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use



Liberty London and Topman Oxford Circus, in collaboration with all-over print specialists Yr Store have opened pop-ups within their flagship stores offering customers the chance to create and print their own bespoke T-shirts using Epson SureColor dye-sub printers, while they wait.

Yr Store's garment print installations feature interactive touch-pod design stations and live all-over printing, thus enabling customers to create one-off patterns in-store from an archive of designs and images that are then printed and applied to T-shirts on-site and ready-to-go within a matter of minutes.

The T-shirt designs are printed using Epson's 44-inch SureColor SC-F6000 roll-fed dye-sublimation printers. Supplied to Yr Store by specialist Epson re-seller RA Smart, these printers use Epson UltraChrome DS ink, a specially-developed aqueous ink that produces outstanding images with vibrant colours, intense blacks, sharp contours and smooth gradations, when used in conjunction

with all leading transfer paper. What's more, its excellent light- and wash-fastness, as well as resistance to abrasion and perspiration, makes it the ideal choice for T-shirt applications.

With output speeds from 16 to 57m<sup>2</sup>/hr, depending upon application, the SC-F6000 is also the ideal 'on-demand' print solution for the retail environment, as it is easy to use and can be operated by a single person.

"Yr believes the future of fashion is in carefully curated live garment creation," says Yr Store's Tim Williams. "Working with Epson technology means we can provide the highest quality product in super-fast time, offering customers a great retail experience and their own unique garment."

While the Liberty concession was only open until the end of December, Topman is a permanent installation and the concept will be rolled out to other Top Shop stores throughout the country during 2014, with further printable garments, such as sweatshirts, scarves and leggings, providing other printable options.



Martin Johns, ProGraphics, Epson UK, says: "Not only does the SureColor SC-F6000 deliver on performance, cost, reliability and flexibility, it also opens up new revenue streams for customers. Yr Store's live garment print installations in Liberty and Topman are a perfect example of

how Epson technology is assisting users to develop their creative ideas to expand their businesses further."

For further information visit: [www.yrsto.re/](http://www.yrsto.re/) [www.epson-global.com](http://www.epson-global.com) and [www.rasmart.co.uk](http://www.rasmart.co.uk) ■



Mercury Signs & Designs, a full-service graphic design and sign specialist has recently invested in a Roland SOLJET PRO4 XF-640 high performance wide format printer to boost capacity and enable it to meet the demands of a growing range of customers in the specialist commercial vehicle wrapping sector.

Founded in 2000, the company has grown to become one of Scotland's leading signmakers, offering a wide range of design and signage services. It has also built up an enviable reputation in the large-scale commercial vehicle wrapping sector, securing major contracts across Scotland to wrap fleets of buses, trucks, cranes and trams. The XF-640, purchased from Roland authorised dealer, Spandex, has joined a growing arsenal of production machines at the company's headquarters in Perth, Scotland, including a Roland VesaCamm VP-300, an HP latex machine and a Grenadier wide format printer.

Tracey Shanks, a Partner at Mercury Signs & Designs, explained: "We first saw the Roland SOLJET PRO4 XF-640, or 'The Beast' as it has been nicknamed, in action at FESPA 2013 in London earlier this year and, since we were specifically looking for a high production printer that would enhance our capabilities, we were wholly impressed with its performance.

"We have a number of contracts with large bus and tram operators and trucking firms and these are very demanding jobs that require speed, quality and precision. So, we needed a robust wide format machine we could completely rely on, one that would run from day one and keep running, regardless of what we threw at it. The Beast has been an outstanding investment for us in this regard and we've been delighted with its production ability."

She continued: "In fact, since the installation, we have used it to produce a lot of our large



commercial contracts, including wrapping buses and trams, due to its phenomenal speed. When you're faced with a tight turnaround, you need as much time as possible for the wrapping of the vehicle itself, as the finish has to be the best it can possibly be. Thus, the speed of The Beast means we can ensure that not only is the printing top quality, but that the wraps also meet the highest professional standards too."

Designed for use with both outdoor and indoor applications and with a printing speed of up to 102m<sup>2</sup>/hr. outputting exceptional quality, the SOLJET PRO4 XF-640 is the ideal production tool for signs, banners, vehicle wraps, window graphics, POP displays, exhibition show graphics, posters and more. The Beast is compatible with Roland's newest eco-solvent inks, ECO-SOL MAX2 for an expanded colour gamut and fast drying times and offers a dual mirrored CMYK ink configuration for consistent colour imaging.

Tracey reports that the Mercury team also been very impressed with

Roland dealer, Spandex, commending it for: "A very smooth sales process, competitive pricing and comprehensive training and aftersales service."

She concludes: "Put simply, The Beast does just what it says on the tin, and in a high pressure production environment, the importance of this cannot be overstated. We wanted a powerful production machine that we could rely on; that could be trusted to keep producing high quality work at a great speed, with an easy learning curve and minimal maintenance. The Beast gives us all of this and we couldn't be happier with its performance."

For further information on Mercury Signs & Designs visit: [www.mercury-signs.com](http://www.mercury-signs.com)

For further information on Roland DG visit: [www.rolanddg.co.uk](http://www.rolanddg.co.uk)

For further information on Spandex visit [www.spandex.com/uk](http://www.spandex.com/uk) ■

W.A.E Group, the Leeds based sign and display company, has recently extended its Agfa printer portfolio with the addition of an Anapurna M2050, a purchase that forms part of a £300k investment which the company has made in new equipment during the past 12 months.

W.A.E, which produces a wide range of signs and display material using a variety of processes, including

silkscreen and inkjet, originally installed an Anapurna XL five years ago, followed by an Agfa Jeti printer, using the roll-to-roll option it offered to fulfil the demands of a large retail account.

The Anapurna M2050 is a high-speed UV curable inkjet system that prints directly onto a wide variety of both rigid and flexible media to provide top class productivity, offering speeds of up to 53m<sup>2</sup>/hr,



and eight (CMYK Lc Lm, 2 x white) picolitre heads that deliver good

solid colours and fine text reproduction as small as 6pt, as well

a good tonal rendering. The white ink option also makes it ideal for use with clear and dark substrates. Maintenance is easy and as well as offering low ink consumption, ink levels are monitored by the printer's automatic ink refill system during production.

W.A. E. has built a reputation as a one-stop nationwide signage provider and services the sign and print requirements of a broad range

of customers, including estate management companies, property developers, construction companies, education establishments, sports venues and local government as well as large corporate companies. Its recent investment in new equipment has enabled it to increase production and quality of output and profitability.

Explaining his company's investment philosophy, Managing

Director Paul Austin said: "In order to remain successful we feel it is vital for us to keep pace with the improvements and increased productivity offered by the latest developments in inkjet technology and, with its facility to offer top print speeds on a wide selection of different media, the Anapurna M2050 was our obvious next purchase. Furthermore, since we have worked with Agfa for many years now we have the extra

assurance of knowing that its service and support is excellent. We are confident that this machine will work in tandem with our older machines to fulfil the increasingly exacting demands of our clients."

For further information on the W.A.E. Group visit: [www.wae-group.co.uk](http://www.wae-group.co.uk)

For further information on Agfa visit: [www.agfa.com](http://www.agfa.com) ■





# Making the most of materials

Recent developments in signmaking materials are helping to facilitate the production of more creative signs and graphics, while also offering improved ease of handling.. Mike Connolly reviews some of the latest innovations and highlights some recent projects that have made the most of the new opportunities on offer.

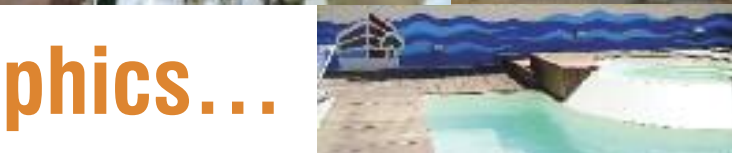


## Innovative wall graphics...

**A specialist manufacturer of decorative-effect vinyl materials, APA has extended the boundaries of creative possibilities on internal and external walls with a range coloured films and printing papers.**

Use of these digitally printable films, a heat gun and an appropriate roll-

applicator are all that is required to create stunning and durable wall graphics. The range of printing papers is now available in new sizes and with fresh application procedures for the decoration of walls. They are available in both adhesive and non-adhesive formats for wet application and with different finishes such as smooth, rough and brushed plaster. ■



## ... and eyecatching wraps



**In another recent development APA has added to its range of wrapping films, with the launch of Galaxy Red Chrome, a high value adhesive film with an inimitable metallic red stardust effect, that produces eyecatching results.**

The new film further enriches the Chrome Galaxy range of materials, which at the moment comprises two variations, Steel and Red.

Highly conformable, and specifically manufactured to fulfil the decorative

demands of flat, undulating and curved surfaces, Galaxy Red Chrome is particularly suitable for applications where areas need to be highlighted using a shiny and chromed finish.

As well as the aesthetic aspect, Galaxy Red Chrome can also be used to protect a vehicle's original surface and can be easily removed when required, without leaving any unsightly residues.

**For further information visit: [www.apaspa.com](http://www.apaspa.com).** ■

## The next big thing

**Productivity improvements and quality enhancements are more normally associated with hardware developments. However, with the introduction of MetaWrap MD-X to its materials portfolio, Metamark claims to deliver the same benefits, and others, packed in a roll of a remarkable new material.**



Wrapping, or at least the skill-set required to do it, has become a part of most signmakers' production vocabulary. Design for vehicle markings has now evolved to the extent that fewer clients are happy to settle for simple, cut and applied lettering and more output is now printed, rather than cut, on panels of material, with subsequent application inevitably imposing the need to navigate complex panel surfaces. Even if a vehicle isn't totally covered in printed graphics, wrapping disciplines and skills are called upon to successfully fit printed design panels over partial vehicle surfaces, and thus materials capable of handling wrapping's special needs are required.

The materials typically used for wrapping today were originally developed, long before digital printing became popular, and for a different purpose. Generally speaking, for wrapping what's required is a material that conforms to accommodate the need to stretch over features such as bodywork bulges and into recessed details. Some materials manage this better than others, with those best able to do the job usually being narrowly focused on it and not used for much else.

However, a new film from Metamark, has been recently released to the market and it is said to offer wrappers a genuine alternative to the materials they normally turn to. MetaWrap MD-X bills itself as an ultra-extensible next-generation wrapping film and, according to Metamark, its talents extend beyond wrapping.

The new film is evidently very conformable, as would be expected of one engineered with wrapping in mind and is said to stretch and conform very

easily, with both experienced applicators and novices reporting that its user-friendly handling characteristics very quickly become familiar. They also claim that they can achieve great looking results quickly and reliably.

MetaWrap MD-X apparently handles ink and heat very well too, both notable and desirable benefits in a film used for wrapping and in applications beyond. Being an MD-Class film, MD-X is generously profiled, thus liberating more of the printer's available gamut than materials requiring tighter ink limits. Heat softens the application handle in a very linear and predictable fashion and speeds application over complex surfaces, enabling the applicator to approach such detail confidently, knowing that he's not likely to damage the printed material.

Unlike many traditional wrapping films, MetaWrap MD-X resists squeegee marking. This is an important performance advantage given the gloss finish preferred for most decorative vehicle finishes. A gloss finish readily discloses mechanical surface flaws, such as squeegee marks, and, in some lighting conditions, this can spoil what might be an otherwise good result. MetaWrap MD-X resists marking, thanks to the film's novel formulation and engineering, and so looks good from all angles and in all light conditions.

MetaWrap MD-X and its application-feel offer distinct advantages over traditional wrapping materials, some of which are lost if the printed material is laminated using traditional laminating media. Metamark has therefore taken a systemised approach with MD-X and offers a mechanically matched laminate for the film. The laminate exhibits the same handling characteristics as the base



film and confers the same application benefits too. In addition, it exhibits good clarity and the graphics it protects 'pop'.

In technical terms, MD-X is a product of the most advanced manufacturing so far from Metamark. The new film's performance demands a state-of-the-art adhesive system and Metamark has specified two. MetaWrap MD-X is available both with Metamark's MetaScape air evacuation feature, and without it.

The MetaScape feature, which also features on other Metamark media, enables trapped air to be simply wiped away with minimal effort using a squeegee. For applications not requiring the MetaScape feature, the Apex formulation delivers the known benefits of easy repositioning, a highly developed ultimate bond, and clean removal when the graphic is taken out of commission. Both adhesives feature an opaque blocking agent to help resist strongly coloured substrates showing through or imparting a colour-cast to the print.

Metamark reports that it conducted extensive testing for in-hand feel for its new wrapping film before settling on the

degree of compliance and conformability the product now exhibits. It also underwent application trials and many process tests and acquits itself well on all counts.

Development effort and advanced formulation and engineering don't come without a price attached, but it's here that MetaWrap MD-X springs another surprise as it offers users a notably cost effective option. For this reason, and for others, Metamark is predicting that it will find applications beyond vehicle wrapping, and that thanks to its extensible nature it will be used to wrap more things, more often.

Metamark is prepared for a significant amount of interest in its new film and has samples ready for despatch so that both experienced wrappers and those on the learning curve can experience Metawrap MD-X's handling and feel for themselves.

To request a free sample simply e-mail: [sales@metamark.co.uk](mailto:sales@metamark.co.uk)

**For further information visit: [www.metamark.co.uk](http://www.metamark.co.uk)** ■



## A plethora of solutions



As part of an expansive materials portfolio that encompasses applications as diverse as vehicle wrapping and garment decoration, Grafityp UK also supplies a wide range of signmaking materials.

Grafitack Promo is a gloss vinyl with a three-year outdoor durability, while the 100 Series and GEF in gloss and matt have a five-year life span. Grafitack Removable films in black or white gloss can be removed at up to six months following application without any adhesive residue. The Fluorescent Series is ideal for high-impact graphics, while Grafitack 200/300 Series offers a seven-year life span

The TL Translucent Series is also a seven-year film available in a wide range of colours. It is suitable for backlit signs and light box applications. Graficast premium-quality cast vinyl is ideal for long-term applications and is capable of withstanding the harshest environmental

conditions for up to 10 years.

Other products from Grafityp UK include a range of photo-luminescent films for 'glow in the dark' applications, etched glass-effect films for window graphics, glass door and partition decoration applications, special-effect films and reflective films for safety and road signs.

For banner applications, the company also supplies Grafibanner and Grafisoft films as well as a range of banner application tools that includes eyeletting machines and banner clips.

For further information visit: [www.grafityp.co.uk](http://www.grafityp.co.uk)

## Add élan with ease

Metal-effect films can add a fresh dimension to quality signage but there can be issues with their application, since invariably they cannot be applied wet and this can result in air bubbles. With the new CAL 23 silver and gold mirror finish films from the German manufacturer ASLAN, Doro Tape claims to have effectively solved this problem.

Using ASLAN 'dry apply' technology, the new films have air channels built into the adhesive to enable fast and efficient dry application that eliminates frequently messy and problematical wet application. An ideal choice for double-sided exterior window graphics, CAL 23 has a two-year durability.

For further information visit: [www.dorotape.co.uk](http://www.dorotape.co.uk)



## Brightening concrete surfaces

Leading supplier of speciality films, Sihl Direct has launched a short-term film for outdoor graphics that can be applied to surfaces such as walls, pavements and roads.

Called Permorable, it is a non-PVC pressure-sensitive film that incorporates an easy-to-apply adhesive. The printed film conforms readily to the surface and meets

anti-slip standards for outdoor pavements. It is also scratch-resistant and requires no over-lamination.

As a non-PVC film, the product has no environmental issues and can be purposely removed and safely disposed of after use.

For further information visit: [www.sihl-direct.co.uk](http://www.sihl-direct.co.uk)



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## Making a mark



**Manufacturer of speciality films, ASLAN has added a high-quality blackboard film to its memoboard range of films.**

Called ASLAN CR62, the black self-adhesive film is ideal for constantly changing menus in restaurants and cafes as well as for use in offices and



schools. A highly scratch-resistant surface ensures that no ghosting or shadows occur, even after long-term usage, with chalk markings easily

removed with a wet cloth.

**For further information, visit [www.aslan-schwarz.com](http://www.aslan-schwarz.com)**

## Tape it up!

**In addition to a wide selection of signmaking materials, predominantly from MACtac, for which it is a major UK stockist and distributor, Amari Digital Supplies also offers a comprehensive range of complementary application tapes to which it has recently made two additions.**



The range now includes a new clear option in a size of 1.6 metres wide x 100 metres long and the new 4078RLA option from R-Tape that is for use specifically on wall graphics. This now expands the R-Tape range that includes ApliTape 4075, Clear Choice AT60 and Conform with RLA 4050 Medium Tack and 4070 High Tack. All of the tapes can be supplied as full logs and slit to customer requirements.

ApliTape 4075 standard grade paper tape is the most popular for sign shop wet application involving computer-cut lettering, while ClearChoice AT60 features a clear, rigid orange peel

polypropylene face and is ideal for similar applications. Conform Application Tapes offer superior lay flat characteristics that resist edge curl and tunnelling problems in application.

Amari Digital Supplies has also added 18 new matt colours to the MACtac MACal 8900 Pro Designer Series of signmaking films. These supplement the original 32 gloss and 52 matt



colours and similarly incorporate a removable solvent-based adhesive. The additional colours are predominantly pastel shades to complement popular interior décor trends. Typical options include Silk Grey, Lagoon Blue, Pastel Turquoise, Magnolia and Antique White and Violet.

For adding special effects to signs and

graphics, ADS also offers the PERMAfun range of films from MACtac. It includes Crystal Gloss, Brushed Metal, Coarse Grain Wood, Fine Grain Wood and Leather-effect formats. All of the materials have been designed for application to flat or gently curved surfaces.

**For further information visit: [www.amaridigitalsupplies.com](http://www.amaridigitalsupplies.com)**

## A conucupia of colour

**Four new limited edition colours have been added to the range of Foamalux foamed PVC sheets from Brett Martin, bringing the total number of colours now available to 15 and providing the largest choice of coloured options currently available to the sign and graphics sectors.**

The new arrivals which comprise Neon Pink, Neon Green, Raspbery and Black Sparkle, now supplement the existing colours of Strawberry Red, Red, Orange, Sunburst Yellow, Yellow, Ivory, Green, Blue, Light Blue, Grey and Black. The entire range is self-coloured throughout, thus enabling the coloured edge to be maintained after cutting, routing or engraving and is available in a thickness of three and five millimetres, with the four new versions supplied as three-millimetre sheets.



In addition to the self-coloured range, Foamalux is available in three application-specific formats. These



include Foamalux White UV, Foamalux Ultra in white and six colours for exterior use and Foamalux Xtra, a 'green' option in white that incorporates a core of 80 percent recycled material.

Foamalux is a strong and durable rigid PVC sheet with a smooth surface, making it ideal for use in conjunction with both screen and direct-to-



substrate digital printing and with the application of vinyl-applied graphics.

**For further information visit: [www.brettmartin.com](http://www.brettmartin.com)**

## Dicing on a dot

**Print service provider AHAlprint used the solvoprint easy dot 100 film from NESCHEN to create graphics applied to an entire glass façade at the Volksbank Kur-und Rheinpfalz branch in the Postgalerie shopping centre in Speyer, Germany.**

The film was chosen due its dot-shaped adhesive coating that makes it easy to work with and apply and because it is particularly suited to applications involving glass surfaces. The film also meets stringent statutory

fire safety regulations for public buildings such as shopping centres.

The high-quality digital prints were produced using environmentally friendly solvent-free Latex inks to produce brilliant colours. The prints were both water- and UV-resistant and required no over-lamination. Similar applications are due to take place at other Volksbank branches in four other major German cities.

**For further information, visit [www.neschen.com](http://www.neschen.com)**





# Materials for every application



Leading trade supplier William Smith is the UK's largest stockist and distributor of premium-grade signmaking films from 3M. It also supplies further options from Arlon and Contra Vision to meet niche market and specialist sign and graphics requirements.

Key products from 3M include 3M Envision Graphic Film 3730 and 3M Scotchcal Translucent Graphic Film 3630, both of which optimise LED technology in illuminated signage applications. William Smith also supplies 3M Scotchcal 80 and 100 Series of self-coloured opaque signmaking films.

3M 3630 is described by 3M as a 'war horse' vinyl. This 50-micron 10-year cast translucent film features a pressure-sensitive adhesive and synthetic liner and is available in a range of 57 colours. It provides uniform colour in both reflected and transmitted light, while the low surface gloss helps eliminate glare. The film claims a superior lay flat capability and can be applied to a wide range of substrates, including flat acrylic, polycarbonate, GRP and glass for use in internally illuminated signs, windows, fascias and awnings.

3M Envision Graphic Film 3730 performs in a similar fashion but has been developed to achieve the same level of luminance but requiring fewer light sources. It has a strong sustainability edge by reducing energy consumption and is therefore a 'greener' option. The Diffuser films in the range are available

with two levels of light transmission (50 and 60 percent) to manage sign illumination more efficiently, while the Translucent films are available in both standard and customised colours and in an inkjet-printable format.

3M Scotchcal 80 comprises economy cast films in 84 colours, including matt white and black, eight metallic and 33 Pantone-matched formats. 3M Scotchcal 100 is available in 120 standard colours and 50 metallic formats.

The films are suitable for application to flat and moderately curved surfaces and carry a 12-year durability.

For further information visit: [www.williamsmith.co.uk](http://www.williamsmith.co.uk)



# Elegant and eco-friendly

For its new BT Sport TV service, encompassing BT Sport 1, BT Sport 2 and ESPN, BT entrusted vehicle livery specialist Stewart Signs with the task of wrapping its BT Sport service fleet of vans.

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

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

Stewart Signs, a long-term and trusted BT livery partner, worked with AMV BBDO and the BT Fleet organisation in the printing and application of the van wraps, which took place at three Stewart Signs' service centres and some BT Fleet workshops. The wraps used 3M's

Envision film and over-laminate that provided a powerful sustainability edge and complemented BT's CSR policy but at an affordable cost. The film was chosen unequivocally for the project and added to the successes Stewart Signs has enjoyed during a 50-year partnership with 3M.

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

Complementing these environmental benefits, the film offers significant advantages in application. Because of its flexible character it provides outstanding conformability to vehicles with difficult-to-reach and complex



contours, low stress levels during the application process, which eliminates lifting, cracking or tearing of the film, an ability to be liberally repositioned until perfect adhesion to the substrate is achieved and excellent concealing power to prevent 'show through'. The film also prints well, is easy to handle and can be purposely removed without any adhesive residue or other imperfections once a livery promotion has run its designated course.

Marketing Manager at Stewart Signs, Gary Stanley commented: "The BT vehicle wrapping project was completed within a very tight time frame, with only a short period between completion of the graphics and application of the printed wraps. Like

businesses, BT cannot afford to have large numbers of its vehicles out of service for long periods. Use of our strategically located service centres and access to BT's own facilities ensured that downtime was minimal."

On the choice of 3M's Envision vehicle wrapping solution, Senior Buyer at BT Fleet Geoff Wileman added: "We chose the 3M Envision film because it supported our CSR policy and did not cost the earth - in more ways than one!"

For further information on Stewart Signs visit: [www.stewartsigns.co.uk](http://www.stewartsigns.co.uk)

For further information on 3M visit: [www.3M.co.uk/graphicsolutions](http://www.3M.co.uk/graphicsolutions) and [www.wrapyourcurves.co.uk](http://www.wrapyourcurves.co.uk)

# A little vision goes a long way

A range of premium-grade sign making films is available from 3M. It includes the 3M Scotchcal 3630 and 3730 Envision Translucent and Diffuser Films and 3M Scotchcal 80 and 100 Series of opaque self-coloured films.

57 colours (many with Pantone simulations) and can be used for internally illuminated signs, windows, sign fascias and awnings. It provides uniform colour in both reflected and transmitted light, with the translucent liner facilitating multi-colour registration.

Working similarly to 3M Envision Translucent Graphic Film 3630 is 3M Envision 3730, reputedly the first film to optimise LED technology. It can achieve the same level of brightness but requires fewer LED modules, thus further reducing material and maintenance costs. A key benefit noted during its use in the U.S was that it eliminated 'hot spots' in signs.

The 3M Scotchcal 80 and 100 Series of opaque self-coloured films are suitable for both interior and exterior

applications. Series 80 comprises economy cast films in 84 colours, including matt white and black, eight metallic and 33 Pantone-matched colours. Series 100 is a range of premium-grade films available in 120 standard colours and 50 metallic formats. The films can be applied to a wide range of sign substrates, including aluminium, GRP, acrylic, glass, steel and painted surfaces. The films are suitable for applications involving flat or corrugated surfaces, are water-resistant and come with a 12-year durability.

For further information visit: [www.3M.co.uk/graphicsolutions](http://www.3M.co.uk/graphicsolutions)





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This month, **Mark Godden** encourages signmakers to make their customers exclaim:



## “I didn't know you could do that!”

I didn't know you could do that!” is something you hear a lot in our business and you don't have to be listening especially hard to stumble across it.

The flip side of hearing it said of course, is actually saying it yourself – chances are, you have. Perhaps it's about a deeply buried feature your printer boasts that you've now stumbled across, or a capability that some type of speciality media or material delivers, but either way, once discovered, you've a new string to your bow and, who knows, playing it may actually land you some business.

This whole, 'didn't know' condition suggests that someone somewhere has work to do. For the want of knowing, there's probably a high-octane creative out there somewhere trying to come up with a compelling means to promote something new. If this drifting creative knew, for example, the scope of things you could deliver, Mr. Signmaker, given the materials and hardware at your disposal, would he or she be knocking on your door wanting to explore ideas and do business? I think it's likely.

The notion of filling in the blanks in general understanding as to what is, and what might be possible, contributes to growing the market. That's an important thing to do. Without market growth, all that happens is available share moves around and the fortunes of most simply track GDP, which is not exactly the most exciting measure or a reward sufficient to motivate speculative investment in things like hardware.

Growing a whole market produces a very generally distributed benefit as might be expected. High tides, it's said, lift all boats. This raises questions concerning whose responsibility it is to grow a market. Spending time, effort and possibly a lot of money for the benefit of your competitors doesn't sound like a very promising tactic. So, how does it work?

Really big, really new ideas don't come along that often and ones that are sufficiently well muscled to swing a business tide are even less frequent. When they do, those who are responsible for them will often try to get the product or technology supporting the idea specified. Written into the specification will be all manner of contrivances to ensure that any benefits resulting when the big idea is bought, accrue to the manufacturer's product. There's nothing wrong with this but it's very difficult to sustain the advantage exerted.

There's little in the way of formally organised and coordinated effort pointed at growing markets as fragmented and hazily defined as those served by signs and graphics producers. Market growth though, remains desirable. Thankfully, at least some of the markets served by our industry are capable of promoting themselves.

We do benefit from a very simple truth in this business and that is that lots of the things we make are head turning and very attractive. Let's look at vehicle wraps as an example. Despite the idea having been around for a while now, a wrap, not just any wrap mind, is capable of getting attention. That attention drives desire for more of the same thing. Opinion leaders who decide to wrap vehicles become more or less proxies for the agents of growth we're arguably missing.

Strange as this may sound, lots of eyes still alight upon a wrapped vehicle and have a 'didn't know you could do that' moment. The very same eyes will fail to make the connection that, if you can totally wrap a vehicle in a printed design, you could totally wrap it in a solid coloured material, thus

changing the vehicle's base colour. The very same eyes probably don't even make the connection that, the vehicle is actually wrapped or perhaps don't even care. The underlying truth here is that, to some, many even, something as simple as a vehicle wrap might be entirely fresh and quite the 'biggest' thing they've seen in a month of Sundays.

If you can get yourself into a position where you're the one switching the lights on among the 'didn't know you could do that' set, then you might benefit as a result of your having sparked more than an interest, you might just have fuelled a wildfire.

It's somewhat stating the obvious, but the quality of self-promotion behind the signs and graphics industry is highly variable. Far from being intended as a criticism, you may care to see it as an opportunity you're being alerted to. It may be the case that, in order to really lift the bar and out-promote your close competitors, you don't have to do very much at all.

If you were to decide that, at some point, you're going to have a tilt at growing your part of the market and getting fresh ideas in front of fresh eyes, nothing speaks louder for the case you're trying to make than the work you've already done. Despite this, it's a source of some amazement that relatively few companies in the sign and graphics business can call on something as fundamental to self-promotion as pictures of the jobs they've produced. If you resolve to do nothing else this year, resolve to get pictures of everything you make. Make sure they're at a resolution that supports printing. Ensure they're well lit. Put some effort into composing them. Make sure they're as sharp as you can make them – keep the camera still.

Once you've built a reserve of decent pictures, use them. Get a gallery on your website as a matter of priority. Ensure that you have good access on a mobile device so you can pounce at opportune moments and back up your mugger's pitch with that all-important picture. For an initiative involving such little cost and relatively little effort, you get possibly hundreds of very influential proxy advocates for the work you do. That's a powerful thing.

As a composite expression of what you're capable of doing and of what's possible, a well-populated gallery of images is a powerful tool when you get a chance to use it in front of the right prospect. “Oh, I didn't know you could do that,” is, yes, a statement of fact, but it's also a potent buying sign. It's easier to grunt or say nothing, than it is to trot out the 'didn't know' line. It virtually invites you to elaborate on the little education you've just provided and turn it into a selling opportunity you can close.

Here's another inducement to get cracking with the pictures. Sign Directions is read by LOTS of influential designers and end users. Getting your best work in front of them involves little more than sending the magazine a few well written words of news describing the notable work you've done and that all important picture. Our back room will edit it and, before you know it, your work is on view to a much broader public.

There - you didn't know you could do that!

**Mark Godden**  
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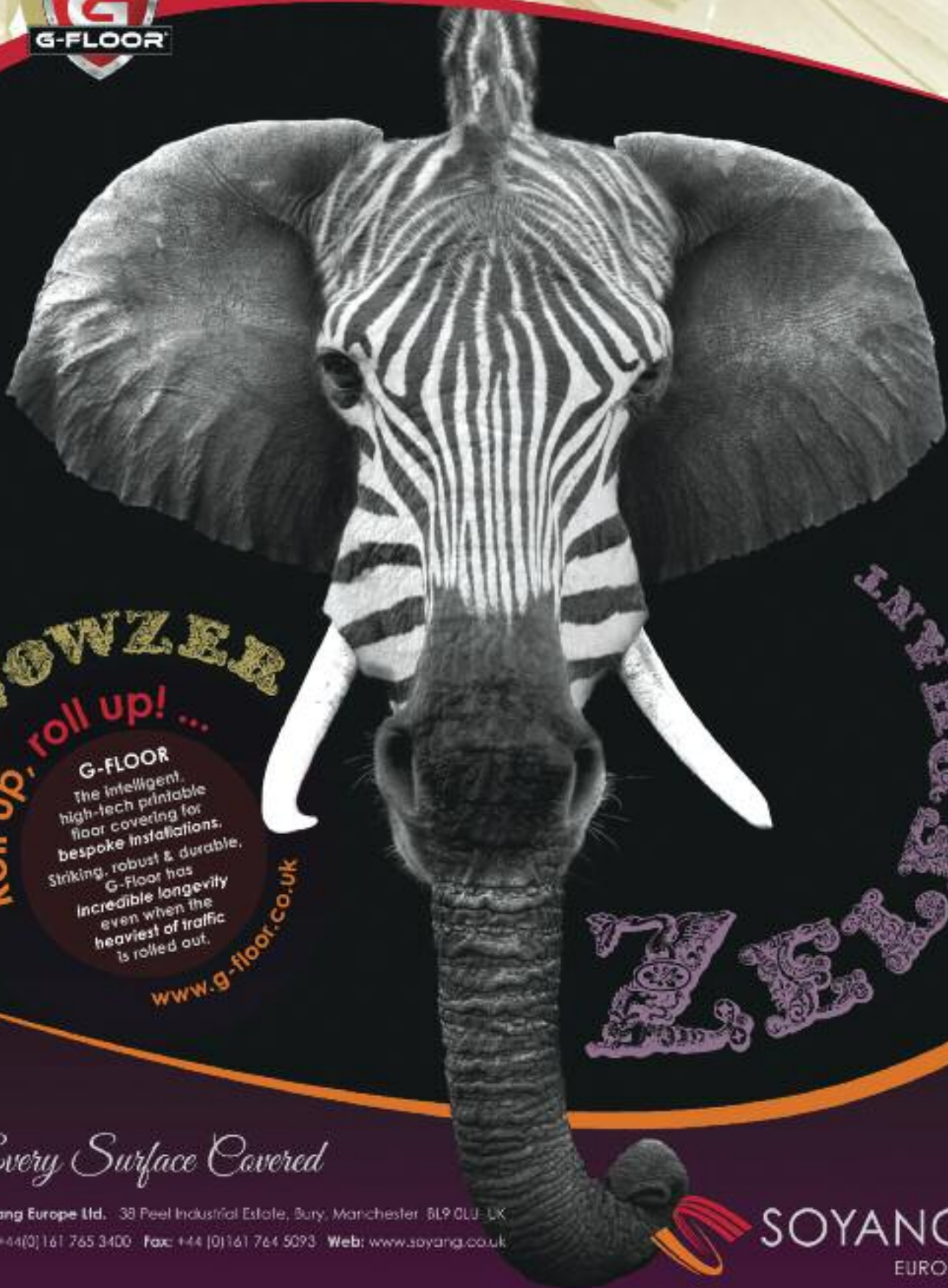
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