

sign

Jun/Jul 2014 - No.139

directions

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DÉCOR DIRECTIONS BLAME IT ON AGFA!

A WELL KEPT SECRET THE UNVEILING OF DEFLECTO EUROPE

SPEND, SPEND SPEND! EXHIBITION REVIEWS

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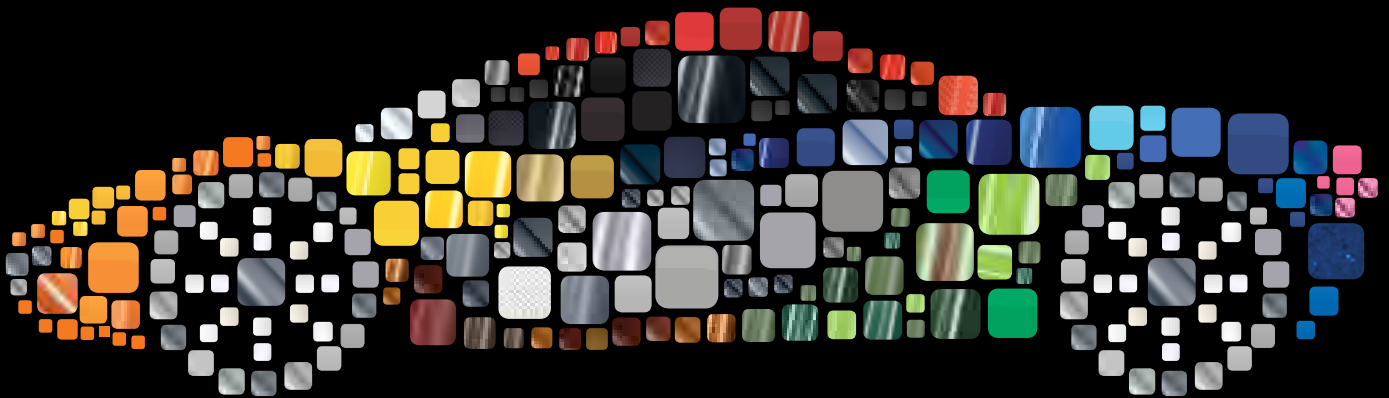
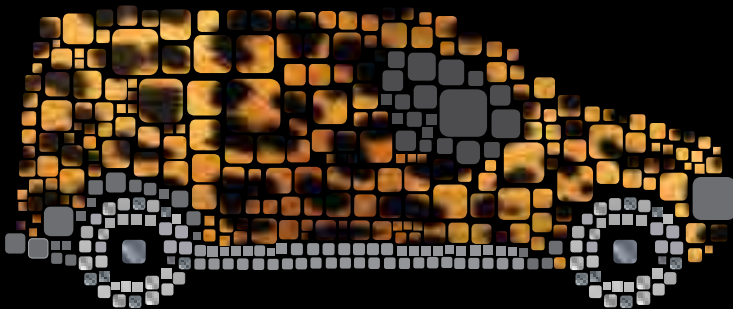
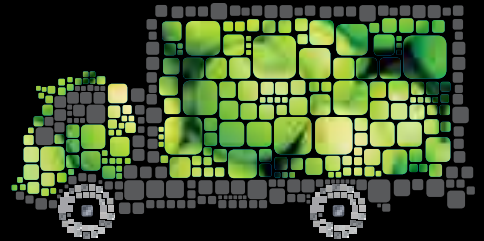
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Sign Directions Hotline:

If you would like the contact details of any of the companies featured in this issue of Sign Directions, please ring **Tel: 01623 882398** for full company information, or alternatively, e-mail signdirections@btconnect.com for a response by return.

Coming Next:

The next issue of Sign Directions will be the August/September issue, which will be published mid-September

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Courtesy of Stika.co

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Annual Subscription Rates:

UK £50 \$78 €78
Europe £93 \$143 €145
Rest of the World £114 \$178 €178
Agents can claim a 10% discount

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Introduction

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setting the scene

Last month saw the official launch of the British Sign Awards and, at the same time, the call went out for entries. And, since I know that all sign companies will have a project that they want to enter, I thought I'd provide a few well-timed words of advice, which are simply these: ownership of an iPhone does not a photographer make!

Although the awards are structured to promote absolute fairness, in as much as all the judges will see during their deliberations are the photos of the project, together with a description of the work carried out and the challenges encountered and overcome – no company names, no ritzy presentation material – the photos that are submitted need to be absolutely tip top quality in order to give the project the best possible chance of success.

When I say tip top, I mean a photo that has been taken by someone who knows what they are doing and which preferably shows the sign or display without a lot of surrounding site debris, trailing wires, a nasty reflection of the fish and chip shop over the road and/or two scruffy men in overalls having a chat in the foreground!

And yes, dear reader, in my time, I've received all of these and much, much worse! I don't know what it is about men and mobile phones, but they seem to believe that the mere possession of one conveys magical photographic powers – believe me it doesn't!

Not that photos taken on a proper camera are always any better either. Indeed, it often appears that a man's over-estimation of his artistic prowess increases in direct proportion to the amount of money he's spent on kitting up. I've lost count of the amount of times I've been assured that a superb photo, taken on the latest knock out camera, is on its way, only to receive something that has taken a day of painstaking retouching before it is rendered useable.

So, if you are planning on entering Sign Awards, (and the latest information appears on page 30 of this issue and on the awards website, www.britishsignawards.org, where you can also fill in an entry form) remember that every lily could do with a bit of gilding and give yourself and your project a fighting chance!

And talking of gilding the lily, our new regular decor section, Décor Directions, which appears on pages 24-29, is designed to show just how that can be done. Inspired by Agfa's House of Asanti feature at the recent FESPA Digital exhibition in Munich, Décor Directions illustrates how decorative effects can be cunningly used both to add ballast to the most pedestrian signage programmes and to provide sign and display companies with a highly lucrative and enjoyable diversion into an area where they can showcase their skills to a whole new – and often more appreciative – customer base. One example of this is provided by Stika.co, this month's cover stars, a company that has built a highly successful business on the back of a novel decorative idea. Read the story on page 27.

Décor Directions is accompanied by a new, dedicated website (www.decordirections.co.uk) where both the projects featured within the magazine, plus lots of different ones, can be seen in greater detail with, in many cases, a wider portfolio of really lovely photographs too – for once, I have absolutely no complaints!

This issue also includes reviews of this spring's two premier shows, which serve to underline that, economically speaking, things are finally getting back to something like normal. Certainly at Sign & Digital UK it was case of spend, spend, spend, with exhibitors hardly able to keep pace with the demand

for their products. Not surprisingly, they were delighted! Read all about it on pages 34 to 37. At FESPA Digital, it was a similar story, with the show fielding more exhibitors and attracting more visitors than ever before. Find a full resumé of the event on pages 42-45.

In this month's Supplier Spotlight, I spill the beans on Deflecto Europe, a company that has successfully operated under the radar for years, but which is now offering a new dedicated fabrication service. Read all about it on pages 32-33.

Elsewhere you'll find all of our regular features and on page 50, Mark Godden explains why he thinks you're worth it!

In this issue we also welcome a new member to the Sign Directions team – designer Jonathan Horne, who has patiently dealt with my usual round of prevarication, indecision and contradictory instructions with not so much as a single complaint! Jonathan is sitting in for our long-term designer Hina Mistry, who has been busy with a little production of her own, the birth of twins Eeshan and Leah! I'm sure that you'll all join with me in wishing Hina all the best in both her new role and her very well deserved maternity leave!



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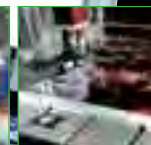
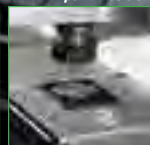
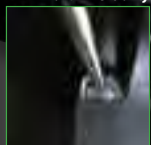
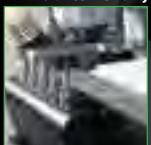
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Appointments



Hybrid Services, Mimaki's exclusive UK and Irish distributor has recently made two new appointments.

Stuart Cole takes on the newly created role of National Sales Manager – Industrial Products, where he will be responsible for further developing the growing market for Mimaki products within this challenging new area.

Stuart brings significant knowledge and skill to his new position, having already gained over 25 years experience in the wide format and sign and graphics sectors.



Colin Lewis takes up another newly created position, that of Operations Manager, in a role that will see him taking responsibility for the company's service and technical departments, where he will head up a team of internal and nationally based engineers that support Mimaki installations throughout the country.

Colin brings over 40 years' experience in the customer service and technical sectors, having previously worked for a number of blue chip, multi-national companies.

CMYUK has appointed **Michael Crook** as Commercial Director, Consumables Division. In this new role, Michael will concentrate on the company's growing portfolio of materials, promote customer relations and generate wider understanding of the importance of using the right media and consumables.

Having accumulated 17 years of experience within the sign and digital sectors, Michael joins CMYUK from Antalis, where he was Product Manager of its Sign & Display division and previously worked for Robert Horne, where, as a member of the Paperlinx Digital Solutions' team, his in-depth knowledge of materials and understanding of customer requirements were instrumental assets.

Applelec has recently made four new appointments.

Gary Middlemiss takes up the position of Operations Manager, in a role where he will be focusing on health and safety training, along with project management of the more unusual or complex projects that Applelec undertakes.

Matty Bullough fills the newly created role of Design Engineer. Matty, who has ten years' experience in design engineering within the sign sector, specialises in design for manufacture and will be involved in both new product design and customer design support.

Lois Edwards is Applelec's new Marketing Assistant. She joins the company from GAP,

where she was a Regional Visual Merchandiser, and will be looking after day-to-day marketing activities, as well as bringing her experience of event management to the role.

Conor Bradley, who started working in the sign industry five years ago, with an apprenticeship in metal fabrication and welding, is now putting his practical knowledge to good use in his new role as a Sales Assistant.



Perspex Distribution has appointed Neil Sole as Branch Manager of its Weybridge

branch, which opened in 2012.

Neil, who has gained 16 years' experience in the print and display sector, is tasked with further developing business at the branch and servicing its growing customer base in the south of England.



Pyramid Display Materials has appointed **Graham Scanlan** to look after sales

in the north west of England and north Wales

Graham, who formerly worked for both Robert Horne and Europoint, brings with him a wealth of experience spanning 25 years in the sign and display sectors.

His appointment coincides with the opening of Pyramid's new 22,000 sq. ft. warehouse extension in Manchester.



Screen Europe has appointed **Colin Price** as Sales Manager, Print-on

Demand. Colin brings more than 25 years' experience selling equipment, service and support for vendors such as Scitex, Lüscher and FFEL.

In his new role at Screen, he will use his considerable technical and commercial sales expertise to support both direct and indirect sales channels for Screen's expanding range of inkjet presses and printers.



Veritek, the pan-European technical service, support and maintenance provider, has appointed **Dan Bullough** as

Group Sales Director, a role in which he will report to the CEO, **Jim Edgar**.

Dan, who brings with him a wealth of international, sales and general management experience, having previously worked in high-level positions for Xerox Global Services and Regus, will be responsible for the group's strategic expansion in core target sectors across the UK and Europe. ■



L-R: Conor Bradley, Applelec Managing Director, Ian Drinkwater, Gary Middlemiss, Lois Edwards, Matty Bullough.

Inspirational new website for Signbox



Architectural sign specialist Signbox has launched a new look website, which has been designed to reflect the company's in-depth knowledge of the architectural, interior and design sectors.

Visitors to the website will find clear navigation to their relevant sector, together with a plethora of case studies that serve as testament to the high level of innovative signage solutions that Signbox delivers.

Mark Bartlett, Managing Director of Signbox commented: "Recognising the important role the internet plays in helping businesses connect and communicate with customers, we have ensured that our website is an easy to navigate portal that is both informative and inspiring and, since we've also discovered that the architectural and design communities often use our case studies for their storyboards, we invited our customers to help us design a website that includes the most relevant information for their needs."

For further information visit: www.signbox.co.uk

The Manchester-based signmaker Sign UK has moved to bigger premises in Oldham in order to accommodate its continued growth and plans for further expansion.

With its turnover rising significantly in the six years since its inception, and the most recent figures reflecting a 25 percent increase on last year, the company has also recently expanded its team to include an experienced design specialist. Further, with a growing percentage of its work now taking place throughout Europe, it anticipates welcoming further new additions in the coming months

A big move for Sign UK

and also plans to expand its network of approved sub-contractors and suppliers too.

The new 10,000 square foot factory, located on Oldham West Business Park, has been adapted to accommodate Sign UK's specialist equipment, and also includes office space and staff and customer facilities.

For further information visit: www.sign-uk.com



Octink wins Bronze

Sign and large format print specialist Octink has been awarded the Investors in People Bronze award in recognition of its commitment to continually developing, supporting and motivating its staff.

The Bronze award is achieved by only

five percent of Investors in People recognised organisations in the UK and is awarded to those companies that demonstrate an additional 26 or more pieces of evidence above the Investors in People core Standard.

For further information visit: www.octink.com

Candles is all lit up!

Allen Signs, which has offices in North Hykeham near Lincoln and Nottingham, has helped to put a charity shop on the map by providing its signage for free.

Cancer charity, Candles, which was established in 2001 by cancer survivors Pam Connock and Dyllys Firth, is on a mission to raise a million pounds to fund pioneering immunotherapy research by Professor Oleg Eremin at Lincoln

County Hospital. So when Allen Signs Managing Director, Dave Allen, heard that Pam and Dyllys had been offered the lease of a shop by the Lincolnshire Cooperative Society, he readily agreed to design and manufacture the fascia signage, window graphics and advertising board free of charge.

For further information visit: www.allen-signs.co.uk and www.candlescharity.webeden.co.uk ■



Dave Allen with Pam Connock and the new signs

Miles for smiles

As part of the Sussex Sign Company's initiative to assist local communities and their activities, it is currently supporting '500 miles for Smiles', a campaign designed to raise awareness of, and funds for, mouth cancer.



Accordingly, when 'Dental Hygienist of the Year', Christina Chatfield walks 500 miles, starting in Kirriemuir, Scotland, where her career began, and finishing in Brighton, she will be assisted

in her endeavors by Sussex Sign Company, which not only designed and wrapped the Camper van that will be escorting her throughout her journey, but also donated the 10 metre banner that will grace Brighton's Beach Café to greet her triumphant return.

To donate to the campaign visit: www.500miles4smiles.org

For further information on the Sussex Sign Company visit: www.sussexsigns.com ■

Stock Displays is flying high

Doncaster-based Stock Displays is set to scale new heights this summer by completing a terrifying sky-dive, despite the fact that only one member of its nine-strong team has previously taken part in such a challenge!

The team will be taking the leap of faith in order to raise funds for its local children's hospice, Bluebell Wood, which provides care and support to families of children with a shortened life expectancy.

The Stock Displays team, which will be free-falling for up to 5,000 feet and possibly reaching speeds of up to 130mph before pulling the parachute, is hoping to reach its

target of £5,000 and to this end, has also planned a series of other fund-raising events too.

Speaking on behalf of the team, Inbound Sales Manager, Laura Lawson, said: "Despite initial misgivings, once we appreciated the fantastic work Bluebell Wood do, we were all very keen to take part - I just hope that we feel the same on the day of the dive!"

For further information on Bluebell Wood visit: www.bluebellwood.org/support-us/donate/

For further information on Stock Displays visit: www.stockdisplays.co.uk ■

showtime

DIARY DATES FOR 2014

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Viscom Italia 2014

6th-18th October

Fiera Milano, Milan
Organiser: Reed Expo
Tel: +39 02 435170-1
e-mail: visualcommunication@reedexpo.it
www.vscomititalia.it

SGIA Expo 2014

October 22nd-24th

Las Vegas Convention Centre
Organiser: SGIA
Tel: 001 703 385 1335
e-mail: sgia@sgia.org
www.sgia.org

Euro Trophex 2014

25th-27th October

PTA, Amsterdam
Organiser Hill Media
Tel: 01442 826826
e-mail: alisoncwhite@aol.com
www.eurotrophex.com

Viscom Frankfurt 2014

5th-7th November

Frankfurt, Germany
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new projects



► Leading corporate signage specialist, Kent-based **Sign 2000** has created signage and associated graphics that fully complement the strong Caribbean theme of the new **Turtle Bay** restaurant in Leicester, the latest addition to one of the fastest growing speciality restaurant chains in the UK. The aim of the restaurant is to project a genuine Caribbean island theme by providing authentic dishes from that part of the world and creating the same informal and characteristically friendly ambience.

Sign 2000 worked in partnership with the design agency and main contractor and provided an eclectic mix of interior and exterior signage and graphics manifestations that used both traditional artisan skills and the latest manufacturing technology. The result was an eye-catching display that captured the living style and culture of the Caribbean.

Main signage was produced using powder-coated aluminium sheet with inlaid acrylic text and logos. **GE Tetra LED** illumination technology was used for the interior of the restaurant, while the external neon signage was housed within protective fabricated polycarbonate cases. Supporting graphics were digitally printed using 3M premium-grade films.

For further information visit:
www.sign2000.co.uk ■





▲ Due to its suitability for large-format installations, adhesive performance and long-term graphics durability, Controltac Graphic Film with Comply Adhesive Series 160C-32 from **3M** was used by corporate livery specialist **Stewart**

Signs to create a spectacular train wrap on behalf of **Virgin Trains**. The wrap was used as part of a travelling movie promotion for the Twentieth Century Fox film **X-Men: Days of Future Past** and applied to a specially refurbished train that will

feature the graphics until the end of July.

After careful removal of the existing Virgin Trains' livery, teams of Stewart Signs' highly trained livery applicators meticulously wrapped

each carriage of the train with digitally printed images of the film and its main characters, in a task that took teams 160 hours to apply 549 square metres.

The film's Comply adhesive technology enables straightforward installation of large-format graphics due to the presence of specially embedded channels in the adhesive that allows air bubbles to escape during the application process and ensures perfect adhesion to flat and gently curved surfaces, including those featuring rivets. The adhesive is also grey-pigmented to provide excellent hiding power, while the film has a matte finish that is scuff-resistant.

In common with all of the enamel inks and engineering processes used to create the wrap, Controltac Graphic Film with Comply Adhesive Series 160C-32 was designed and tested in accordance with relevant rail industry standards.

For further information, visit www.3m.co.uk/graphicsolutions or www.stewartsigns.co.uk ■

▲ Graphics supplied by **William Smith** helped to launch the Zone caravan, a new venture

for Alphatec Van Conversions, which both sells and hires out the caravans.



Created by Alphatec Van Conversions' to provide a modern spin on a style that has been around since the 1930s, the Zone is a retro inspired teardrop caravan, which incorporates both the company's 60 years

of experience in the vehicle conversation sector and its passion for the great outdoors.

Compact, but containing everything the modern caravanner requires, the Zone is lightweight to make towing easy and is also easy to store.

The eye-catching graphics supplied by William Smith for the original

caravan were colour coded to match Alphatec's own mini-van and were printed on 3M IJ180Cv3, a short to long-term removable film that is designed for use in conjunction with both inkjet and screen printing technologies, before being laminated with 3M 8580 gloss overlamine.

For further information visit : www.williamsmith.co.uk ■



Supplier News

Queen's Award for Contra Vision



Contra Vision has been awarded the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise for International Trade and, in so doing, becomes one of a select group of businesses that can claim this accolade, the most prestigious

business award in the UK.

Contra Vision's win is in respect of the fact that it has grown its overseas sales earnings by 1084 percent over the last six years and increased exports as a percentage of total

turnover from 35 percent to 80 percent, using a network of 18 distributors located across the world from Europe to Australia.

Originally formed in 1985, when Roland Hill, Contra Vision's Chairman and Managing Director, began patenting and licensing the technology, now known worldwide as Contra Vision see-through graphics, the company has since introduced 27 inventions patented or patent-pending, employs 11 staff and a range of consultants with offices in the UK and the USA and has a network of distributors across Europe, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and North and South America.

In addition, it undertakes significant market research to provide new

opportunities that help to ensure its international sales continue to grow.

Commenting on the award, Roland Hill said: "It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Contra Vision staff and the world class products that we continue to develop and innovate in order to accelerate the growth of the worldwide market for see-through graphics."

For further information visit: www.contravision.com

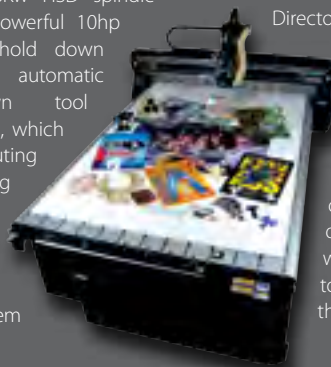


Best year ever for Tekcel!

Complete CNC Solutions the exclusive distributors for Tekcel CNC routing and cutting systems, enjoyed its best year ever for machine orders at the recent Sign & Digital UK exhibition.

The new Tekcel GFX Series router, which made its debut at the show, attracted a huge amount of interest, in terms of both its all-round ability to rout, knife cut and register print on a multitude of different materials, together with its very competitive price.

The demonstration model on the stand featured a large format 2080mm x 3100mm cutting area, with an 8Kw HSD spindle with C-axis, a powerful 10hp vacuum table hold down pump, a fully automatic Pop Up/Down tool changing system, which neatly houses routing and knife cutting tooling, along with the Tekcel Opticam 'Cut to Print' camera registration system



and material location pins.

Emma Sage, Complete CNC Solutions' Financial Director commented: "It was fantastic to see so many visitors at our stand and to receive so many confirmed orders over the three days of the show, which is testament to the efforts of the team and the

efficacy of the Tekcel products".

The Tekcel GFX router produced on-going samples throughout the show, using aluminium composite panel supplied by Multipanel UK, acrylic supplied by Perspex Distribution and card and paper based display board products supplied by Dufaylite.

For further information visit: www.completenc.co.uk www.tekcelrouters.co.uk



Learning to wrap

In recognition of the fact that good wrapping skills are now considered to be a prerequisite for sign and print companies that want to distinguish themselves beyond the mainstream, Metamark has recently introduced MetaWrap MD-X, a next-generation wrapping film, that aspires to change the dynamics of the wrapping market.

Now, the introduction of this new product is being followed with a programme of training sessions, designed to enable participating companies to get the best from both the material and the rapidly developing commercial opportunities it represents.

Accordingly, Metamark is now offering both single day introduction and two day immersion courses

in modern wrapping at Walsall College's Roland Academy. With a maximum of six delegates per course, hands-on quality time is assured and participants will have the opportunity to test the efficacy of MetaWrap MD-X for themselves while also learning all the wrapping fundamentals, from planning to the ultimate delivery of a wrapped vehicle.

For further information contact Metamark on Tel: 0854 345 5645 or visit: www.metamark.co.uk



Wrights announces spectacular growth

Wrights GPX has announced a 40 percent increase in its turnover, and is now aiming for further growth in terms of both turnover and the recruitment of new staff during the rest of 2014.

Based in West Bromwich, Wrights GPX is one of the UK's leading plastic manufacturers, supplying

everything from industrial components to retail display and point of sale products and also has a thriving sign and graphics arm. The company recently reported a turnover of £6.5million, which represents an increase of 40 percent on last year's figures, but it has set itself a target of increasing its turnover to £8million by the end

of the financial year.

The increase in turnover has also resulted in a recruitment drive, with the company adding eight new staff members last year and aiming to add a further eight this year, in a move that will bring its total workforce up to 90. At the same time, the company has also



invested over £500,000 in new equipment and plans a similar level of expenditure in the coming months.

For further information visit: www.gpxgroup.com

Vision Engraving appoints CSI

Vision Engraving & Routing Systems has appointed Component Source International Manufacturing (CSI) as its exclusive distributor in the UK and Ireland.

Originally founded in 1995 in Dublin, CSI has been providing industrial labels for the Irish market since 1997.

Since 2003 it has been distributing engraving equipment in Ireland and began to distribute engraving materials in both the UK and Ireland in 2005. It also expanded its distribution of engraving equipment to the UK in 2010.

With a headquarters located in

Dublin and an office in Bristol, CSI is perfectly positioned to offer Vision Engraving & Routing System's high quality engraving equipment and complementary after sales service within the region.

Based in Phoenix, Arizona, Vision Engraving & Routing Systems has

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For further information visit: www.csionline.ie and www.visionengravers.com

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Equipment & Material

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APA Truck from APA, a highly conformable cast film that has been specifically designed to decorate and customise truck and curtain sided commercial vehicles,

is now available in a selection of unique and exclusive colours.

Suitable for use in conjunction with solvent, UV and Latex printers. APA

Truck has been specially formulated to resist the daily mechanical stresses and climatic conditions to which trucks and curtain sided vehicles are exposed.

APA also offers a matching transparent laminate film, which is available in both gloss and matt finishes to protect the printed images.



The company has also extended the scope of its APAWrap Film series, or vehicle wrapping vinyls to include a special range of films that have been especially developed for use in applications on sail boats, motor boats or indeed, any type of watercraft.

The films, which offer the optimum level of water resistance and durability, are available in the same

classic nautical colours of the Cast Film, while APA also offers two ultra transparent and water resistant films, GS110 and GS200, which have been specifically produced for application to the sections of the craft that are most exposed to abrasions, such as side projections and other areas that are in constant contact with the waterline.

For further information visit: www.apaspa.com



Extra elegance for high gloss prints

A division of Amari Plastics, Amari Digital Supplies (ADS) has added a new photo paper from Sihl to its expanding range of digital media. 3454 Solvent Paper PE 240 has been developed specifically for use with solvent, UVC and Latex inks.

The bright white glossy PE-coated paper will provide high-definition photographic-quality prints which are both water- and abrasion-resistant and can be used without the need for lamination for a wide range of longer-term interior applications, such as advertisements, indoor designs, photographic displays and special decorative effects.

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

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

For further information visit www.amaridigitalsupplies.com



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Equipment & Material

Reaching new Surfaces

Amari Digital Supplies has expanded its range of sign and graphics and digital printing materials with the introduction of a highly innovative and environmentally aware printable static cling film from Stafix in Finland.

The film dispenses with the need for any form of adhesive, relying instead on a static charge stored in the microscopic bubbles within the film that ensure firm adhesion to a wide range of substrates. It also eliminates all of the familiar problems associated with adhesive-backed or glue-applied materials, such as wrinkling, bubbling and stretching, whilst facilitating fast and easy application and purposeful removal with no messy residual adhesive.

Available in both white and clear formats, Stafix Litho, HP Indigo-compatible sheets and complementary UV inkjet rolls also have strong environmental credentials. The non-PVC films are made from 100 percent recyclable polypropylene, have no conventional solvent-based adhesives and can thus be disposed of, as required, without the problems associated with incineration and without emitting toxic fumes.

Stafix is recommended for indoor and short-term outdoor sign and display applications, such as in-store POS and promotional displays, street marketing and advertising campaigns, decals, posters and banners. It can be applied to and purposely removed

from a wide range of substrates, including the glass and acrylic commonly used in traditional sign and display applications, as well as more specialist surfaces like marble, wood, metal, brick and stone.

Depending on the prevailing environmental conditions, the films will adhere on average to any surface for up to three months and can be liberally removed and reused as required.

Stafix is available direct from Amari Digital Supplies or at local branches of Amari Plastics.

For further information visit www.amaridigitalsupplies.com ■



All round appeal

Despite its affordability, Metamark's recently re-formulated MD-FL400 event banner material ticks all of the right boxes in terms of weight, durability and base colour and is also the ideal choice for interior and outdoor applications where resolution and colour fidelity dictate the specification of a quality product.

MD-FL440 can also be used for projects where there is a requirement for large volumes of quality print as it is capable of rendering subtle gradation as well as the poppy colours so beloved by advertisers.

In terms of its construction, the

material, which can be used in conjunction with any modern wide format or flatbed printer using solvent, eco solvent, UV and Latex inks, is scrim supported and on the cool side of white, thus producing sparkling, high contrast highlights and very punchy, deeply saturated colours.

It also works well with all banner finishing techniques and yields a finished result that offers enduring quality in practically any application arena. Free samples are available upon request, for same day dispatch.

To request a free sample e-mail sales@metamark.co.uk

For further information visit: www.metamark.co.uk ■



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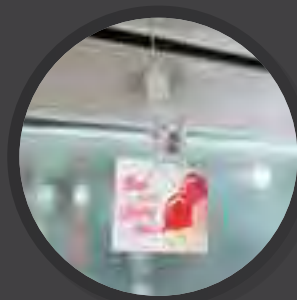
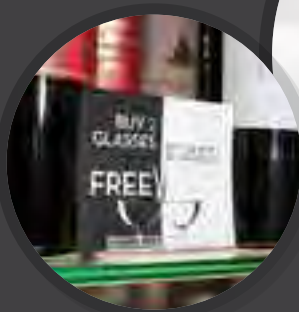
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Equipment & Material

Pop-up shops with professional appeal

Following the growing enthusiasm for Pop-up shops, Quadrant2Design, an exhibition stand contractor based in Poole, Dorset, is offering a ready-made solution.



Adapted from the company's Prestige Events System, a Swiss-designed modular solution that is already widely used throughout Europe to create exhibition stands, conference sets, retail displays and stands for all

types of corporate events, the Pop-up shop is constructed from lightweight, but extremely strong, aluminium pop-up frames.

It is quick and easy to build, without the need for either special tools or professional expertise and, since all Prestige graphics are panoramic and can be affixed to the erected framework using magnets, it is possible to achieve a highly individual look that properly reflects any desired branding. In addition, there is also the option to integrate brightly lit product showcases and 'floating-effect' digital screens to create a temporary setting that also has a permanent and professional appearance.

Quadrant2Design, who hold exclusive rights to the Prestige Events System in the UK, pre-build every stand, free of charge, prior to delivery in order to assure a fail-safe solution. Furthermore, all design concepts and visuals are provided free of charge and without obligation.

For further information visit: www.prestige-system.com

An alternative source of ACM

The high rigidity, strength and durability of Blackburn Metals' Aluminium Composite Panel (BCP), which comprises a polythene core sandwiched between two thin aluminium sheets, is particularly suitable for use in sign and display applications.

Building on the success of other popular brands of ACM, Blackburn Metals has developed its own range, which is up to a third of the weight, but offers the same level of

rigidity as more traditional sign and display panelling products.

All Blackburn's composite panels are available pre-finished in polyester paint, and come complete with a five-year product guarantee. In addition to standard colours, any colour is available subject to a minimum production quantity. They can be supplied in full sheets or, alternatively, each sheet can be cut to bespoke sizes and shapes, or manufactured into sign trays, if so desired.

The range is further complemented by Blackburn's Composite Traffic Panel, which was specially developed following collaborations with the manufacturers of reflective sheeting and rivets and complies to the Road Traffic Regulations of BS EN 128891/2007 and carries a 12-year warranty.

For further information visit: www.blackburnsmetals.com



Gripping Displays!

Stock Displays has broadened its inventory to include an extensive array of banner stands, fab banners and stock colour snap frames, but perhaps its most striking new addition is the 'Grippit', a range of frames comprising slats and a rubber section that enable notices or tile signs to be positioned easily and without the need for pins or magnets.

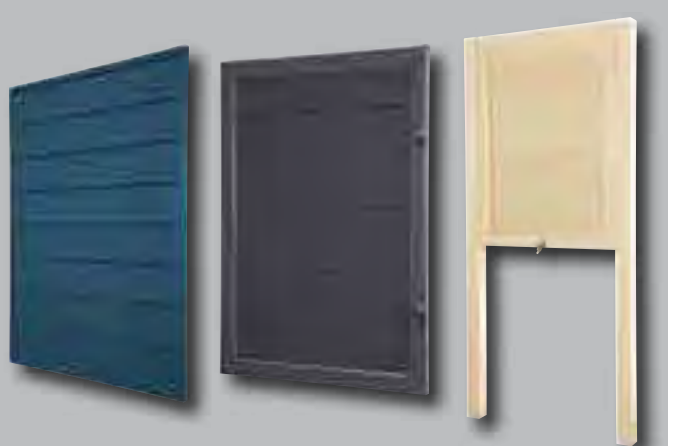
There are three options to choose from, including the Grippit Wall Frame, which has a slimline aluminium frame and is just 16mm deep, making it perfect for use in indoor locations. Light weight

and incredibly durable, it simply attaches to the wall to provide an interchangeable, yet cost effective display.

The Grippit Lockable Frame is housed within an exceptionally robust frame that features a 55mm wide, heavy duty profile and a high security lock and hinge system.

The Grippit Post Frames, which are ideal for displaying posters and messages in public locations, combine a high security lock with durable, 3m long aluminium posts to provide maximum visibility.

The Grippit system is especially popular for use in sensitive areas,



such as hospitals or schools, as the pin and magnet free noticeboard is easily cleaned, thus eliminating both the risk of cross contamination when changing notices, and the possibility of small components being misplaced.

Stock Displays offers all three products on a bespoke service, with a three-day lead-time.

For further information visit: www.stockdisplays.co.uk

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The Grain gets to grips with routing



Arguably the European market leader in the manufacture of three dimensional wooden sign systems, the Grain Sandblasted Sign Company produces signs that are both sensitive to the aesthetic of the businesses they represent, while also conveying a strong sense of environmental awareness.

In fact, the level of the Grain's business is such that it recently invested in a new CNC router. Peter Ratcliffe explained: "We already had a CNC machine, but, as the very nature of our business requires us to produce bespoke items very quickly using larger and thicker substrates, we needed something more substantial with a larger bed size in

Peter added that this was certainly a case when size mattered. He said: "We had severe space constraints as the machine needed to be installed under a mezzanine floor with just 2.35m of headroom, but happily, the Klever was one of the few machines that could accommodate this with the required extraction".

and speed – we couldn't be more pleased!"

For further information on The Grain visit: www.thegrain.co.uk

For further information on Biesse and the Klever visit: www.biesse.co.uk



Father and son team Peter and Sam Ratcliffe, who are co-directors within the company, are passionate about their sign sector heritage and this passion, coupled with their craftsmanship, ensures that they now service some of the best known names within the leisure, retail and entertainment sectors.

order to transfer our creative designs into the finished products that our customers deserve. So when the guys at software company Delcam recommended the Biesse Klever, which we went to see in action at Biesse's Daventry Technical Centre, it 'ticked all the boxes' as far as we were concerned."

The visit to Daventry also reinforced Peter and Sam's decision to buy Biesse. Peter confirmed: "We were impressed by Biesse's investment and commitment to the UK market and it was also great to meet the spares and front line support teams, which really filled us with confidence"

He goes on to report: "In terms of performance the machine's reliability is excellent and, on the one occasion when we experienced downtime (which was only a trip), we had an engineer on site the next morning – an impeccable level of service, especially when you consider that we are based in deepest, darkest Cornwall!"

The fact that the Grain can now achieve 3D milling has been a major advantage that has opened up new markets for The Grain who can now 3D mill MDF and HDU, something that Peter feels has definitely helped the company to win new business.

He concludes: "The Klever has been well worth the investment and I'd even go as far as to say that it has already paid for itself in terms of reliability



AXYZ helps double production

An AXYZ CNC router supplied by AXYZ International has helped double the production capacity of West Midlands-based Porter & Woodman.

The company is a major consumer of plywood and MDF used for a diverse range of products distributed by the various businesses within the group. This includes point-of-sale and signage solutions, such as chalkboards, blackboards, A-boards and menu and poster holders, as well as shop fitting and display units.

The AXYZ 4010 CNC router recently installed supplements an AXYZ machine purchased three years ago. The router is part of phase one of a £100,000 investment in CNC machinery that has enabled additional staff to be employed and fuelled growth as a result of the new

business that has now been secured following the installation.

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

Manager of the CNC Machining Shop, Colin Inchley added: "I am thrilled with the new machine and how it has helped increase our production capacity. It is much quicker and more efficient, but perhaps of greater

significance, it has assisted the group's expansion and secured new jobs. The addition of the 4010 router means we can split the workflow between the two machines to ensure that at no time is either tied up on a specific job."

The AXYZ 4010 router is part of the 4000 Series that is recognised as one of the most popular and robust routing, cutting and drilling solutions currently available. It provides a work area width of 1,524mm and lengths starting at 1,220mm, with incremental increases of 610mm. The machine can handle materials in excess of four feet wide by virtually any length, while the 150mm gantry clearance will accommodate thicker substrates.

The AXYZ 4010 router installed at Porter & Woodman incorporates a

seven-tool Automatic Tool Change (ATC) facility. In common with all AXYZ routers, however, it can be supplied with a host of optional production enhancements. Most recently, these have included new servo drives and the latest helical rack and pinion drive system that includes multiple gear teeth to ensure a more even distribution of the workload whilst reducing machine wear and increasing material feed rates. These production enhancements are further complemented with the latest A2MC Smart Console that eliminates 'bounce' and vibration caused by sudden acceleration or deceleration often experienced with other control systems and with the AXYZ Auto Zone Management System that provides a greatly improved material hold-down capability, as well as reducing or eliminating material wastage and machine downtime caused by incorrectly set vacuum valves.

For further information on AXYZ routing solutions, visit www.axyz.com

For further information on Porter & Woodman, visit www.porterandwoodmangroup.co.uk ■



Koolkut powers growth

Growth, while a good thing and a key goal for many businesses, also brings its challenges and for Lincolnshire-based Elite Signs, the issue of sheet material cutting loomed large among those challenges.

Established in 1998, the company originally cut Foamex and Dibond manually, with a blade and straight edge, buying other sheet materials in cut to size. This approach was fine while the business was small, but, as Nick Tinker, Elite's owner, explained, it fell short once the company began to grow. He observed: "We grew by about a third in the course of one year, which revealed the need for a great degree of flexibility and capacity."

In order to achieve that flexibility and capacity, Elite Signs needed to be able to cut sheet materials in house so that it would no longer need to wait for its suppliers to deliver materials for each incoming order. Additionally, Elite would be able to make use of off cuts, turning what was previously waste into saleable products.

Nick was aware that a moving-column vertical panel saw would be the best option, as it required only one man operation and would take up the minimum amount of space. In addition, it could be used to repeat cut a wide variety of materials, while entirely eliminating the need for the horizontal handling that can be problematic when working with both heavy sheets and vulnerable, flexible sheets, such as acrylics.

However, after thoroughly researching the market, Nick

found that most machines were exceptionally expensive, even when they were available second hand, so he was delighted to discover the Koolkut range from British panel saw specialist Sagetech, which is priced from £4,995.

"I was impressed," he recalled. "The Koolkuts were priced about the same, new, as many second hand machines, and it was immediately apparent that they're robust, solidly built saws. For the money, they are amazing."

Elite Signs' Koolkut KK21 is the largest saw in the Koolkut range, catering for sheet sizes of up to 3.1m by 2.1m. Its smaller siblings, the KK16 and KK12, cut sheets of up to 10' x 5' (3.1m x 1.6m) and 8' x 4' (2.5m x 1.25m) respectively. All Koolkuts offer plunge and bevel cutting, simple and compound angle cutting to the full length and breadth of the sheet, quick stops for easy precise and repeat dimensioning and mid-height supports for smaller work pieces.

The Koolkut range sits at the heavy-weight end of Sagetech's family of saws, capable of high-end intermediate industrial use, while at the other end of the spectrum, Sagetech's fully portable Zapkut ZK range offers a genuine vertical panel saw solution

to entry-level operators, while the Zapkut ZM units are mid-range solutions, providing many of the benefits of heavier duty units, such as a moving column design, at a fraction of the cost.

Able to cut a wide range of signmaking materials, including plywood, MDF, acrylics, Foamex, Dibond and solid aluminium, the Koolkut range offers greater versatility than guillotine and knife-blade cutting solutions.

With no exposed blade, nor the need to move the work piece during cutting, these saws are safer than common alternatives, such as table saws. The exceptionally robust frame and high-precision, sealed-for-life bearings offer more precise cutting and the vertical attitude removes the need for horizontal sheet handling, thus reducing the risk of injury and work piece damage. Cutting even the heaviest sheets is a genuine one-man job.

Installed in early 2013 Elite Signs' Koolkut KK21 has become an indispensable part of its armoury. Running every day and on busy days, more or less continuously, it is used for dimensioning Foamex and Dibond, and trimming off-cuts to size for use in customer projects. The saw is also frequently used to trim off the bleed on finished signs too.

Nick summarised: "The Koolkut has given us enhanced speed and



Tekcel

One of the UK's most innovative signage companies, F1 Graphics have taken delivery of the very latest Tekcel VSR 1540mm x 2540mm CNC routing system, to complement its recent investment in a new large format flatbed inkjet printer.

Darren Ware, owner of F1 Graphics explained: "We researched the CNC Router market long and hard, over many weeks, but couldn't find another system that came anywhere close to the Tekcel router. Not only in terms of its superior build quality and material hold down, but also with regard to its proven ballscrew and digital servo motor drive technology, which we consider to be essential for high performance, accuracy

flexibility, and contributed to stronger profits. It paid for itself within the first year. It's an absolute essential in the studio, and great value for money!"

For further information on Sagetech's vertical panel saw ranges, visit www.sagetech.co.uk.

For further information on Elite Signs visit: www.elite4signs.co.uk



the router of choice

and reliability. We were also very impressed with Complete CNC Solutions, Tekcel's exclusive UK and European distributors, who we felt confident could provide on-going support combined with a wealth of industry knowledge"

With the decision as good as made, a visit to the recent Sign & Digital UK exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham was enough to seal the deal and accordingly, F1 Graphics placed its order at the Complete CNC Solutions stand,

Knowing how important the drive technology of a router is to the overall accuracy and performance of the system, F1 was delighted to learn that all Tekcel routers feature class leading, ballscrew digital servo drive systems on every axis, thus providing

unrivalled accuracy and repeatability every time. The VSR also features a neatly placed multi tool change system that combines a choice of up to six tools with a powerful HSD 8Kw spindle motor. The new system is also fully equipped with the very latest 'Cut to print' camera registration technology, print finishing features and all out sign making capabilities, making the Tekcel router a true all-rounder.

Based in Derbyshire, F1 Graphics offers a huge range of high quality commercial sign and display products and with many years' of signmaking experience under its belt the company offers its customers a 'Turn Key' solution for premium products and services at extremely competitive prices.

Darren continued: "We regard it as our job to provide innovative solutions to signing problems and our inkjet printer and Tekcel router empowers us to do just that!"

Using the combined might of its two new acquisitions, together with the high quality solid carbide router tooling, also supplied by Complete CNC Solutions, F1 Graphics can now produce fast, efficient and superior edge finished routed products, straight from the machine, without the need for any additional edge cleaning processes.

Julian Sage, Managing Director of Complete CNC Solutions, commented: "We work hard to provide a comprehensive CNC router solution for all our customers,

whatever their individual system requirements and in this instance, thanks in part to the excellent preparation of essential services, such as power and air requirement installed by F1 Graphics, the installation of the VSR router was completed in just one day and the F1 production team was able to use the subsequent two days of onsite training to maximum effect, to the extent that, by the end of the second training day, they were running live jobs!

For more information on F1 Graphics visit: www.f1banners.com

For further information on Complete CNC Solutions visit: www.completecnc.co.uk



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Blame it on Agfa!



► **This month sees the introduction of a brand new section, together with its own dedicated website, which is designed to showcase all of the latest developments in the increasingly popular décor sector. Val Hirst reports.**

Frankly, I blame Agfa. Wandering around the recent FESPA Digital exhibition, feeling totally bamboozled by the explosion of new machines on offer, I stumbled upon a decorative confection

called the 'House of Asanti', which resembled nothing so much as a giant dolls house with the front missing. Each of its six visible 'rooms' featured walls, floors, furniture, soft furnishings and other equally arresting decorative effects, all of which had been created using digital printing technologies, or to be more precise, Agfa's digital printing technologies, since this was, I later realised, a subsidiary of the main Agfa stand across the aisle.

For me, it was the stand-out moment of the whole show, as it perfectly illustrated, in way a kick-ass printer spewing out a half completed poster never can, the infinite possibilities that are now available to anyone with a digital resource and a modicum of imagination.

But perhaps even more importantly, it also directly inspired the implementation of www.decordirections.co.uk, a new website that is designed to be the cyber equivalent of the House of Asanti, in as much as it will showcase everything that is new in the world of décor, including projects and products and all of the latest decorative ideas and application techniques.

Hopefully, both the site and this new regular décor section within Sign Directions, will appeal to sign and print companies who want to

flex their creative muscles and use their current facilities to capitalise on the new opportunities the decorative sector can offer.

In addition, we are also hoping that the site will attract the buyers of signs and graphics, as well as corporate, retail and interior designers, architects, marketing and advertising agencies and, indeed, anyone who has any sort of interest in furthering the scope of the decorative sector.

Of course, many sign and print companies are already enthusiastically producing a variety of wonderful decorative effects as part of their mainstream work, some of which are briefly featured overleaf and also appear in a more detailed format on the website.

If you have a project that you'd like to share, we'd be delighted to receive your information and photographs and also welcome any comments, views and observations you'd like to air.



Direct them to me at val@decordirections.co.uk

Meanwhile, if you are interested in capitalising on the possibilities offered by the decorative sector or need a little design inspiration, please visit www.decordirections.co.uk without delay! ■



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Graham and Brown | The Canaletto Building | London Book Fair | Stika.co

Impact & Inspiration

Impact



► Making an impact is something that comes naturally to global wall decoration manufacturers **Graham and Brown**, but when planning its stand for this year's **Heimtextil** exhibition in Frankfurt, Germany, it enlisted the help of **Antalis UK** to execute one of the event's most spectacular and sensational stands.

Antalis suggested that Graham and Brown use digitally-printed YUPOTako, a UV 1270mm self-adhesive film to cover furniture in bold black and white designs to represent different parts of the house and to provide the perfect backdrop for Graham and Brown's vibrant wall papers and wall graphics. These were complemented with digitally printed floor graphics using **Drytac's Floorprint**, overlaid with **Drytac Interlam**

Pro Emerytex to create an extremely durable, non-slip floor covering.

For further information visit:
www.antalis.co.uk ■

▲ Working with leading brand identity and visual communications expert **Socrates, W&Co** was recently commissioned to design, manufacture and install large LED light boxes, to provide an enticing panorama of the city skyline as it appears from the upper floor windows of the

Canaletto Building, a block of luxury waterside apartments located in fashionable east London.

The 16.5m wide backlit panorama was created from two large format light boxes, which featured a curved fabric face. Manufactured in multiple sections, the light boxes were joined together on site for use within the ground floor showroom apartment.

For further information on W & Co visit: www.w-co.uk ■





▲ When Manchester-based **Trafford Signs** was asked to create a meandering and inspirational 'river' of words, which would entice and lead visitors into the **London Book Fair** across the public pedestrian spaces around Earl's Court, it turned to its materials supplier of choice, **Soyang Europe**, for advice.

Soyang suggested that its Alumigraphics product, a rugged aluminum foil based material, which conforms and adheres to the texture of any surface to which it is applied, was the perfect choice. Highly durable and available in either smooth or high-grip surface finishes, Alumigraphics is resistant to both heavy pedestrian and rolling vehicle traffic, as well as

all types of climatic conditions, making it suitable for use in myriad indoor and outdoor applications. It can be printed on large format UV curable, latex and solvent digital printers or via the screenprinting process

For further information on Trafford Signs visit: traffordsignsltd.co.uk

For further information on Soyang Europe, visit: www.soyang.co.uk



▲ Weymouth-based **Stika.co** began in 2012, when founders Alex and Cristina Smith created a printed light switch cover featuring a cartoon character for their young daughter's bedroom. Now barely two years later, the company has sold 10,000 stickers through eBay and receives 150 orders per day via its website!

To help it keep pace with demand it invested in a **Mimaki CJV30-60** integrated cutter, which it purchased through Mimaki reseller **PaperlinX**. The new machine perfectly fulfils Stika.co's requirements, delivering vibrant colours and crisply detailed print, as well as the requisite cutting capability.

Using Orajet 3164 100mic vinyl as its material of choice, Stika.co has now developed an impressive portfolio of light switch stickers, which include everything from cartoon based images, through to the abstract art and the company is also expanding its range to include mobile phone skins and complementary covers for television remote controls too.

**For further information on Stika.co visit: www.stika.co.
For further information on Mimaki equipment visit: www.hybridservices.co.uk.
For further information on PaperlinX visit: www.paperlinx.co.uk**



▲ Twyford based **Pools Plus** sought the assistance of **Signarama Reading** when it wanted to provide its outdoor show area at the Wyevale Garden Centre with a facelift.

As well as being tasked with installing new external signage, Signarama Reading was also

briefed to revamp two of the existing buildings on the site, using 3mm printed foamex to produce a graphic

applied to the interior of the window of one building to create the illusion that it is, in fact, a sauna, and cladding a second building in aluminium composite to which it applied digitally printed vinyl to produce the image of a flourishing herbaceous border that is a seamless continuation of the surrounding garden.

For further information visit: www.signarama-reading.co.uk

For more detailed information and photographs on all of these and further projects, visit: www.decordirections.co.uk



ESMA launches PID conference



► **ESMA, the leading, non-profit, European association for specialist printing manufacturers of screen, digital and flexo technology, has announced the launch of a new conference, Printed Interior Decoration (PID), which is scheduled to take place on 26th-27th November 2014 in the Radisson Blu Scandinavia, in Düsseldorf, Germany.**

The conference, which aims to provide a comprehensive overview on the increasing use of printing technologies in interior decoration, will include 16 individual presentations that between them will cover all aspects of design, statutory regulations and the most appropriate printing solutions, plus information on materials and equipment. In addition, four keynote speakers will also provide useful insights into this new and dynamic marketplace, which is being driven by the growing demand for personalisation and bespoke decoration for domestic, corporate and retail interiors, as well as bars, restaurants, hotels and public buildings of all types.

The conference will cover four specific areas, namely wall decoration, floor decoration, furniture and textiles and it is

anticipated that it will attract an audience comprising interior, retail and textile designers, together with signmakers, print companies of all dominations, exhibition stand makers and shopfitters.

The cost of attendance is set at €595.00, which includes lunches, a networking dinner, presentations and access to the accompanying exhibition. There is also a special early-bird price of €495.00, for delegates who register now, and a preferential rate for ESMA members.

For further information contact ESMA direct on Tel: +32 16 894 353, e-mail: pb@esma.com or visit: www.printedinteriordecoration.org and www.esma.com

SDEA Directory out now



The new look SDEA Retail Display Directory, the essential buyers' guide for creating retail interiors, is out now.

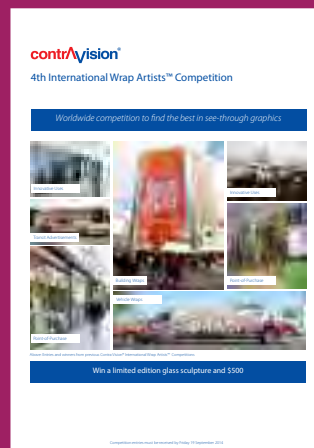
Brimming with new ideas, creative concepts and innovative retail display solutions, it showcases over 100 leading designers, manufacturers and suppliers of

specialist retail display products and services. All are members of the Shop and Display Equipment Association (SDEA).

For a limited period, a free copy of the directory is available to retail display buyers and specifiers who contact SDEA on Tel: 01883 348911 or via e-mail at directory@sdea.co.uk and quote this article.

For further information visit: www.sdea.co.uk

Calling all wrap artists!



For the fifth time, Contra Vision is sponsoring an international competition to find the best see-through window graphics, advertisement, sign or other designs placed on the windows of any building, vehicle, POP, entrance doors or partitions.

All winners will receive a limited edition glass sculpture by an internationally recognised artist, while the overall winner will be rewarded with a limited edition glass sculpture, plus a cheque for \$500.

All entries submitted must feature projects that have used Contra

Vision Perforated Window Film, Contra Vision Impress (formally known as Contra Vision ORSTM) or Contra Vision XRTM technologies.

The competition is split into five categories, including Building Wraps, Point of Purchase, Vehicle Wraps, Transit Advertising and Innovative Uses and in addition, there will also be an overall winner.

See-through window graphics enable advertising, branding, signs or décor on glazing to be viewed from the outside, but seen through from the inside, thus facilitating application on areas where otherwise they would not be acceptable. Well designed, imaginative see-through graphics help to promote the overall use of see-through graphics, inspiring others to consider it as a useful communication medium and the Contra Vision Wrap Artists competition is designed to generate interest by showcasing the best see-through graphics worldwide.

The deadline for the receipt of entries is Friday 19th September 2014 and projects may have been executed at any time up to that date from 1st January 2012. The winners will be announced on Wednesday 22nd October at the SGIA 2014 Expo in Las Vegas, with winners being notified seven days prior to that date.

To enter, contact Dee Barrington-Ford at dee@contravision.com to request an entry form, or visit www.contravision.com and follow the Wrap Artists link, where entries can also be submitted electronically.

For further information visit: www.contravision.com

For all of the latest décor related projects, products and news, visit: www.decordirections.co.uk. ■

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Awards underway!

The BSGA British Sign Awards are now well underway, with the BSGA declaring itself delighted by the level of support the new scheme has received from the industry.



David Catanach, Director of the BSGA reported: "We now have virtually a full complement of sponsors for the awards, which were launched to provide our industry with a showcase for its incredible creativity and skill. However, without the support of our sponsors, turning the idea into reality would have been very difficult."

3M led the way, taking on the mantle of corporate sponsor for the whole awards programme and were soon joined by **Metamark** (Small Signmaker), **Vink Lighting** (illuminated), **Nationwide Platforms** (Roll-out Programme), **Complete CNC** (Retail) and **Vink Digital Signage** (Digital Signage Project).

David continued: "Now, we are

pleased to announce that these companies have been joined by **Soyang Europe**, who are sponsoring the Wide Format Project of the Year, **William Smith** who are supporting the Vehicle Graphics Award and **Decor Directions** (the new website dedicated to expanding the horizons for sign businesses) who are supporting the Interior Signage category. We are

also delighted that **Signs Express** have agreed to be the sponsor of the Product of the Year, which looks like being one of the most hotly contested categories."

There are still one or two categories open for sponsorship. Any business that would like to be involved should contact David Catanach on Tel: 0845 338 3016.



The Cat will host



Bob 'The Cat' Bevan MBE, a legend on the after-dinner speaker circuit, will host the event. Probably the first person to have been honoured by HM the Queen for after dinner speaking, Bob is certainly the only after-dinner speaker to be selected

for an entry in 'Who's Who' and the only one to have had a poem written for him by the Duke of Edinburgh!

While now in demand around the world as an entertainer, Bob actually comes from the corporate business world. For 14 years he was PR Director for a major PLC and then gave up the chance to be head of PR for ASDA to

concentrate on show business.

He has spoken at 77 or the 92 Premier and Football League clubs, as well as countless cricket, rugby and other sporting functions. He is also a very experienced awards host and has appeared at events as diverse as Birmingham City Council, the Promo Show Awards, the UK Warehousing Awards and the Airline of the Year Awards.

"We are delighted that Bob 'the Cat' Bevan has agreed to host our

awards," said David Catanach. "His appearance will add sparkle and humour to what promises to be an outstanding event."

The awards will be presented at a Gala Luncheon to be held in the Holte Suite at Aston Villa Football Club on Thursday, October 30th.

Tickets are available at £55.00 each or £450.00 for table for 10. For further details visit the awards website at www.britishsignawards.org.

About the awards

The British Sign Awards, organised by the BSGA, offer an opportunity for any sign business in the UK to gain recognition for outstanding work produced since March 1st, 2013.

Entries must be received by September 1st so now is the time to start thinking about which project, or projects, your company will put forward to the judging panel. Entering the awards is simple and free – just go the awards website at www.britishsignawards.org and

complete the online entry form and upload images of your project.

The awards are open to all UK-based signmakers (membership of the BSGA is NOT an entry requirement) and judging will be undertaken by an independent panel of sign industry experts.

There are a total of 10 signmaker categories, with awards being presented for Architectural, Illuminated, Wayfinding, Interior and Retail signs. There are also awards for Vehicle Graphics and

Wide Format Printing, a category for Digital Signage Project of the Year, which recognises the increasing importance of electronic media in modern signage, and an award for the roll-out programme of the year, where implementation of a signage programme across multiple sites is the entry criteria.

The final signmaker award is for the Small Signmaker of the Year. The category is open to any sign business that employs between one and five people. Small businesses form the backbone of the UK sign industry and the award is designed to recognise the creativity and ingenuity of this sector. Smaller

businesses are encouraged to enter their projects in both this and other relevant categories.

In addition, there will also be a special award for the Sign Product of the Year. This award, which will be judged by a panel of signmakers, will highlight the latest innovations. Manufacturers and suppliers of machinery, materials and technology are invited to submit their entries, but we will also be asking industry experts to supply nominations for this award too.

For further information on entry requirements contact Ray Hirst on Tel: 01623 883797 or email to info@britishsignawards.org

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A well kept secret

You may not know the name but you've certainly seen – and probably used – its products, which range from literature holders to display stands, merchandising strips to menu holders, plus a whole stack of filing trays too. Val Hirst reveals the well-kept secret that is Deflecto Europe.





Deflecto's European headquarters is located on an unassuming industrial estate in Newport, Gwent, where it currently churns out a dizzying array of products that are categorised as 'office desktop', which for the uninitiated, include the ubiquitous plastic filing trays, desk organisers and card index boxes that are the mainstay of many an office.

'So what?' you might ask, but actually there's much more to Deflecto Europe than that. The company, part of the Deflecto Group, which boasts a global Head Office in Indianapolis and wholly owned manufacturing facilities in the US, Canada and China, as well as the UK, also comes under the auspices of Jordan Group Industries, an American manufacturing-based company that boasts revenues of \$1.2 billion.

What's more, Deflecto's full product portfolio, which is detailed in a new 102-page catalogue, encompasses a comprehensive range of sign holders, literature displays and point of sale products, all of which are manufactured from the materials extruded in its Chinese factory.

Andy Page, the company's European Sales & Marketing Director explains that, as a trade only supplier, Deflecto manufactures the products sold by industry friendly suppliers in each sector, who frequently rebrand them under their own names. In fact, he also reveals that, since its acrylic sheet is soon to be sold through some of the sign and display sector's best-known suppliers, signmakers will be able to experience for themselves the high level of quality, that he claims, is synonymous with Deflecto, albeit unknowingly. And the same goes for the literally hundreds of different banner hangers, hooks, clips, connectors and fasteners and cable ties it provides too.

Andy, along with European Marketing

Manager Natalie Robbins, is fairly new to the company and their arrival has directly led to a major reassessment of its capabilities, with Andy observing: "Up until recently, the main emphasis here was on the manufacture of the office desktop range, but although that has been and continues to be a very successful area for us, other channels of the business were not fully used". He enumerates these as being an obsession with quality manufacturing, an expertise in fabrication, which was not previously utilised in the UK, a high level of flexibility, in terms of both manufacture and delivery and surprisingly short lead times.

Andy continues: "Although we've never really marketed it, we've always provided a bespoke fabrication service for clients who required something outside our standard product collection and, very often, such bespoke products are automatically added to our portfolio if we feel that there would be sufficient demand to warrant it. However, now we are offering a dedicated fabrication service for customers who require something a little bit different, whether it's sign, display or POS related. What's more, despite fabrication taking place in China, we can offer a 24 hour design and quotation service and produce a prototype, ready for client's inspection in seven days."

Natalie Robbins adds though that, if this service is received as enthusiastically as the initial response indicates it will be, then Deflecto Europe has the option to initiate its own home-grown fabrication facility in Wales, using the two currently vacant units that make up part of its Newport facilities.

I am shown some of the frighteningly complex client samples that have recently been created in China and am invited to compare the quality between the original sample and

the Deflecto prototype. In each case, I have to admit that in terms of both material and construction, the Deflecto version is visibly superior.

Andy Page ascribes this to the fact that with the Deflecto products, quality is assured every step of the way. He says: "The fact that we control all aspects of the process, from the extrusion of the material to the final item, means that we can guarantee that the finished product is as good as it possibly can be. What's more, we can offer a full range of finishing processes too, including heat bending, etching, laser engraving, silk screen printing and display construction – pretty much everything a customer could ever need!"



For its signs and displays, Deflecto uses three ranges of materials – its standard commodity range that is crafted from PS, its acrylic premium range and, for the more environmentally aware customer, a special 100 percent recycled acrylic, which also offers a very classy satin finish. Showing me an example of a sign holder made from this material, Andy remarks that it recently attracted the attention of one major retailer who appreciated its anti-glare properties to the extent that it immediately placed a large order with its usual Deflecto supplier!

Which according to Andy is exactly as it should be. He confirms that the company take their trade supplier

status very seriously indeed, although he agrees that if Deflecto's services are more widely publicised they might receive direct approaches from end-users. He reflects: "It's something that may well happen in the future, but really we feel that our strengths lie in manufacture rather than direct sales. We are very happy to be the back room boys who provide really good products for customer facing organisations to sell and if they want to rebrand them under their own banner, then that's absolutely their prerogative."

Natalie adds the company has built up a lot of close relationships with their supply chain over the years and would thus be very loath to jeopardise them. She says: "I can see that in the first instance we might produce samples for an end user, but in every case, they would be referred to one of our supplier partners if and when it came down to placing an order. For us that's definitely the best modus operandi."

Before I leave Deflecto I have whistle stop tour of its factory, and for the first time in ages, I see a real manufacturing set up with lots of heavy duty kit spitting out office accessories in a host of trendy colours, which is complemented by a bustling despatch department that is sending products out all over the country.

There's no doubt that this is a company that knows precisely what it's doing and has the wherewithal to do it and now, with the addition of a new and highly energetic and motivated team at the top, who knows what Deflecto Europe will do next?

For further information and for a full list of Deflecto suppliers, visit: deflecto-europe.com



Spend, spend spend!

This spring, two exhibitions, Sign & Digital UK and FESPA Digital, were the perfect launch pads for a plethora of new products while also providing welcome confirmation that finally, the economy is back on track. Val Hirst reports.

Things got off to a good start at the NEC, where Sign & Digital UK took place on 29th April-1st May, attracting more than 6,000 visitors and once again confirming its status as the UK's premier event for the sign, display and digital printing sectors.

The lively three-day event was a busy and bustling show, which featured a host of exclusive national and international product launches, equipment demonstrations, new show features and more than 30 daily seminars and workshops, proving itself to be the perfect venue for sign and print companies who were determined to spend, spend, spend!

Expressing his delight at the show's success, Event Director Rudi Blackett, said: "This year, the exhibition has surpassed everyone's expectations, with exhibitors reporting brisk sales across every day of the exhibition. There certainly was that great 'buzz' in the hall that you get with a successful show and we are thrilled that it

delivered for our visitors, exhibitors and supporters."

The event also confirmed its reputation as being the one to visit to see the latest equipment and materials from the industry's biggest names. New products that were premiered included the new **Jetrix KX7-D printer** from **InkTec Europe**, the latest **Mutoh ValueJet 1638X** from **Colourgen**, Ricoh's new **Ricoh Pro L4100 Series** large-format roll-to-roll printer and **Roland DG UK's** first ever dedicated flatbed printer, the **VersaUV LEJ-640F**.

HP also presided over the first European showing of its new Latex 300 printer series, while **Atlantic Tech Services** showcased the **AEG Voyager Pro 2050 UV** printer. **QPS** also launched Nazdar's brand new 202 Series digital ink and **Epson** introduced its new range of high-speed, four-colour large-format **SureColor SC-T** printers.

Sales were strong across the three days of the show, with **MTEX** selling an **MTEX 5032** direct-to-textile printer to **Borney UK** on day one.

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



Graphic Station's Paul Fox, I-Sub Digital's Emma Plant and Hybrid's Peter Mitchell at Sign & Digital UK 2014

Ink specialist **Colorific** also reported that it had an extremely successful show with over 20 orders being placed for its **UV Lightbar technology**.

The exhibition saw the first worldwide sale of Mimaki's newly launched **JFX200-2513 UV LED** flatbed printer, which was unveiled on the stand of Hybrid Services, Mimaki's

exclusive UK and Ireland distributor. The machine was snapped up by **Graphic Station** just minutes after the doors opened, with the Romford-based business, purchasing the system through Mimaki reseller, **i-Sub Digital**, in order to expand its wide format print services into the fine art and photographic sectors.





(l-r) David Joyce and Sandra Wright, PaperlinX; Moray Campbell, Allander and Jane Rixon, HP

For **PaperlinX**, the investment in exhibiting at Sign & Digital UK was also well spent, with the paper merchant securing orders for digital printers from Canon, HP, Jetrix and

Mimaki totalling almost £300,000! The sales included a brand new **HP Latex 330** to Moray Campbell, Director of Edinburgh-based **Allander**.



Darren Taylor, director of Fusion, makes the purchase official with Tom Gent, engineering manager, Perfect Colours



(L-R) Peter Bray, managing director of Durst, poses with Mark Starkie and Andy Morris from Print and Cut and Jason Burroughs, Perfect Colours

Perfect Colours reported prolific sales, selling 20 HP Latex 300 series printers, eight HP Designjet Z6200 printers, two Omega 2s and one Durst Rho P10 160. It was also in the happy position of being able to sell both the Omega 2 printer and the Rho P10 160 demonstration machines that graced its stand within a matter of hours! The **Durst Omega 2** was purchased by Darren Taylor of **Fusion** who was won over by the machine's flexibility, while Mark Starkie and Andy Morris from

Print & Cut snapped up the **Durst Rho P10 160**, explaining that its high level of productivity would perfectly complement the quality output of the Omega 2 that it already owns.

Eventureworks acquired a **Roland VersaArt RE-640** wide-format printer from **Quality Print Services (QPS)**, shaking on the deal on the first day of the show. Eventureworks revealed that it would be using the machine to bolster the output of its specialist cycle jerseys.



The Roland VersaArt RE-640 was demonstrated at Sign and Digital UK 2014 before being installed at Eventureworks's printroom





Ricoh UK celebrated its Sign & Digital UK debut by accumulating significant leads for its **Pro L4100** wide format latex printer series, **Pro C751** digital production press and SaaS-based Marketing Asset Management (MAM) solution, **MarcomCentral**.



Roland DG was aided and abetted on its stand by customer and real-life magician, **James Anthony**, who performed jaw-dropping magic tricks using Roland DG branded props.

The company reported that it had its most successful Sign & Digital UK to date, enjoying a huge amount of interest from visitors eager to see the show debuts of a number



of recently launched machines, including the **VersaUV LEJ-640F**, the **VersaUV LEF-20** and the **VersaCAMM VS-i**.

Rob Goleniowski, Sign and Graphics Business Manager, Roland DG UK reported: "We had another great Sign & Digital UK with a constantly busy stand, and particular interest being shown in our new Roland DG Vers UV LEJ-640F flatbed printer, which really drew the crowds and the VersaUV LEF-20 desktop UV machine, which was outputting onto a range of different shaped novelty items"

Roland also put the machines on its stand to good use throughout the event, by using them to produce



free promotional banners for two UK charities: **Ronald McDonald House Charities** and **Children's Hospice South West**.

As well as participating in the exhibition, the **Amari Group**, which comprises **Amari Signs & Graphics**, **Vink Lighting** and **Graphic Printing Technologies**, also hosted a glittering evening event for 140 staff and customers at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. As well as a drinks reception and a four course dinner, the event also featured a guest speaker, **David Daziel** the founder of integrated design consultancy **Daziel and Pow**, who shared his experiences of working with retailers such as fashion chains Jigsaw and Next, department stores including Debenhams and John Lewis and Argos and Primark. His views, which were both provocative and insightful, certainly left attendees with much to consider concerning the ever-changing whims of clients!



The company's splendid stand provided the perfect showcase for Amari's portfolio of sheet materials, printers, cutters and ancillary equipment from GPT, plus Vink Lighting's wide selection of LED illumination and its newly launched collection of digital signage networks, while another company within the Amari Group, **Amari Digital**

Supplies (ADS) presided over a separate, frenetically busy stand that displayed its comprehensive range of flexible media to perfection.

Soyang Europe used the show to demonstrate that, true to its word, it really has got every surface covered. Taking centre-stage on the company's stand, alongside a mind-blowing array of printable textiles, meshes and canvases, were two new products that were also making their European debuts. The first, **G-Floor**, a high density, clear, flexible PVC substrate, which can be printed on the underside, using either UV or solvent inks on a grand-format printer, had actually been used to provide the

stand's attractive flooring, while the second new product, **AlumiGraphics**, which comprises a rugged, aluminium foil base material that conforms and holds to the texture of any surface that it is applied to, can be used on both floors and walls, inside and outdoors.

Reassured by their almost immediate return on investment, most exhibitors were keen to secure their favoured stand space at next year's show, with Faversham House Group reporting a 33 percent increase in re-bookings compared to last year. With a third of the space already signed up for the 2015 event it was confirmed that the show will move into Halls 17 and 18 to accommodate both the growing demand for space



and the anticipated upturn within the industry generally.

Sign & Digital UK 2015 will take place on 24th-26th March.

For further information visit: www.signanddigitaluk.com



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FESPA Digital 2014 was the largest show to date in the event's eight-year history. Held in Munich on 20th-24th May, it attracted a record 16,766 unique visitors, and boasted a total visitorship of 24,954, with 42 per cent of visitors returning for more than one day.

This exceptional figure, which was up 40 percent on the previous largest show held in Hamburg in 2011, underlined the eagerness of visitors to fully explore the many product innovations demonstrated by the 536 exhibitors, as well as taking advantage of FESPA Digital's extensive education programme. In total, the exhibition attracted visitors from 121 countries world wide, with the largest number coming from Germany, Italy, Austria, the UK and Spain.



For the second time, the event also incorporated European Sign Expo, which fielded exhibitors showing non-printed signage products, lighting and digital signage networks and hosted its own dedicated one-day conference programme.

Award was presented to A-Design in Russia for its entry in the Garment and Functional Printing category, while the Best in Show Award went to the German company ZEGO Promotion & Logistik for its entry in the Garment Decoration of the Year category. The Young Star Award went to Eleni Bourazanis from the UK who has won a six-month internship with Mimaki.



FESPA's Las Barrow presents ZEGO Promotion & Logistik with the Best in show award

Other UK winners included Press On, who scooped the prize for the In-store Project of the Year and Raccoon, who added the Outdoor and Vehicle Project of the Year to its growing portfolio of awards. Ireland's Horizon Digital Print walked away with the award for the Integrated Print Campaign of the Year.



Fespa's Michel Caza presents the People's Choice Award to A-Design

The Awards, which were judged at the recent FESPA Global Summit, were showcased online so that votes could be placed for the People's Choice of the Year category and all short-listed entries can also be viewed online throughout the global tour of FESPA events in 2014 / 2015.



Mimaki's Mike Holsten presents Eleni Bourazanis with the Young Star Award

At a celebration dinner held on the third night of the show, FESPA announced the winners of its 2014 Awards, which attracted entries from 24 countries, with the top prizes being presented to entrants from Europe, Asia and Australia.

Next year will see the return of big FESPA, the screen + digital + textile printing exhibition, which will take place on 18th-22nd May 2015 at the Koelnmesse exhibition venue in Cologne, Germany.

Following months of voting online, the 2014 People's Choice of the Year

For further information visit: Visit: www.fespa.com



Exhibitors participating in the show included **APA**, who presented its new Titanium Matt Chrome film (CH/089.1), using a video to detail the application process on the prototype car that was also the eye-catching centrepiece of its stand. Visitors were also able to see and test the company's wide range of films for use on walls, T-shirts, vehicles and glass.

A wide range of self-adhesive films, including a new printable metal-effect film in gold and silver, was shown by **ASLAN**. The new film, PrintMetal DryApply ASLAN CPL 22, features a special top coating that enhances its suitability for digital printing and cutting.

Specialist manufacturer of foamed



leading status in the wide- and super-wide digital printing sector, **EFI** demonstrated its latest UltraDrop greyscale print head technology on the VUTEK GS printer range. The technology will now be a standard feature on all GS series printers. The company also announced its agreement with 3M to offer 3M's renowned MCS (Matched Component System) warranty for a period of seven years on vehicle graphics produced by a combination of designated 3M films and overlaminates and specified EFI VUTEK printers and inks.



Canon Europe launched the Océ Arizona 6100 Series, an entirely



Agfa Graphics showed the latest additions to its portfolio of UV-curable wide-format inkjet printers, including two models from the new Anapurna i-series, as well as the new Jeti Titan S/HS, all of which were fuelled by the company's proprietary UV-curable inks and driven by Agfa's dedicated Asanti workflow software.

PVC sheet materials, **Brett Martin** showcased its full range of products. Taking centre stage was the ultra-smooth and ultra-bright Foamalux range in different formats, along with the company's Marlon polycarbonate and Marpet-g FS PETG sheet products.

Reinforcing its perceived market-



new Arizona series printer platform designed for sign and display companies who produce over 30,000m² of printed rigid media per year. Incorporating the six-colour 6160 XTS and the seven-colour 6170 XTS, the Arizona 6100 Series extends the market's access to Arizona print quality, application versatility and ease of use.



Durst used the show to introduce several new machines. Amongst the line-up was the latest addition to the company's popular Rho series, the Rho P10 200/250 HS, the Rho 312R and the Rho 1300, all of which are the most productive printers in their class, together with the Rhotex HS, the fastest printer for the production of soft signage.



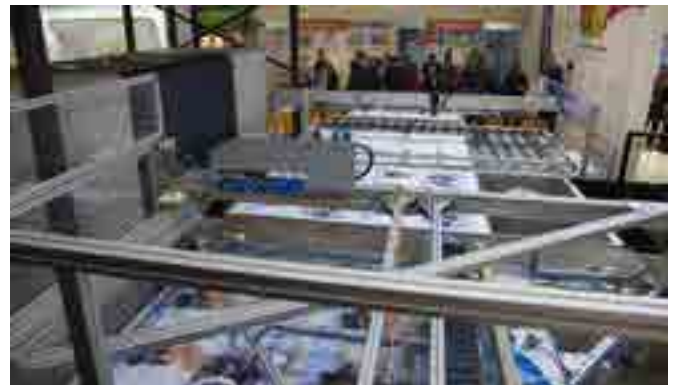


Visitors to the **Fujifilm** stand saw no less than three new printers, the Onset R401, the Acuity F series and the Vybrant F1600. Together with a number of new products in its Euromedia materials range.

In addition, Fujifilm used the vent to announce that **Caravan Industries** had placed an order for its second Inca Onset to complement its previously purchased Inca Spyder 320, Inca Onset S20 and Acuity LED 1600 and Acuity 2545 printers.



(l to r) Enis Kraiem, Regional Sales Manager - Graphic Systems Division, Fujifilm Middle East FZE with Nasser Elras, General Manager, Caravan Industries



Fujifilm also announced that the **ImageData Group**, one of the UK's leading print service providers and a Fujifilm business partner, has invested in the world's first Inca Onset R40i UV flatbed printer.



Canadian manufacturer of large-format digital printers, **Gandy Digital** launched its SL8TE Hybrid and True flatbed entry-level UV inkjet platforms. The SL8TE offers four- and six-colour printing plus white and a clear varnish ink capability.

Also shown for the first time were the Pred8tor and Domin8tor high-volume printers utilising Ricoh Gen 4 printheads and incorporating a number of hardware, ink and software enhancements

printhead drive and ink re-circulating systems series, the technology of which is fully compatible with Xaar 1001 and 1002 printheads.



INX Digital demonstrated the two new industrial-grade printers that have been added to the Evolve range of machines, including the TP series, reputedly the first printer to use the new Xaar 1002 industrial-grade printheads.

Within the Evolve range, INX Digital has also expanded the JetINX



The Italian ink manufacturer, **J-Teck3** demonstrated its J-Cube disperse inks for Kyoceva and Ricoh print heads. The direct-to-fabric version of J-Cube, PK (Kyoceva) and PR (Ricoch), were also on show, together with the newly developed J-MelaMine water-based graphic pigment for printing on melamine paper used in the décor market.



Developed for short-term display applications in the retail sector, the new RePop lightweight dry-apply film was demonstrated by **Lintec Graphic Films**. It is said to be the company's easiest-to-apply-and-remove film produced to date.

Other graphic films on display included the UV-printable E-2200ZC and eco-solvent-printable E-1000ZC designed for longer-term applications, both of which are available with an over-laminate to provide excellent scratch resistance.



Visitors to the **Neschen** stand were captivated by the five-metre high, free floating textile sculpture that was crafted from Neschen's Backlit Artist Premium light-textile material, which provided the stand's stunning centrepiece. Other products on display included Easy Dot, which had been used to cover large parts of the stand's walls, Easy Fix 180 MSP and Filmolux UV Ultra Gloss, together with a large selection of printable wallpapers that had also been used to decorate the stand.

Marking its 25th anniversary, **SA International** demonstrated the widely specified Flexi family of signmaking, digital printing and CAD/CAM CNC machining software solutions. They include the intuitive PhotoPrint range of print-and-cut workflow packages and the award-winning PixelBlaster print-to-finish production software

Seiko Instruments demonstrated its range of 'added value' printers, including the ColorPainter M-64s, which handles a diverse range of media, including photographic paper, canvas, backlit, white paper and wallpaper formats.

A range of new digital textile printing solutions was demonstrated by **MTEX**. It comprised the MTEX PAD designed to pre-treat and coat materials prior to printing, the MTEX 5032 PRO, a second generation of the popular MTEX 5032 textile printer and the MTEX W&D, a new combined washer and dryer unit developed specifically to emulate traditional methods of fabric finishing.



A highlight of the **Summa** stand, the F162 cutter is capable of processing a wide range of media, including corrugated card, foamed and composite boards and vinyl. The F162 Booster Pack has enabled a number of new performance enhancements, including optimisation of the motor management of the cutter and modules, new media loading procedures and easier tool handling.

Summa also demonstrated the new DC5 thermal transfer printer/cutter, along with the S Class 2, Summa F and SummaCut plotter/cutters.



Global developer of inkjet technology, **Xaar** introduced its new 1002 Amp, the first in a new range of piezo-electric drop-on-demand printheads



designed specifically for more technically advanced applications. The printhead combines precise drop placement, consistent drop volume and high frequency jetting with a variable drop size capability to deliver accurate fluid control essential for such applications.



SwissQprint launched its latest Nyla 2 large-format flatbed printer. Although the size of the machine is identical to that of its predecessor, the printer table is actually 25 per cent larger, making it the largest printer in the company's portfolio.

Swiss digital cutting and finishing specialist **Zund** demonstrated its G3 M-2500 tandem cutting system. It features a router and the EOT-250 (Electronic Oscillating Tool) for processing thicker substrates, with all of the cutting solutions featuring the latest version of the Zund Cut Center (ZCC) digital workflow suite ■



Printer Parade

With many companies taking the opportunity to present their latest printers at Sign & Digital UK and FESPA Digital, Mike Connolly provides a round up of some of the most industry relevant new releases.

AEG launched the first in a new series of AEG wide-format UV-curable printers, which are manufactured in the EU and distributed in the UK by Atlantic Tech Services.



The attractively priced Voyager Pro offers the novel advantage of a metallic ink channel among its versatile configuration options and employs Xaar's latest 1002 printhead technology to deliver drop placement accuracy and generate uniform drop volumes, even when using the most demanding of fluids, such as metallic ink formulations.

The **2.05m Voyager**

Pro 2050 is a combination flatbed and roll-fed wide-format printer that is complemented by the **3.2m Voyager Pro 3200** and two entry-level models with 1.65m and 2.2m hybrid options.

The Voyager Pro series offers a variety of ink options, including the base inkset of CMYK, which can be enhanced with the addition of a light cyan and light magenta and also offers the further option of white and metallic inks, plus the addition of clear varnish if required. Additionally, orange and green or violet and red can also be integrated for users who require these alternatives. All VoyagerPro series printers can

be upgraded to carry further ink channels at the customer's site.

For further information visit: www.aeg-professional-printers.co.uk and www.atlantic-ts.com

Following a redesign, **Agfa's Anapurna i-series** of UV-curable inkjet printers moves up-market, delivering both more productivity and quality at a highly competitive price point. Incorporating the latest generation



of high-resolution printheads, the **Anapurna M2050i** achieves a productivity increase of at least 50 percent, in addition to optimised dot positioning and higher image quality. It also features Agfa Graphics' 'white ink management' solution for highly reliable white printing.

The 3.2m wide dedicated roll-to-roll UV-curable **Anapurna M3200i RTR** is a first-in-industry mid- to high-end printer with a broad application scope at an entry-price point. At FESPA, it was shown with dual roll capability to maximise efficiency, while the new mesh option facilitates printing onto mesh material without the need for a liner.

All Anapurna i hybrid engines are prepped for integration with an ABF (automatic board feeding) system for enhanced productivity and convenient multi-board feeding and also feature a brand new contemporary design too.

For further information visit: www.agfa.com



of the **SureColor SC-F7100**, a highly productive, reliable and flexible 64-inch digital dye sublimation transfer printer. Developed and manufactured wholly by Epson, the SureColor SC-F7100 features an enhanced auto take-up reel with improved tensioning, a new post-platen heater and an optional print drying system to ensure greater reliability and efficiency when producing textiles roll-to-roll.

The SureColor SC-F7100 is ideally suited to the production of mid to high volume producers of soft signage and to users who want to capitalise on the growing requirement for short to medium volume textile production.

EFI is bringing LED to a greater number of companies with the introduction of the **EFI H1625 LED** printer, an ideal machine for users who want an entry-level printer with the advantages of LED, greyscale, standard white ink, and single-pass multilayer capabilities. The printer's variable droplets provide eight levels of greyscale for superior image quality, fine gradients and strong solid colours. With a 1.65m-width and fast changeover between rigid and flexible materials, the versatility

Whether driven by changing trends in fashion, or used for the production of promotional material, the SureColor SC-F7100 makes print runs of items including soft signage, sportswear, apparel, accessories or gadgets, both efficient and easy.

The enhanced take-up reel, combined with its improved tensioning, reduces maintenance, so that users can be confident that the printer can be successfully used without constant monitoring. Additionally, the post-platen heater, and the optional Print Drying System, ensures that prints dry quickly, saving users time.

of the **EFI H1625 LED** printer offers users the opportunity to generate greater profits and a fast return on investment, for a low total cost of ownership.

For further information visit: www.efi.com

Building on the success of the **SC-F7000**, **Epson** has responded to customer demand for a textile printer engineered for short to medium print runs with the launch



based and environmentally friendly UltraChrome DS ink. The roll-fed CMYK SureColor SC-F7100 works with all major dye sub transfer papers and a wide range of substrates with polyester coating across a broad selection of media, including fabrics, garments and rigid substrates, such as fibreboard, metal and plastic.

It offers speeds of up to approximately 58m²/hour, or typically 30m²/hour in two-pass production mode and uses a 1.5-litre bulk ink system and long-lasting one-litre (1.08kg) ink pouches.

For further information visit:
www.epson.com

Fujifilm's new Acuity F Series, which has been specifically designed for volume sign and display production on rigid media, delivers exceptional print quality at speeds of up to 155m²/hr, and is available as a six- or seven-channel model.

media, including uneven substrates.

Finally, the Acuity F is equipped with an Automated Maintenance System (AMS), which cleans the printheads in less than 25 seconds per colour, thus ensuring that the nozzles are clean and ready to print at any time, further maximising the printers' productivity.

For further information visit:
www.fujifilm.eu/uk

HP showcased its newly launched



HP Latex 300 Printer Series and **HP Designjet Z6800** Photo Production Printer at FESPA Digital.

The new **HP Latex 300 printer series**, comprising the

HP Latex 360, HP Latex 330 and **HP Latex 310**, are designed for easy operation in small spaces. The entry-level, 54-in HP Latex 310 Printer offers the benefits of HP Latex in a compact model with front-media loading to maximise the production area. The 64-in HP Latex 330 printer combines application versatility with affordability, handling larger, heavier rolls and printing up to 50 m²/hr. The higher-volume, 64-in HP Latex 360 printer prints up to 91 m²/hr and increases application versatility with an ink collector for porous textiles. The printer also features automatic front-to-back registration for printing double-sided banners.

The new **HP Designjet Z6800** printer increases productivity with print

speeds up to 50 per cent faster than previous HP devices. Additionally, it is uniquely designed to deliver high-value indoor applications and gallery-quality prints, with durable output that last up to 200 years, using advanced colour management features, including an embedded spectrophotometer, as well as HP Chromatic Red Ink for a wider colour gamut and uniform gloss.

For further information visit:
www.hp.com

Mimaki unveiled the JV300-130/160 family of eco-solvent inkjet wide format printers. Combining speeds of up to 105m² per

hour, with new printheads, which can easily manage both solvent and water-based inks to deliver a broad range of wide format printing applications, the printers, which are available in 1.3 and 1.6 metre widths, also support a wide range of materials and applications.

They can be used in conjunction with the new **SS21 eco-solvent ink** in CMYK, light cyan, light magenta and white, together with orange and light black, to extend the colour gamut and improve gradation performance.

Alternatively, the Mimaki JV300 can run Sb53 water-based sublimation inks for printing onto polyester to produce bright colours and facilitate high-density printing.

When using SS21 inks, the printer lays down a denser layer of solvent white ink to provide excellent

opacity and brilliant colours on either transparent or dark/opaque materials. The newly developed SS21 orange ink can be used as a process colour to closely match 92 percent of the PANTONE colour chart, thus enabling the faithful reproduction of corporate colours together with accurate replications of food and other natural products. Mimaki's new light black inks and superior grey-balance control produces accurate greyscale printing without unexpected colour shifts. Smooth, non-grainy skin tones and greyscale gradation are also highlights of this new printing capability.

Mimaki's second new release was the highly anticipated new **JFX500-2131 LED UV flatbed** printer, which delivers a winning combination of high speed, productivity, quality and green advantages.

Offering printing speeds of up to 60sq.m/hr, the JFX500-2131 is 2.5 times faster than conventional JFX printers from Mimaki and brings new efficiency, quality and price/



The Series' true flatbed architecture supports the broadest range of rigid media, including irregularly shaped, heavy, smooth or pre-cut materials and also facilitates the production of multi-layered applications, double-sided or large prints over multiple boards in perfect register, and edge-to-edge printing.

A key feature of the Acuity F is the dual print zones, each with its own vacuum system, which can be used independently to facilitate printing on to substrates of up to 3.05m x 2.5m, 50.8mm thick. Non-stop production is possible, as one board can be staged while the other is being printed.

Designed for flexible productivity, and featured for the first time on an Acuity, the device's pneumatic registration pins require minimal operator involvement. These ensure quick loading in perfect register, as well as its high-flow vacuum system that can perfectly hold down any rigid



performance to the sign and wide format printing sectors.

With a bed size ideally suited to the 8' x 4' rigid sheet market, there is a choice of vibrant process colour inksets, including white, clear and primer ink options.

For further information visit:
www.hybridservices.co.uk

Mutoh unveiled three brand-new printers, including a compact 24" wide roll-to-roll printer and two LED UV printer models.

The ValueJet 628 is Mutoh's first 24" wide roll-to-roll printer for print, sign and print-to-cut applications. Equipped with the latest generation micro piezo printhead, this eight-channel machine delivers high quality prints for both indoor and outdoor applications.



High opacity white ink can be used to make colours pop and the clear ink can be layered into gloss or matt finishes to provide eye catching 3D textures and embossed effects.

The other show debutant was Roland DG's first wide-format flatbed printer, the **VersaUV LEJ-640F**, which offers a print area of 1600 x 2500mm wide, and facilitates the creation of the broadest range of POS displays, packaging prototypes, outdoor and indoor signage.



Appearing at Sign & Digital UK for the first time, **Ricoh** introduced its new **Ricoh Pro L4100 Series** latex large format printer, a roll-to-roll machine that comes in two models, the 130cm (Pro L4130 and the 160cm Pro L4160. It supports up to seven colours in various configurations, including CMYK, orange, green and white ink.

The LEF-20, which has a bed size of 508mm x 330mm can be used in conjunction with Roland's advanced ECO-UV inks, available in a CMYK + white + clear configuration to turn an exhaustive range of objects, including promotional items,

Capable of printing CMYK, plus white and gloss inks, onto both rigid and flexible substrates up to 150mm in height, the LEJ-640F offers sign and print companies the flexibility

The ValueJet VJ-426UF is a desktop A3+ flatbed LED UV printer that facilitates direct printing on a wide variety of solid materials and objects up to a thickness of 7cm. Using Mutoh's newly developed LED UV VOC-free inks, it offers a maximum media size of 483 mm x 329 mm and is aimed at the producers of short run personalised gifts, packaging prototypes, awards and specialty industrial items, as well as labels, decals and signs.

The Ricoh Pro L4160 and L4130 deliver high print productivity and quality as a result of a range of advanced technological innovations, including Ricoh's own piezo electric printheads. The series also meets the market need for products that reduce environmental impact, printing through low power consumption and the use of aqueous latex ink.



For further information visit: www.ricoh.co.uk

Roland DG premiered two recently launched machines at the shows, the first of which, the **VersaUV LEF-20**, is its biggest and fastest desktop UV machine to date and offers sign and print companies the opportunity to diversify their business and target new markets.



novelty gifts, souvenirs, awards, USB sticks and phone cases, into highly profitable, creative and personalised items, as well as facilitating the production of small-scale signage.

needed to produce the broadest range of creative, high quality and profitable applications, including POS displays, packaging prototypes and outdoor and indoor signage.



The VJ-1626UH is a 64" (165 cm) wide hybrid LED UV printer that prints on a wide variety of rigid and flexible materials, including heat-sensitive substrates. It uses Mutoh's new VOC-free LED UV CMYK, white and varnish inks to produce high quality trade show graphics, POP, interior decoration, small lot packaging prototypes, banners, and posters.



It uses **Roland's ECO-UV ink** to ensure high density printing in a wide range of colours and supports three ink configurations, CMYK+White+Gloss for the largest range of applications, CMYK+White+White for opaque white printing on transparent and dark-coloured substrates and CMYK+Gloss+Gloss for an extensive range of 3D, doming or embossing effects in striking gloss and matt finishes.

For further information visit: www.mutoh.eu

For further information visit: www.rolanddg.co.uk

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- Greenguard Certified Inks
- LED Low Power Consumption
- Ultra White Inks

Worthwhile investments



Based in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland, **Plus2Print** is a printing company with a strong online social media presence and thus acquires a substantial portion of its business via platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. However, when it came to investing in a **Mimaki CJV30-100**, the purchase came about through more old school means!



Established in 1990, Plus2Print is a family business currently run by brothers, Alan and Gavin Oakes, who took over from their father 15 years ago. Between them they have degrees in business studies and fine art, backed up by experience in print and graphics and have used their combined skills to good effect to drive the company forward.

When the time came to invest in new printing technology a chance meeting at a set of traffic lights was all that was needed to partner Plus2Print with the right machine for

its requirements and budget.

Gavin Oakes explained: "We just so happened to see a **Dennis D Evans** van parked at a set of traffic lights and I knocked on the window for a brochure - it really was a fortuitous meeting!" Dennis D Evans, the long standing Belfast-based Mimaki reseller, was able to demonstrate the speed and superior print quality of the Mimaki CJV30 integrated printer/cutter, which it installed at Plus2Print shortly after.

Gavin Oakes continued: "The Mimaki CJV30 fitted into our setup perfectly and the seamless transition from printing into cutting has been a great asset. We were looking at wide format to push our business forward to the next level and meeting the team at Dennis D Evans was a real breakthrough. It also confirmed to us that vehicle graphics are great way of promoting any company's brand and providing a professional image; all of which can now be easily achieved with the Mimaki."

The CJV30 Series printer/cutter is an award winning integrated print and cut solution and offers flexibility with its four sizing options from 60cm through to 1.6m. Combining high performance with superior print quality, it delivers production print speeds of 17.5m²/h and runs with Mimaki's SS21 fast drying, outdoor durable inks. It comes complete with Mimaki's RasterLink Pro RIP software, featuring continuous print and cut, 16-bit rendering and a whole host of user-friendly machine specific tools,

as well as a gold warranty as standard.

For further information on Plus2Print Tel: 028 4461 2225 or see their Facebook page: Facebook.com/plus2print.

For further information on Dennis D Evans visit: www.devans.co.uk.

Trade UV litho printer, **Oriel Printing**, has embraced digital technology with an investment in **Fujifilm's Acuity 1600 LED** to provide customers with high quality and cost-effective prototypes.

Richard Simms, the company's Managing Director explained: "We had been monitoring the digital landscape for a while in search of a UV inkjet solution that could be easily integrated within our existing production environment and would enable us to offer on-demand and cost-effective quality colour proofs on various substrates."

Fujifilm's Acuity LED has the capability to print six colours plus white and clear, and is also extremely versatile in terms of material handling, both of which were fundamental in Oriel Printing's decision making process. Richard commented: "We deal with a variety of materials, such as plastics, foil paper, vinyl and carton board, and we were impressed by the Acuity LED's ability to print directly onto substrates up to 13mm thick, using white ink and clear varnish options."

Oriel Printing is planning to use the Acuity LED both to produce short-run labels and packaging proofs without incurring the costs and make-ready times of a conventional litho press. Richard added: "We are excited about our first dip into digital UV printing and we believe that our clients will appreciate receiving an accurate proof of their jobs on the actual

carton board that will be used for the full production run."

Richard is also satisfied with the Acuity LED's green credentials, which fit with Oriel Printing's ethos. He observed: "UV LED technology consumes far less energy than conventional UV lamps and lasts up to ten times longer. We are always happy to reduce power costs and have already invested in energy savings projects, such as the installation of solar panels on the roof of our premises to generate sustainable electricity."

Finally, Richard has no concerns about the level of service he expects: He confided: "We have an established relationship with Fujifilm as a long-standing and reliable supplier and what's more, Fujifilm's XMF workflow



has already optimised our production environment."

For further information on Fujifilm visit: www.fujifilm.eu/eu/products/graphic-systems/

For further information on Oriel Printing visit: www.orielprinting.co.uk

Lincoln-based **Venture Signs & Graphics** recently installed an **Epson SureColor SC-S30600** printer to expand its print capabilities and bring more of its wide format print work in-house. The company bought the printer from **SMGG**, the commercial graphics division of **Stanford Marsh Group**.

The SureColor SC-S30600 Printer was selected for its efficiency and reliability, alongside its excellent reputation for printing on to vinyl media. Venture Signs is primarily using it for signmaking applications and vehicle graphics and its acquisition recently enabled the company to tackle a 50m hoarding print project with no difficulties whatsoever – something that would



have been nigh-on impossible prior to its installation.

The SC-S30600 was also used to excellent effect on another eye-catching commission that involved the wrapping of eight support vehicles and two exhibition units for the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance service. Following its completion of the job, Venture Signs & Graphics was praised for both the quality of its expert printing and its application expertise, with the Air Ambulance Service claiming that

the fleet's distinctive yellow livery, together with its Charitable Trust branding, helped the helicopter and supporting exhibition unit to attract a 30 percent increase in visitors at the recent Waddington Air Show.

Designed to offer efficient and environmentally-friendly production at the lowest total cost of ownership, the SureColor SC-S30600 enables sign and print companies, such as Venture Signs, to cost-effectively expand their service offering. It can be used to produce everything from

posters, signs, banners, backlit panels and POS to vehicle wraps, interior decorations and exhibition displays.

With a wide range of roll media supported, users can reliably and cost-effectively print on to vinyl, canvas, clear film and photographic paper, plus a range of popular banner substrates, at up to 64-inch (162.6cm) width.

By enabling Venture Signs to bring previously outsourced work in-house, the Epson machine has enabled it to exercise greater control over both the quality of the output it delivers and the speed at which it can turnaround jobs, thus providing a higher level of customer service, to its customers.

Explaining his company's choice of the SC-S30600, Keith Archer from Venture Signs said: "We were looking for a printer to boost our production and the SureColor SC-S30600 was highly recommended by a number of people, with the Epson printheads being described as 'particularly impressive'."

As well as its purchase of the SC-S30600 Venture Signs also acquired an Easy Mount EM 1600 SH laminator and Wasatch RIP software and took full advantage of the free-of-charge Epson SureColor Academy training day that helps to ensure that end users achieve the very best results from their new machines.

Keith concluded: "We decided to approach SMGG after seeing a number of positive customer testimonials in the trade press, which were backed up by personal recommendations and happily, we weren't disappointed by our choice – SMGG was very responsive to our needs and the whole installation was a simple and hassle-free experience. We'd be happy to recommend both the machine and the supplier!"

For further information on Venture Signs & Graphics visit: www.venturesigns.co.uk

For further information on SMGG visit www.smgg.co.uk



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This month, **Mark Godden** has a special message for signmakers...



Because you're worth it!

Among the most appealing commercial features of the sign and graphic sectors, as seen through the eyes of at least some of its practitioners, is that the industry's products can be, and often are, sold to the end-user for a price determined on a basis other than 'costs-plus'.

Instead of having to unravel a product to understand its cost, and then having to apply a percentage mark-up, sign and print companies are often accorded the none-too-common luxury of being able to declare what a job's worth, and making that the price, leaving the bank manager to laugh all the way to wherever it is bankers go to bury their bones.

Disagree with me if you like, but I imagine there's something a bit joyless in getting up in the morning to do nothing more creative than slap a fixed margin on stuff and then move it out the door. I recognise though, that in some businesses, there's little or no latitude for doing more. The margin you can achieve is actually a pretty hard-wired reflection of how attractive, you, what you do, or what you make, is to the person you're selling it to and that's a limiting factor. Let's drill into this a bit.

If you sell locally grown, common-or-garden crops from a stack of boxes at the side of the road, you'll get X for them. However, grow them in what you can genuinely claim to be an organic practice and wash them before putting them on sale and you'll get X, plus a factor, for the value you've added. Dice them and put them in a bag and the price gets a bit higher again. Print a brand on the bag and put them within arm's reach of an audience that places a premium on convenience and your product is 'worth' more still.

The reason I'm re-visiting the subject of pricing, and not for the first time in this forum, is that I had a light bulb

moment the other day. I was visiting a sign company in the north of England and there, in a smart meeting/ante-room off its production floor, was a wall-mounted sign. I don't propose to name the company, or go into too much detail here about the sign, although I will, subject to the agreement of the people involved, share it in greater detail at some point in the future. For now, it suffices for me to use the experience to drive home my point.

The sign, as I've said, was mounted on a wall, on neat little satin stand offs as it happens. In terms of manufacturing practice it comprised nothing more than a bit of cutting/weeding/basic application/laminating - that's all. The materials used were equally familiar - an etch film, a silver film, a sheet or perhaps two of acrylic. The sign could claim some novelty in the net effect it achieved when its parts were brought together and it certainly piqued an interest in me. I'd estimate (and it is an estimate) that thirty-ish pounds worth of materials went into it and a bit of labour - for the sake of argument let's say it cost fifty pounds in total.

However, if that sign were to be re-tasked to an end-user's purpose and made according to his design, my view is it ought not to leave the premises for less than two-hundred pounds. Cost multiplied by about four or even more, in other words. How's that for a return on the materials, labour and other costs? What makes the sign in question worth that kind of money? The answer is, the willingness of someone to happily pay it.

I'm convinced that countless jobs pass through the hands of sign companies for far less than those jobs are notionally worth. That's not always a bad thing. If the bloke that made the sign in question supplied it for a price that registered with his client as being great 'value', then a cause was arguably well served. It's easy to take this too far though. It's possible to sell into value, and still make an enhanced margin.

If you're bearing with me at this point in the hope of seeing some prescriptive in support of a winning pricing strategy, then I'm going to have to disappoint you - it's not coming. Instead, what I hope to do is to buoy your confidence with a veneer over the top of what's a very deep subject and take you to the point where you're prepared to test the waters and maybe ease your overall pricing in an upward direction.

For starters, and let's get this out of the way quickly - you're worth it! I've said it before, and will say it yet again, you're worth it. Signmaking survives as a specialisation in a rapidly expanding opportunity often referred to as 'print' and it survives for very good reasons. There's a raft of skills supporting your badge of honour beyond pressing the button and getting a print out of a wide-format printer. An obvious example might be, you can wrap flat materials around far from flat things, such as cars. Others can't.

There's a sentiment that's doing the rounds, which suggests that customers in search of stuff they know to be printed don't actually

discriminate much on the 'what and whom' side of the equation. For this reason, what I'd call 'commercial printers', the guys who may have traditionally output business cards and brochures and so on, are now being asked for banners, signs and window graphics too. Many have responded and they're now among us, our brethren armed to the same cause. Interestingly, capital expenditure, and I realise that I'm generalising here, rolls off these guys. Cost of entry to get into sign printing is not a lot when compared to the cost base that underpins most commercial printers. They know how to sweat assets and get a return on investment, but how developed is their sense of what things are worth?

I don't think we're there yet, but there's no doubt that increased capacity helps to drive down prices and more people able to print more stuff looks a lot like increased capacity to me. Think though, it's only the capacity to produce we're talking about. Capacity to apply well, to design in an exemplary fashion, to serve the needs of a customer like he was the last customer on earth, to produce work of an uncommon quality - all of that is in rather shorter supply and it always will be.

Sometimes, you need to affirm your talents to yourself. Look at the last great thing you did and ask yourself the question - does this encapsulate a skill that justifies a premium to a discerning buyer? You know the answer. Now, go and sell your work - for what its really worth!

Mark Godden
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