

# siggr

Nov/Dec 2013 - No.135

directions

## The soft option

New ways  
with textiles



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**INPRINT** IT'S PRINT JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT!

**A MOOD OF EXPECTANCY** SMALL COMPANY, BIG IDEAS

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**signdirections**

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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 January/February issue, which will include a Preview of Printwear & Promotions and a special feature on Signmaking Materials



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Introduction

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# LETTERS & LOGOS



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## setting the scene

During November, the BBC (in a clear instance of 'Pot, kettle, black' if ever there was one!) aired a TV programme called 'Britain on the fiddle' which highlighted the exploits of so-called 'Benefit Cheats', focusing particularly on a woman who continued to claim benefits after winning £95,000 on a game show and a man who claimed £32,000 worth of benefits while supposedly 'living the high life'.

The reporter, Richard Bilton, adopted the patronising tone that the BBC always affects on these occasions, to make plain his distaste for these 'scroungers', but frankly, if the programme was designed to provoke moral outrage, it left this viewer totally unmoved. Because when it comes down to it, 'Benefit Cheats' are the least of our worries.

In fact, if you look back over the past few years, it would seem that there's scarcely a person or organisation left who hasn't been on the hey-diddle-diddle in some form or another. Bankers, insurance companies, venture capitalists (indeed, practically anyone operating within the financial services sector), politicians, senior civil servants, newspapers and dear old Auntie itself, where financial fiddling has been accompanied by fiddling of a much darker nature, they've all been at it. We can also add to that list HMRC, who, it seems, can be persuaded to drastically slash the tax bill of any multinational that feels inclined to take its head honchos out for a slap up lunch and, for reasons unknown, enables Amazon, Starbucks, Google et al to get away without paying any tax whatsoever. And that's before we even get to health service chiefs and the heads of various Quangos, whose reward for complete incompetence is several months – years even – of suspension on full pay, before waltzing off into the sunset with a golden handshake and a substantial pension.

Of course when the fiddlers are people of a supposedly higher order and/or very rich, they are unlikely to be described as such. They are much more likely to be classified as 'being entrepreneurial', thus providing their various dubious enterprises with a cloak of respectability that ensures that

they are as likely to be knighted or otherwise honoured for their crooked dealings, as they are to be publicly shamed for their misdemeanours – so long, that is, as they don't get caught.

So when faced with some wretched 'dole scrounger' who is eking out his or her pitiful benefits with the odd scam or two, I feel a whole lot less irritated than I do when I hear that 'Call-me-Dave' was accompanied on his recent trade mission to China with a load of his cronies, including, unbelievably, his father-in-law, Viscount Astor. You can just imagine the conversation can't you?

Call-me-Dave: "Pa-in-law, how d'ya like to come on a jolly little jape to China, what?"

Viscount Astor: "Certainly m' boy, don't mind if I do, by jove!"

So, if over these last years, you, along with I suspect, 90 percent of the sign industry, have played a straight wicket, despite acting as an unpaid tax collector for the government and spending any spare moments you might have trying to unravel the initiative sapping welter of bureaucratic red tape, ranging from stakeholder pensions to paternity rights, that plagues all small business owners, make 2014 the year that you get your snout firmly stuck in the trough - a bit of creative accounting here, a bit of cash-in-hand there, you know the drill. After all, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!

And if Call-me-Dave and Dough Boy are to be believed, 2014 might even be a better year for the meekly hardworking amongst us too, as finally it seems, the economy is beginning to recover, although cynic that I am, I suspect it has more to do with the fact that come January, the next General Election will be only 15 short months away, but no matter! If you are looking at new ways of increasing your profitability over the next year, you could do worse than consider how digital textile printing could help you do that. This month's special feature, which starts on page 26, outlines all of the latest developments and also provides a listing of the affordable printers that could help to get you started.

Those who are considering new frontiers, need to learn more about InPrint, a brand new exhibition that is being pioneered by Frazer Chesterman and Marcus Timson, late of FESPA, which will take place at Hannover Messe on 8th-10th April. Frazer and Marcus reveal their plans for the show, which focuses on the ways that print can be used to enhance a wide range of items targeted at different industrial markets and end-users. Read what they have to say on pages 38-39.

On page 22, a new sign company makes its debut; Mood Signs, which won the ESF 2013 Sign Maker Award before its official launch. Elsewhere, you'll find all of our regular news pages, while in this month's Last Word, Mark Godden explains why you should look after your customers.

Right now, in between Christmas shopping (God Bless the Internet!), I, like you I hope, will be devoting some time to devising a few, strictly legal, crafty dafties of my very own that will help to smooth the magazine's passage through the coming year. Until then, all that's left is to wish you a very merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year on behalf of everyone at Sign Directions.



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## Win an award in Munich

The President and Board members of the European Sign Federation (ESF) have launched the 2014 Competition for Sign Design, which will be held in conjunction with The European SignExpo scheduled to run concurrently with the FESPA Digital exhibition on May 20th-23rd 2014, in Munich.

The Competition, which is split into three categories and is open to all sign designers, signmakers and design schools based in Europe, challenges entrants to provide a new logo design,

plus new corporate and wayfinding signage as part of the rebranding of the Millennium Shopping Mall.

Winners in all three categories will receive a Sign 'Oscar' and certificate to celebrate their achievement and will also positively benefit from the publicity surrounding the competition.

The winners must be willing to attend the Awards Ceremony that will take place during the European Sign Expo and travel expenses and one night's hotel accommodation will be provided

for a maximum of two people per category.

In addition, the winning entry from either an individual student or a group of students from a recognised School/College of Design will receive a financial prize to the value of €2,500,00 and the judges will also have the discretion to award prizes of € 750,00 and € 500,00 to second and third placed entries in this category.

The competition is free to enter and completed entries must be



submitted electronically to the Secretary of ESF on or before 18th April 2014, to [peterbsa@orange.fr](mailto:peterbsa@orange.fr)

For full details and to download an application form visit: [www.signawards.eu-signs.org](http://www.signawards.eu-signs.org) ■

## Countdown to Trophex 2014

**THE TROPHEX SHOW 2014**  
Pavilion, NEC, Birmingham  
19th - 20th January 2014

The first exhibition to kick off the 2014 show calendar is Trophex, the UK's major showcase for everything that pertains to the trophy, awards and personalisation sectors and takes place at Birmingham's NEC Pavilion on 19th-20th January.



As well as being able to meet all of the sectors' leading manufacturers and suppliers under one roof and see all of the latest product innovations and developments, visitors will also be able to enjoy live demonstrations and take advantage of a host of special show offers.

New features for 2014 include an Industry Awareness Zone, where a series of seminars will take place over the show's two day duration period. These will include 'Releasing the power of CorelDRAW Graphics Suite', where Suzanne Smith from Corel Corporation will reveal the endless possibilities that visitors can use to enhance their creativity, plus a seminar hosted by Dean Brittain of Gravogaph designed to illustrate how users can make the most of their Gravogaph equipment and a

seminar presented by John de la Roche of Hybrid Services, which will explain how digital printing technologies can enable trophy and engraving companies to enhance their product portfolio by producing one-off prints or short runs for their clients.

A second new feature, the Knowledge Centre, will field a team of industry experts, who will delight in offering visitors access to their advice, support and problem solving capabilities.

Entry to Trophex is free and there is no charge for car parking.

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



## Keep informed at Sign & Digital UK 2014

In view of the fact that the UK sign industry is facing increasing legislation governing its activities, the BSGA will be using the occasion of Sign & Digital UK 2014 to hold two workshops designed to explain what the changes are and what must be done in order to meet the latest requirements.



Failure to meet the standards could, in the future, result in criminal proceedings and custodial sentences for offenders.

The first workshop, 'An introduction to new standards for sign design and construction', will cover what the new European Standards (Eurocodes) demand from both sign manufacturers and sign buyers and will demonstrate how they relate to BS 559: 2009 (the UK standard for sign design). The potential impact the UK Building Regulations could have for the sign industry will also be discussed.



The second workshop will deal with the contentious issue of Planning Regulations and how planning law has a direct impact on sign maintenance. A case study

illustrating the consequences of failure to maintain a sign will be explored and the BSGA will detail a new addendum to BS 559 covering sign maintenance and warranties.

Changes to planning laws are happening on an almost daily basis and the association will also show how it is involved in a constant battle to prevent planners implementing restrictions that

could adversely affect the sign industry.

David Dyke, BSGA President said: "While changes to legislation and planning laws are often ignored, or simply condemned as interference by bureaucrats, both can have a direct impact on the success or otherwise of sign businesses.

"Anyone who commissions,



manufactures or installs a sign is bound by the rules and it is vital that everyone involved in the industry understands what is required of them. Those signmakers who use this knowledge in the appropriate way will stand above those that don't."

David Dyke continued: "The workshops at Sign & Digital UK provide a perfect platform to talk directly to the industry and we are grateful to the event organiser for providing this opportunity."

**Sign & Digital UK 2014 takes place on 29th April -1st May 2014 in Hall 2 at the NEC, Birmingham. The two BSGA workshops will feature on each day of the show.**

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

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## Appointments



**Zeta Specialist Lighting** has announced the appointment **Adrian Dennis** to the position of Sales and Marketing Director.

Adrian brings a wealth of experience to the role, having held a number of senior sales and marketing positions, most recently with PaperlinX, where he was Divisional Director of its Sign and Display division.

In his new role, Adrian will establish and execute a sales and marketing strategy to raise the profile of the brand and will also build and lead the sales and marketing teams.



**Spandex** has named **Gabriela Parish** as Marketing Manager for Europe, reporting to Rob Karpenko, who

assumed the position of Director of Marketing for the organisation in July 2013.

Gabi, who is based at the offices of Spandex UK in Bristol, has worked for Spandex for six years in the role of Marketing Manager for the UK and Spain and will retain her UK regional marketing responsibilities in addition to her new focus on strategic group marketing.



**Kornit Digital Europe** has appointed

**Nikolaus Nowak** as Customer Service and Logistics Manager. With more than two decades of experience in a similar role, Nikolaus Nowak joins the company following six years with Heidelberg's Mexican subsidiary, where he was responsible for more than 100 field engineers.

In his new role, Nikolaus will take on the challenging task of structuring and establishing standard procedures in the areas of customer service and logistics at Kornit Digital's Dusseldorf HQ.

**FESPA** is expanding its leadership team, with the addition of two senior executives.



**Neil Felton** now assumes the role of CEO, making him responsible for the overall direction of all the organisation's activities, including the global exhibitions and events portfolio, interaction with FESPA's 37 national associations, and direction of FESPA's Profit for Purpose mission.

**Roz McGuinness**, who has over 17 years of experience in the exhibition sector, joins FESPA as Divisional Director, taking full responsibility for both FESPA's European exhibitions and its Asian events. She will oversee all aspects of the shows, including sales, marketing and operations, working with an eight-strong team.

**Sean Holt** takes up the role of General Secretary where he will be responsible for coordinating FESPA's support for its national associations, including the organisation of educational, knowledge sharing and networking initiatives funded through the Profit for Purpose programme.

**Nigel Steffens**, who joined FESPA in 1993 as Assistant General Secretary, becoming CEO in 2001, will now assume a part-time consultative and ambassadorial role.



**Perfect Colours** has appointed **Simon Landau** as Graphics and Colour Director.

Simon, who previously worked with colour software supplier GMG UK, is one of the UK's leading colour specialists with over 20 years' experience. Able to certify to FOGRA standards, he has considerable expertise in multi-device solutions and has implemented many standardised wide-format production

## showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2014

### SGI Dubai 2014

**7th-9th January**

Dubai World Trade Centre  
International Expo Consults  
Tel: +971 4 3435958  
E-mail: bazil@lec.ae  
www.signmiddleeast.com

### Trophex 2014

**19th-20th January**

The NEC Pavilion, Birmingham  
Organiser: Hill Media  
Tel: 01442 826826  
E-mail: colingallimore@aol.com  
www.trophex.com

### 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

**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)**

sites of varying complexity throughout the UK. One of his key initiatives at Perfect Colours is the addition of an advanced colour management service.

**Signs Express** has appointed **Justin Pearce** to the new role of Procurement Manager, following a restructure at the franchise headquarters based in Norwich.



Justin, who has previously worked as Operations Manager and National Account Manager at Signs Express, will now focus

on the company's supplier relationships and assist the network with its supply chain management.



**Graphics Printing Technologies (GPT)** has announced the appointment of **Jason McNulty** as its

new Hardware Sales Manager. Jason has joined GPT from Paperlinx UK, where he was Product Sales Manager, responsible for the growth of digital hardware.

In his new role, Jason will be responsible for growing the company's hardware business and also promoting the GPT brand in the North of England.



**Pixartprinting** has appointed **Andrea Pizzola** as its new Sales and Marketing Director, where he will help Pixart to

further consolidate its position as Europe's premier web-based print provider.

Andrea was formerly in charge of marketing and product development for the online fashion retailer YOOX's Italian market, before being posted to Hong Kong as its Commercial Planning Manager for the Asia-Pacific area.

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Bolton at Home | East Z East | National Media Museum

# new projects



► The high quality and versatility of **Lintec Graphic Films** has injected a panoply of vibrant colour and refreshing modernity into the new offices of **Bolton at Home**.

A non-profit company that oversees the local council's 18,000 homes, Bolton at Home plans to deliver £124 million of improvements to homes and estates in Bolton over the next five years and to support this aspiration, it relocated to two new offices and enlisted the services of designer Stella Corral to ensure that the interior design properly reflected the ethos of the organisation.

Spread across three floors, the new offices were constructed with plenty of glazing to invite as much natural light in as possible. The



ground floor features long stretches of window in the break area and along the larger meeting rooms, while the open-plan first and second floors are set out with a range of different sized glazing for its smaller meeting rooms.

In order to relieve the overall white colour scheme, while also providing privacy for room-users, it was decided to create multi-colour film treatments, using Lintec Graphic's E-2200ZC, a UV-printable gloss polyester film with exceptional scratch-resistance. The non-PVC film combines exceptional optical clarity, ease of



installation and impressive environmental credentials and can also be printed with any number of colours, to achieve vibrant, eye-catching glass surface treatments.

Initial discussions with staff lead to the creation of drawings relating to the home, housing and locality, which were subsequently



developed into organic patterns. Thus, each area of the offices has a different ambience and colour palette, which helps to provide both an aesthetically pleasing and refreshing working environment.

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



▲ Creating a corporate identity for a restaurant requires meticulous management of every element involved in the signing, graphics and decorative ambient elements, but it was a challenge that was more than met by Chorley-based **Poppy Signs** when it undertook a commission from Indian eaterie, **East Z East**.

Introduced to East Z East by a shop fitting company that it had previously collaborated with on other projects, Poppy Signs began by providing an exterior sign that features the highly distinctive East Z East logo, mounted onto a curved, faceted fascia, elements of which precisely match the particular shade of red offered by the Metamark T Series of translucent materials. LED lit, the completed sign perfectly echoes

the perfectionism practiced by the restaurant.

For the interior signage, Poppy Signs used Metamark Silver Etch effect film to provide a tastefully detailed, yet restrained manifestation programme defining panel work and partitioning. Patterns in the manifestation scheme are evocative of Eastern influence and provide defined areas of privacy, while also enhancing the overall ambience.

Contrasting elements, in black opaque Metamark M7, add a touch of real design novelty to the partitioning, without impairing sight-lines in the restaurant's seating areas, while the tightly coordinated decorative branding also finds other subtle



continuations, including cut and applied elements on LED lit planters. Contrasts are found throughout with Brushed Metal effects adding a further spice to

the scheme.

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

▲ Acting as a shining beacon to visual culture, illuminated signage for the **National Media Museum** supplied by **M4 UK** and **Applelec**, is now glowing brightly across Bradford City Centre.

To deliver maximum visibility to the museum's identity signage, the lettering features LED illumination with a kick. Installed at elevation, it uses key construction techniques to intensify light output and ensure the National Media Museum's logo is visible across the city.

The sign, which is 15 metres in length, uses Applelec's fabricated 850mm-high letters that are face illuminated with a double line of high brightness SloanLED V Series modules, while the interior

of each built-up letter was painted in satin white, to further aid light reflection.

The sign fixing system was particularly heavy duty and an anchored stainless steel Hilti bolt was used to secure each letter firmly into position, while a cable tray was fitted inside the building to protect all LED wiring and produce a neat and secure finish.

Despite the scale and brightness of the sign, it is highly energy efficient, with the SloanLED modules and power supplies, which were also supplied by Applelec, drawing just 450W in total.

The National Media Museum



lettering is the second project completed for the Science Museum Group by M4 UK who previously worked on signage for the National Railway Museum.

**For further information visit:**  
[www.applelec.co.uk](http://www.applelec.co.uk) and  
follow **MK4 UK** on Twitter  
[@M4UKLtd](https://twitter.com/M4UKLtd) ■







Supplier News

## The future is . . . Clarity

Sign and print professionals from Clarity Software's 4,500-strong user base came together recently at the company's annual User Group Meeting, which as well as offering an excellent networking opportunity, also enabled attendees to take advantage of free advice, and to discover how they could use their software to help them win new business in the future.



their quotes and repeat and raise new ones wherever they are, thus enabling them to react to opportunities faster than ever before, with everything synchronised to the office."

The event also served as the launch pad for some new Clarity products and provided a sneak preview of the powerful new quoting functionality of Clarity's online CRM system, Clarity Go. Due for release this month, it will equip users with the freedom to quote while they are on the move.

Outlining the benefits, Richard Gamlin continued: "It's a new way of working; with total flexibility bringing a new level of efficiency, while also providing sales teams with the freedom to generate prices and close orders, to the extent that selling on the move will become the new norm."

Commenting on this new feature, Clarity MD, Richard Gamlin said: "Fast and accurate estimating on the go is the main priority for many of our customers and our Go Quoting software will enable them to access

Another new introduction was Clarity WebShop, which is described as the industry's first MIS-integrated e-commerce solution and provides



users with the ability to run an online shop from within their Clarity MIS, thus managing their online and

offline prices from one system.

Emerson Welch, Clarity's Marketing Manager explained: "Our Web Services team has devised a complete website solution that's quick and easy to roll out. All online sales drop straight back into Clarity using our Web to MIS technology, meaning the order process is so smooth and simple that our customers can be selling online within days."

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

## Metamark and Xpres team up

Digital transfer specialist Xpres has revealed further details relating to its expansion into the sign sector with news of a strategic partnership with Metamark, a leading manufacturer of digital media and sign vinyl.

The agreement will see Xpres stocking a diverse range of Metamark consumables and marks the latest step in its quest to become a true one-stop supplier for the visual communications industry.

Xpres Executive Director Luke Clayton explained: "We're seeing

a growing number of customers who are diversifying the range of services they offer in an effort to gain more business and many more signmakers are now supplying decorated apparel and sublimation giftware. Similarly, there are established garment decorators that are also offering sign services. We're committed to developing and extending our product range to cater for this changing customer profile and we're absolutely delighted to now have Metamark products as an integral part of our offer. Metamark's outstanding reputation for quality and the depth of its product range is

something that we know our customers will fully appreciate and value".

Paul French, Metamark's CEO added: "We believe the way Xpres treat its customers and the solution it aims to offer is a perfect reflection of our business here at Metamark, especially as we intend to significantly grow our business. This new strategic partnership with Xpres will enable us both to achieve our combined goals."

News of the Metamark tie-up follows the recent announcement that Xpres has become an authorised Mimaki

reseller and also further strengthened its relationship with Roland. It is now stocking an extended range of Roland options, including the full range of Eco-Sol machines and vinyl cutters. This comprehensive hardware portfolio, together with Metamark's consumables is now available for demonstration in the company's 'Inspiration Suite' facility at its Headquarters in Castle Donington.

**For further information or to arrange an appointment for a demonstration, contact Xpres on Tel: 01332 85 50 85 or visit [www.xpres.co.uk](http://www.xpres.co.uk)**

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Equipment & Material

## Making the message stick

The ticket office at Swansea's Liberty Stadium recently underwent some improvements, with the ambient graphics being provided by Richard Dawson's Valley Group using Metamark materials.

Metamark etch effect films seemed the obvious choice for the glazed surfaces that are often a mandatory requirement in public spaces, as markings made with etch effects are clearly visible without significantly

impeding the passage of light.

However, the stadium's revamp also required some of its large, painted steel pillars to be wrapped with images of sportsmen, a commission that proved a bit more challenging, as the pillar's surfaces were such that the graphics needed more sticking power than that provided by a regular adhesive bond. Accordingly, Valley Group selected Metamark MDP-H to help it provide the required effect. Metamark MD-PH

prints like other Metamark MD-Class films, but is particularly suited to use with low energy surfaces and in particular apolar plastics, as the characteristic black rim of exposed adhesive normally found when adhesive materials are applied to such surfaces, is notably absent.

Happily, Liberty Stadium's management team was so pleased with the result that it is now

planning to further extend the scope of the revamp and naturally, Valley Group is very happy to oblige!

For further information visit: [www.metamark.co.uk](http://www.metamark.co.uk) and [www.valleygroup.vg](http://www.valleygroup.vg)



## Affordable creativity

Etched glass effect films are increasingly used by signmakers seeking to create both decorative and privacy effects in a wide range of applications and Arlon's new Series 54 film is an affordable option that can be used on a variety of glass surfaces.

Series 5400 is easy to work with and can be used for both internal and external applications. It comes with up to a five year indoor durability and three year outdoor durability.

It is available from William Smith ex-stock in full or part rolls and same day despatch is offered on orders received up to 6.00pm



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

## Tough and transparent

Brett Martin has expanded its transparent sheet range with the introduction of Marpet-g FS, a durable and impact-resistant PETg sheet that offers outstanding optical clarity and light transmission, superior chemical and fire resistance, and easy thermoformability, as well as being fully recyclable.

An amorphous polyester that does not crystallise when heated, Marpet-g FS can be successfully used for fabrication and vacuum forming, as well as both hot and cold bending techniques, as it does not whiten or crack. It also maintains its high impact strength during processing, thus enabling it to be easily laser-

cut, sawn, drilled, welded, edged, riveted, die-punched or die-cut using steel blades, and can also be polished using mechanical, flame and solvent polishing techniques.

The fact that it can be processed in many different ways and formed into complex shapes, makes it the ideal alternative to the polycarbonate, solid acrylic and PVC sheets traditionally used in sign, display and store fixture applications, while its excellent resistance to most chemicals, atmospheric pollutants, and UV light also enables it to be used for outdoor signage.

Marpet-g FS is suitable for use in

conjunction with screenprinting and direct-to-substrate digital printing and also provides a suitable surface for decoration with vinyl graphics.

Available in a variety of thicknesses, including 2mm, 4mm, 5mm and 6mm, Marpet-g FS is offered from Brett Martin in 2050mm x 3050mm sheets.

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



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Equipment & Material

## An even greener option

**Materials from Sihl Direct UK's TriSolv range of environmentally friendly billboard and poster media can now be used on the new generation HP Latex printers, including the DesignJet L26500 and L28500, as well as the LX 600/ LX 800 machines.**

TriSolv media offers minimal shrinkage and outstanding waterfastness, delivering high quality photo-realistic prints on poster papers or billboard

applications. The products' multi-layered coating, which ensures water and weather resistance and the high white point of the papers, guarantees not only best performance with solvent and UV inks, but can also be used with the environmentally friendlier Latex inks, to achieve outstanding interior and exterior application.

Sihl Direct offers a handy application guide on its website, while the Sihl

Direct Team can be contacted by phone to discuss individual requirements in more detail.

Printed samples and test rolls can be ordered free of charge via the appropriate contact form that can also be found on the website.

**For further information visit: [www.sihl-direct.co.uk](http://www.sihl-direct.co.uk) or Tel: 0161 927 9051 ■**



## Signs on demand

**JepSign, a new system for personalising and making quality signs on demand, will help to invigorate the market with its potential for instant fulfilment and low trade pricing, combined with healthy margins.**

The JepSign system which is ideally suited for the quick and easy production of house signs, numbers and plaques and health and safety signs, can be used to produce quality durable signs that can be designed and printed to order using JepSign sign materials. These include aluminium sign backings in bronze, silver, gold and white, clear acrylic, white PVC and self-adhesive vinyl.

The finished signs have no screw holes, thus facilitating an unbroken printed image and can be attached to most surfaces using the self-adhesive fixers provided. They are suitable for both outdoor and indoor use, and offer excellent colourfastness and weather resistance.

The JepSign system, which has been developed by Jepson & Co. a leading supplier of vehicle licence plates, comes complete with a suite of traditional design templates, but can also be used in conjunction with full colour or monochrome, illustrations and photographs, as well as names, numbers and logos.



Each sign making kit comprises the JepSign user-friendly sign designing software; a full colour OKI C511 dn laser printer; and a JepSign sign assembly board.

**For samples of sign materials or a**

**demonstration of the JepSign system, Tel: 0114 2731151 or e-mail: [michaelshuttleworth@jepsonandco.com](mailto:michaelshuttleworth@jepsonandco.com)**

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

## Decorative effects

**Aslan has introduced Aslan CM 100 (DCUM) a new, self-adhesive colour film with 100 µm thickness, which has been especially designed for use for exhibition graphics and shop-fittings, as well as for wall decorations.**

Thanks to its low-reflective surface, a roll width of 102 cm and flame resistance compliant with DIN EN 13501-1, it is ideal for use in public spaces.

The film's 100-µm thickness ensures quick and easy application, while the



material's high opacity facilitates application onto coloured surfaces. It is removable without leaving any unsightly residues, thus making it the



ideal choice for wall decorations.

The range includes 23 colours and it will be available in January 2014.

**For further information and to request samples visit:**

**[www.ASLAN-schwarz.com](http://www.ASLAN-schwarz.com). ■**

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

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# Get Klever with Biesse

Global manufacturer Biesse UK has launched an exciting, new series of CNC routers that have been especially developed for the sign and display sectors. Branded the Biesse Klever, they are said to be a direct response to the demand from businesses in the UK for well-manufactured, well-supported and competitively priced CNC routers capable of cutting a wide variety of sheet materials including acrylics, metals, aluminium composite panels, woods and laminates.



and display sectors too.

One glance at a Klever router and it's clear to see that this new range represents a significant departure from many other routers currently available. In full compliance with CE certification and the latest Health and Safety regulations relating to the operation of CNC routers in the workplace, Klever routers are supplied with all the guards and safety features necessary to provide a safe working environment for the operators and total peace of mind for the owners of the business.

Klever routers are available in a wide variety of industry standard bed sizes, ranging from 2.5m x 1.25m (8' x 4') up to 3.6m x 2.2m (12' x 7') as standard. They also feature all the production equipment required to meet the varied demands of the busiest workshops, including powerful 'zone controlled' vacuum hold down beds with optional vacuum accessories that allow horizontal and underside edge machining. Even in their standard format, Klever routers are remarkably well equipped with auto tool length sensing and pneumatic sheet registration stops included at no extra cost.

Klever routers can be configured for metal

cutting with the addition of an automatic mist coolant system. Companies looking to cut acrylics, plastics, laminates and aluminium composite panels will be attracted to the integrated, 'active hold down' dust foot - complete with pneumatic swarf agitation. There is also a brush foot attachment available for use with woods and 3D applications.

It will come as no surprise to anyone with experience of CNC routing that all Klever routers sport class leading, HSD spindle motors in a choice of manual or tool change formats. Highly valued for their exceptional performance and long service life, spindle motors made by HSD have been the preferred cutting head technology of 'router gurus' for many years. It's no coincidence that HSD spindles are frequently offered as a premium upgrade by many CNC router manufacturers around the world. However, the salient point here is the fact that HSD is a manufacturing division of the Biesse Group

This can only be another contributing factor to the almost infectious confidence that Biesse exhibits in its own products. One of the ways in which this manifests itself is the comprehensive five-year warranty that is a standard feature of all Biesse machines.

Far from being the type of third party insurance policy that's sometimes passed off as a real warranty, Biesse offers a full manufacturer's warranty that's underwritten by the Biesse Group and directly supported in the UK by a 15 strong technical team, forming a nationwide network of field service



engineers and help desk technicians.

Klever routers are compatible with all industry standard design and toolpath generation software packages, including 3D applications, thus new users will immediately feel at home with the familiar feature of Biesse's Windows-based, graphical user interface.

Biesse UK welcomes opportunities to arrange one to one demonstrations at its well-equipped showroom facilities in Daventry, Northamptonshire. Alternatively, working site visits can be arranged on a regional basis.

At its UK Tech Centre in Daventry, Biesse is devoting the whole of February 2014 to 'Nesting Workshops' where clients and potential clients can discuss all aspects of CNC flatbed machines for machining plastics, wood and advanced materials.

Biesse UK would also like to extend an invitation to companies looking for a CNC system that will cut virtually any material, including glass, ceramics, marble, aluminium and steel up to 150mm thick, to discover the many benefits of WaterJet cutting by attending one of its special 'WaterJet Workshops' which are being held on 21st, 22nd and 23rd January 2014.

**For further information, contact Biesse UK on Tel: 01327 300366**

**e-mail [events@biesse.co.uk](mailto:events@biesse.co.uk) or visit [www.biesse.co.uk](http://www.biesse.co.uk)**

# Further enhancements for flagship cutter

Graphtec GB has announced major new enhancements to its flagship FC8600 plotter/cutter, which are available with immediate effect. They comprise innovative new performance functions on both the machine and the supporting Graphtec Studio software that is supplied free as part of the new offering.

Key enhancements apply to the ARMS 5.0 (Advanced Registration Mark System) that now incorporates the new ISM (Intelligent Scan Mode) and EPS support within the Graphtec Studio software package.

The new ISM function incorporates a sequential mode within the Segment Area Compensation facility to significantly improve accuracy and tracking of contour cutting for long-length Print & Cut applications, as well as expanding the range of compatible media. The EPS support provided by the Graphtec Studio software commensurately improves compatibility with other popular design software such as Adobe Illustrator and CorelDRAW.

The FC8600 plotter/cutter provides higher productivity levels via a maximum speed of 1,485mm/sec to sustain the machine's "fastest in class"



status. It also provides a maximum cut area of 1,600mm x 50m with the FC8600-160 model and 750mm x 50m and 610mm x 50m respectively with the FC8600-75 and FC8600-60 versions as well as an enhanced cutting force of 600gf and an ability to cut media in a

thickness of up to one millimetre.

**For further information, visit [www.graphtecgb.co.uk](http://www.graphtecgb.co.uk) or telephone 01978 666700.**

# Holding it down

**XYZ International has introduced a further optional production enhancement that will greatly improve material hold down efficiency.**

Called the XYZ Auto Zone Management System, it is a highly configurable software production tool option that ensures the material to be processed is held securely throughout the cutting cycle to facilitates optimum accuracy and a perfect finish.

The system provides three different vacuum 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. The Pendulum Processing mode enables the vacuum to switch between two virtual zones, usually the front and rear halves of the machine, so that the router can operate

continuously for maximum productivity. For total manual control, individual zones can be switched via the Zone Manager function.

In addition to greatly improving material hold down, the XYZ Auto Zone Management System eliminates material wastage and machine downtime caused by incorrectly set vacuum valves. The system now supplements other standard and optional production tool enhancements introduced by XYZ International to expand the capabilities of all XYZ routers.

These have included the latest A2MC machine control system that greatly reduces or eliminates 'bounce' and vibration caused by sudden acceleration or deceleration often found with other control systems and the AVS (XYZ Vision System). This is fully integrated within the A2MC controller and compatible with all of



the cutting tools used with XYZ routers, including oscillating, tangential and drag knife cutters to enable a much wider range of materials to be processed.

Introduction of a new helical rack and pinion drive system as an optional production tool enhancement has further expanded the performance capabilities of XYZ routers by greatly

reducing machine wear. This has been made possible by the incorporation of multiple gear teeth within the system that ensures a more even distribution of the work load, resulting in a significant increase in feed rates, more accurate cutting and smoother and quieter operation of the router.

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







small signmaker spotlight

# MOOD Signs

## A mood of expectancy

Over the years, Sign Directions has tried to champion and promote small companies, in particular those, that even in their embryonic phase display the potential to become key players in the future. One such company is the recently established East Sussex-based MOOD Signs. Mike Connolly visited the two founding partners at their new facility to learn more

Formed only in September of this year by Brett Armstrong and his brother in law Robert Mood, MOOD Signs is already making its mark with some fairly impressive local signs that augur well for its undoubtedly bright future. The work undertaken to date already reflects the company's ambition to become a serious force in the highly specialised field of architectural signage, rather than simply focussing on the more common eclectic mix of signs, banners, and vehicle graphics, although, in the fullness of time, this may form a more prominent part of its activities.

A key indicator of MOOD Signs' potential in the architectural signage sector came as a result of Robert Mood winning the Sign Maker category in the prestigious European Sign Federation (ESF) Awards 2013. Designed to recognise signing excellence, this competition is open to all sign companies from within the Federation's 23 member countries, including members of the British Sign & Graphics Association and FESPA affiliates. Thus, nothing could have sent a more powerful message to potential clients of MOOD Signs than the winning of this award and at such an early stage of the company's evolution!



Peter Tipton of ESF presents Robert Mood with his award

The award was given in recognition of the quality of the signs proposed for three areas of application at a simulated hotel project. These comprised a set of fascia ID signs, a monolith sign and a series of projecting signs, all of which amply served to illustrate the creativity and craft skills of Robert Mood.

Robert is very much the creative force behind the new venture, having gained time-served experience at both Sign 2000 and Graphic Design International



(GDI), which is also based in East Sussex, followed by further work experience in Australia at Melbourne-based Premier Graphics.

As Brett Armstrong explained: "Robert is a very talented signmaker and his awards success testifies unequivocally to this fact. The direction of our business will be influenced very much by the special skills and strengths that we have identified



and Robert's own unique talents as a true craftsman. Collectively, these will drive the business forward."

In addition to the local signage contracts so far completed, which now also include a commission to provide a number of huge acrylic letters for a major pizza company, MOOD Signs will continue to provide a local signmaking facility in order to properly establish a business platform, before targeting larger corporate organisations in order to fuel the anticipated future expansion.

They say that mighty oaks from little acorns grow, and, if so, MOOD Signs is destined to become a very big tree indeed! Join us in monitoring its future progress.

**For further information visit: [www.moodsigns.co.uk](http://www.moodsigns.co.uk) or telephone Brett Armstrong on Tel: 01892 669 668.**



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# Making the right impression

As a business that only opened its doors four years ago, Impression (Bolton) is now flourishing as a large format display, event and signage company.

Specialising in the production of a variety of graphics and digitally printed products, ranging from A4 leaflets, to vehicle wraps and marketing collateral for brand building, through to exhibition stands, it has invested heavily in the latest equipment to meet the demands of these diverse applications.

After initially using Roland, Konica and HP solvent and small format printing machines, for roll to roll and small print projects, including promotional work for hotels, colleges and local authorities, it was the arrival of an 8' x 4' Océ Arizona Flatbed digital printer in 2011, plus the more recent acquisition of an AG/CAD KM627R digital cutting machine, that have really helped to propel Impressions to a new level.

As Director Martin Lyons observed: "We wanted to extend the scope of our business and the purchase of the Océ flatbed UV printer with a 2.5m width, which has facilitated printing directly onto substrates such as Acrylic, DiBond and Foamex, as well as the production of window stickers and reverse printing, has certainly helped us to achieve that aim, by enabling us to broaden our scope and capacity."

However, whilst the acquisition of the Océ printer opened up new markets for Impression, the company was still outsourcing a large number of jobs for routing, corner machining and hole drilling, which, coupled with the increasing diversity of its work, meant that it was becoming more and more dependent upon external suppliers. In addition, it was also turning away some lucrative bespoke POS projects, as it didn't have sufficient capacity to handle them.

Accordingly, Impression began to consider the possibility of purchasing its



own cutting tables so that it could continue to drive the business forward. Following an intensive review of the available options, it decided on the AG/CAD KM627R flatbed-cutting machine.

Martin Lyons explained: "As the AG/CAD KM627R has virtually all of the capabilities of a high-end, 'all bells and whistles' machine, but at half the cost, it was the logical solution for our business. Furthermore, since most of its competitor machines actually run AG/CAD KASEMAKE, we were confident that we were buying both a quality machine and the best available software."

Since its arrival at Impression last April, both roll fed and direct to substrate output from the Arizona has been passed directly onto the KM627 for cutting, thus creating a perfect synergy between the two machines.

It has also made a huge impact, especially for the POS projects that



Impression has recently completed for clothing brands Henri Lloyd and Dare 2B. These involved the production of freestanding display and shelving units made from boxboard, Corex and Dufaylite that incorporate backlit LED lighting. Without the KM627, production would have been impossible, as Impression would have been unable to hand cut the 18mm thick Dufaylite POS displays or to have produced the complex forms, shapes and holes to the requisite level of accuracy. However, thanks to the innovative KASEMAKE software, the KM627 made light work of cutting, creasing and folding the units.

In addition, Impression uses a considerable amount of aluminium composite material (ACM), which previously had to be cut by the material supplier to the sizes and shapes required. Now though, the ACM sheets can be cut to the exact dimensions required by a specified job, in-house, thus enabling Impression to significantly improve its lead-times and reduce material costs.

According to Martin Lyons these savings are such that he anticipates that the KM 627 will pay for itself within 12 months.

He confirmed: "Since the machine was installed we have already saved the equivalent of 50 percent of its cost."

He concluded: "The KM 627 offers so many different benefits, for example, its numerous tooling options, which include scalpel tools for cutting vinyl stickers, mean that it can be used to knife cut, as well as for routing, creasing and 'kiss cutting', while AG/CAD's KASEMAKE software, which is extremely intuitive, ensures that the KM627 is very easy to use. And although it is doing everything we expected and more, we are still discovering new applications everyday. All in all, we are absolutely delighted with the value that it has added to our business!"

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

**For further information on Impression (Bolton) visit: [www.impressionltd.co.uk](http://www.impressionltd.co.uk)**

# Reliability, versatility and speed!



**When Cyrus Norton from Digital Factory was looking for a new finishing solution for the company's large format printed output, he needed a real workhorse, which is why he chose the Kongsberg XP cutting table from ESKO, purchased from CWE Solutions.**

Established in 1998, Digital Factory is a leading supplier of graphic and display solutions throughout the Home Counties, serving design agencies and trade partners, as well as end users. With production facilities in Surrey and equipped with the latest in digital production technology, it provides creative graphics, backed up with the

professional service expected in today's ever changing market place.

Explaining his choice of cutter, Cyrus said: "I knew that we really needed a machine that was above all else, versatile and reliable, and, when I discussed our requirements with CWE Solutions, it immediately recommended the Kongsberg."

The Kongsberg XP table, which is twice as fast as the Kongsberg XL and XN, is designed to work in the most demanding of production environments, facilitating 24/7 operation. It can be used for everything from a single unit, to a full-scale production run, processing up to a 1000 units in a day.

Since its installation in February 2012, Digital Factory has used the Kongsberg with a variety of media,



ranging from paper to 25mm acrylic and Cyrus particularly endorses its work on acrylic. He reported: "It does everything we need it to do very well indeed, to a very high and consistent standard, which is crucial for us, as we are facing more and more exacting demands from clients - it has been a

very worthwhile investment."

**For further information on the Kongsberg cutters visit: [www.cwesolutions.co.uk](http://www.cwesolutions.co.uk). For further information on Digital Factory, visit [www.digitalfactory.co.uk](http://www.digitalfactory.co.uk)**

# Swap the oldest for the newest!

**Roger White of the Business Support and Innovation Centre (BSAIC) in Croydon had become rather attached to his old Roland CAMM 1000A Cutter, which had given trusty service since 1990, although he admitted that recently it has needed a bit of TLC and some searching around for obsolete parts to keep it running.**

Consequently, he was delighted to learn that he was the winner of the 'Oldest Plotter in Captivity' competition that appeared in the May/June issue of Sign Directions to coincide with the launch of Mimaki's new CG-SR111 cutter series at FESPA 2013.

Now, his prize, a shiny new Mimaki CG60-SR111 cutter has been installed and is already making an impact on BSAIC's production.

Commenting on the CG60, Roger said: "The most noticeable thing about the new machine is that it delivers a really

precise, finer cut and is much more versatile and sensitive. For example, we use it quite a lot for garment marking and we are finding that we can produce much more intricate shapes for transfer printing. It's also great for vinyl cutting on signage applications too."

Originally established to satisfy the needs of local Croydon businesses, BSAIC draws on over 30 years experience within the sector and offers a 'one-stop-shop'; supplying everything from signage and large format, small format and lithographic printing, to POS, exhibitions and hardware. Importantly, the company is uniquely positioned to benefit from a regeneration programme, which promises to make Croydon one of the UK's biggest consumer and business hubs.

It's still relatively early days, but Roger is already discovering features of the Mimaki that make life easier for him and



his team. He reported: "The ability to save specific speed and pressure settings for different types of media, instead of having to manually adjust the settings with each change of material is a real benefit."

He continued; "The Mimaki is a great new tool for us and much faster than anything we've previously experienced, with the added advantage of being so much quieter in operation! Its addition to our existing plant helps alleviate the

pressure of deadlines and increases our profitability. And, although I am moving towards retirement, the Mimaki will continue to be a great benefit for me and ultimately for any new owner in the future."

**For further information on Business Support and Innovation Centre visit: [www.bsaic.biz](http://www.bsaic.biz). For further information on Mimaki cutters visit: [www.hybridservices.co.uk](http://www.hybridservices.co.uk)**



# The soft option

If you want someone to provide an overview of the latest developments in digital textile printing, the best person to ask is none other than Magnus Mighall, a partner at RA Smart, the specialist digital textile print supplier and someone who knows practically everything there is to know about the topic. Val Hirst persuades him to review this year's advances and to share his predictions for 2014



According to Magnus Mighall, RA Smart has enjoyed another record year in terms of sales of digital textile printing systems, which would seem to indicate that the market for textile-based applications is thriving. He confirms: "With a new crop of digital systems and growth in the soft signage sector, as well as investment from the traditional textile markets of fashion, apparel, education, home furnishing and sportswear, we have seen the steady growth in digitally printed textiles that we anticipated."

He adds that the demand has also been fuelled by the interest in specific new trends, such as all over dye sublimation printing onto T-shirts saying: "Despite a slow start, things picked up considerably

following Sign & Digital UK at the end of April, which saw the launch of new printers from both Mimaki and our new OEM partner, Epson. The fact that FESPA was held in London this year was also a real bonus for us. We shared a stand with our heat press partners Transmatic, and were able to showcase our range of printers and heat press options to a wide audience from a variety of market sectors."

Magnus admits a particular fondness for Mimaki's new TS500 - 1800D dye sublimation printer, saying enthusiastically: "It offers speeds of up to 150 sq.m/hr, thus providing users with true high speed production capabilities and significantly reduced

consumable costs. The TS500 print engine is now also available in the TX500 direct to textile version for printing directly onto fabrics, such as polyesters, silks and cottons and I am sure it will find favour with many of our existing customers who are looking for increased production capacity."

In fact, RA Smart has recently installed the UK's first Mimaki TS500 for an established user of dye sublimation systems in the apparel sector that needed additional production capacity.



*B-Loony, the supplier of advertising balloons, invested in the new Epson SC F6000 dye sublimation printer in the summer, following its requirement for increased capacity for its digitally printed promotional product range. Production Director, James Clephan commented: "The F6000 was the ideal solution to meet our production demands and we have since invested in a second unit thus, complementing our existing plant, to further increase our production capabilities."*

For further information visit: [www.b-loony.com](http://www.b-loony.com)

Another machine that has proved itself to be very popular, offering as it does an entry level option into digital textile printing is the Epson F Series dye sublimation system that made its debut at Sign & Digital UK. Magnus reveals that RA Smart has already installed several systems for companies producing a broad range of dye sublimation applications. Uniquely, the F7000 (64") and F6000 (44") printers are the world's first dye sublimation machines where every major component, including the printer chassis, printheads and ink, emanate from the same manufacturer.

He says: The F6000 44" printer, which is partnered with the Wasatch RIP, has proved to be a particularly popular choice, largely due to its excellent price/performance ratio, which cannot be matched. It's the ideal solution for customers who want an affordable system without having to compromise on quality or reliability.

One of RA Smart's most important markets is the education sector, which has continued to invest in digital textile technology. Magnus says: "Educational establishments are an extremely important part of our customer base and we have worked with universities and colleges throughout the UK for over 25 years. Most establishments now have some form of digital textile printing facility if they offer any textile printing courses within their curriculum and many of our education customers now have multiple installations, with the Mimaki TX2 remaining the machine of choice, due to the high quality results and the versatility of the range of textiles that can be used." He also notes that, increasingly, as well as using their printers as a teaching aid, RA Smart's education sector customers are now also using them to offer a bureau service

to local businesses too, in order to generate extra income.

The production of printed sportswear using dye sublimation printing methods remains an important market, especially as there is now such a wide choice of systems offering various levels of productivity. Magnus reports: "We have seen customers invest in the Epson F-Series, Mimaki JV33, Mimaki JV34, Mimaki JV5 and Mimaki TSS all for use in sportswear applications. The development of the dye sublimation papers is also extremely important and we are now seeing the introduction of lighter papers, which also means cheaper papers that can handle the heavier ink loading required."

He agrees, though, that it's probably the soft signage sector that has seen the highest level of new investment, with it seems, the majority of customers, who are coming into the textile sector from the solvent/UV direction, feeling more comfortable with the idea of printing directly onto polyester. But Magnus cautions that whilst this may be ideal for the flag and banner market, where it is the norm to achieve a good show through on the reverse side of the flag, a system that enables printing both direct to textile and via dye sublimation is certainly likely to open up more opportunities and provide greater versatility. He says: "Such machines really help to broaden both the range of items that can be produced and the potential for profit. However, it is a bigger investment, as, in addition to the printer, another prerequisite is a rotary heat press, rather than just the infra-red fixation unit required for direct to textile printing."

He adds, that RA Smart has



introduced the new Transmatic HF range of fixation units, which can be run either 'in-line' with the printer, or 'off-line', so that one fixation unit can service multiple printers, thus relieving the higher cost of printers with integrated fixation units.



*RA smart has worked with the highly innovative tent manufacturer, Field Candy to help it bring its digital production in-house, following which its use of Mimaki printing hardware has enabled it to supply high end, bespoke tents to companies around the globe.*

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





## special feature - digital textile printing

UV printing technology is also being used by a handful of RA Smart's customers for special textile applications, where the handle of the fabric is not so important and/or for very technical fabrics that are being used for particular niche markets. Magnus observes: "Whilst UV printing would never be suitable for the fashion, apparel or home furnishing sectors and has limited appeal for the 'soft signage' market, we have certainly seen UV being used to achieve extremely successful results where traditional textile ink chemistries have failed."

When ruminating on the future development of digital textile printing, Magnus feels that manufacturers would be wise to note customers' true needs. He says: "Whilst the industry demands faster systems to meet the ever

increasing requirements of end users, and there will always be a proportion of companies who will require these high production units, it is vital that manufacturers don't lose sight of the fact that there are a very significant number of companies, including the majority of our customers, whose businesses simply don't need the biggest, fastest, most productive machines, but who do require systems that offer the right price/performance ratio in order to fulfil the demands of their client base."

He continues: "For example, we had a client who was very interested in the new Mimaki TS500 and was extremely impressed with the capabilities and results achieved from all the print trials we ran. However, in the end, he decided to purchase the equally impressive, but

significantly less productive Mimaki TSS. This wasn't a decision based on price, but on the fact that this particular customer felt that the TS500's higher productivity didn't really fit into his business model and would also necessitate an investment in

Magnus adds that companies printing onto cottons and silks for the fashion and apparel sectors face a similar predicament. He explains: "The range of 'industrial' digital systems now available facilitates the production of some very significant metreage, but due to the technical requirement of printing with reactive and acid dyes and the fact they have to be steamed and washed after printing, means that the investment required is quite substantial, which could well be the reason why no one in the UK, other than a few well-established screenprinters, is showing much interest in the larger industrial systems."

He goes on to say that in his view, the next big thing is likely to be the development of textile pigment inks. He reveals: "I am sure it is no coincidence that we have seen a significant rise in the number of customers investing in digital systems using textile pigment ink technology. In fact, we have installed several Mimaki TX2 and JV5 belt systems specifically for use with textile pigment ink technology over the past six months."

"One of the main advantages of textile pigments is the ease of finishing required; all that's needed is for the binder element of the ink to be fixed, which is done by dry heat, rather than via steaming and washing. Up until now, the problem with pigments has been the lack of colour gamut and the wash fastness of the final print, which is due to the amount of binder and colourant that can be passed through the digital printhead without causing issues with run-ability. Over the past couple of years though, we have seen significant improvements in both the textile

additional equipment and manpower in order to keep it running. He sensibly concluded that it would be more cost effective to leave the larger production runs to suppliers in the Far East."

pigment inks and the pre-treatments of the fabrics, which helps to enhance the colours and this, in turn, has led to more and more customers realising that this technology is a viable one."

Currently, RA Smart is due to install the UK's first industrial textile digital printer using textile pigment inks for the home furnishing sector. But Magnus thinks that for sign and display companies, the most relevant fact about pigments is the results that can potentially be achieved on polyester. He opines: "This will indirectly open up more opportunities for companies who want to get involved with printed textiles for soft signage applications, by enabling them to also to print onto cottons (and silks) with the same machine and inks that they use for polyesters."

Magnus reveals that RA Smart is just about to take delivery of the new Epson F2000 DTG (direct to garment) printer for use in its demonstration showroom. He says: "I am particularly excited about this system, as there is an obvious market potential for a sensibly priced, reliable solution for printing onto both white and light garments and dark coloured garments that has hitherto been missing. Epson has introduced the F2000 in two models, the four colour (2 x C,M,Y,K) for white and light colour garments and the five colour (C,M,Y,K plus white) for use on dark colour garments. Both options are available for the same price and Epson's own inks will be available in both 250ml or 600ml cartridges, with the pre-treatment required for printing white available in 20litres, which is enough to print approximately 3,000 T-shirts!"

So that leaves us with one last question, namely, "Is now the right time to invest in digital textile printing?" No surprise for guessing that Magnus's answer is an unequivocal "Yes!"

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



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# The Affordable Options

Want to have a pop at digital textile printing, but not sure how to get started? Epson, Mimaki and Mutoh all offer an affordable selection of machines, ranging from entry-level options up to more production orientated models, plus lots of useful advice delivered via their distributor and reseller networks. This is our resume of the available options, but to download more detailed specifications and to arrange demonstrations, visit the web addresses given at the end of each section.

## Mimaki TPC-1000

**Description:** One metre wide printer with integrated cutter, 12-15m<sup>2</sup> per/ hour production print speeds, for dye sublimation printing onto paper,

**Applications:** Garment marking, promotional products, sportswear.

**Inks:** Mimaki Sb53 dye sublimation

**Price:** Upon application



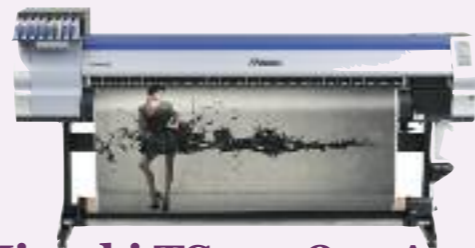
## Mimaki TS34-1800A

**Description:** 1.9m wide printer, 30+m<sup>2</sup>per/ hour production print speeds, for dye sublimation printing onto paper

**Applications:** Sportswear, furnishings, exhibition graphics, retail POS, flags, soft signage

**Inks:** Mimaki Sb53 dye sublimation

**Price:** Upon application



## Mimaki Tx2-160

**Description:** 1.6m wide printer, 12-15m<sup>2</sup> per/hour production print speeds, for use with natural fabrics and polyester

**Applications:** Fashion, furnishings, flags, sportswear,

**Inks:** Mimaki reactive, acid and sublimation

**Price:** Upon application



## Mimaki TS5-1600

**Description:** 1.6m wide production dye sublimation printer, 40m<sup>2</sup>per/hour production print speeds

**Applications:** Fashion, furnishings, sportswear, retail POS, soft signage

**Inks:** Mimaki Sb53 dye sublimation

**Price:** Upon application



## Mimaki Tx500-1800B

**Description:** Belt fed, volume production textile printer with a choice of inks to suit use on natural and manmade fabrics

**Applications:** Fashion, furnishings, sportswear, retail POS, soft signage

**Inks:** Mimaki dye sublimation, acid and reactive

**Price:** Upon application



Hybrid Services is the UK distributor of Mimaki machines in the UK and Ireland. For further information and details of its reseller network visit: [www.mimakiservices.co.uk](http://www.mimakiservices.co.uk)

## Mimaki TS500-1800A

**Description:** 1.9m wide volume production dye sublimation printer, 150m<sup>2</sup> per/ hour production print speeds

**Applications:** Fashion, furnishings, sportswear, retail POS, soft signage

**Inks:** Mimaki Sb300 dye sublimation

**Price:** Upon application



## Mutoh DrafStation RJ-900X

**Description:** A 42" (A0), four-colour inkjet printer, which comes complete with take-up unit and stand.

**Applications:** Architectural drawings, engineering drawings, construction, mechanical design, GIS applications, plus high quality graphics for indoor and short-term outdoor use. Can also be used as a dye sublimation machine to produce in-store textile décor, banners, sportswear, personalised homeware and mugs, key rings, coasters, mouse-mats etc.

**Inks:** Mutoh Disperse Dye Ink, Mutoh Water-Based Dye Ink

**Price:** £4,495



## Mutoh ValueJet 1324 and 1624

**Description:** Four-colour, ValueJet 1324 (54") and 1624 (64") wide with production speeds of 29m<sup>2</sup> per/hr

**Applications:** Full colour posters, banners, backlit signs, POs displays, external signage plus use on textiles for exhibitions graphics etc.

**Inks:** Mutoh Eco Ultra Ink, Universal Mild Solvent Inks (UMS)

**Price:** ValueJet 1324: £9,950 / ValueJet 1624: £13,950



## Mutoh ValueJet 1624W



**Description:** A four-colour, 64" wide format dye sublimation printer

**Applications:** Soft signage and graphics, home decoration, flags and pennants, sports goods, apparel, mouse mats, umbrellas, mugs etc.

**Inks:** Mutoh Disperse Dye Ink

**Price:** £13,295

## Mutoh ValueJet 1628TD and 2628TD

**Description:** The 1628TD (64") and 2628TD (104") print either direct to fabric or via dye sublimation transfer in one printer.

**Applications:** Display fabrics, flags, soft signage, decoration textiles, garment and apparel, home furnishings

**Inks:** Mutoh Direct Disperse ink, Mutoh Disperse Dye Ink

**Price:** ValueJet 1628TD: £21,990 / ValueJet 2628TD: £39,990



## Mutoh ValueJet 1638 and 2638

**Description:** Four-colour, 1638 (64") and 2638 (102") feature speeds up to 48m<sup>2</sup> per/hr.

**Applications:** High-volume production of long term indoor and outdoor applications, including full colour indoor and outdoor posters, signs and banners, backlit signage, POS displays, external signage, vehicle graphics plus textile exhibition graphics etc.

**Inks:** Mutoh Eco Ultra Ink, Universal Mild Solvent Inks (UMS)

**Price:** ValueJet 1638: £20,995 / ValueJet 2638: from £36,495



special feature - digital textile printing

## Mutoh ValueJet 1638W and 2638W

**Description:** The dual head set-up (two x four-colour) 1638W and 2638W dye-sublimation printers offer production speeds of up to 65m<sup>2</sup>/hr and 72m<sup>2</sup>/hr respectively.

**Applications:** High-volume production of soft signage and graphics, home decoration, flags and pennants, sports, goods, apparel, mouse mats, umbrellas, mugs etc.

**Inks:** Mutoh Disperse Dye ink

**Price:** ValueJet 1638W: £18,995 / ValueJet 2638W: from £36,495



Colougen is Mutoh's UK distributor. For further information and details of its reseller network visit: [www.colougen.com](http://www.colougen.com)

## Epson SureColor SC-F2000

**Description:** Prints directly onto fabric up to 25mm thick. Prints a single T-shirt in 27 seconds

**Applications:** T-shirts, caps and bags.

**Inks:** Epson UltraChrome DG ink

**Price:** £17,754.00



## Epson SureColor SC-F6000

**Description:** A four-colour dye-sublimation printer that uses transfer paper to print onto polyester and prints at 16-63m<sup>2</sup> per/hr.

**Applications:** Customised promotional items, soft signage, banner and gadgets.

**Inks:** Epson Ultrachrome inks

**Price:** Upon application



## Epson SureColor SC-F7000

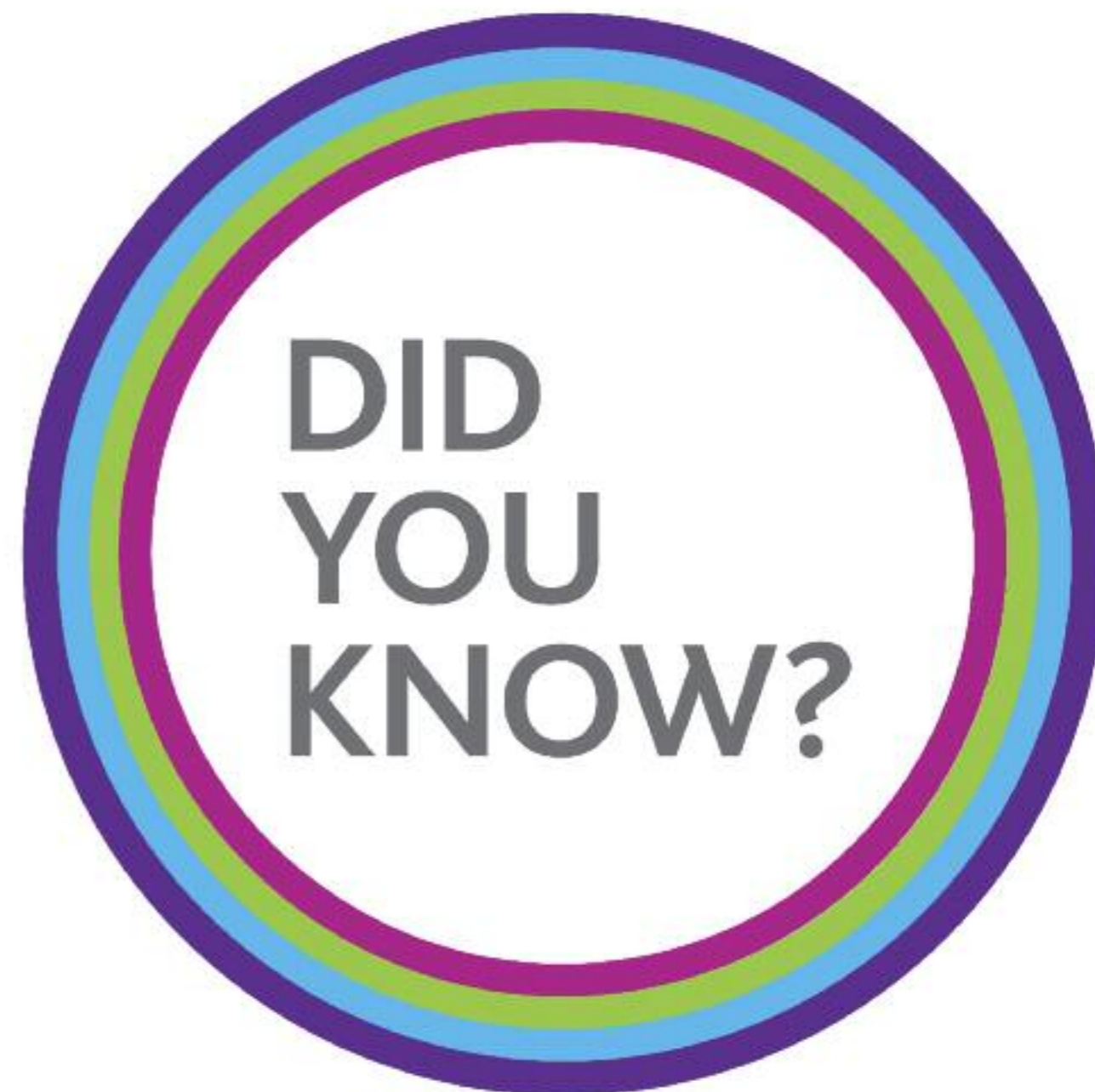
**Description:** A four-colour roll-fed dye-sublimation printer onto paper with print speeds of 16-57m<sup>2</sup> per/hr.

**Applications:** Customised sportswear, apparel, accessories, sports goods, soft signage, banners and flags.

**Inks:** Epson UltraChrome inks

**Price:** Upon application

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



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Installations

## The Italian job



**Pixartprinting, the Venice-based web-to-print company, which serves over 95,000 clients throughout Europe, was the first Italian company to take delivery of the Durst**

**Rhotex 322 inkjet printer for soft signage applications.**

According to Pixartprinting's Managing Director, Alessandro Tenderini, of late, there has been a noticeable shift in favour of textiles over PVC for the production of soft signage output such as banners. He commented: "The reasons for this are not surprising, when you consider the advantages. Not only is it easier to dispose of fabric-based graphics; they are also easier to handle and install, cost less to transport and suffer less creasing. What's more they can be stored and reused as often as needed and that's before you even begin to consider the environmental benefits, when compared with PVC."

The partnership of Pixartprinting and Durst has been in existence for some time, but was further consolidated with installation of the Rhotex 322. Pixartprinting's Sales Director Alberto Bassanello added: "We are fully aware that production systems are chosen only after careful consideration of all available machines in the market, but having reviewed all options, we once again decided to place our trust in Durst technology."

The machine prints up to 110 square metres/hour in six colours with a 600dpi resolution. Moreover, prints deliver incredible image brightness, vibrant nuances and high visual impact, due to the use of water-based Rhotex dispersion inks that are completely recyclable, odourless and free of harmful volatile organic compounds. Prints have a two-year outdoor durability on large-format output.

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



## Featuring fashion



**Epson recently teamed up with the renowned Japanese fashion designer Kansai Yamamoto to print designs featured at a major international fashion event.**

Using specially developed inks, Epson printed around 30 of the designer's creations on its digital textile printers, using, in the process, more than 1,000 square metres of textiles such as cotton, polyester and silk. The creations, combining traditional Japanese designs and ultra-modern styles, were printed largely on two Epson printers, one of which was the Epson SurePress FP-30160.

The Japanese designer, who began his career in London more than 40 years ago, approached Epson after seeing examples of its printed fabrics and being impressed by the company's innovative technology and its ability to blend various colours and patterns to create highly original and artistically beautiful designs. In turn, Epson felt honoured to have received a commission from such a world-class designer and to have met his requirements against a tight deadline. The success of this project will help drive Epson's textile printer business forward.



by some large customer requirements for solvent printed material. However, we are gradually migrating to more environmentally aware alternatives and are constantly seeking ways to reduce our carbon footprint, an aim that digital textile printing is helping us to fulfill."

**For further information visit: [www.vgl.co.uk](http://www.vgl.co.uk) and/or [www.durst-online.co.uk](http://www.durst-online.co.uk)**

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

## A bold move

**Somerset-based marquee specialist Boldscan recently invested in a new TS34-1800A dye sublimation printer supplied by specialist Mimaki reseller RA Smart. It will be used to personalise fabric interiors, café barriers and 3D feather flags required for systems supplied by the company to the hospitality industry.**

The latest Boldscan systems, Clubhouse and Sky Shades, are produced respectively using a combination of an aluminium frame and either canvas or PVC and a fabric that offers a 98.8 percent UV block. These are customised using the TS34-1800A dye sublimation printer and installed at a variety of public events and leisure facilities

Boldscan's Managing Director, Steve Hansford commented: "Whether a company wants its logos or photographic imagery emblazoned on walls or carpets, there is no limit to the creative possibilities. Following our investment in the TS34-1800A, combined with our own technical expertise and the support given by the RA Smart team."

The printer supplied by RA Smart came via Mimaki's exclusive UK and Ireland distributor Hybrid Services.

**For further information visit: [www.boldscan.co.uk](http://www.boldscan.co.uk), [www.rasmart.co.uk](http://www.rasmart.co.uk) and [www.hybridservices.co.uk](http://www.hybridservices.co.uk)**



## A popular choice

**Launched at this year's FESPA event in London, the MTEX 5032 digital fabric printer manufactured by the Portuguese company POD Iberia, is already in huge demand. Notable UK installations include Hollywood Monster, Xtreme Graphics and C3imaging where the printer has been installed and supported by Digital Print Innovations (DPI).**

The 3.2 metre-wide MTEX 5032 printer installed at Hollywood Monster was one of the first to be delivered in the UK. The company is a leading provider of wide-format printing and renowned for its excellence in design, print and delivery capabilities. Sales Director Simon

McKenzie commented: "When you have several customers asking for a particular kind of print, for example dye sublimation, we have to listen and seek out the best direct-to-textile printer to meet their needs. The MTEX 5032 ticked all the boxes for us."

One of the first jobs produced on the printer following its installation, was for a 30 x nine-metre backdrop created for the Birmingham REP theatre and its latest production 'Tartuffe', which had to be both lightweight and creasefree. The project, which took around seven hours to print and five hours to piece together, required a combination of a 220g fabric and dye sublimation technology in order to deliver the vibrant colours required. Hollywood Monster also produced around 400 square metres of digital wallpaper for the same project.

Xtreme Graphics, a leading provider of all kinds of large-format printing and a pioneer in direct-to-textile printing, has now installed two new MTEX 5032 printers to bring the total of MTEX printers in operation to four. The machines are used primarily for the production of flags and lightweight banners.

Earlier this year, the company gained



special recognition for its 'crowd surf' 30 metre-wide and 20 metre-high banner marking the 50th anniversary of the Munich air disaster that claimed the lives of many Manchester United players and staff.

Improved customer choice was said to be behind the purchase of the MTEX 5032 printer installed at C3imaging.



could help us to take full advantage of exciting new soft signage opportunities."

C3 has a network of branches in the UK and the new printer was installed at the Liverpool site. Nigel Davies added: "The MTEX printer provides a superb all-in-one direct-to-textile solution, printing at up to 1440dpi and at speeds of up to 58 square metres/hour direct to textile, using vibrant water-based inks. Having a direct-to-textile printer like the MTEX has really simplified what had previously been a fairly technical process."

**For further information visit: [www.podiberia.com](http://www.podiberia.com), [www.dpi-uk.com](http://www.dpi-uk.com), [www.hollywoodmonster.co.uk](http://www.hollywoodmonster.co.uk), [www.xtremegraphics.co.uk](http://www.xtremegraphics.co.uk) and [www.c3imaging.com](http://www.c3imaging.com)**

## Immensely impressive

**Reading-based graphics specialist VGL has now added a second Rhotex 320R printer from Durst Image Technology to its impressive stable of large-format printing solutions.**



As Managing Director and co-owner of the family-run VGL business, Michael Ayerst stated: "We have always invested in the latest and best technology. Customers want a reliable and fast turnaround and quality printing at a competitive price and Durst has been a key factor to our success in achieving this. The Rhotex offers fantastic quality at an industrial speed, with the printer's 3.2-metre width being an additional benefit.

He continued: "We have gradually replaced all of our old roll-to-roll equipment with Durst machines. These

include a Rho 160R incorporating 3M Scotchprint consumables, a Rho 320R and 500R and a Rhotex 320 textile printer. Textiles are a major growth area for us and potentially for the whole market. With a move to a larger factory we have been able to install a Rhotex 320 that has enabled us to continue the expansion of our textile printing business.

"As a company we are extremely environmentally conscious, which is why we are gradually phasing out our solvent printers, while still retaining certain elements to satisfy the demand



Updates

## Making an impact

**As a leading supplier of European manufactured fabrics, Bury-based Soyang Europe is enjoying a substantial year-on-year increase in sales, largely due to the fact that more customers are investing in superwide and wide format polyester fabrics for use in soft signage, POS and exhibition installations.**

One of the company's most popular products is the German-made Impact Prime backlit material, which, according to Soyang Europe's Sales manager, Tim Egerton, has a crease free finish and an ability to diffuse light while still retaining punchy colours. He explains: "It suits a variety of printer types and delivers a vibrant and attractive result, whether it is used in conjunction with the direct dye sublimation printing method or with Latex or UV printers."

He added: "We've worked with Aurich Textilien for over three years and this product has been hugely successful throughout continental Europe, so it's

very pleasing to see UK and Irish customers gaining a similar benefit."

Soyang Europe has a policy of carefully selecting its material suppliers and, as a fully vertical operation Aurich's state-of-the-art production facility, which is located to the east of Dusseldorf, coupled with its quality control processes, ensure that its fabrics perfectly complement the Soyang range of PVC-based materials.

Typically used to form printed elements of in-store displays and exhibition stands, the Impact Prime fabric is easy to hem with a flat Keder strip for use in tracked tensioning systems and whilst being ideal choice for lightbox applications, it also works equally well when used for suspended 3D installations, thanks to its light elastic construction that ensures a crease free finish.

Explaining the increasing popularity of the use of textiles, Tim Egerton observed: "The growth of printed



textiles is being driven by a number of factors including the ease of transport and the minimal risk of damage during transit, but we are also finding that they are popular with retail brands, who are now frequently specifying a recyclable substrate."

He continued: "Ease of installation is also a factor. One, or at most two people, can easily change a fabric graphic with minimal training, enabling a brand's

message to remain current, while also providing repeat business for sign and print companies!"

Soyang Europe's comprehensive range of digitally prepared materials encompasses fabrics, PVC products and wallcoverings, and is constantly being reviewed and updated.

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

## Going direct

**Adding to its range of digital textile printers, Epson has introduced its first direct-to-garment T-shirt model.**

The 1440x1440dpi SureColor SC-F2000 can be configured to suit users' specific requirements through a choice of CMYK ink for use on white garments and CMYK ink with up to four white inks for use on coloured garments, both of which are crack-resistant and provide a soft and comfortable feel.

Garment Creator software is bundled

with the printer/ink package that includes a cost calculation function to monitor the amount and cost of the ink used for each print job.

Featuring Epson's TFP print head, the SC-F2000 can print a single white T-shirt in 27 seconds using the dual-colour mode and a dark coloured T-shirt in 27 seconds using a white and colour ink. When used in conjunction with Epson's eco-friendly UltraChrome DG ink, the printer is said to excel on dark fabrics due to the robustness of the white ink. This is circulated within the system and



has been designed to reduce clogging, thereby increasing productivity and enabling fast turnaround.

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

## Raising the standard

**The launch of the new Mimaki Tx500-1800 further extends the family of digital textile printers available from Mimaki's exclusive UK and Ireland distributor, Hybrid Services.**

The Tx500-1800B supplements the highly successful TS500-1800 and TS34-1800A printers, but delivers a 1.6 times greater print speed at 60 square metres/hour with a print resolution of 600x450dpi on an extended range of textiles, which includes cotton, silk, hemp and rayon.

Other key features that differentiate this latest printer, include a specially designed conveyor belt that feeds materials without tension, enabling

high-quality printing on elastic materials and facilitating unattended operation. Compatible ink technologies include reactive dye (Rc300), sublimation dye (Sb300) and acid dye, plus the pigment inks that will be available in the near future.

The combination of speed and print quality, coupled with a variable dot function that delivers rich gradation without banding and facilitates precise printing of fine lines, are added-value features of the Tx500-1800B. The printer also includes a number of design features that support ease of use in a production environment, as well as automatic cleaning and drying of the conveyor belt between or during jobs to



ensure the material being handled is protected from staining or dampness frequently found with other printers.

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

## A winning trio

**Available through its recently formed Textile Division, three new textile materials have been introduced by All Print Supplies (APS). These environmentally responsible products are compatible with UV, solvent and Latex wide-format print technologies and provide individual as well as common performance enhancements, such as water and fire resistance and a light weight in combination with strength and durability.**

Red-Eye (TSWM225) is an environmentally friendly matte white woven material that is both water resistant and compatible with UV, dye sublimation, (for use with both direct and transfer dye sub printers),

solvent and Latex ink technologies. It features a 'lotus effect' surface that enables water to run off rather than be absorbed. The product is particularly suitable for use as printed roll-up displays, hanging banners and backlit displays.

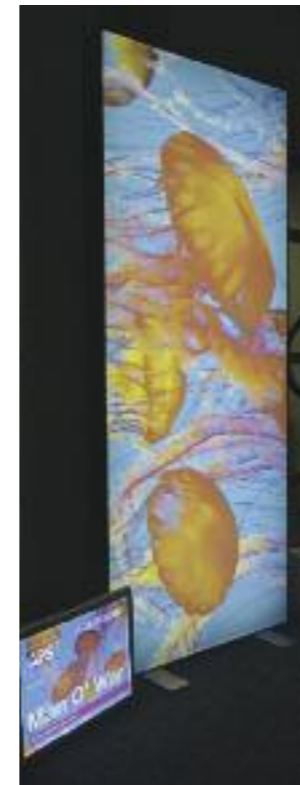
Butterfly (TSFG120) is a lightweight matte white knitted fabric with similar printer and ink compatibility and eco-friendly characteristics. With a good show-through capability, it is ideal for use for a variety of flags.

Man O War (TSWM200) is a lightweight woven, crease-free and water-resistant printable fabric compatible with dye sublimation (transfer), solvent and Latex printing technologies. Like the Red-Eye option, it is also watertight with good



lay-flat characteristics making it suitable for backlit displays, tensioned display frames and inflatable displays.

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



## If you can't make it, fake it!

**Still not convinced that digital textile printing is the right direction for your company? Why not take the easy option instead?**

Pixartprinting offers a comprehensive web-to-print service, which includes the production of flags, canvas signs

and banners, T-shirts, decorative fabric bags, bespoke printed textiles and much else besides, all of which can be printed to your precise specification with a fast turnaround. This enables you to carry out some selective test marketing or to build a customer base before investing in

equipment of your own. Based in Venice, where it operates from a state-of-the-art facility, Pixartprinting has also established a network of partners throughout Europe, enabling you to discuss your requirements with a native speaker if required.

**Check out the full Pixartprinting portfolio at: [www.pixartprinting.co.uk](http://www.pixartprinting.co.uk)**

**We are indebted to Pixartprinting for photography used throughout this feature. ■**



# It's print Jim, but not as we know it!



As arguably the two people most instrumental in transforming FESPA from a single event into a formidable world-wide brand, Frazer Chesterman and Marcus Timson are now tackling a fresh challenge in the form of InPrint, an exhibition that is designed to highlight industrial print technology. Val Hirst quizzes them to discover how sign and print companies can benefit from the show

**When, two years ago, you left FESPA to establish FM Brooks, an offshoot of the international exhibition organiser Mack Brooks, it's fair to say the industry was agog. Why did you leave and why did you choose to join a company with no track record in the sign and print arena?**

When I joined FESPA in 2003 the challenge was to build an exhibition portfolio and recruit a team to run the events in order to increase both the Associations' revenue and its global reach, and we absolutely succeeded in our mission! So the time was right for a fresh and exciting new challenge.

**The first show that you organised under the FM Brooks banner was EcoPrint, which took place in Berlin in the autumn of 2012. When will it run again?**

EcoPrint succeeded in pulling together the print industry to tackle sustainability and for this we are proud! The feedback we received on the content and the vision was very rewarding – we were the first exhibition organiser to gain ISO 20121 and we were also recognised by the UK Exhibition industry who presented us with the Exhibition News Award for Best New Organiser.

EcoPrint proved that there is a strong interest in sustainability and a clear need for reliable information and guidance. The real success story for EcoPrint however was the high quality conference and the ensuing discussion. I am sure it will run again in some format, when the issue needs tackling again and if the market demands it, but for now, the dynamically growing InPrint Show has our full attention.

**There are already an enormous number of print related shows. What makes you think that there's room for yet another?**

There are indeed many shows out there, but currently no event that focuses solely on the opportunities offered by the industrial print sector. InPrint is designed to remedy this, by providing a platform for 100 companies from the functional and decorative print sectors to present their latest technologies to manufacturers who are looking for a new way to add value to their offerings. Thus InPrint will show innovative print technology that can be used to help enhance a wide range of different items made from ceramics, wood, textiles, plastic and glass, which are targeted at a wide variety of different markets and end-users.

I'd like to add that in the 15 years that Frazer and I have been working together, we always like to challenge the markets we work in by creating a new value. And once again, with InPrint we want to provide a unique focus on a market that we feel is growing significantly, but that has no event of its own. Industrial print is valued at \$100 billion, whereas the wide format market is valued at around \$35 billion and what's more, industrial print is expected to grow by \$20 billion in less than 10 years, so it certainly needs a dedicated show!

Exhibitions that serve transforming markets are really important and InPrint, we believe, is such a market. Industrial print is at a similar stage of development to that of the graphic print or wide format sector back in 2004-5, so we expect a strong level of interest and there is a great opportunity for any print business interested in developing new revenue streams.

**You've already amassed a very impressive line-up of exhibitors, many of who are names familiar to Sign Directions' readers. Do you think that this marks something of a sea change within the industry?**

Yes. Our own experience and the extensive research that we carried out with IT Strategies, has revealed that the demand for digital printing technology within the traditional print-related markets, such as the wide format market, has started to level off. In fact any 'tipping points' were realised some time ago and it is only innovating incrementally. Many InPrint exhibitors support this view, which is why so many of the leading manufacturers, such as Agfa, Canon, Durst and Fujifilm, Mimaki, Ricoh, Xaar and Xennia are taking part - they are all looking for their next area of opportunity.

In addition, the development of inkjet technology continues and with it, the range of applications, with the result that it is now possible to extend its scope into directions that were previously considered untenable.

**Why did you choose to Co-locate with the Hannover Messe event in April 2014?**

Hannover Messe is the world's largest event for companies engaged in industrial production and manufacturing, which means that visitors will have direct access to a number of shows, such as Industrial Automation and Digital Factory and conversely, the visitors to all of these other shows – around 200,000 in total – will also have access to InPrint, thus providing exhibitors and suppliers of printing equipment and consumables with a vast new audience.

**Why do you think the show will appeal to sign and print companies?**

Nowadays, manufacturers are developing game-changing technologies that facilitate fast, customised print onto all sorts of items, while also opening up myriad new creative possibilities too. What's more digital printing means that both risk and costs are minimised, when compared with the more traditional printing methods previously employed.

We think that many of the most entrepreneurial sign and print companies are very interested in learning how they can use their skills and resources to maximum advantage, with the effect that they are actively looking for new ideas and inspiration, which they will find in spades at InPrint!

**What sort of visitorship do you anticipate that InPrint will attract, both in terms of numbers and categories of company and will these visitors be potential new customers for sign and print companies too?**

We are expecting around 4,000 to 5,000 visitors from many different business sectors and our aim is to create a new community and marketplace made up from people and companies involved with both functional and decorative print. We have spent the last 12 months building a database of around 20,000 names and this will form the nucleus of this new and unique community, which is interested in industrial print in all its manifestations.

We are keen for sign and print companies to become part of this community and to benefit from the many innovative ideas that we are sure will evolve from it and are eager that they should have an early opportunity to engage with companies that aren't currently on their radar.

**What other show ideas are you considering at the current time?**

Actually we're not! InPrint is our main focus, especially as we believe that industrial print is an area that is moving really quickly and thus deserves our full time and energy commitment – we are in this for the long term. We know from our experience that it takes time to successfully build a brand and more importantly, a new community. We feel it could easily take five to 10 years, before we get anything like close to realising the full potential of InPrint and I'm speaking for both of us when I say that we are really relishing it!

**InPrint will take place at Hannover Messe on 8th-10th April 2014.**

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





## Mimaki's plus sized option

Mimaki has launched the JFX200-2513, a large format flatbed UV inkjet printer that can print up to 25 square metres per hour on materials up to four feet by eight feet (2,500 x 1,300 mm) in size and up to 50mm thick.

The JFX200-2513's compact footprint, eco-friendly LED curing and attractive price point make it ideal for businesses in the sign and display graphics sector that wish to affordably expand their range of services.

Sign and display companies will appreciate both the printer's functionality and its compact footprint, which, along with its affordable price, make it a viable choice for businesses of all sizes.

It is offered with multiple ink types that support a wide range of materials and applications including LH-100, a hard UV cure ink with high rub and chemical resistance with excellent colour fidelity. Mimaki's LUS-150 is a low-cost UV cure ink with suppleness

that extends to 150 percent without cracking, for use on materials to be applied to curved surfaces. Finally, Mimaki PR-100 is a primer ink that can be used as a pre-treatment agent to improve ink adhesion on difficult surfaces. The ink is available in economical one-litre ink bottles for reduced ink costs.

The Mimaki JFX200-2513 features variable dot function that assures a

high quality print by jetting three ink dot sizes at once. The printer also features a white ink option for brilliant images, compelling backlit graphics and other items printed on transparent materials. It also sports Mimaki Circulation Technology, which eliminates issues with white ink sedimentation.

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

## Get recycling

Quality Print Services (QPS) is reminding wide-format print businesses who sign up to Nazdar's free ink campaign that they will also be eligible for the QPS cartridge recycling scheme when they become regular customers.

Nazdar is so confident that its top-

quality alternative inks will win over current OEM ink users that it is offering free ink cartridges to the UK industry, following a hugely successful scheme in the USA.

QPS, supplier of Nazdar inks, launched its end-to-end cartridge recycling programme in 2011 in an effort to minimise its role in the generation of landfill waste from the sign and graphics sectors and its resultant environmental problems.

QPS customers who take advantage

of the recycling programme will receive certification of their involvement, which can be used to support an ISO 14001 application.

Customers of Nazdar inks developed specifically for Mimaki, Mutoh and Roland wide-format printers are eligible for the programme.

For further information on QPS, visit [www.qualityprintservices.com](http://www.qualityprintservices.com). To sign up to receive a free ink cartridge visit: [www.nazdar.com/freecartridge.asp](http://www.nazdar.com/freecartridge.asp).



## Get ready for the Rho

Already considered to be the most productive 12-picolitre inkjet in its class, the Rho 1012 prints with a resolution of 1000 DPI at speeds up to 490m<sup>2</sup>. Now, with the addition of Durst's own Variodrop technology, enhancements to the image quality mean that it is capable of delivering excellent results at even faster printing modes.

The Rho 1012 features Variodrop technology, which ensures that solid areas are even smoother, while it also helps to overcome some of the errors that can occur with greyscale printing alone. In particular, greyscale relies very strongly on accuracy of drop placement and this can be affected by the

uniformity of velocity of drops. Any variations of the printheads' working conditions could lead to a mismatch of different greyscale level drop velocities and the consequence is drop placement inaccuracy.

The Variodrop on the Rho 1012 changes the drop size from 12 to 20 picolitres and, even at the larger drop size, solid colours are smoother and have an improved colour gamut. Variodrop is an adjustable binary mode that uses multipulsing for drop size modulation. It combines two voltage pulses in such a way that the second pulse pumps the precise ink dosage into the droplet before it detaches from the nozzle plate, without forming any satellites. Compared to the



often uneven droplets formed from an ill-tuned greyscale waveform, with Variodrop the double pulse drop shape is perfectly uniform and its placement is always evenly spaced.

In common with other Durst inkjet printers, the Rho 1012 is upgradable in the field, which means that the new Variodrop technology can be added to existing customers' printers.

The Rho 1012 has a host of features such

as left and right registration, which enables parallel printing of boards side by side and mechanical two point pin registration for perfect front and reverse side printing. Printing options include fast media change from rigid to roll and options for roll to sheet or roll-to-roll printing, plus ink options that include light colours and Process Colour Addition (PCA).

For further information visit: [www.durst-online.eu](http://www.durst-online.eu)

## QPS to sell Roland printers

Lancashire-based Quality Print Services (QPS) has been appointed as an authorised Roland dealer in respect of Roland's dye-sublimation printers.

Commenting on the appointment, Chris Bailey, Director of QPS said: "We have supplied and supported a range of dye-sublimation inks and heat transfer papers to the trade for over a decade and as this is an increasingly dynamic and progressive market, we're delighted to be adding Roland's wide-format technology to our portfolio."

The first Roland machine that QPS will be selling is the Roland VersaArt RE-640, with the company already confirming its first sale to one of its

existing dye-sublimation customers.

The Roland VersaArt RE-640, is a 1.6m wide printer that features an eight-channel mirrored ink configuration (CMYKYYMC) for colour consistency, while the Roland Intelligent Pass Control system accurately controls dot placement between passes to virtually eliminate banding. Variable droplet control produces seven different droplet sizes to accentuate an image's fine details. It prints at speeds of up to 23.1sqm/hr onto heat transfer paper, thus making it ideal for the speedy, high-quality production of transfers for use on ceramics, sportswear, flags and soft signage applications.

QPS will supply the VersaArt RE-640 with premium digital water-based



inks, enabling users to cut the cost of dye-sublimation printing without compromising either the quality or consistency of their output.

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

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# Worthwhile Investments

Companies explain why they chose the equipment they use

Building a memorable brand is a challenge, but with its signature pink hippopotamus, Wakefield-based **Hippoprint** has a head-turning corporate identity that's as strong as its product.

With a portfolio that encompass everything from traditional business stationery and leaflets, through to stickers, pull up banners and T-shirts, Hippoprint's wide format capabilities are matched with an absolute guarantee of next day delivery, which is why the company's owner, Anthony Wood, is so committed to investing in the right equipment. Currently in the midst of a program of replacing Hippoprint's printer line-up with Mimaki solutions, Anthony was particularly interested in gaining a sneak preview of the new JV400-160SUV when he recently visited Mimaki's UK and Irish distributor, **Hybrid Services** with reseller **Granthams**.

The machine had only just arrived in Hybrid's showroom, but so impressed was Anthony that he ordered one on the spot!

Explaining his enthusiasm, he said: "By becoming the first UK print company to install a 1.6m JV400-SUV, we can ensure that we stay at the forefront of the rapid turnaround sector."

The Mimaki JV400-SUV offers a substantial colour gamut, unique glossy print and a highly durable finish, all of which are perfect for the kind of work that Anthony envisages Hippoprint producing. He said: "We frequently supply high colour posters and pull up banners with large ink loads, but it can be a real challenge to finish them the same day. However, the SUV enables us to print and send within a matter of minutes and with 95 percent of our



orders coming late in the afternoon, it takes a little bit of the pressure off."

Now employing over 20 staff, Hippoprint, which was first formed in 2009 when Anthony, having previously rescued another print business some five years ago, was invited to create a web-to-print setup from the ashes of a business. With web design skills in house, Hippoprint invested heavily in a bespoke back end and began to build a brand that's unique in the UK print sector. Anthony opined: "None of our competitors has Hippoprint's structure and approach to business, as very few people really understand the value of integrated marketing, which is what we try to practice."

Retaining customers can be a test for any online business, but Anthony has loyal customers who have bought into his ethos. He said: "We're here to provide the absolute best service for our customers, so we'll do crazy things to ensure it happens, whether that means



meeting customers' trains with boxes of business cards as they travel through railway stations, or swapping unused stocks of obsolete paper for homemade cake with local artists and schools!" And it certainly seems to be a commitment that's paying off. An order from Kensington Palace appeared in Anthony's inbox recently, thus proving that a combination of great customer reviews and a significant investment in marketing goes a long way

towards gaining the royal seal of approval!

**For further information on Hippoprint visit:**

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

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



Leicester-based **Digital Wordcrafts** has extended the capability of its print room with the addition of a new **Mimaki JV5-320S** 3.2m-wide solvent printer, which has provided it with both the extra width and capacity required to handle larger work.

The company bought its first Mimaki wide-format printer four years ago and over time has built up a print portfolio comprising a Mimaki JV34, two Mimaki JV33 machines and now the Mimaki JV5-320S. The new printer, only the second of its type to be sold in the UK, was installed in October by Mimaki UK reseller **i-Sub Digital**.

Commenting on his choice of machine, Digital Wordcraft's Director, Adrian Bingley, explained: "We bought the 3.2m machine to get extra width so that we could cater for the exhibition market, since we've found that printing onto textiles and stretching them onto canvases is a cost-effective way to produce a large-scale wall displays with no joins or visible fixings, thus making them ideal for use as exhibition graphics."

Digital Wordcrafts has also recently used the JV5-320S to complete a similar job for HSBC: a 3m x 4m backlit display for use in a branch of the banking chain, something which, claims Adrian, would previously have been unachievable.

Using Mimaki SS21 class-leading solvent inks, the Mimaki JV5 can print onto a



range of media, including textiles, canvas, films, vinyl, banner PVC and papers. Its four printheads offer fast speeds and outstanding quality, with resolutions of up to 1440dpi.

i-Sub Digital is currently offering an enhanced deal on other printers in the Mimaki range. Existing owners of Mimaki CJV30-130, Mimaki CJV30-160, Mimaki JV33-130 and Mimaki JV33-160 solvent printers, working or not, can trade them in for a new printer and receive a three-year Gold Warranty and £1,800 worth of ink.

**For further information on i-Sub Digital visit:** [www.i-subdigital.com](http://www.i-subdigital.com)

**For further information on Digital Wordcrafts visit:** [www.wordcrafts.co.uk](http://www.wordcrafts.co.uk)

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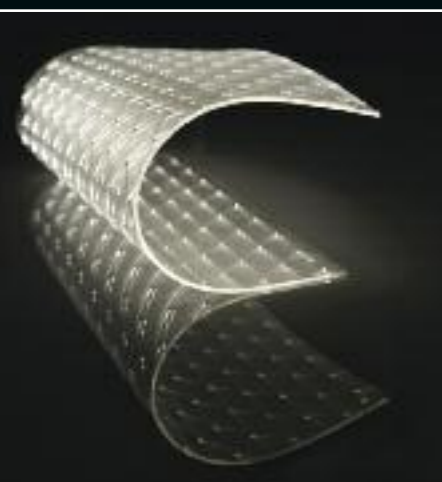
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The modular light tiles can be produced in any shape or size up to one metre, offering up to 20,000 lumen per square metre. Designers will benefit from single or double

sided illumination and with LEDs distributed across the panel, applications are not inhibited by the need for external thermal management.

As standard, the tiles are supplied with LEDs offering a colour temperature range from warm white to cool white (3000K - 7000K) and Colour Render Index (CRI) >85. Single or mixed colour options are also possible, as well as a range of low voltage or constant current drive solutions.

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

**Design LED Products has launched flexible LED light tile technology, which offers designers the opportunity to use**

Design LED's patented technology embeds LEDs into a thin, flexible

## LONG LINES OF LIGHT

**Polestar has introduced a high quality AC LED module that is available in two light or four light options and, which, it claims, is also set to revolutionise the sign sector.**

It can be installed in continuous runs of up to 75 metres, with no requirement for drivers and no voltage drop, making it the product of choice for large signage applications or areas where access is particularly difficult. A CE approved maintenance free

product, it is supplied IP67 as standard and is double insulated, thus meeting all the latest IEE regulations.

Both the 33 and 60 lumen high output Polestar LED modules, which are super-fast to install when using the integral 3M mounting pads, with each run simply terminating with a standard IP rated connector, also carry Polestar's three year warranty.

As well as typical sign and light box



applications, this innovative product is also ideal for use with



exhibition stands and display products and most indirect lighting installations.

**For further information and technical data sheets contact Polestar at:** [sales@polestarlighting.com](mailto:sales@polestarlighting.com) ■

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**new concept in LED tube lighting, which can be used in a variety of applications, including exhibition displays, backlit walls, outdoor illumination and interior lighting.**

Designed by Jonathan Evitt, the founder of Wandlite, to provide a light source that is visually attractive, the spirally wound LED tape is aesthetically pleasing and the semi-translucent end fittings ensure that the whole tube glows

from end to end.

Manufactured in Britain to the highest EU standards, the Wandlite tube runs off a standard 12v power supply, but draws only 1.2 amps per metre. In locations where an electrical supply is not possible, the Wandlite tube, together with the right adaptors, can be connected to a solar-powered panel, rechargeable battery, cigarette lighter, 12v car/truck battery or generator.

Available in 800mm, 950mm, 1000mm, 1250mm, 1500mm and 2000mm tube lengths, it can be used either as a stand-alone light, or in combination with further Wandlite tubes to provide the ultimate in lighting flexibility. In addition, the tubes can be supplied in custom lengths and colours and in RGB multicolour lights if required.

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

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# A cracking convention

The recent Signs Express convention, which took place at the Radisson Blu hotel in Derby during November, was a bustling affair, combining a daytime conference with an evening awards ceremony.

The convention, which was themed around the concept: 'Working together to make the boat go faster!' was sponsored by nine industry suppliers, including Amari, Epson, Metamark, Pinetree Enterprises, Sign Elite, Sign Making Tools, Sign Pro Systems, Trade Signs and Western Sign Systems, all of whom fielded stands around the conference room.



Deborah Hall, a journalist and broadcaster who has carved out a unique career in corporate business presentations and who presented an interactive format of seminars and thought provoking case studies, facilitated the day's proceedings. Speakers included members of the Signs Express head office team and Anne Hitch from Signs Express (Peterborough), plus representatives of Amari, Epson, Metamark and Trade Signs, as well as Lee Devenish from Driver Hire, and Emerson Welch and Scott Banks from Touch Systems.

A lively and informative day, which everyone agreed had provided the best convention experience to date, was followed by an equally lively and enjoyable evening, that began with a champagne reception, followed by a gala dinner, and, after delegates and their guests enjoyed a spectacular five course meal, it was time for the serious business of the evening – the presentation of seven awards.

This year saw the inauguration of a



new award for productivity for which there were three nominees – the Signs Express centres in Harlow, Southampton and Falkirk, with **Signs Express (Falkirk)** scooping the



award.

The next award, also new this year, was designed specifically to recognise innovation. The finalists this time were Signs Express centres in Glasgow, Peterborough and Lincoln, with **Signs Express (Peterborough)** being declared the winner in respect of the innovative 'a map for all' project that it completed on behalf of the RNIB



The most collaborative franchisee award enables franchisees to vote for a fellow franchisee and thus perfectly represents the 'working together' theme of the conference. Chris and Julie Hardy of **Signs Express (Bedford)** were delighted to receive the award along with with the other two finalists, Stuart Harrison of Milton Keynes and Matt Bevis from North East Lincs.



Signs Express' Managing Director Craig Brown presented the most prestigious award, The Franchisee of the Year, to the **Signs Express (North East**

**Lincolnshire) Centre**, which has enjoyed its best ever trading year, with Manchester and Warrington being named as the two runners-up.

There were also individual sign awards in three categories, which were judged by an independent panel comprising representatives from the BSGA, Epson, Metamark and Sign Directions.



Signs Express (Leeds) won the award for the Best Exterior Sign in respect of its work for the Royal College of Music, a project that the judges felt showed a high level of design ingenuity, firstly in the interpretation of the original brief



for something 'out of the ordinary' and then by adapting the initial idea in line with budgetary restrictions, without losing any of the intended impact.

The winner of the Best Vehicle Graphic was **Signs Express (Lincoln)** who produced a host of individual but equally appealing liveries for PC Coaches' fleet, which nonetheless all formed part of a cohesive whole.

The award for the Best Sign Project made **Signs Express (Leeds)** a double winner, as it further confirmed its ability to handle large jobs, as well as smaller ones, by enlisting the assistance of other Signs Express centres when necessary. Its work for Airedale involved the manufacture and installation of a multiplicity of signs, across different sites, while remaining true to the company's corporate identity.



This year also marked the departure of **Frank Eliel and David Corbett**, the founding directors of Signs Express who are retiring after starting the company 24 years ago. Frank and David, who have left a strong legacy of success, paving the way for the new management team, comprising Craig Brown, Tony Marsh, Peter Sayles and Jonathan Bean, received rapturous applause and a standing ovation as they were called to the stage to receive a surprise parting gift of a super car track day.

Signs Express is already busily planning its 2014 event, which will be a double celebration, as it also marks the company's 25th anniversary.

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





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This month, **Mark Godden** makes an impassioned plea



## Look after the customers...

If I seem a little preoccupied with computers, in Last Word these days, and particularly my own, it's only because I am. Bear with me on this one though, it may save you some time one day and I do get round to discussing business a little later.

I performed an alleged 'upgrade' to my PC a week or so ago. All went well initially. Eventually though, so as not to violate what seems to be a genetically coded rule that all Windows-based PCs seem compelled to serve, something stupid was inflicted upon me – the computer asked me for my password so it could finish the installation. I obliged and received the response: 'Computer says no!'

I could really spin this out, but I won't, I'll take you forward instead to hours later when I'm feeling nothing less than blind rage, still locked out of my computer. Then it occurs to me. It wouldn't, would it? Maybe the stupid bloody Windows OS has wiped out the keyboard driver settings. Know what? It had.

Here's what that means to you, Mr Customer. While letters are, by-and-large, where you'd expect them to be on your keyboard, pressing say, a '@' key actually produces a " " " and of course, you can't see that, because all that comes up in the password field is a succession of bullet symbols. Ignoring what's actually printed on the keyboard, I tried again and finally got: 'Welcome to Windows 8.1!'

Have I become grumpy or is that the dumbest thing to ever make it into a 'world-leading' product? There goes half a day I'll never see again. I hope my experience saves you some time, should you decide to 'upgrade' at some point.

Windows applications used to have something known as 'Intellisense'. The basic idea was the application would perform, or suggest, the next logical thing, based on what you were doing. It's not there anymore. I suspect this is because so many PCs

guided by its wisdom, were walking down to the shops unbidden and jumping into the skips behind the Apple store. Putting it politely, PCs have challenges to overcome.

Moving on.

If you were to gather in a single room, a representative of each of the factions that comprise the sign and graphics sectors today and ask each: "What's the biggest challenge facing our business?" I'd expect that you'd get a very varied bag of answers.

From those who'd been let out of the kitchens and labs and who are charged with developing the next big thing, you'd get a response centred on an elusive breakthrough, or the challenge of finding ways to commercialise an anonymous looking blob of ink that does something really clever.

At the polar opposite end of the industry, among those who have to make signs for a living and find real customers to sell them to, a more down-to-earth response could be expected. From among these legions, you'd hear about things like simply getting paid on time, or doing what's needed to get the phone ringing and orders flowing.

Between the two, you have the entire infrastructure, in terms of suppliers, engineers and marketers, which makes the industry tick. Their challenges would probably be represented as a complex amalgam of all that ails any industry. Trying to be great while mired in the day-to-day. Keeping a competitive edge. Containing costs. You know the drill.

However, somewhere in the mix you would hope to find someone who

just 'gets it'. Someone who clearly understands his business and who values his customers and who, despite having to sell to survive, does so while seeing things through his customers' end of the telescope. The very notion of 'challenge' to someone motivated along such lines is seen more as a spur to activity than something to be fought to submission.

The reason for venturing these thoughts is that I was impressed by a conversation I had some days ago with a man running a growing sign company. He put it to me that it's down to crusading types to try and overcome business challenges on a grand scale. In other words, if you want to bring about a better deal for the sign industry, give up being a signmaker, take up arms and camp outside Downing Street. Concentrate instead, he said, on winning a better deal for your own customers.

Know what? I think he may be right. In delivering a better deal for your customers, you do influence a generalised section of the population and it will have a bearing on the wellbeing of your business. This may sound to some like a wishy-washy, bend-with-the-breeze attitude, but it's not, in my view. I've always been a big fan of anything that delivers a better deal to customers.

Customers' advocacy is an incredibly powerful thing. We once called this 'word-of-mouth'. Word of mouth is as important as it ever has been. Although it now rubs shoulders with the means to broadcast opinion, to those who are tuned in, on a scale you would have once needed television and radio to accomplish. This recent vehicle carries negative

sentiment far and wide too, just like word of mouth. But the really cool thing is it costs little to nothing to make someone's day, thus producing positive sentiment. The good it generates is priceless.

Keeping in touch with the basics could be argued to be amongst the greatest of all of the significant business challenges out there and it touches those of all stripes. I've always been deeply suspicious of a hotel that might be recommended to me on the basis that 'it's clean'. Doesn't that come as standard? I personally react well to things that work as you'd expect them to, or that arrive when scheduled. It's great when you can recommend something based on a very positive personal experience and those little things, things that cost nothing, bring such a big influence to bear.

There's only so many ways to say this, but, the exemplary businesses out there, all of them, do tend to see things in people terms. They're the ones that rank among the most admired. It's the big company boss who stands up and puts himself behind his products and services. Or the small operator who goes to great pains to carry an enquiry from a glimmer of interest to a successful sale and onward into a long-term relationship.

Challenges come in many colours, but were put into perspective for me by a person speaking on behalf of a small and growing company. Stay focused on what you do and look after the people who come to your business - because that's what they are.

**Mark Godden**  
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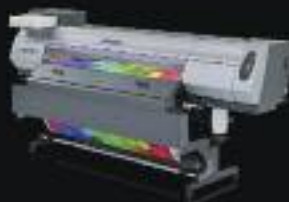


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