

# WhatTheyTh!nk

OCTOBER 2020

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## A MATTER OF DEGREES

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# KODAK WHO?

**W**hen you think of Kodak, your first thought might be of capturing that “Kodak Moment” with a camera and owning that visual record for a lifetime. That slogan first appeared in 1961, and became part of the “global” language, which has since found a place in the Oxford Dictionary.

Kodak’s founding by George Eastman in 1888 was a brilliant move, designed around the selling of inexpensive cameras and creating an annuity making large margins on film, paper and chemicals for years after the camera sale. They ultimately developed (no pun intended) as of 1976 as the global company synonymous with photography accounting for 90% of film and camera sales in the U.S. alone.

Their products went beyond consumer cameras like the Brownie, Instamatic and others, to the commercial photography, graphics arts market and movie industries. To support that volume of consumable sales, they created Kodak Park (now called Eastman Business Park) in Rochester, N.Y., near their headquarters.

Enter the digital revolution, where images could be stored on media other than photographic paper, processed with chemicals. Like many new technologies in their infancy it took years for it to gain acceptance and stabilize. While Kodak tried to make a go of it, like many other companies, they found the competing interests of their legacy business in their way. They were, however, able to continue to maintain and even expand their role in graphic arts through the manufacturing of offset and flexo plates and workflow software. The volumes and margins would never reach those

of their heyday, but it gave them some room to try to decide where they should pivot to next.

Additionally, while many people don’t think of Kodak as one of the production inkjet pioneers, Kodak’s inkjet roots date back to the 1970s. In 1983 Kodak acquired Mead Digital Systems, founded in 1972, which introduced its first commercially available inkjet product in 1976. Kodak initially acquired the company as a wholly owned subsidiary then fully merged it as Diconix, introducing the first portable inkjet printer in 1984. In 1993, Diconix was acquired by Scitex, who further developed the technology and launched two Versamark production inkjet products in 2001. Kodak reacquired Scitex Digital Printing in 2004 and never looked back.

Kodak’s involvement in production inkjet didn’t stop there. While the Versamark technology and product line continues to evolve, in 2009 Kodak introduced Stream and in 2017 Ultrastream, inkjet technology along with new lines of Prosper production inkjet products and many OEM relationships. This, in effect brought them back to their original business model, since they can now sell the hardware in the form of printheads, and supply the ink and consumables for years to come.

Lately, Kodak has been in the news for their interest in manufacturing core pharmaceutical component chemicals. To many this seemed like an “outside play,” something Kodak knew nothing about, when in reality it goes to the core of their heritage dating back to the beginning in 1888. Does that mean that Kodak is abandoning their graphic arts, movie, production inkjet and workflow software businesses? Of course not, it is just a continuation of how a manufacturing company reinvents themselves to leverage their expertise and resources to continue to evolve and grow. ●

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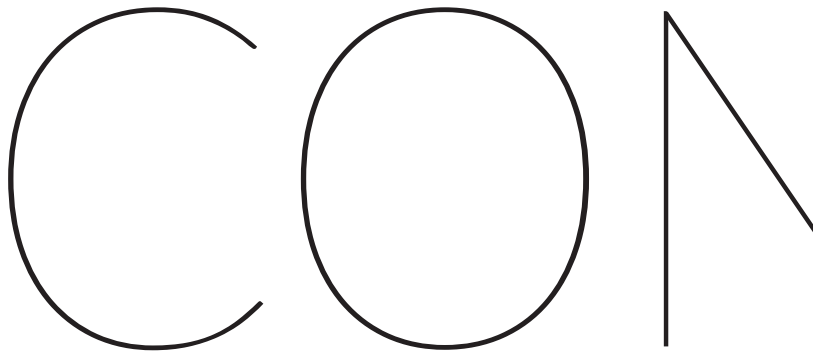
Published by WTT Media, Inc.  
2038 Ford Parkway #218, Saint Paul, MN 55116

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PrintingNews.com—the web portal representing content from Printing News, Wide-Format & Signage—is devoted to delivering you timely news and multimedia content on a daily basis.

WhatTheyThink (ISSN 2642-3189) (USPS 500-850) Volume 44, Number 1 is published ten times per year in January/February, March, April, May, June/July, August, September, October, November, and December by WTT Media, Inc., at 2038 Ford Parkway #218, Saint Paul, MN 55116. Periodicals postage paid at Saint Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WhatTheyThink, 2038 Ford Parkway #218, Saint Paul, MN 55116. Subscriptions: Individual subscriptions are available without charge in the U.S. to qualified subscribers. Publisher reserves the right to reject non-qualified subscriptions. Annual subscription prices in the U.S.A \$95; Canada \$125 USD; all other countries \$150 USD. Printed in the USA. Copyright © 2020 WTT Media, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recordings or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission. WTT Media Inc. does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any person or company for any loss or damage caused by errors or omissions in the material herein, regardless of causation. The views and opinions in the articles herein are not those of the publishers, unless indicated. The publishers do not warrant, either expressly or by implication, the factual accuracy of the articles herein, or of any views or opinions offered by the authors of said articles.



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# LANE CHANGERS

# AND GAME CHANGERS

*Competitive diversification with inkjet*

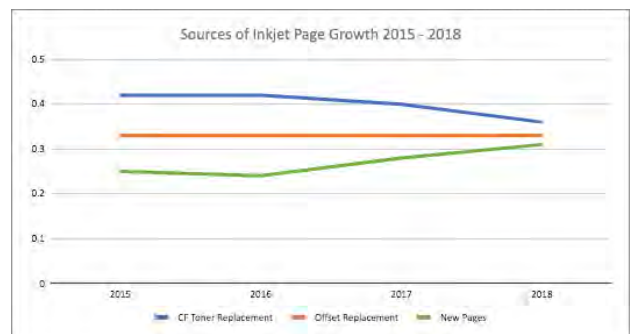
Once upon a time, digital printing for transaction printers and direct mailers meant over-printing mono toner on pre-printed shells. Then full color toner came along and enabled personalization, improved response rates and faster turn-times for direct mail, but it was a bit too slow and a lot too pricey for bills and statements.

When full-color inkjet became viable for customer communications, adoption was rapid and wide spread across most transaction print organizations producing more than 30 million images per month. Full-color toner continued to gain traction with direct mailers and, as color quality improved, direct mailers have also taken on inkjet to such an extent that digitally produced direct mail images exceeded offset in 2018, according to I.T. Strategies.

Naturally, these changes had economic benefits for the transaction printing and direct mail companies using inkjet, but these segments weren't the only ones affected. Before the digital transition, all of that volume also required a commercial print product in the form of rolls of corporate letterhead or direct mail shells that inkjet quickly made redundant. Commercial printers were the net losers for much of the digital revolution and particularly with inkjet. It's no wonder that commercial printers long had an attitude of "never inkjet." Inkjet was the enemy that cannibalized pages.

Despite the fact that transaction printers and direct mailers were not specifically targeting commercial printers with their transition efforts, the impact was significant. At a time when inkjet annual page volumes were consistently growing in double digits, a big chunk of that growth was coming at the expense of commercial volumes.

Drawn from "The Continuous Feed Ink Jet Production Market-2017" from I.T. Strategies, Figure 1 shows that a full third of inkjet page growth in each year between 2015 and 2018 was driven by reductions in offset volumes.



Source: I.T. Strategies

The pull from offset continues steadily even as toner replacement declines and the volume of new inkjet pages begins to increase. At the time this study was published, sheet-fed inkjet volumes were still in their infancy. B2 sheet fed presses started hitting the market about eight years ago, targeting commercial

and other graphic arts applications. But they did not offer the same compelling cost model to commercial printers that continuous inkjet offered transaction printers and direct mailers. In 2015, the Canon i300 became commercially available, followed by the Xerox Brenva in 2016. Like their continuous cousins, the devices were more of a draw for transaction printers and direct mailers, but they still added to the pull of volumes out of commercial print shops.

Fast forward to 2020 and Canon and Xerox have both upped their sheet-fed game with the Canon iX Series and the Xerox Baltoro to directly pursue the commercial printing market. Landa now has a production B1 press targeting commercial printing and their partner, Komori will have a fast-follow in 2021 with the NS-40 B1 press.

In the past two years, leading continuous feed OEMs such as Canon, HP, Kodak, Screen and Ricoh have all delivered new devices supporting high-coverage, high-resolution devices that drive superior print quality on offset stocks.

In fact, prior to the pandemic, most production inkjet OEM development and marketing expenditures were being driven toward buyers in the commercial printing market. Prior to the pandemic, that was working very well for the OEMs and their customers and once COVID is out of our health and economic systems that success is expected to continue. However, just as adoption of inkjet in transaction printing and direct mail had a knock-on effect on commercial printers, the adoption of inkjet in the graphic arts space may have some side-effects for other markets as well.

### Inkjet changes the game for everyone.

What we have learned from early adopters of inkjet and the impact on those markets is that companies who buy inkjet often see significant changes to their business model as a result. A company may buy inkjet to meet a particular need, but quickly find that there are more things that they can do. In fact, often the productivity of the devices forced companies to go and look for new things to do because they had so much remaining capacity on the device after their existing work was run.

The economies of scale are tremendous on

continuous feed inkjet, so not running your device at high capacity is like throwing away money. With transaction printing, it was very natural to look for other volume to fill in production peaks, and often that volume came from direct mail, workbooks and directories. When companies can do more with their press, they can also look in more places for volume. They don't have to stay in their lane to compete anymore.

In a 2019 survey, Inkjet Insight found that most transaction printers and direct mailers have become "lane changers" deriving less than half of their revenue from their stated segment focus.

As Figure 2 shows, 70% of direct mailers, 58% of transaction printers and 53% of in-plant operations surveyed were "lane changers."

Data from 120 direct mail companies indi-

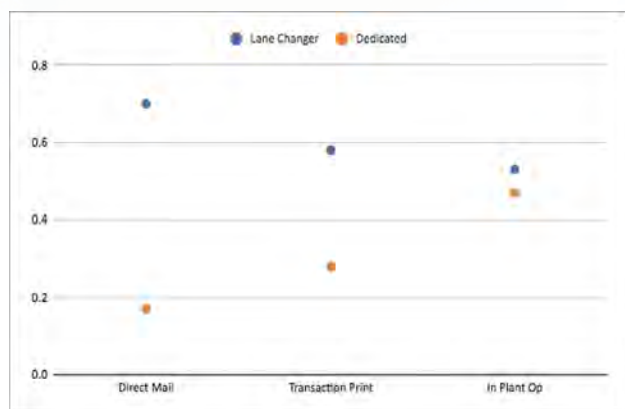


Figure 2: Percentage of Lane Changers and Dedicated Operations by Segment (Direct Mail, Transaction Print, In Plant Operation)

Source: Inkjet Insight 2019 Data Analysis

cated that only 17% earned more than 80% of their revenue from direct mail services. Out of 60 transaction printing organizations surveyed, only 28% earned more than 80% of their revenue from transaction printing services. This is less surprising since transaction printers typically offer non-print, e-delivery and archiving services, and programming can also be a large revenue source. However, the in-plant operations survey data was intriguing because it showed a strong correlation with inkjet adoption.

Of the 38 large in-plant operations reviewed, 47% remain dedicated to their core business. Drilling down on the 47% dedicated in-plants, only one company has inkjet. Conversely, when looking at the 53% of in-plants who have branched out,

40% of those companies have inkjet.

In-Plant operations are incredibly diverse, so a sample size of 38 companies is too small to know if these differences are driven by the industry supported or the type of print focus of the organization (commercial, transactional, direct mail, books, signage, etc.) but it does warrant further analysis.

### Getting Ready for Change

Changing lanes isn't always simple. While your inkjet device may be able to handle a variety of work, that doesn't mean that your company knows how to sell or service that work. Direct mailers who have added aspects of transaction printing to their business may need more robust programming and data protection services as well as more finishing and mailing equipment.

Transaction printers moving beyond low coverage envelope mail needed to learn a lot more about color and media than they did before. They will also be selling to a very different client segment in marketing as compared to operations. It can be a lift, but it's happening. Direct mailers and transaction printers are competing and, with increasing frequency, merging.

Now, commercial printers are getting into the inkjet game. Many have added inkjet to their offset (and toner) press portfolios. Like companies in other segments, they want their inkjet press busy – and they would rather take a turn at grabbing volume from someone else rather than cannibalizing their own presses. They may be competing for those “off peak” volumes like directories, workbooks or notices with transaction printers and direct mailers.

As all of these companies begin selling their inkjet-driven services into the same companies, the ability to do more than one thing can be a competitive advantage. Lane changers become game changers when they deliver a “one stop shop” experience to meet their customers' printing needs. This is particularly true when selling to large brands who prefer to work with as few suppliers as possible.

There is another side effect from the push of inkjet into high-quality commercial production: higher expectations. Brand

marketers, designers and print buyers are getting introduced to a whole new level of inkjet quality. It's not business quality or good enough quality, it's offset quality or better, and it's being produced on an inkjet press near you.

Color fidelity and print quality is becoming a competitive factor in segments that were previously not as color sensitive. Transaction printers who use profiling and ink limiting to control costs may find that companies are becoming more sensitive about their brand colors.

Because delivering top quality color is more expensive than “business color” companies need to be able to price appropriately for the service level delivered and educate customers on the rationale for cost differences. Ink is liquid gold and jobs need to be priced to account for relative ink usage. This many mean adding more papers and more profiles to deliver a competitive offer.

### Inkjet Changes Markets

Inkjet is not only entering new markets, it's changing the way we think about and operate in those markets. This article has focused primarily on three market segments, but inkjet is also moving into book production, magazines, directories, catalogs, signage, security printing and of course packaging and labels.

Inkjet pages in these markets are coming from companies buying inkjet to serve their segment, but also from lane changers dipping their toes into new areas. Fewer and fewer companies with inkjet are operating in a single application area. More often they are using inkjet to evolve into multiple markets and drive page growth.

This means that your competition may be coming from a different direction than you expect. Look all around and decide if it's time for you to change lanes before the competition overtakes you. ●

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*Elizabeth Gooding helps companies to streamline their business process, improve customer retention, and maximize new opportunities for document design, print and Internet technology. Contact her at [Elizabeth@inkjetinsight.com](mailto:Elizabeth@inkjetinsight.com).*

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# CRACKING THE CODE

*Is your packaging secure?*

**W**hile product counterfeiting has been an issue for many years, brands are now determined to address the issue head on. Security is becoming a crucial part of the packaging process.

The global anti-counterfeit packaging market is expected to generate \$38.3 billion by 2020, at a CAGR of 9.5% over the period of 2014 – 2020. Further research by the “Global Anti-Counterfeit Packaging by Technology” study from TechSci Research projects that the global anti-counterfeit packaging market will grow at a CAGR of around 13.85%, in value terms, during 2018-2023.

Food safety and supply chain visibility compliance is another area that demands packaging and label secure identification. These new compliance regulations are designed to verify the authenticity and origin of your raw materials and ingredients, and to effectively, quickly and accurately track and trace your products as they move across a global network of growers and shippers, distributors and manufacturers, and retail outlets both virtual and in-person.

In addition, the new Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA) was enacted by the U.S. Congress on Nov. 27, 2013, which requires that there is an ability to track and trace all products in the pharmaceutical distribution supply chain. This act also prepares the market for a greater focus on personalized medicines, since the legacy one-size-fits-all

methods are starting to show their limits.

Ultimately that means even more need for security in packaging. This is even more relevant as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the population’s desire to protect themselves and the explosion of questionable products to answer that desire.

## Converters and PSPs Prepare

There has been a proliferation of software that can be used by consumer product and pharmaceutical companies to manage these new compliance regulations, but as a converter or print service provider what tools do you have to prepare you to take on these new customer requirements?

Currently holograms are being used for basic security, and technologies like RFID and NFC have



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shown promise and can add additional value. Each of these solutions has already started to find the way into the product supply chain. However, these technologies currently require the application of either a pre-manufactured tag or the use of a post-print embellishment technology.

While these technologies have proven to work, there is an additional cost in excess of \$.01 per tag in the case of holographic tags not including the application associated with their inclusion on a label or package, and much higher for RFID and NFC.

Interestingly, the common thread in most of the available tools is the ability to image at a high resolution and/or specialty screening technique. Additionally, the use of variable data is a requirement in any track and trace application.

Since flexo is the predominant printing technology used for labels and packaging, the developments in flexo plate screening and print control provide the necessary requisites for counterfeit identification and protection. As an example, the Bobst THQ process, provides “ultra-high” resolution flexo print that supports security printing. As a part of the THQ process they have even created a series of smartphone apps for product validation and control. One of those is the THQ-NanoT for visual control, which provides for validation of almost invisible codes embedded in packaging graphics.

The system also supports a THQ-R code for consumer control in the form of a specially designed barcode, and THQ-Seals for secure anti-copy technology to help identify counterfeiting. Other flexo plates can also support high resolution and screening techniques including the Kodak Miraclon FLEXCEL.

For track and trace you would probably need to introduce variable data into the printing process. This can be accomplished

either by digital imprinting the printed flexo packaging either in line with supplementary inkjet printheads, or directly with a digital press, depending on the run lengths and cost considerations.

Global Graphics introduced “Dynamic Overlays,” which is a simplified way to handle variable data. It can combine data from a source file such as a CSV or automatic counters with a PDF background. You can overlay text, JPGs, EPS and barcodes based on that data. This was introduced as a feature in the Harlequin 12 RIP/Renderer,

which is used in many production inkjet DFEs. It supports several dozen different barcode symbologies, including QR codes. The barcode sizes can even be automatically snapped to output resolution

to maximize readability in addition to advanced inkjet screening.

Many digital press manufacturers, including both EP and Inkjet presses support security printing natively as well. Xeikon has offered native 1200dpi resolution with variable dot density for years and has been used for the printing of the Belgian government’s tax stamps for years. HP Indigo digital presses have also partnered with many track and trace systems to provide complete solutions to converters and PSPs.

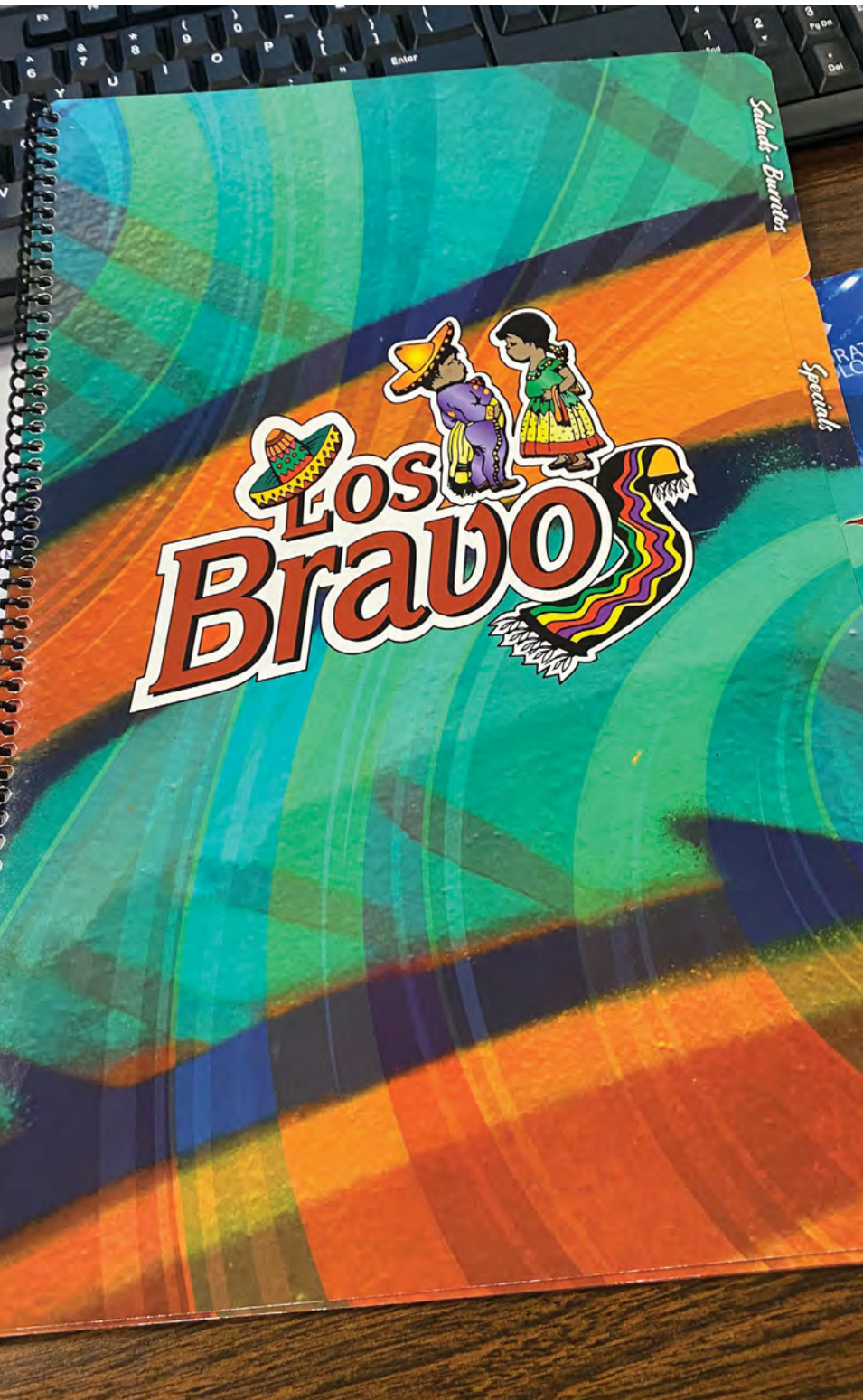
Security printing is an increasingly important requirement of all label and packaging production. The ability to meet those requirements through the variety of available technologies can open the doors to new opportunities for converters and PSPs. ●

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# PAPER OR PLASTIC?



*Depending on the application, printing digitally on synthetic substrates may be worth premium pricing.*

By Mark Vruno

It is no mystery that digitally printing on synthetic paper and plastics is a more expensive proposition than running traditional, wood-fiber papers on press.

“End customers need a good reason to use them,” said John Risdon, a senior account executive at Hop Industries.

Printed products such as parking-pass hang tags are one variable-data example that is worth the extra cost of plastic media with a high temperature rating.

“You can print and die cut it, and it won’t droop, curl or melt in a hot, 120-degree car parked in Phoenix, Arizona,” Risdon said.

HOP Industries is a newer name in the digital-print space. HOP (the acronym stands for “Have Our Plastics”) is plastic-film distributor and converter that services the flexographic, offset and UV inkjet/industrial latex wide-format production arenas.

“The lure of digital [print] is that there are no make-readies,” Risdon said. “With 5 to 6

million impressions, these toner-based machines really are 'presses.'"

The people investing in them are in it for the long haul. That's why HOP considers digital print such a viable, growth market for its products.

Six months ago, Konica Minolta approved Hop-Syn XT 8- and 10-mil waterproof and durable synthetic substrates for use on its AccurioPress C14000 and C12000 high-speed, digital color presses.

"Hop-Syn's XT substrate is the first synthetic paper to be approved for the AccurioPress C14000 -- the result of rigorous testing in our Japanese facilities," said Dino Pagliarello, senior VP of product management and planning for Konica Minolta.

Hop-Syn XT is a proprietary synthetic "paper" made from a mixture of calcium carbonate and polypropylene resin. The grade is manufactured with ultraviolet (UV) inhibitors and additional whitening agents, which improve the sheet's brightness and opacity up to 94%. With a high dyne level and smooth matte finish, XT features the printing performance expected from a fine offset paper but has extra tear strength and weather-resistant properties that allow print promotions to meet the most demanding environmental conditions.

"Our XT substrate also is water- and grease-proof, with a temperature rating from minus 60 degrees to 220 degrees [Fahrenheit]," Risdon said.

During digital print production, temperatures need to be controlled to prevent the substrate from melting on fusing heads.

Used in offset, flexo and wide-format production, the tree-free media is available in a variety of roll widths, sheet sizes and gauges, with a thickness range of 4 mil up to 10 mil, roll widths of 55" and 61" and sheet sizes 25"x 38" and 26"x 40"; all treated grades also can be custom-sheeted. The synthetic material can be sewn and grommeted for hanging signage and banners. The UV inhibitor additives ensure no yellowing or fading (one-year guarantee for direct exposure to sunlight). Popular applications include POP displays, signs and banners, hang tags, shelf talkers, book covers and outdoor product guides.

## Menus on a RYOBI Press

HOP works with a dozen or so customers with presses manufactured by RYOBI MHI Graphic Technology (RMGT), Risdon said, who "are getting fantastic results."

VISOgraphic, a commercial printer in Addison, Ill., near Chicago, has been a repeat customer. And this past June, a print provider in Kentucky produced synthetic menus (see sidebar), for a Mexican restaurant in Indiana, on a RMGT/RYOBI purchased through Graphco.

"We used 12-pt. Hop-Syn G2 synthetic media for a 12-page, spiral bound menu order," said Bruce Shulman, president of Paducah Printing. "It was our first project using that product, and our experience was great. Our press uses LED-UV inks, and curing was excellent. We inline-coated using an LED-UV high gloss. We also noticed the



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static electricity that sometimes causes feeding problems with other synthetics... were not a problem with the G2”

Additionally, Hop-Syn offers the GO line of liquid-toner-compatible substrates that is approved and certified (by Rochester Institute of Technology) for use on HP Indigo presses. Durable and water-proof, with robust ink-coating adhesion, this material also runs well on Konica KM-1 and Komori IS-29 UV presses, according to Risdon. Contact the manufacturer for sheet size availability.)

Hop-Syn has conducted testing on KM-1/IS-29 UV inkjet digital presses.

“Our products work fine with a primer

coating. We are working with our 10-mil GO

Indigo material with these two presses. Initial results on non-primed Hop-Syn showed poor adhesion on the black ink,”

Risdon said, “but production on our primed material is yielding acceptable black-ink adhesion.”

As both presses are formatted for sheet sizes, Hop-Syn will readily provide sheets to the full 23 x 29 size intended for the press, along with 20 x 28; 20 x 26 or 19 x 25 or 17 x 22.

“It is our understanding that other synthetic

paper producers are only supporting this market with B2-size sheets designed for HP Indigo 10,000/12,000 models,” Risdon said. “If owners of these or other presses wish to obtain sheets for testing or evaluation, we’re happy to assist them.”

### Solving the Water-Based Ink Challenge

Ed Pierce, FUJIFILM product marketing manager in the U.S., agreed that synthetic substrates have a growing presence on digital presses, especially on his OEM’s production inkjet sheetfed models. In addition to parking tags, Pierce said retail point-of-purchase (POP) signage, identification cards and garden plant spikes are added to the possible application mix. The growth of polypropylene and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) polymer use in commercial and wide-format print settings is a primary reason why FUJIFILM North America’s Graphic Systems Division has partnered with Permalite, the largest U.S. inkjet coating manufacturer.

Announced in late May, the Permalite partnership granted Fujifilm’s J Press 720S and 750S customers access to a new collection of specialty inkjet media, including synthetics such as PVC and polypropylene -- two of the most commonly used synthetic media, as well as fine-art canvases and

*Continued on page 61*

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## POST-COVID COATINGS & TREATMENTS

Hop-Syn XT is an ideal substrate for businesses requiring waterproof materials that can be cleaned with disinfecting sprays or wipes, such as menus in restaurants. In our COVID-19 world of the past eight months, some printed products, such as menus, have become more sanitary (or disposable) than ever before. Most menus can be cleaned effectively with mild detergent.

“Our product will take a heck of an intensive cleaning,” said John Risdon, a senior account executive at Hop Industries. “Hop-Syn is designed for offset-UV production. We ran [XT] samples on an EFI VUTEk HS125 Pro UV flatbed printer. I personally used 90% rubbing alcohol on them -- and there was no effect to the print!”

Furthermore, Dawn Nye, solutions and services marketing manager at Konica Minolta Business Solutions U.S.A., said that Clorox (bleach) brand disinfecting wipes did not affect the prints that she generated. Nye believes the Hop-Syn substrate can stand up to intense cleaning for menus or interior signage.

Many media vendors are rising to the microbe challenge, but it’s a problematic market space for converters such as Hop Industries. That said, Risdon is investigating an ultraviolet-cured, antimicrobial coating from Associated Printing Productions, Inc. (APPI), a commercial printing, packaging and fulfillment company in Miami Lakes, Fla. Developed in collaboration with Biomaster and Ctg2 Technologies, the UV-cured surface coating can be applied directly to paper during the printing process.

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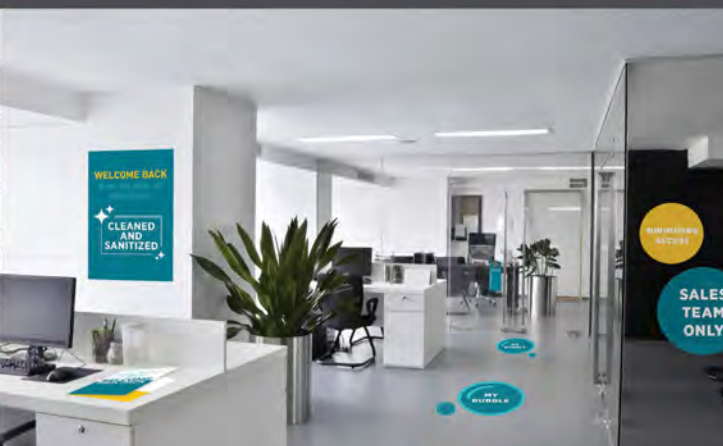
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# THE STATE OF THE USPS

*It's been a rocky year for the U.S. Postal Service.*

**F**acts, fiction, drama, political overtones, United States Postal Service on the nightly news, mail delays, PMG testifying to congress, sorting equipment being removed, collection boxes “covertly” disappearing....

Whew, what a whirlwind of a year.... and, we still have several months to go before 2020 closes!

Never in my wildest dreams did I think that all of this could happen in a few short months, but it has in the middle of a global pandemic.

It is tough keeping up with all the different “media” sources that are: speaking, reporting, inquiring, speculating, inferring, espousing about what is going on with the USPS.

There are several people in my network whom I rely on for solid, truthful and accurate information regarding industry legislation, political influence support/movement and operational changes.

First, let us start with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the USPS. I have heard the stories of the backed-up mail and packages, rotten perishables, etc..., and I too am dismayed.

What many may not realize is that with a workforce of 600,000 +/, the USPS has been impacted with absenteeism and the same workforce related challenges as every other “business entity” because of the pandemic. It is reported that on any given day, over the past six months, USPS operations are trying to process and deliver mail with 30 - 35% less employees due to leave associated with COVID-19. Whether the employee was/is sick themselves, caring for a family member, being quarantined due to exposure or has childcare issues because of daycares being closed, they are unable to report to work.

What operation can fulfill its obligation six days per week with one-third of their employees away



from work?

Interesting statistics shared through an USPS industry update: Volume of First-Class Mail letters has not been impacted with the delays being seen by First-Class Flats and all package services. Informed Visibility statistics consistently show a one-two-day delay in First-Class flat and package mail

We know the package volume has increased drastically for the USPS and other package carriers due to the increase in online shopping resulting from

“ The USPS also operates in an environment with many imposed labor restrictions for their labor pools. ”

COVID-19. It makes sense that these mail types would be most adversely impacted, as they require greater amounts of manual sortation and delivery processes. In an environment where the workforce is diminished, and the requirements have increased, the resulting delays are inevitable.

The USPS also operates in an environment with many imposed labor restrictions for their labor pools. Each group is represented by separate union entities, with the goal of protecting their members. This limits

the USPS operations managers in a time where their workforce is depleted. They cannot assign a clerk to go and deliver mail as would happen in other businesses, as that is a letter carrier job, and this spials exponentially as the numbers of workers not reporting increases. It is rather amazing that the delays we are seeing have not been greater given the complexity of the issues these operations face each day.

Overtime has been used to supplement the delivery efforts when absenteeism is an issue so that the USPS is able to meet its service obligations. We have all heard the news stories regarding the mandate from PMG DeJoy to eliminate all overtime. This is an admirable goal for any operation and something all businesses do regularly. Under “normal” circumstances this would be an appropriate mandate, but these are far from “normal” times, and the universal service obligations of USPS are far different.

Some recent misnomers circulating and percolating within the industry and national news outlets that merit clarification to drive factually based understanding include:

### **The President directs the USPS and appoints the PMG.**

This is false. The USPS Board of Governors (BOG) directs the USPS, not the President. It has been widely speculated that there is some sort of “political play” going on since the appointment of PMG DeJoy, given his personal political affiliations. There is a “due process” which is clearly defined and was followed, in the selection of a PMG to serve the USPS BOG. As a matter of checks and balances,” the BOG presents their candidate to the US Senate for confirmation. In the case of PMG DeJy, this was all done appropriately and without issue.

The members of the USPS BOG are political appointees. There is a maximum of nine governors at any one time appointed by the President



*Christine Erna is President of Strategic Postal Advisors. She consults to improve address quality while reducing return mail expenses. She can be reached at: [cje@strategicpostaladvisors.com](mailto:cje@strategicpostaladvisors.com).*

and with the advice and consent of the Senate. It is mandated that no more than five governors can be affiliated with the same political party. Governors shall represent the public interest generally, and shall be chosen solely on the basis of their experience in the field of public service, law or accounting or on their demonstrated ability in managing organizations or corporations (in either the public or private sector) of substantial size (50,000+ employees).

The PMG is the Chief Executive Officer of the USPS and serves at the direction and pleasure of the Board of Governors. The BOG and the PMG select the Deputy Postmaster General (DPMG) who serves at the direction and pleasure of the PMG.

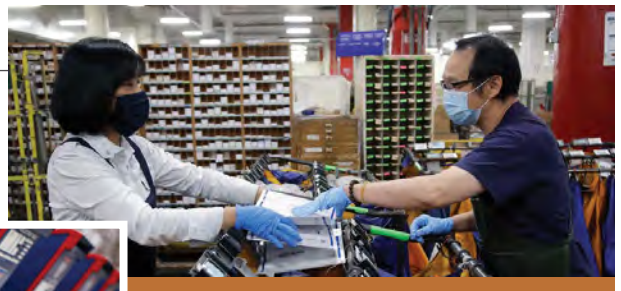
### Removal of Blue USPS Collection Boxes

The USPS has been removing, refurbishing, relocating and installing newer, more secure collection boxes for a long time (decades).

This story is weeks old, but someone photographed a stockpile of old collection boxes and speculated what was going on without knowing the facts. When posted to social media where it is picked up by the various news outlets without knowledge of the facts and the truths behind the information, the conspiracy fires really begin to burn out of control.

**The facts:** The USPS (and no one or other entity) is not intentionally removing these boxes to delay the mail to impact Vote by Mail regardless of what uninformed people are saying or showing in an “out of context” photograph.

**The truth:** Since its peak mail volume in 2006 (206 billion mail pieces), there has been a drastic and steady decline in mail volume. Communication more frequently occurs via online media today. In many geographical areas this results in collection boxes requiring services when there is not a single piece of mail to retrieve. By monitoring volume coming out of the boxes, the USPS can intelligently decide where they need to be relocated/retired



for optimal use by the USPS and its patrons. Sadly, it is also true that these boxes have been targeted for mail theft and have become increasingly less secure. That too is why the

USPS has been reducing their presence across our neighborhoods and municipalities.

### Vote by Mail and Absentee Ballots

The mailing industry and USPS have been collaborating on election mail for years. This is evident by the information on the USPS website. The USPS website offers a plethora of information on election mail.

Each state has mail-in voting, but some allow voters to take part only in certain circumstances. Here are a few of those circumstances:

- Some states require an excuse for voting by mail. Due to the coronavirus, most states consider this a valid excuse to vote by mail. Check with your state and area officials to know how this affects your voting options.
- Because of the coronavirus, your state may automatically send you an absentee ballot or a form to fill out to request one. Check with your state and area officials to know how this is being handled in your area.

States are making it easier for citizens to vote absentee by mail this year due to the coronavirus. Every state's election rules are different, and each state has its own rules for mail-in absentee voting. Many are still in the process of deciding how they will handle voting during the pandemic.

Sometimes circumstances make it hard or impossible for you to vote on Election Day. But your state may let you vote during a designated early voting period. If this is an option you want to explore, research the option with your state or local election officials

**Please note:** Your state's rules and voting dates may change in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

- You do not need an excuse to vote early.
- In some states, you may cast an absentee ballot in person before Election Day. To do this, you must request an absentee ballot from your state. Your state may require you to submit a valid excuse as well.

From facilitating the nation's largest one-day food drive, working with customers to prevent dog bites, educating customers on consumer protection to delivering holiday cheer to those in need, the Postal Service supports communities nationwide.

**Veterans:** The Postal Service employs more than 97,000 military veterans and is one of the largest employers of veterans in the country.

**All Heart:** The Postal Service is at the core of the \$1.6 trillion U.S. mailing industry that employs more than 7.3 million people.

**Heroes:** Postal employees regularly go beyond the call of duty to protect the lives of customers they serve, including older and disabled customers through the Carrier Alert Program. In fiscal year 2019, the Postal Service recognized 232 heroic employees.

**Greener Than You Think:** Free Priority Mail packaging (boxes) meets a significant sustainable forestry initiative and has allowed the USPS to meet all Forest Stewardship Council certification standards. This means the paper for those boxes comes from well-managed forests. In addition, the boxes include at least 30% recycled content.

**Retail Giant:** The Postal Service has the nation's largest domestic retail network – bigger than McDonald's, Starbucks and Walmart combined.

**Global Business:** The Postal Service processes and delivers 48% of the world's mail and is constantly innovating to make customer experiences better.

**Vehicles:** The Postal Service has more than 228,000 vehicles, one of the largest civilian fleets in the world. New next-generation vehicles will have improved ergonomics, safety features, fuel efficiency and design flexibility.

**Competition and Collaboration:** The Postal Service both competes and collaborates with the private sector. UPS and FedEx pay the Postal

Service to deliver hundreds of millions of their ground packages, and USPS pays UPS and FedEx for air transportation.

**Affordability:** For 55 cents, anyone can send a one-ounce letter, regardless of geographic location, to anywhere in the United States.

**Dependable:** The Postal Service is the only organization in the country that has the resources, network infrastructure and logistical capability to regularly deliver to every residential and business address in the nation.

**Security:** U.S. Mail is protected by more than 200 federal laws enforced by the Postal Inspection Service, one of the nation's oldest law enforcement agencies.

And most importantly...Zero tax dollars used. The Postal Service receives NO tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

The USPS is a 200-year-old quasi government SERVICE institution that has bound this country together through communication using mail across the country and the world. The service has certainly changed from the first steamship mail contract in 1815, to a century later in 1918, when the first Airmail service began. Over a century later in 2020, the changes continue. Not unlike everything else in our society, technology and data are the driving force behind new and innovative mail services. It is critical for all of us to support a sustainable postal system. The USPS is at the core of a \$1.6 trillion US. mailing industry that employs more than 7.3 million people. This industry is critical to our economy and national prominence.

We have known for years that legislated change is needed to sustain the USPS and to support the mailing industry. The current spotlight is a wakeup call to our entire industry to reach out to legislators and educate them on why they need to support legislative change. Fact-based information is very important. The facts are just the facts and cannot be argued (intelligently). If everyone commits to deal only in fact, we all get closer to meaningful change that benefits us all.●

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# EXECUTIVE Q&A: CANON'S FRANCIS A. MCMAHON

Talking about this year's virtual thINK and Canon's plan for the future.

By Richard Romano & Adam Dewitz

**W**e caught up with Francis A. McMahon, Executive Vice President at Canon Solutions America,

in the wake of the virtual thINK Ahead 2020 Conference to talk about how Canon's customers are faring in the crisis, how Canon itself has responded, and how the crisis has demonstrated the wisdom of the Grateful Dead lyric, "Once in a while you get shown the light/In the strangest of places If you look at it right."

**WhatTheyThink:** *At the start of the year, everybody was looking toward a positive 2020, printing shipments were up—and then March happened. How have Canon's customers been reacting to the crisis?*

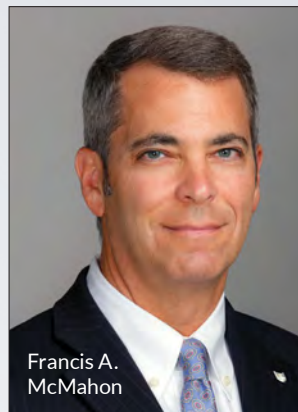
**Francis McMahon:** I talk to a minimum of two customers a day, and probably a max of five a day, and people are really looking at printing differently. They want shorter runs—and they don't just want print-on-demand, they want super-fast print-on-demand. And they're not as quality-sensitive anymore. It's changing the value of what print is to the people that are buying it. For the marketer and the advertising agency, they're saying, "Wow. If I can get a higher return, and I can turn it around very fast, and I can do shorter runs, that's a good thing."

**WTT:** *That's really the Amazon effect coming to the printing industry. We want a really fast, streamlined order system so we can even make purchases from our phones. This is the year where it's becoming clearer*

*that printers need to understand the customer experience that Amazon is creating and how it's going to affect us.*

**FM:** Think of book printing. I don't know about you, but I'm reading a lot more now

And there are a lot more books being produced for home-schooling. Book printers are thriving today, and that's a trend that's going to continue. It's on-demand, it's shorter-run, and it's done digitally. The transactional side is suffering a bit. Projections from Keypoint



Francis A. McMahon

**Canon**

Intelligence and I.T. Strategies, based on what we are seeing, are a little pessimistic. We're not seeing declines of 20% and 30% page volume, but just under 10%, and a majority of that is transactional. People aren't going to doctors as much. There aren't as many automobile accidents because people aren't driving as much. So there aren't as many insurance claims and claim printing is much lower. On the transactional side, we also have to be thinking about paper prices going up, what's happening with the U.S. Postal Service and postal rates and the impact that will have on our industry. If the total cost continues to go up, more corporations are going to start demanding more e-communications. We have to help people

understand the value of print communications in the mix.

I think we're in for some challenging times in the next two years—not bad, just challenging. The market's not going to be as big as it was in 2017, '18 or '19, and I think it's going to take until 2023 to get back to those levels. We all needed to be woken up; not just in our industry, but humankind just needed to wake up, and that's not a political statement. We live in a very prosperous country and prosperous world, for the most part, and we've just taken everything for granted. I think people get complacent and they don't think as strategically or as innovatively as they could because they're comfortable. The only way to force great change and create great opportunities is to be taken out of your element. Unfortunately, it's happening in the form of a worldwide disaster. But for the printing industry, it's showing us that the old ways of doing things need to evolve.

**WTT:** *Canon has been very aggressive in continuing to launch products this year. How was that strategy developed and how is it playing out?*

**FM:** The important thing is, there's the virus and it's a really bad situation and we need to be sensitive. At the same time, we have a responsibility to the industry to keep it going. We made promises to a lot of customers who made decisions months ago to wait until these products came out, and some of those businesses were counting on us to get our new products to them so they could start pursuing new markets or replacing older equipment. We felt a real need to stay on track. We moved forward with the ProStream 1800 because we had made commitments to customers that they would get one in a certain period of time. Then there are upgrades; there are a lot of 1000s out there, and if customers want them to run faster—and the return on investment is much faster when you can produce more—they needed upgrades. So the driver behind the ProStream 1800 launch

was that our customers needed it, and we will always do what is right for our customers.

**WTT:** *You also launched the varioPRINT iX.*

**FM:** We had a lot of customers that were waiting to get the next generation so they could have sheetfed inkjet with the same type of running costs, but more flexibility on paper and higher image quality. We felt a real need to get that out. Going back to the changes in the printing industry, this is going to be one of the presses that helps our industry get to the future successfully.

**WTT:** *You have both continuous-feed and sheetfed units. Where are people making the bigger investment?*

**FM:** Continuous-feed is going to remain an important product for years to come, but many of us believe that sheetfed is the dominant product: multiple substrates, being able to print more jobs because you're not doing roll changes, super-fast turnarounds. We sold more of our sheetfed devices than we ever had in January to June compared to any other year.

**WTT:** *Canon has been doing R&D in labels and packaging and developing concepts under the LabelStream brand. Is there any update on Canon's entry into the packaging market?*

**FM:** Not at this point, but it's a growing opportunity, no question. Our infrastructure is set up to support the commercial, transactional, book and direct mail spaces. We're the market share leader in production inkjet and we've got a really profitable business. I view labels and packaging as a different business, not necessarily outside of production printing, but it's a whole other piece that requires the right infrastructure to support it and go to market. We've got our eye on it and you'll hear soon about what we're going to do.

**WTT:** *I want to kind of shift gears to the thINK Conference, which went virtual this year. Talk about the reaction to the event, what you're building with thINK beyond just a*



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*Continued on page 60*

# PROCESS CREATORS VS. PROCESS FOLLOWERS

*Manage your process to better manage your business.*

**W**hen print businesses buy software, you are sold on the return-on-investment (ROI) of the software tool. The sales process includes references to other printers who have completely revolutionized their business with the purchase of this tool. The sales process

informs you that you will be more efficient, win more business and increase your profits from purchasing this tool. All of that is possible. It does happen. It's never guaranteed, and the software is not the most important component in making all those good things happen. In a world that is addicted to the idea that technology can fix everything, it seems like a controversial statement.



The most important component of your business is having people who are good at process creation. What do I mean by process creation? We can really simplify work down to just two kinds: process creation and process adherence/execution. Your business, as it runs today, is a collection of processes that are executed over and over every-day by your employees. Many of these are “informal processes” that exist only in your employees’ heads and they are executed based on memory. So when there is turnover or expansion, undocumented processes get passed down verbally, if at all.

A business’s ability to execute is really about the processes it uses to get work done. What are your processes? Do they work for you? Do they work when your best CSR goes out on maternity leave? Do they work when your top press operator breaks their leg skateboarding? Processes that rely on your best humans are people-centered processes; every business has some of them. Sales is a very people-centered process but even there you can create a methodology for guiding a prospect through the sales process of becoming a customer.

I want to talk about your employees who can create, reinvent and reimagine processes. These are the employees that are absolutely critical to getting the ROI out of those software purchases.

I like to joke about businesses who have terrible customer service (which is usually a process problem). My joke usually goes something like this: “Did they wake up this morning and decide they were going to start renting cars, making it up from scratch?” I



swear sometimes when I walk up to rental car counters, it feels like they are doing this thing that is their core business for the first time. In other businesses, you walk in and you feel like someone thought about every single move every person is doing to get your product or service into your hands as quickly as possible. I think about the In-N-Out Burger drive-thru (a fast food restaurant on the West Coast)—you see lines 20+ cars deep and you still get in line because you know they are doing everything possible to move that line as fast as possible.

When do you pay attention to processes? You might not be aware of this, but you probably are talking about processes daily. When things go wrong in your business, you might call a meeting (back when we could meet in person). Now you call a virtual meeting. These meetings typically jump right to solutions. How do we solve this challenge? Or, what do we do to prevent this human mistake from happening again? If there’s a process creator in the room (they are both born and made), they are focused on understanding the process as it is supposed to work now. They stay in the challenge. Nobody in the room knows enough to solve the problem yet because a process breakdown usually involves multiple layers of issues. It is almost never the obvious first guess. If there are no process creators in the room, patches get added to an already broken process. This continues for years; patches upon patches upon patches of “solutions” that weren’t



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*Jennifer Matt writes, speaks, and consults with printers worldwide who realize their ability to leverage software is critical to their success in the Information Age.*

“ You don’t staff your business for your employees to have a lot of free time. Process definition is ’t required everyday and it should not be done by everyone. In fact, asking non-process creators to create processes is a recipe for disaster. ”

properly thought through or that cause additional issues up or downstream.

Process is boring to a lot of people. In fact, many people are repulsed by it. I tried to get a leadership group at a printer to walk through the path a job takes in their shop from estimate to shipment. Key leaders could not stay for the whole meeting. It was too uncomfortable. This is the primary process in their business; as the number of Rst-It Notes increased on the table and the number of discrepancies between team members mounted, the room had a noticeable tension. The core process of the business was unclear, inefficient and error-prone. It’s a process-mapping exercise, not a place to blame anyone. How do you find something you haven’t yet defined

Most businesses don’t give people the time and space to define their processes. You don’t staff your business for your employees to have a lot of free time. Process definition is ’t required everyday and it should not be done by everyone. In fact, asking non-process creators to create processes is a recipe for disaster. You have to understand who is a process creator and who is a process executor. Don’t mix the two. Some people can think about the flow of the business, others are far more comfortable “in the flow of the business”

Here’s a very brief description of how I think about processes. First of all, you have to believe and understand that your whole business is a set of processes. For example, we recently decided to offer professional services on a software subscription product. Our steps in defining the process looked something like this:

1. Write a rough draft of the end-to-end process, led by a process creator who is getting input from all the process

executors - the people who will be doing the tasks.

2. Iterate on this draft for at least a few days. Ideas get better when they are allowed to bake.
3. Because this process is going to be run over and over, we put the process into a tool called Process.st, which allows you to create a process template and run checklists each time the process is run.
4. We ran the first checklist against the first project
5. We had a bunch of things we forgot or didn’t optimize, which we noted during the first process.
6. We iterated the process.
7. We ran it again.
8. We iterated again.
9. We then handed it off the executors - not the process creators.
10. They ran it once and had additional questions.
11. We iterated.
12. Now we’ve run it like 30+ times and have only made one or two additional changes.
13. This process is boring. It just happens and everyone knows how to do it and who should be doing what.

That seems like a lot of work, but now this process runs daily, and I’m not involved. It’s boring. It just happens without mistakes or human errors. Once in a while an exception will be thrown and we’ll reconvene and look at what we need to do to change the process. In the middle of all this we added another resource. There was no training. We simply asked them to follow the documented process; she had a co-pilot for their first project and then was on her own after that.●

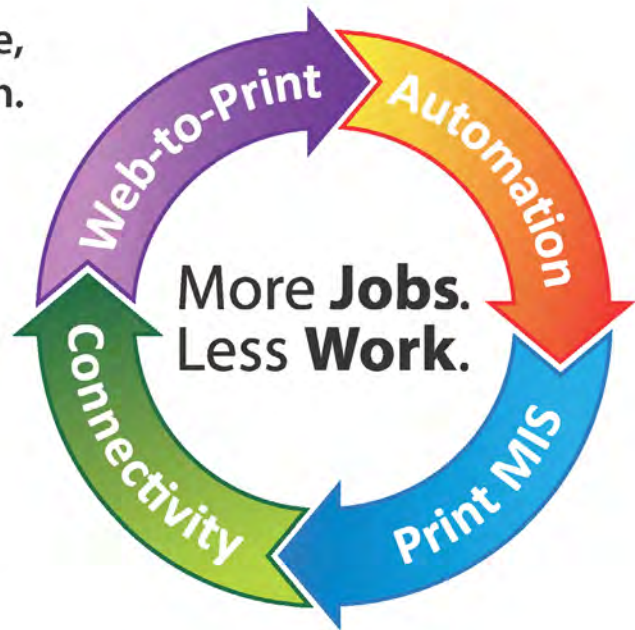
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# THE DIGITAL TRADE PRINTER

*A new approach to an old idea*

By Frank Romano

**B**ack in the day, trade printers would gang printed jobs in full color from a number of small commercial printers onto one

large sheet. This cut cost and allowed small printers to offer color-printed jobs to their customers. In many cases, these trade printers were also called gang printers. They advertised extensively in industry trade publications.

This was in the day when most small printers had black and white offset duplicators and 4-up or large color presses were beyond their reach. Full-color print-

ing required color separations, exacting pre-press and highly skilled staff. Small and quick printers had high school kids.

Color printing on an offset duplicator often consisted of a Townsend T-Head which could print a spot color. It was not until the advent of the digital color printer in 1993 that color printing was generally available. It then took a while for the equipment to become affordable to the small and medium printing company. Today, almost

every printer offers full-color production printing routinely. And offset duplicators are now in museums.

Enter HPG. Harvard Pinnacle Group in Waltham, Mass. is a digital trade printer. They began in Harvard, Mass. on Pinnacle Road and hence the name. Owner Greg Wallace started the company as a Macintosh training center, and his need for training materials moved him into printing. The company was born digital and has stayed digital.

The HPG equipment complement consists of six digital printers and 14 finishing systems. Those digital printers include Oki, Konica Minolta and Xerox Iridesse. There are no direct or end user customers. HPG only prints for the trade and sells to the trade. Its customers are other printers.

Why is there still a need for the trade printer? Certainly, every small or quick printer already has a digital printing device or two or more. Perhaps one is black and white and the other is full color. But there is a bewildering variety of systems out there, with extended gamut capability, special spot colors, a variety of



Greg Wallace,  
Harvard Pinnacle  
Group Owner

finishing options and much more. Let us not forget that there are still trade printers with 6-color or more offset presses.

Way back when, I did a consulting gig for a New England business forms company. We ganged a gazillion business cards on the film output from an CRT phototypesetter so as to burn one plate. Some of the early online printing services began as gang printers by organizing multiple jobs on one large sheet. Today, short runs are the norm, and digital printing is the right technology at the right time.

The trade printer is an extension of another printer's business. Trade printers stay on top of the technology and thus allow the small printer (or any size printer) to offer new services without committing to new equipment.

I once read "Pierre DuPont and the Making of the Modern Corporation" and learned that a company can apply a buy rather than make approach. This negates large investments in capability until the amount of outside purchases reaches critical mass. Then the company can make the investment in equipment or infrastructure. Trade printers let you build a business and then invest in new capacity when the revenue justifies it.

The HPG finishing equipment is even more interesting. HPG acts as a dealer for Duplo and Challenge which makes the Waltham facility both a production hub and a demonstration center. HPG's business today is

about half and half digital trade printing and finishing equipment sales.

"Many dealers do not have the equipment they sell in their demo rooms, so they are selling by using the data and spec sheets," Wallace said. "HPG uses the equipment it sells in our Digital Print Production Center for actual production jobs that we get from printers, brokers and trade companies."

Dealers usually use their equipment vendors to demo equipment or have "canned" demonstrations. HPG welcomes having potential clients use actual production jobs to test finishing equipment. And the HPG Digital Print Production Center also acts as a production backup for their customers. They know what works, what doesn't work and how to make it work.

Equipment never breaks until you use it. Sometimes HPG customers are in the middle of a production job that they can't finish until their equipment is fixed. HPG has a "We've Got Your Back" service program where they invite clients to come into the Digital Print Production Center to use the HPG facility or send their job and HPG will finish it for them.

The variety of HPG work is staggering. Displays throughout the building show printing

on almost every substrate, with special effects that draw attention. From small brochures to giant signs, HPG stays on top of the technology to meet its customers'—and by extension their customers'—needs.

"It's the value-add that matters,"

Wallace said.

HPG can add foiling, gold/silver imprinting and

other special effects. And these features get attention.

More importantly, workflow matters. HPG operates with a small contingent of staff and this is possible because of workflow approaches that facilitate a high level of automation.

As both a service and a supplier, it seems better able to weather the vagaries of the pandemic. Selecting finishing equipment as a dealer focus also made sense. We do not really sell printing. We sell paper in the form of flyers, brochures, booklets, books, etc. and these products are used by marketers to inform and persuade some audience.

As communication and marketing evolve, the printing service will evolve. There will be a need for new thinking as we move into the future. HPG Print is one example of that future. ●

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*Frank Romano's career has spanned over 50 years in the printing and publishing industries. He is the author of 40 books, the Editor of the International Paper Pocket Pal, a contributor to major encyclopedias and dictionaries, and the author of numerous articles.*

# DEVELOP NEW AGILITY

*Continuous evaluation is the key to success.*

**G**one are the days of standing up a grand organizational design that functions for years. Enter the forever “beta phase” of ongoing enhancement and

improvement. The current pandemic has amplified the contrast in reaction time, or agility versus the status quo, more than any time in recent history. Now is the time to take action by embedding agility into your organizational design.

Agility is not an elusive concept, neither is it a disruptive, one-time effort. Rather, it is a quantifiable system of continuous evaluation of your fundamental business practices.

The stepping-off point is an assessment of the core practices from which your business culture emanates. That is, the standards and structure under which your people operate utilizing formal and informal processes powered by rapidly changing technology tools (traditionally referred to

as people, process, technology and structure). This assessment process will reveal key competencies to replicate and inefficiencies to improve. Properly nurtured by leadership, this process

becomes a transformative circular progression that, leaving no sacred cow untipped, improves the organization’s agility and effectiveness with each new cycle.

## Refine your vision and your team.

People are your most valuable and, conversely, your most unpredictable resource. It is a result of humanness that you must install processes, technology and structure to ensure the correct actions are taken and completed accurately and on time.

Most people want to do a good job for the company and customers and are often held back by the burden of status quo, a structure that is lethargic



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and systems that are antiquated and time consuming.

Begin the transformation process by refining your company's vision, mission and values to ensure they are compelling and aligned. The purpose is to set a standard and establish a culture that will generate a professional, productive and even emotional connection with your people. Then design an internal culture campaign that recognizes, encourages and rewards the embodiment of that culture. This will begin to wire your organization to respond to circumstances, and the inevitability of change, with an agile mindset.

Of equal importance to newly defined standards are the people in your company you engage to deliver on the spirit of the culture.

Leadership must cast a vision that will inspire the curiosity and performance of the team. Then do the hard work of objectively evaluating your team and their roles. It is common to rush this process and hire based on one-dimensional criteria. Hard skills alone are no longer the only measure. Soft skills like adaptability, communication, emotional intelligence and integrity are of paramount importance.

Build a thoughtful top-grading process within your organization and use it continuously. New people instill new ideas, which coupled with a new organizational design, will proliferate change throughout your business practices creating continuous improvement. Once initiated, the first circular progression of creating agility begins to take hold.

### Rethink processes and technologies.

Seth Godin, author, entrepreneur and genius marketer, said, "Organizations that destroy the status quo win. Whatever the status quo is, changing it gives you the opportunity to be remarkable."

This thought gets to the heart of agile organizational design: your processes and enabling technologies must empower a nimble response to changing conditions in the marketplace. To accomplish this, create a recurring plan to engage your team and your strategic customers and partners to review your processes, workflows, automations and touch-points. Empower your internal and external constituents to freely test your plan. You will get an objective, and possibly sobering, view of your actual

business operating reality.

Equipped with a steady influx of feedback, take on the challenge to rethink, redesign, replace and automate operational processes on a continuous basis. Chances are you can list a dozen process and technology obstructions burdening your business delivery system. Your team and your customers can likely name twice that amount. Dedicate finances and human resources to the prioritization and delivery of progressive improvements. A key tactic is to leverage the surplus of simple, affordable SaaS solutions that can automate daily routines and create real-time visibility to information that used to take hours (or days) to compile.

As part of your culture campaign, close the loop by consistently communicating status updates to

*Continued on page 63*



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## Crawford Technologies Announces Launch of CCM Gateway for Nuxeo

Crawford Technologies, provider of innovative document solutions that streamline, improve and manage customer communications, and Nuxeo, the developer of a leading content services platform (CSP), have joined forces to develop a new integration that will allow organizations to move their high-volume documents and customer service data, regardless of format, into the Nuxeo ecosystem. CCM Gateway for Nuxeo is the only solution on the market today that integrates Crawford Technologies' transformation, indexing and document classification techniques with Nuxeo's robust cloud-native platform. The solution makes it possible for enterprises to move from problematic legacy storage systems to a modern, cloud-based, natively web-enabled solution to accelerate digital transformation initiatives.

[www.printingnews.com/21143792](http://www.printingnews.com/21143792)

## BOBST Brings Gravure Printing for Flexible Packaging into the Digital World with oneECG Extended Color Gamut Gravure Technology

Gravure is a printing process that has been spoken of relatively little of late, compared with other printing methods that have undergone a very fast transformation. However, the demands of the fast-moving consumers good industry have been pressing on gravure printing just as much: increasingly short run production and time-to-market, packaging customization, ready to recycle packaging substrates and the need for global brand color consistency.



Global color consistency is a conformity that brand owners aim to achieve on a global scale because when it comes to their favorite brands, consumers tend to perceive the lack of color consistency as a product quality issue. Therefore, printers and packaging converters must be equipped to deliver on this request and the adoption of the Extended Color Gamut (ECG) technology is one of the essential conditions.

[www.printingnews.com/21143800](http://www.printingnews.com/21143800)

## Core Publishing Solutions Expands into Four-Color Digital Inkjet Production

Core Publishing Solutions announced the installation of new web press printing technology to provide its customers with high quality inkjet color printing at an affordable cost in multiple trim sizes.



Now Core Publishing Solutions' customers can benefit from one of the printing industry's most productive inkjet color duplex presses, the HP T490 Pagewide Web Press, which attaches in-line to a Muller Martini SigmaLine III and has imposition and job optimization by Connex workflow software. This new press will join two already installed HP T360 inkjet presses at Core Publishing Solutions' facility in Egan, Minnesota. Core Publishing Solutions is one of the top 10 book manufacturers in North America.

[www.printingnews.com/21143799](http://www.printingnews.com/21143799)

## HP Launches The World's Easiest Plotters for Architect, Engineer, Construction and Home Offices

The new HP DesignJet series comprises intelligent, flexible, compact and stylish printers, that are unique to other types of plotters on the market today. With HP Click software, one-click printing – even for documents of different sizes – is made easy. Combined with the automatic A3/B tray, it enables to print multi-size projects automatically – A3/B and A1/D or A0/E – without manually switching the media source. The new HP DesignJet series also enables seamless printing and management from any connected device, wherever you are, thanks to the HP Smart App.



HP Inc. has announced the release of a new HP DesignJet portfolio aimed to simplify the printing needs of construction ecosystem professionals (architects, engineers, constructors and subcontractors), while delivering high-quality and fast print-outs at a low cost.

[www.printingnews.com/21143805](http://www.printingnews.com/21143805)

## Quantum Design and Hunkeler AG Agreement Offers Game Changing Solution to Non-Stop Production in Digital Printing

Quantum Design has announced an agreement with Hunkeler AG. This agreement will make

Quantum Design the exclusive supplier of automatic splicing and rewinding equipment for Hunkeler AG.

The partnership is a result of many months of hard work collaborating on a custom automatic splicing machine, the Hunkeler RS8 model, and an automatic turret rewinder, the Hunkeler TR8 model.

The technology that is central to this collaboration is a game changer for digital printing as Hunkeler will be offering the first inline finishing system with nonstop end to end processing in the industry

The RS8 is a shaftless automatic butt splicer with two shaftless roll positions that feed a continuous supply of material into the press while the integrated storage festoon eliminates the need to stop for changing rolls.

The TR8 automatic turret rewinder is designed with two shafted roll positions to continuously rewind rolls directly from the press eliminating the need to stop the press to remove rolls and offering greater throughput.

Both machines feature touch screen PIC Controls and the quality construction for which KTI equipment is often recognized and that aligns equally with Hunkeler's own equipment durability.

[www.printingnews.com/21143845](http://www.printingnews.com/21143845)



## Infigo Software Further Strengthens their Offering Through printIQ Partnership

Infigo Software is proud to announce its further enhancements to the partnership with leading MWS provider printIQ - offering greater flexibility, efficiency and cost savings to its Web-To-Print customers.

With pressure on print facilities to create diversified revenue streams and improve productivity, Infigo is committed to building partnerships that enables clients to fully digitalize and futureproof their operations.

Through the dedicated integration with printIQ, Infigo's users will benefit from a seamless, end-to-end estimating, ordering, and production workflow system

The cloud-based management workflow system gives print managers complete overview of the workflow, so they can maintain continuity between stock suppliers, internal shop floor, right through to outsourcing.

Users can log in to the cloud-based system anywhere in the world, track jobs online and manage entire projects remotely - from estimating all the way through to invoicing. This enables printers to massively improve operation efficiency - from increasing quote response rate to reducing production errors.

[www.printingnews.com/21143930](http://www.printingnews.com/21143930)



## Barthel Gruppe Strengthens Environmental Offering with World's First EcoLeaf Metallization Unit on a Digital Hybrid Press

ACTEGA Metal Print GmbH announced that the specialist high-quality labels printer, Barthel Gruppe - one of the largest labels printers in Germany and the Netherlands - has joined its beta program with the world's first installation of an ACTEGA EcoLeaf Metallization unit on a digital and flexo hybrid press.

Recently installed on a Mark Andy Digital Series HD press, at its eprint facility in Bünde, Germany,

the EcoLeaf unit enables the company to offer an alternative to traditional cold foil, while providing its cosmetics-based customers with high quality, cost effective but sustainable short to medium-run metallized silver labels. Additionally, by using the Mark Andy press to overprint the EcoLeaf trigger image, the Barthel Gruppe can now offer new forms of profitable decorative effects including a rainbow of metallic colors.

Barthel Gruppe - with headquarters in Essen, NRW - specializes in providing labels for some of the world's leading brands in markets including chemicals and auto, food, pharmaceuticals, wine and spirits. In January 2020, Barthel Gruppe acquired the cosmetics specialist eprint to expand and complete its portfolio. The company now has printing and storage facilities across Central Europe, enabling it to successfully serve its worldwide customer portfolio.

[www.printingnews.com/21143850](http://www.printingnews.com/21143850)





### More Innovation from Tom O'Brien: Flexible Packaging On Demand

Tom O'Brien, founder of AccuLink, now has a new business added to the mix called AccuFlx Packaging. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143161](http://www.printingnews.com/21143161)



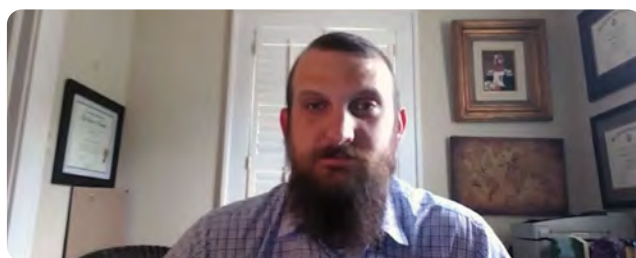
### Pete Santora Shares Insight into the Future of Apparel Automation

Pete Santora examines how automation can help reshore manufacturing and strengthen supply chains. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143282](http://www.printingnews.com/21143282)



### Target Report Interview—Buyers are On The Move and On Track

Rod Bristol talks with Mark Hahn of Graphic Arts Advisors about how M&A activity is different. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143318](http://www.printingnews.com/21143318)



### Michael McDonald Shares Insights on Sewn Products

Michael McDonald, President of Sewn Products Equipment and Suppliers of the Americas (SPESA), provides information on the organization. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143370](http://www.printingnews.com/21143370)



### Frank's Flashback: 1995

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of what was a watershed year for the printing industry. 1995 was the year that the industry was at its peak. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143410](http://www.printingnews.com/21143410)



### thINK Conference Goes Virtual

Canon Solutions America EVP Francis McMahon and thINK Executive Director Eric Hawkinson, preview the sixth annual thINK Ahead conference. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143501](http://www.printingnews.com/21143501)



### thINK Board Members on This Year's Event

David Zwang talks to thINK Board members Todd Roth and Pete Studer about how the Board made the decision to hold thINK as a virtual event. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143545](http://www.printingnews.com/21143545)



### Advantage CS-25 running pocket folders 7,000/hour

ALL NEW Rollem Advantage line of converting system, shown finishing a 9 x 12" pocket folder. The folder was die cut on an Insignia die cutting system. Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143597](http://www.printingnews.com/21143597)





**Industry Veteran Aviv Ratzman Finds Compack, a New Web-to-Pack Portal**

Aviv Ratzman, who spent time at HP Indigo and co-founded Highcon, starts a new venture today.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143710](http://www.printingnews.com/21143710)



**Warren Werbitt Goes Printer to Printer with Jubels' Jeroen van Druenen**

Warren Werbitt talks to Jeroen van Druenen, CEO of 80-year-old Jubels in Amsterdam.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143752](http://www.printingnews.com/21143752)



**Sewing Automation: Where Are We Now and Where Are We Going?**

Frank Henderson of the Henderson Sewing Company is the third generation running this family business.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143812](http://www.printingnews.com/21143812)



**AI/DC: I made a bot write an AC/DC song**

Using lyrics.rip to scrape the Genius Lyrics Database, I made a Markov Chain write AC/DC lyrics. This is the end result- "Great Balls".

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143858](http://www.printingnews.com/21143858)



**Attracting New Talent: A 2020 Imperative**

Jeff White, Director of Development for the Print & Graphics Scholarship Foundation (PGSF), provides an update on the status and activities of the organization.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143990](http://www.printingnews.com/21143990)



**Mohawk Paper's Chris Harrold Explains the Renewal Line of Papers**

Mohawk Paper has introduced its Renewal line of papers. It is using hemp and straw fibers in two paper lines.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143916](http://www.printingnews.com/21143916)



**Beyond Print: Technologies for Augmenting Print Reality**

Industry professionals and business owners and managers registered for WhatTheyThink LunchNLearn Webinar.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143587](http://www.printingnews.com/21143587)

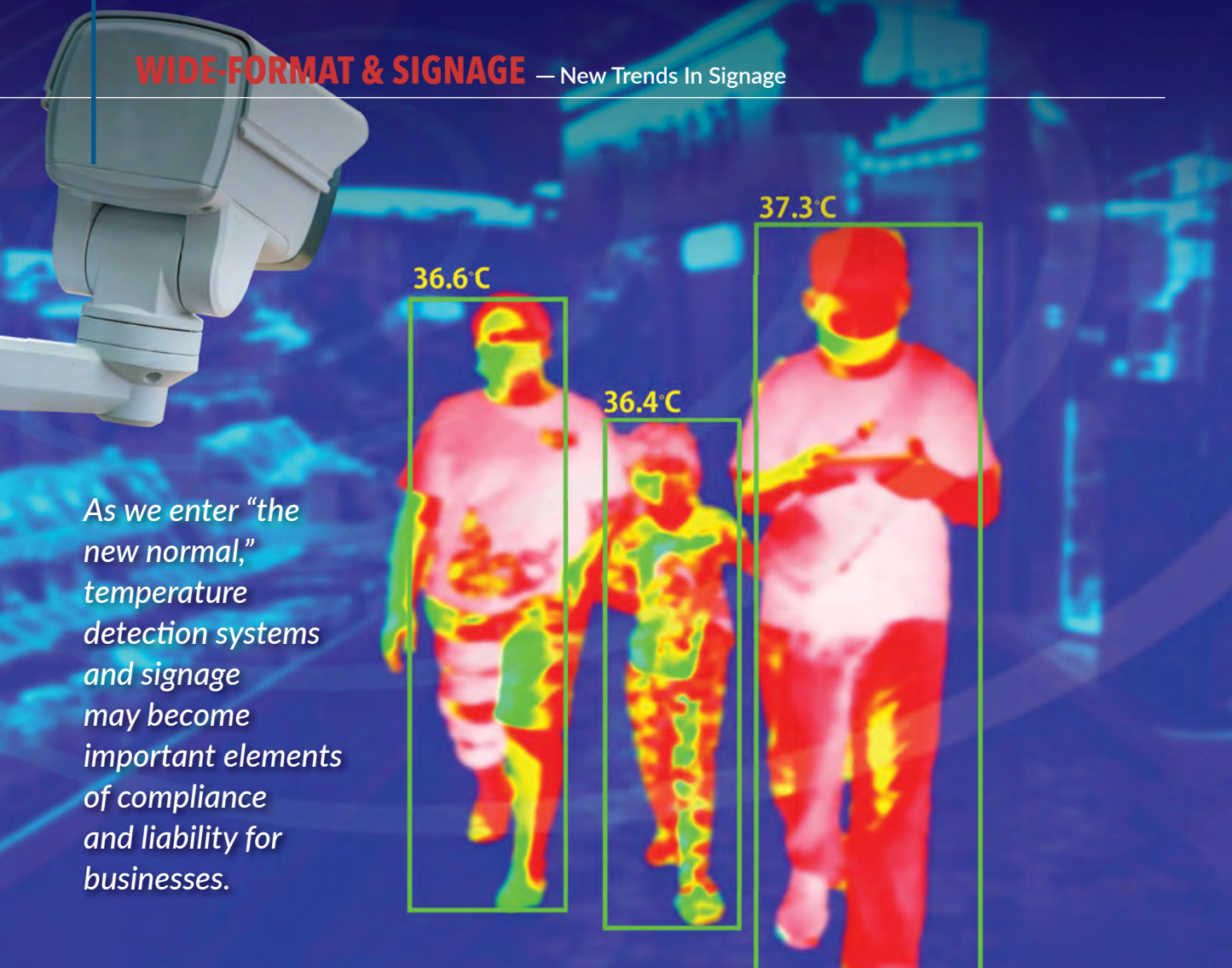


**Canon Responds to the Pandemic**

Canon Solutions America EVP Francis McMahon and and think Executive Director Eric Hawkinson talk about how the company responded to the pandemic.

Find video here: [www.printingnews.com/21143589](http://www.printingnews.com/21143589)





*As we enter “the new normal,” temperature detection systems and signage may become important elements of compliance and liability for businesses.*

# A MATTER OF DEGREES

By Richard Romano

**A** new signage category that has emerged since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic is “temperature-taking signage.”

Back in our August issue, I wrote about TempDefend, a “Protection as a Service (PaaS)” system from 22Miles. Another player that has appeared in this space is Altoros ([www.altoros.com](http://www.altoros.com)),

a 20-year-old consultancy and professional IT services and software provider. Altoros has launched Mass Fever Screener, a combination of artificial intelligence (AI) cameras and Altoros-developed software designed to facilitate prevention of the COVID-19. The thermal camera scans people entering a building or other location (up to 30 people can be screened

simultaneously), determines their temperature (with an accuracy of  $\pm 0.3^{\circ}\text{C}/\pm 0.6^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), and, if they are above an acceptable level, the system will alert security or whoever has been designated the responsible party, who then implements whatever policies specify what is to be done with an employee, customer or visitor who has been found to have an elevated temperature.

According to Andrei Yurkevich, CTO for Altoros, one of the gaps in the market for temperature-screening systems that Altoros saw was that there was no system that could orchestrate several cameras or be installed in multiple entrances.

Another gap in the market is data collection, which Mass Fever Screener integrates.

“Where we’ve seen a need is in developing a system where it will be possible to collect historical data about people who enter the building,” Yurkevich said. “Most likely there will be some compliance requirements for organizations to track their employees or their visitors.”

And it may be necessary to track statistics over time.

“There was no tool to collect the statistics in an automated way,” Yurkevich

said, “and to see how the numbers changed over time. How many people with elevated temperatures did you have last month, last week, now? The core of the system is reporting the details about how safe the environment is.”

Altoros started with the thermal cameras and the software, but as they saw additional needs arise, they started adding additional modules, including one that provides UV-based disinfecting. Another module helps enforce mask compliance. That is, the AI-based camera can determine if people who enter the location are wearing a mask or not, and, if not, trigger whatever action has been programmed (alert security, etc.). The system can also determine if the mask is being worn correctly (i.e., above the nostrils). What about a mask that is itself a face? For example, WhatTheyThink contributor Mary Schilling printed masks with the faces of WTT’s Adam Dewitz and Eric Vessels on them. Could the system tell the difference between a real face and a printed face?

“That’s interesting,” Yurkevich said. “That’s actually a question of training the model with deep learning. If we could train the model that there was a mask and it’s not a face it’s a mask, then

Most likely over time, the system will be able to tell the difference between a real face mask and a printed face mask.



most likely over time, the system will be able to discern that it's a mask."

That's one example, but you get the idea of how AI and machine learning can be used to train the system to track what it is you're trying to track without flagging a lot of false negatives.

Most of the systems that Altoros sells are customized solutions for individual customers, but to the extent that there is a "box," what customers get "out of the box" is the camera, a network video receiver (NVR), and router that connects to cloud storage via a VPN, as all videos are stored in the cloud, although in some special cases video can be stored locally. For privacy and security reasons, customers need to obtain their own cloud storage accounts. The system can be monitored via a browser on any desktop or laptop computer.

The Altoros system can also be installed on entrance kiosks, so that those entering the building can see in real time their thermal status.

"You will have either a green light or a red light where you will need to have a secondary inspection," Yurkevich said.

The system can be integrated with other entrance systems, dynamic digital signage or even other personnel management systems. It can also use face recognition to match employees entering the building to images stored in an HR system, but that may require those employees to sign their consent that the facial recognition is being used at the entrance.

The customer base for Mass Fever Screener has come from the hospitality industry, especially cruise lines, as well as schools and manufacturing facilities.

Thus far in the pandemic, we have

(quite rightly) focused on health and safety, but as more businesses reopen, legal issues, especially surrounding compliance and liability, will likely play a greater role, and systems like Mass Fever Screener can help with compliance and liability concerns—and even give businesses a competitive edge.

Depending on the state, or even country, mask mandates vary in strictness (or even basic existence), but the Altoros system can help demonstrate mask compliance. And then there is liability.

"The system helps decrease the legal liabilities, to ensure that the business is applying the best effort to protect people who enter and stay on the premises," Yurkevich said.

It has yet to be seen how insurance companies are going to change their policies in the wake of the pandemic (but one can take a guess), but Yurkevich feels that installing such a system may help decrease a business' insurance premiums—or at least mitigate any significant increase.

And then there is just instilling comfort and security in potential customers, especially in the hospitality industry, if they can demonstrate, said Yurkevich, "the likelihood of having an outbreak at this hotel is decreased." That can also give these kinds of locations an edge over the competition.

These concerns are now what businesses are going to have to contend with in "the new normal." And systems like Altoros' Mass Fever Screener can help address these concerns. ●

### Read More...

Find article at [PrintingNews.com/21143893](https://PrintingNews.com/21143893)



*Richard Romano has been writing about the graphic communications industry for 20 years. He is an industry analyst and author or co-author of more than half a dozen books.*

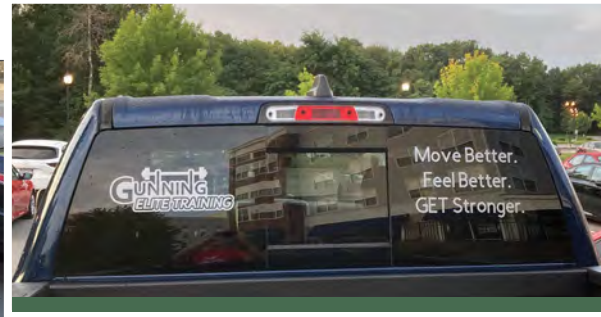
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(Above) Simple vehicle graphics output from an inexpensive Cricut printer. (Left) Vehicle graphics can be an important part of a company's branding—and even serve as an advertising vehicle (so to speak).

# MOVING MESSAGES

*Vehicle graphics are an effective advertising platform.*

By Richard Romano

**A**s we emerge post-COVID, this is a good time for print businesses to take stock of their product and service offerings and look for new market opportunities. In a previous issue, Pete Basiliere enumerated the opportunities in direct-to-shape printing ("Beyond the Hype," *WhatTheyThink*, August 2020, page 46). This month, let's take a look at vehicle graphics.

A lot of shops have been doing vehicle graphics for many years, and it's certainly a more mainstream application than direct-to-shape or some other new areas like printed electronics. And as with virtually everything else in existence, the COVID pandemic has the potential to alter the market.

We've written often about new developments in vehicle graphics, but if they're not something you've paid a lot of attention to, they've come a long way from those stick-on letters or magnetic signs you slapped on the side of a pick-up truck—or even those 1970s custom-painted van murals.

## Consumer vs. Commercial

First, let's back the car up a second. There are

two basic markets for vehicle graphics—consumer and commercial. As the word suggests, "consumer" graphics are purchased by individual car owners for their private vehicles, while "commercial" vehicle graphics are applied to company vehicles.

On the consumer side, you occasionally see some striking vehicle graphics cruising the streets, but the biggest application for consumer vehicle graphics is simple color changes. Once upon a time, if you wanted to change the color of your car, or if the auto dealership didn't have the color you wanted, it would have to be repainted. Today, car color changes are done with wraps, which has the added benefit of making further color changes relatively easy and inexpensive, should a car owner tire of their car's hue. Car owners also often request other decorative effects such as smoked taillights, tinted headlights and blacking out chrome. There are also transparent plastic films such as Clea Bra that are applied to protect a car's paint job from road debris and other damage.

True consumer vehicle graphics tend to be more the purview of wealthier car owners, who want to spiff up their Lamborghinis or Ferraris (it's also a very California thing), but for most vehicle wrap pros, the real action is in commercial wraps, especially fleets. Commercial vehicle graphics also can mean a lot of repeat business, as branding changes regularly requiring an entire fleet to be redone. Vehicle graphics shops that have big corporate fleet clients find this a big profit center.

## Fleet Feat

Commercial vehicle graphics can take a bewildering variety of forms, and, yes, those old adhesive letters and magnetic panels still exist. Homemade

vehicle graphics can be produced on a simple and inexpensive Cricut printer and applied to a window For a small local business, that may be perfectly sufficient

If you have a higher-end printer/cutter from the likes of Roland, Mimaki, Mutoh and/or others, you can take this basic idea to the next level, and even combine window lettering with full body wraps.

For businesses, it turns out that vehicle graphics have been found to be a highly effective advertising medium. Bellevue, Wash.'s Riveting Wraps ([www.rivetingwraps.com](http://www.rivetingwraps.com)) cites data from the Out of Home Advertising Association (OAAA) and 3M that finds that Vehicle wraps have the lowest cost per thousand impressions and highest impressions per dollar compared to other advertising channels."

And a study conducted by the American Trucking Associations (ATA) found that "a vehicle wrap on a typical trailer makes 10 million impressions every year. That number increases to 14 million for trailers with reflective graphics and to 16 million for local delivery vans."



Trailers are an obvious place to put vehicle or fleet graphics.

Trailers and professional services trucks are ideal locations for vehicle graphics. Think of it this way: you just moved into a new neighborhood, you need yard work, lawn care or tree servicing, and you see a relevant vehicle parked outside a neighbor's house. You snap a picture of the contact info on the graphic and look them up online or contact them later. Repeat for any other relevant business whose vehicles you come across.

## Design for Driving

As a provider of vehicle graphics printing and installation, being heavily involved in design can also be a valuable service for a customer especially

if you can help avoid some common vehicle graphics pitfalls and adopt best practices.



### Read More...

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- Avoid busy or cluttered designs. Unless the wrapped vehicle is parked, it is going to be seen in motion, either tooling down the highway at 70+ mph or in city traffic where the average driver has other things they should be paying attention to. Wrap design should be clean and clear and answer three basic questions about the advertised business: Who are they? What do they do? How do you contact them? It should answer these questions in less than 10 seconds.
- Add lines like "We deliver!" if indeed the customer's business does.
- Add URLs or, even better, QR codes, and ideally both for people who don't know what QR codes are. True, drivers shouldn't be scanning QR codes while driving, but if you're stopped at a light or in a car park, it's a great way to get a customer to check out the vehicle owner's website.
- Keep branding—color, logo, overall look and feel—consistent with other marketing and advertising materials. Big brands will demand this, smaller businesses may be less attuned to it, but it can pay to be proactive in helping companies with their own brand management.
- If appropriate, go for "kid appeal!" One wrapper I interviewed some years ago told me that if a vehicle graphic can catch the eye of a child, they are likely to point it out to their parents or whatever adult is driving.

## Not the End of the Road

It's true that with fewer people commuting, there is less traffic during the additional drive times, so vehicle graphics have less visibility during what once were peak hours. But people still do venture out and may be looking for different kinds of services, especially those that deliver. This is a good time to either investigate adding vehicle graphics to your arsenal of capabilities—or convincing customers of the effectiveness of a high-quality, well-designed wrap. ●



## Register for this Webinar on Wed., October 21 Divisional Graphics: Opportunities Post-COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly spawned new forms of signage and display: what EFI calls—and has trademarked—“Divisional Graphics.” These are structural graphics intended to enable or enforce social distancing in public spaces like restaurants, bars, stores, and other locations to help in preventing the spread of contagions—and not just COVID. The coronavirus will remain a persistent threat for the foreseeable future, but even when the immediate threat of the virus has passed, demand for Divisional Graphics—and whatever they evolve into—will likely remain. What will today’s COVID-related materials likely evolve into? What opportunities will remain for these materials, and what new ones will arise? This session, to be held Wednesday, October 21 at 1 pm ET sponsored by EFI, will look at the present and future of divisional graphics and COVID signage.

[www.printingnews.com/21143995](http://www.printingnews.com/21143995)

## Introducing the New Arizona 2300 Series: Improved Flatbed Production and Productivity

The new Arizona 2300 Series offers an instant-on capability through its UV-LED curing system, enabling quicker turnaround for last-minute jobs.

Building on its heritage in flatbed printing, Canon U.S.A., Inc., announced the new Arizona 2300 Series UV curable flatbed printers for the wide format print market. This series is designed to help customers speed up production, improve operational efficiencies and fuel growth opportunities through its new applications.

[www.printingnews.com/21143542](http://www.printingnews.com/21143542)



## Clear Channel Outdoor Integrates All-Screen Video Solution to Amplify Consumers’ Exposure to Outdoor Ads

Clear Channel Outdoor (CCO) has partnered with Tremor Video to help brands amplify out-of-home (OOH) reach and deepen consumer engagement with video ads across all screens including desktop, mobile, tablet and connected TV (CTV). By integrating Tremor Video’s capabilities with RADARConnect, CCO now provides advertisers a coordinated OOH and all-screen video solution that seamlessly extends TV, digital or social video campaigns to reach consumers when, and where, they’re ready to engage with brands.

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## GPA Expands Product Intelligence with UV Inkjet Synthetic Portfolio

GPA is now offering the first-to-market line of digital synthetics and self-adhesives specific to the Konica Minolta AccurioJet KM-1 and Komori Impremia IS29 platforms. UV Inkjet printers have told GPA they want greater utilization of presses for broader, more profitable applications; the simplicity and availability of GPA’s press-specific stocks enable just that.

The portfolio is broad with a range of rigid vinyl, synthetic paper, self-adhesive vinyl and paper, and even Digifly Printable Canvas, all available in UV Inkjet sheet sizes ready to ship from GPA’s warehouses.

[www.printingnews.com/21143357](http://www.printingnews.com/21143357)



## Mimaki Europe and BOFA International Announce the Market-Release of the BOFA Air Purifier Unit

Mimaki Europe and BOFA International have released the BOFA Air Purifier Unit. Launched in March 2020, the product was developed for one of Mimaki’s most cost-effective yet high-performance printers, the 3.2m-wide SW-320EA solvent printer, and extracts VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) emitted during production to ensure a cleaner and more pleasant working environment.

[www.printingnews.com/21143299](http://www.printingnews.com/21143299)



## Canon U.S.A., Inc. Announces New End-to-End Large Format Solutions



Canon U.S.A. Inc., announced the launch of its updated ColorWave and PlotWave large format printer series. Comprising two ColorWave models (3600, 3800) and five monochrome PlotWave models (3000, 3500, 5000, 5500 and 7500), the series has been designed to support and encourage creativity for businesses throughout every stage of the design process—from the visualization of ideas through the developmental process to final designs. Built on trusted Canon technology, both upgraded series offer enhanced security benefits and improved ease of use. For creators looking to meet tight deadlines and protect their data in office or production environments, ColorWave and PlotWave printers can offer the ideal solution.

Integrating optional finishing and scanning solutions, ColorWave and PlotWave printers offer a solution that makes the automated production of large format prints easier than ever. With a range of fully compatible stackers and folders, any printer in the series can be configured to meet specific requirements and easily produce finished documents—all in one printer.

Also compatible with both series are compact single footprint scanning solutions—the optional Scanner Express IV, which can be integrated on top of the PlotWave and ColorWave printers for simple walk-up prints, copies or scans.

[www.printingnews.com/21143806](http://www.printingnews.com/21143806)

## FASTSIGNS

### FASTSIGNS Named A “Top Growth Franchise” By Entrepreneur Magazine

FASTSIGNS International, Inc., has been named to Entrepreneur magazine’s first Top Growth Franchises list — the only sign, graphics, and visual communications franchise recognized — which ranked the top 150 franchises with the most consistent growth in the U.S. and Canada over the last three years. FASTSIGNS has grown aggressively throughout the U.S. and Canada, signing dozens of franchise agreements in major markets including New York City, Chicago, Phoenix, Seattle, and the Toronto area.

[www.printingnews.com/21143639](http://www.printingnews.com/21143639)

## 3A Composites USA Expands Graphic Display Board Line with Encore Products, Elmer’s Foam Boards Acquisition



3A Composites USA has announced the expansion of its foam board range with the acquisition of the EnCore Products and Elmer’s foam boards division from Atlanta-based Newell Brands Inc.

This expansion will broaden 3A Composites’ offering to the display, graphic arts and framing markets.

The current 3A Composites USA graphic display board line includes the well-known FOME-COR, SINTRA, GATOR, DISPA, DIBOND, LUMEX G and ALUCOBOND brands.

“This expansion will allow 3A Composites to integrate the knowledge and expertise of both businesses,” said Brad Walsh, vice president of sales, 3A Composites USA. “The resulting combination positions 3A Composites as an industry-leading supplier with a wide range of foam board products, world-class manufacturing capabilities and unparalleled customer service.

[www.printingnews.com/21143846](http://www.printingnews.com/21143846)

## Gerber MCT Cutter Empowers Colorwave Graphics to Transform During COVID-19 Pandemic

As COVID-19 cancelled in-person events, sign & graphics companies were forced to develop new revenue streams in order to stay afloat. Colorwave



Graphics was able to expand their business through a quick and seamless transition to producing personal protective equipment (PPE) by leveraging the Gerber MCT Cutter. Colorwave was able to develop signage for social distancing, sneeze guards and even a temporary hospital bed made from 100% recyclable material. Additionally, the versatile solution empowers the Illinois-based signage producer to greatly improve their speed and throughput, enabling them to cut 2-up gang banners in just 20 seconds, which normally would have taken 40 hours manually. Colorwave saw an immediate improvement in their production process when they integrated the Gerber MCT Cutter into their supply chain last year. They were able to handle multiple projects at once and take on new projects that they previously weren’t able to.

[www.printingnews.com/21143888](http://www.printingnews.com/21143888)

# TALENT ACQUISITION STRATEGY FOR THE NEW NORMAL

*Five steps for hiring and keeping great employees during and after the pandemic.*

By Arnold Kahn & Dino Scalia

you can engage external talent acquisition experts to help you. Here, we have outlined five keys to an effective talent acquisition strategy to help you get started down the path in this “new normal”.

**Describe your company – and the position you seek to fill – in a positive, flexible manner.**

The goal here is to position your company as a great place to work. Perhaps you can include testimonials from existing employees discussing how they feel about working for you, in terms of workplace culture, the opportunity for advancement, flexibility in work schedules when needed, benefits and other characteristics

that you feel set your company apart. You want to project an image of your company as one people want to work for

It's also important to create a concise and relevant job description. Help potential applicants clearly understand what will be expected of them and avoid the use of generalities and the business buzzword of the week. In this way, you will be able to attract applicants that are more likely to align with the need you are trying to fill

And finally, don't put too many limitations in the description. For example, specifying that an applicant must have “X” years of experience in the printing industry is a limiting factor. What's more important are the soft skills a new employee might bring – adaptability, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, the confidence to be a self-starter and good



**A**s companies around the country get back to work, it's no secret that the pandemic has changed both the way they seek to attract new talent and the interview/on-boarding process.

For example, we hear many stories of hiring and on-boarding taking place completely virtually. This change in dynamics calls for a re-examination of the sourcing, hiring and on-boarding process to ensure that businesses can get the talent they need in order to return to some sense of normalcy as we continue to navigate COVID-19.

The best way to prepare for a modern and effective hiring process is to take a good look at your existing talent acquisition strategy and determine how best to change and update it to meet today's needs. You can do this using company resources, or

character are some of the more important ones and are the skills most in demand today. You can teach someone about the printing industry, but it's harder – if not impossible – to change their character to ensure they fit in with the rest of your team.

### Expand your recruiting reach.

Take the necessary steps to get your company out there on social media. Roll existing employees to find out who is active on their personal social media and is interested in helping you develop or advance the company's social media presence. Especially among younger employees, you will likely find some great candidates for this role. Not only will it help get your company out there and increase the pride existing employees have in working for you, but it will also make the employees that are helping you with this important strategy feel great

about their ability to contribute and even better about the company.

And don't leave the social media thing entirely up to employees. Ensure company leaders are also actively networking on social media, especially on sites like LinkedIn, posting frequently with items of interest and educational value. Stay away from controversial topics as much as possible, especially those that are polarizing the nation these days. You want your company to be as welcoming and inclusive as possible and to be able to attract a broad range of talented people. This helps in the overall positioning of the company, as well as in building a network of like-minded individuals and peers that can be a great source of candidates.

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*Continued on page 62*



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# 3 STRATEGIES TO LAND 5X DEALS

*How to increase sales in challenging times.*

**S**alespeople who are trying to identify, develop and close big deals right now are facing unprecedented challenges. Prospects are distracted, hard to reach and hesitant to set meetings. Buying teams are avoiding any type of risk or perceived risk, which includes changing products or services. As a seller your biggest competitor for new customers is the “status quo.” Live virtual prospect meetings mean that relationship building is more difficult than ever.



The three strategies that will positively impact your win rates for 5X deals (contracts worth about five times your average deal size), include:

- Solidifying at least five key relationships
- Engaging in at least five account strategy development sessions (I call these “War Room” sessions.)
- Giving yourself a sales runway of at least five months to learn, qualify and develop the opportunity

Let’s break these down one at a time...

## Five Relationships Developed

This group includes decision makers, decision validators, decision influencers, stakeholders, subject matter experts (e.g. technical experts, security, legal, procurement) and end users.

Relationship development goes well beyond an initial meeting. Relationships are developed over time and built on mutual trust and in-depth rapport. For large opportunities, relationships should be mapped by the internal account team. For example, who best aligns with your prospect from your company? The account team can analyze each relationship to best understand the appropriate engagement plan. The account team must think strategically about relationships and ask themselves about the relationships they have and the ones they know they will need.

You are **NOT** where you need to be if:

- You are counting on a single relationship to advance your opportunity.
- Your relationships are new, and trust hasn’t been established.
- You do not have access to the decision maker(s) i.e. executive sponsor for your services.
- You do not have true insights into your prospect’s priorities (a level above needs and pain points).

## Account Strategy Meetings (War Room Sessions)

Account strategy meetings are an opportunity to discuss how to be a

trusted advisor for your prospect. They also allow the team to do the strategy work necessary for future success. Topics covered over a series of war room sessions would include: establishing the account team and resources, gathering account insights, scoring the opportunity, qualifying questions and discussion points, mapping relationships, executive engagement planning, constructing a pre-strategy SWOT matrix, charting your account strategy, designing the “Win Themes,” developing competitive blocking and analysis and pre-call planning (for every single prospect meeting).

This work cannot be accomplished in only one or two war room sessions. It must be done over time. Each session builds on the prior one as new information is learned. To truly put the account team in a position for success, all the above components must be completed prior to the issue of an RFP or proposal for a large opportunity.

You are **NOT** where you need to be if:

- The account team is not fully engaged.
- The account team has not developed a compelling strategy to win.
- The account team skipped some of the war room work which lead to some “bad surprises” later in the sales process.
- The account team isn't clear on prospect “Win Themes,” including why each priority is important to the prospect when going into the proposal development stage.

## At Least Five Months of Solid Sales Engagement

It takes time to develop relationships and work through



*Lisa Magnuson founded Top Line Sales in 2005. It has a proven track record of helping companies overcome the barriers to winning TOP Line Accounts. Learn more at [www.toplinesales.com](http://www.toplinesales.com).*

all the war room elements. It also takes time to learn, qualify and develop the opportunity. If these early sales stages are missed or rushed, results will suffer

The other critical part of the time equation is understanding the buyer's journey for big contracts. What is your prospect doing, thinking and feeling at each stage of their journey? Can the account team put themselves in their prospect's shoes?

The prospect's journey takes time, too. It is the job of the account team to add the right value at the right time.

You are **NOT** where you need to be if:

- The account team has not allocated enough time for proper relationship building (depth and breadth).
- The account team did not spend the time required on all the war room elements.
- The prospect facing team rushed through or skipped the learn, qualify and develop stages of the sales process.
- The account team does not understand the prospect's buying journey and isn't in lock step with their struggles and the value they are seeking.

## Ring the Bell!

The account team will ring the bell more often if they commit to the three strategies that will positively impact win rates for 5X enterprise deals. The result will be well worth your efforts. Lastly, don't forget to celebrate! High fi e's are a good start.●



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# A SIGN OF THE TIMES

*Three ways COVID-19 made the signs & graphics industry more essential than ever.*

**T**he pandemic has impacted nearly every aspect of our daily lives, and is reshaping entire industries. It's shown which products and services are crucial to maintaining business, and in turn those industries have become essential to the recovery of small business communities worldwide.

Very early on, signs and graphics was one such vital industry, and its value has only grown as the pandemic has gone on.

Here are just three ways meaningful graphic displays have shown to be a crucial tool for businesses in both the fight against, and recovery from, the coronavirus.

## **Signs make public health accessible and coherent.**

Above all, graphics have been essential in keeping people safe. When we were all quickly trying to learn the reach and scope of the situation, there was a need for information that could be digested quickly and visually.

Local officials, businesses and entire communities have been leaning on signs since the beginning as tools to communicate with residents and in turn keep people safe. As our understanding of the pandemic has evolved, most of us now expect to see signs outside businesses, medical centers, restaurants and community buildings as the first line of defense, arming us with the most up-to-date



information on public health and the coronavirus.

## **Signs help normalize changes to business and retail culture.**

The first time you saw a person wearing a face mask and entering a storefront was likely a surprise. It might have even seemed unsettling or confusing. Now, it's rapidly becoming a new normal, along with implementing new health and safety guidelines for customers and employees alike.

The signs and graphics industry has become key to establishing these new norms. When people enter buildings now, they automatically check doors and front entrances for signs indicating rules for entry. Clear, concise signage is a central tool for engaging with the public and communicating new ways of doing things. Graphics and displays on mask-wearing and social distancing also go a long way toward normalizing the public's evolving rela-



tionship with health and safety

Virtually every public-facing business has become reliant on professional signs and graphic displays to protect public health, keep business open and in turn keep the local economy running.

## **Signs help communities rebuild.**

When restaurants closed dining rooms, owners were desperate to tell customers they were still



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open for delivery or pickup. When non-essential businesses closed, those entrepreneurs needed to tell customers how to take part in curbside pickup. In the early days of panic and confusion, the signs industry was there to help businesses communicate with the public, and in many cases survive the immediate economic impact of the pandemic.

Now, the signs and graphics industry remains just as crucial as local business communities work to reopen, rebuild and recover. To reopen, many of them turned to graphics to explain new policies and procedures. As restrictions have lifted and been reinstated, businesses stayed in touch with the community in large part through the signage on their facility. As employees return to workplaces, clear graphics help keep staff members safe, whether they are working in an office building or a storefront.

The last six months have given us countless examples of individuals and businesses stepping in to help others, give back and show community. Signs and graphics have proven to be valuable tools and have met the call for visual communication during a pandemic. But most of all, it has been the incredible people who are part of this industry that have made signs stand out as an essential business.

When it mattered most, signs, graphics and display companies everywhere have made it their mission to help elevate public

health, establish new norms and get entire communities back to business. We should all be proud of what we've accomplished, and confident in our ability to

continue to support our communities in the weeks and months to come. ●

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# THE STATE OF MARKETING

Peek inside Salesforce.com's "State of Marketing Survey" (Sixth Edition) and the challenges it paints for marketers.

**E**ven as marketers continue to complain that they have a hard time managing their growing repositories of data, both keeping up with and mining them for insights, they are increasing the amount of data they take in.

Regardless of how happy (or not) marketers are with how their data is handled, they are drawing from similar sources. While the order changes by country and industry vertical, top data sources being used by marketers include: transactional data, declared interests/preferences, known digital identities, offline identities, anonymized digital identities, second-party data, inferred interests/preferences, non-transactional data and third-party data

To be effective in their communications, marketers have to analyze and apply their data in an accurate, timely and "permissible to use" manner. The challenges, marketers say, are data unification and activation, and this has to do with the data environment as much as it does volume. It's difficult to get a handle on the top issues when your data management is becoming increasingly fragmented. In 2018, marketers used an average of three data management tools to handle all of their data. Today, that has risen to six, including CRM, email management and marketing automation platforms.

As we found in 2018, no clear winner among many competing solutions has emerged. Today, marketers are turning to even more complex combinations of data management technologies to build a cohesive understanding of their customers, according to the report.

Even once this data is sourced, integrated and managed, the next challenge arises: turning it into insight. With the volume of data available, gaining true, actionable insights is nearly impossible without the use of something that few small and mid-sized marketers have—artificial intelligence (AI). Use of AI among Salesforce.com respondents, for example, has rocketed from 29% in 2018 to 84% today. Top uses include building personalized experiences in individual channels, developing improved customer segmentation/lookalike modeling, gaining

surfaced insights from data, driving next best actions (e.g., offers), and creating automated customer interactions. But not every marketer has access to the same level of opportunity.

Add to this complexity privacy, compliance and transparency. Even as marketers try to manage all of that data, they are increasingly mindful of balancing personalized experiences with customer comfort levels (i.e., transparency in data use), as well as compliance issues. In 2018, 51% of survey respondents said they were "more mindful" of creating this balance than they were two years ago. Today, that has risen to 81%. The percentage going beyond regulations/industry standards has risen from 44% to 57%.

The takeaway of all this? Personalized, relevant communications and the ability to build positive customer experiences on a larger scale isn't going to happen with simple demographic data (or even psychographic targeting) anymore. The omnichannel environment and increased customer expectations keep raising the bar. How are you prepared to help? ●

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Heidi Tolliver-Walker has been a commercial and digital printing industry analyst, feature writer, and author for more than 20 years. Her industry commentary can be found in national printing publications, blogs, and marketing publications.

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# BRINGING FASHION BACK TO ST. LOUIS

*The St. Louis Fashion Fund is thriving.*

By Cary Sherburne

**T**he global pandemic is accelerating needed change in the textiles and apparel supply chain, but it's also putting the brakes on many of the initiatives that were helping to drive change forward. But there is good news coming out of the fashion front from St. Louis, where the Saint Louis Fashion Fund closed down briefly early in the pandemic but is now back at work helping to re-establish St. Louis as a fashion hub, a position it held only second to New York from the turn of the 20th century until post-World War II. We spoke with one of its founders, Susan Sherman, and Jon Lewis, CEO of Evolution St. Louis, a high-tech knitting facility the Fund has attracted to St. Louis, to learn more.

**WhatTheyThink:** Susan, can you start by giving us some background on the Saint Louis Fashion Fund?

**Susan Sherman:** The Saint Louis Fashion Fund was founded about seven years ago to support emerging designers and promote fashion education and outreach in St. Louis.

A lot of the younger generation was not familiar with the history of St. Louis as a fashion hub, and among other things, we wanted to change that. We were formerly located on Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis (the Fund will be moving to a new location in the city soon), which used to be known as Shoe Street U.S.A.

**WTT:** Talk a little bit about how you have worked to support emerging designers.

**SS:** We have had two cohorts of designers go through a program, where we provided them with a

showroom, a cut-and-sew facility and office space. We also gave them stipends and connected them with mentors, and helped them make connections

with fashion centers in New York, Los Angeles, etc.

**WTT:** Where did the attendees come from?



(Above) First St. Louis Fashion Fund Designer Cohort (Left) Susan Sherman, St. Louis Fashion Fund Co-Founder

**SS:** The first group came from all over the U.S. We worked with a company in New York called Launch Collective that did all of the business-related learning with them. And then we had a host of mentors in St. Louis that worked with them on an as-needed basis. In our 7,500-square-foot facility, we had a 2,500-square-foot showroom where they were really able to get to know a customer and the support from the community was terrific. Our of them received a \$50,000 grant from Arch Grants in St. Louis, for example. It's a hard business to grow if you don't have a ton of capital or wealth in your family, or you are not seeing white space opportunities. They all were able to grow in different ways. It was really quite something to watch.



Second Fashion Fund Designer Cohort

**WTT:** And the second cohort?

**SS:** The second group was all local. We had eight designers creating handbags, men's and women's ready-to-wear, juniors and millinery. They have now graduated to other studios/spaces around the city in which to work and continue to build their businesses.

**WTT:** And has your focus changed recently?

**SS:** Yes, our focus has now shifted to economic development and jobs, with Evolution St. Louis being a great example of that new mission.

**WTT:** Jon, talk to us about Evolution St. Louis.

**Jon Lewis:** Through Susan and the St. Louis Fashion Fund, we learned what was happening in St. Louis and have established a high-tech flatbed knitting facility here with 32,000 square feet of space and 30 Stoll flatbed knitting machines we operate with 14 employees. What Susan and her team have done here is create a community of creativity that allows us to be a manufacturing hub right in the garment district of St. Louis. We have been able to stay open



(Above) John Lewis, CEO of Evolution St. Louis

(Right) Example 3D knitted mask from Evolution St. Louis



as an essential business during the pandemic, and we manufactured a lot of masks as the pandemic heated up. Our knitting machines can knit masks as one piece, and because of the

innovative yarns we use, they have a lot of antimicrobial properties. We didn't anticipate buying all these high-tech machines to make masks; it's kind of like driving a Ferrari to the grocery store to get a quart of milk. But we are using that machine time now to help.

**WTT:** Explain a little more about the knitting machines.

**JL:** The best analogy I can equate to is a 3D printer. You program something into the printer and you print out a piece of jewelry or a car part or whatever. It's the same thing with knitting. We receive designs and concepts from our customers and put that into digital form, algorithms that feed our knitting machines. When the data goes out to the knitting machines, the yarn goes into the top and a full sweater comes out of the bottom. It's like Willy Wonka; it just sort of happens.

**WTT:** One of the key things you are doing, Susan, is building an ecosystem in St. Louis. Tell us about that.

**SS:** We do have a fashion ecosystem here. We have the larger brands like Caleres and Soft Surroundings. And we also have more than 100 small businesses, emerging designers and boutiques. We serve them all, and we look at ourselves as a hub where we continually provide information and resources. Even during COVID, we raised funds and provided grants to businesses to help them get to the other side, although I thought we would already be on the other side by now. But the community is really supportive. People understand this business because of the history here, so you don't have to start from scratch. And investors are understanding now—because of the groundwork we have laid—that



Stoll Flatbed Knitting Machines Installed at Evolution St. Louis

fashion is “big business,” and they are willing to invest in other businesses who we hope to attract to St. Louis as well.

**WTT:** I understand you also helped with PPE

**SS:** Yes, we had a big donor who gave us a significant gift, and we raised the rest. We produced \$100,000 worth of PPE, 14,000 masks, in 45 days when people were really searching and desperate for masks back in March and April.

**WTT:** Jon, what are the changes in the industry that drew you to found Evolution St. Louis?

**JL:** We saw that a lot of the new ideas and innovation were coming from emerging brands. And we also saw e-commerce changing consumer buying habits, where now emerging brands could go direct-to-consumer, and that changed the way people were designing. What we have done is blend technology into fashion with the advances in flatbed knitting and apply them not only to fashion and apparel, but also shoes, automotive,

medical equipment, military applications—all of these things we can manufacture bringing technology into what has been a somewhat archaic non-innovative world, with the exception of design. Design has always been innovative. But how you make these things hasn't. So there is a powerful opportunity for the U.S. market.

**WTT:** So what are some of the changes you see coming and why St. Louis?

**JL:** In the middle of COVID and trying to figure out how to get out of it, a lot of the companies we manu-

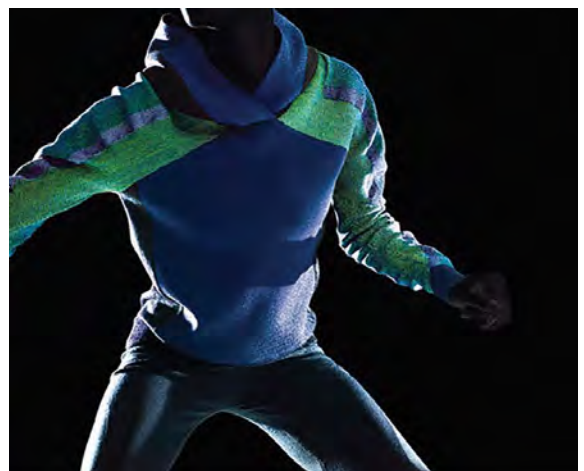
facture for have come to realize a few things. They thought they would have 70% to 80% of their business selling in department stores and 20% to 30% e-commerce (direct-to-consumer) with the model flipping over the next few years. Well, it's flipping now, and the need to flip it is now. The pandemic has made these efforts even more relevant. We are building the manufacturing operation of the future. We see sustainability, modern design and apparel

innovation not just as what you design and how you make it, but also where you make it, what materials you use and how you innovate with materials. All those things are coming together at Evolution St. Louis. We've seen it all come together and we've had instantaneous success. We are in full production right now. We have more customers than we ever thought we would have, to the point that we just leased another 130,000-square-foot facility that will be available in the spring of 2022 to expand

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3D knitted dress and shoes



3D knitted hoodie

operations. We see this as a billion-dollar opportunity, creating an industry sector that will be the cornerstone of a good chunk of the apparel business. In the trillion-dollar global industry, 35% is some sort of knit. If you are going to knit a base product, you want to come to St. Louis to get it done. And it all started with Susan saying, “Hey come to St. Louis to talk to us!” It's a blend of .com, .gov, .org and .edu. All of those entities have really come together here to create a community. ●

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Watch for the full video interview with Susan and Jon, scheduled for publication Sept. 23.*



*Cary Sherburne is a well-known author, journalist and marketing consultant whose practice is focused on marketing communications strategies for the printing and publishing industries.*

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## KLIEVERIK

### Klieverik Opens New Branch in North America

With over 400 machines in operation in US, Canada and Mexico, Klieverik has been market leader in North America for many years. And now Klieverik finally has its boots on the ground in the US with a recently opened location in Buford, GA, near Atlanta International Airport.

From the local Buford office Klieverik technicians are able to support you quicker and more effectively than before. Klieverik will continue to send out Dutch technicians to North America as well.

With a physical location in the North America, Klieverik is able to offer a trade-in program. Klieverik will support the existing customers in their growth of business. When a customer needs extra capacity, or a faster machine, Klieverik can buy back an older unit and replace this with a bigger sized or additional unit.

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### Lucky 13 for New Release of the Harlequin RIP

Innovative new features, including automatic tiling for processing large scale output at high speed, and extended Advanced Inkjet Screens, for enhanced image quality, are introduced in a major new release of the Harlequin RIP today

by developers Global Graphics Software. Harlequin Host Renderer 13 raises the bar in terms of productivity features for print service providers and provides new options to press manufacturers for scaling multiple RIPs for high performance digital front ends. Version 13 of the Harlequin Host Renderer, the printing industry's fastest RIP, adds automatic tiling to maximize the throughput of huge PDF, TIFF and JPEG files such as those generated in the corrugated packaging, wide and grand format, décor and textile markets. Harlequin 13 automatically tiles these large pages – some can be up to 200 meters/650 feet long – to split them across multiple RIPs for increased speed and improved load balancing. Output is continuously streamed to the printer so that print service providers don't have to wait for the entire page to be RIPped before printing can begin. This new feature minimizes RAM requirements and costs for a digital front end (DFE) processing very large output.

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### Susie Williamson Joins CMYUK's Décor and Fashion Textile Division

CMYUK has appointed Susie Williamson as a key account manager for its Interiors, Fashion and Design range of specialist textiles for digital printing.

Susie who has a degree in fashion marketing is an experienced surface designer who has enjoyed a career immersed in textile design and printing. Prior to joining CMYUK, she worked for Macclesfield based RA Smart and Think Positive Print, a pioneering direct-to-fabric digital printing and textile design house, also based in Macclesfield.

Susie will work with print service providers (PSPs) that currently specialise in retail and corporate interiors to expand and deepen their portfolio offerings into décor and design through textile production. By introducing them to specialist fabrics, PSPs will be able to produce unique upholstered digital coverings for furniture, bespoke designs for blinds, rugs, cushions and more, to create highly engaging and aesthetically ambitious multi-faceted interiors.

Susie will be working closely with CMYUK's textile solutions team to support creative entrepreneurs, surface designers and small businesses in embrace Reshoring. This is the practice of turning textile and material design collections into printed products in-house for short-runs, one-offs, or web-to-print just-in-time output. This establishes additional new revenue incomes for their portfolios.

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## Mimaki Customer, TOMDOM, Declares Digital Technology the Fabric of a Successful Textile Print Business

TOMDOM online store is one of the largest Russian online trading platforms, offering a broad range of home textiles. During its 12 years in the market, Moscow-based TOMDOM has become a leading vendor of ready-made curtains with a diverse clientele throughout the country and abroad. The concept of TOMDOM began 12 years ago, when the future founder of the company, Vyacheslav Markov, went curtain shopping for his grandmother. There he faced a serious issue – the range of curtains was incredibly limited, and those that were in the medium price range were particularly hard to find in store. A long search eventually resulted in a purchase and a realization that this consumer niche is virtually empty – with very few Russian or foreign vendors. So, with a little effort and education, one could create a business with guaranteed success and high demand for its products. “People enjoy refreshing their homes or offices with new and exciting pieces every so often which urgently required home textiles,” explained Markov. “This is how the idea of opening a specialized online store came about. Initially, TOMDOM only sold ready-made products, but eventually we expanded production and became a major supplier of our own home textile products.”

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## Stratasys Takes Another Leap Forward for Fashion and Direct-to-Textile 3D Printing

Since its unveiling at New York Fashion Week last fall, the ability to 3D print directly onto fabric has drawn significant interest from the world of high-end fashion. Exemplified by the works of fashion designers threeASFOUR and Travis Fitch on NYFW's catwalk, this technological milestone gave the world a preview of what fashion design could look like when combining the geometric and aesthetic freedom of 3D printing with the comfort of fabric.

Since then, Stratasys has been working closely with a number of household fashion brands to optimize its novel PolyJet Technology to meet the needs of modern-day apparel fabrication and make customized fashion design commercially viable.

As the company works towards this goal, Stratasys is proud to reveal two collaborative works with esteemed fashion designers Julia Koerner and Ganit Goldstein. The works form part of Re-FREAM, a collaborative research project funded by the European Union bringing together artists, designers, engineers and scientists to co-explore the use of technology and 3D printing for the future of fashion.

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Kornit  
Digital

## Kornit Announces Launch of Public Offering of Ordinary Shares

Kornit Digital Ltd. announced the launch of an underwritten public offering of 3,600,000 ordinary shares, 2,000,000 of which are being offered by Kornit and 1,600,000 of which are being offered by an affiliate of Amazon.com, Inc. Kornit will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of shares being offered by Amazon. The shares being sold by an affiliate of Amazon are being issued pursuant to the exercise of a warrant granted to Amazon by Kornit. Kornit intends to grant the underwriters a 30-day option to purchase up to an additional 540,000 ordinary shares.

Kornit intends to use the proceeds from the offering for future potential acquisitions, including complementary businesses, technologies or assets, and for general corporate purposes, including working capital and capital expenditures. Kornit has no agreements or understandings with respect to any acquisition or investment at this time.

Kornit has filed a preliminary prospectus supplement to its shelf registration statement on Form F-3 with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”) for the proposed offering of its ordinary shares. The offering will be made only by means of a prospectus supplement and the accompanying prospectus.

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# PRINTING UNITED GOES VIRTUAL

*There's a little bit for everyone from the comfort of their own home office.*

By Richard Romano

“Virtual events” aren’t really anything new; vendors have long held online events and product launches. But since the pandemic and the lockdown, events usually held IRL are now going virtual. Last month, Canon’s THINK Conference went online with great success and this month, the first of the major industry events, PRINTING United, goes virtual.

On Oct. 26, industry professionals will have the opportunity to see what the future of events will look like, at least

in part. This year’s PRINTING United was slated to be held in Atlanta, and back in June, the PRINTING United Alliance (PrUA) decided, what with coronavirus cases rising on top of mass protests in Atlanta, to go online rather than postpone the event until 2021.

“Our [PrUA’s] mission is really to support the industry,” said Mark Subers, president of PRINTING United. “That involves making sure that the exhibitors have engagement, especially this year when drupa had been planned, companies had R&D cycles scheduled

around it, and there are a lot of product releases. So how do we inform people?”

Once the decision was made to do a virtual event, the next question was, what does it look like? Rather than present six to eight hours of online programming each day or take a multi-track approach, the idea was to focus each day on a specific segment or sub-segment of the industry—what show organizers are calling “Insight Days”—and provide three-and-a-half to four hours of programming on any given day. So one day would focus on commercial print, the next on wide format, the next packaging, followed by textiles and apparel, mailing and fulfillment, industrial and so on. (The show is scheduled to run for 14 days; the schedule is still being developed as of press time.)

Each day then would provide a mix of programming specific to that day’s industry segment. There would be a keynote, in-depth, editorial-based educational sessions from subject matter experts, and six 10 -12-minute product announcements and demos from exhibitors.

“If you want to describe what this looks like, I’m shooting for a news magazine like ‘60 Minutes,’” Subers said. “We’re

Content Topic	Segment	Date
<b>Week 1</b>		
Event Opening	Overview	10/26/2020
Graphics/Wide-Format (Hardware and Consumables)	Graphics/Wide-format	10/26/2020
Apparel - Analog/Screen	Apparel	10/27/2020
Commercial - Digital Inkjet	Commercial	10/28/2020
Packaging - Label and Flexible	Packaging	10/29/2020
Graphics/Wide-Format (Finishing and Workflow)	Graphics/Wide-format	10/30/2020
<b>Week 2</b>		
In-Plant Forum	In-Plant (Stand-Alone Event)	11/2/2020
Commercial - Offset/Analog	Commercial	11/3/2020
Packaging - Folding Carton and Corrugated	Packaging	11/4/2020
Mailing and Fulfillment	Mailing/Fulfillment	11/5/2020
Workflow and Software {All segments}	Workflow/Software (Cross segment)	11/6/2020
<b>Week 3</b>		
Apparel - Direct-to-garment/ Direct-to-substrate	Apparel	11/9/2020
Commercial - Dry and Liquid Toner	Commercial	11/10/2020
Industrial	Industrial	11/11/2020
Digital Textile	Digital Textile	11/12/2020

hiring a professional host to facilitate the day and walk us through the different educational sessions and product demos.”

As befits the “United” part of PRINTING United—and the basic *raison d’être* of the show Subers is anticipating some degree of crossover from day to day.

“I think commercial people are going to come to the wide-format graphics day,” Subers said.

Sessions will be archived and attendees will be able to re-watch sessions or catch up on sessions they may have missed. The archive will remain available through the end of the year.

They are also planning to include special events that will be added onto selected days, such as the Intertech Awards, the Golden Image Awards and others.

Educational sessions and product demos are important elements of trade events, but what about the most important part of a show: the show floor?

If you were at last year’s PRINTING United (or many other shows) you may be familiar with the “Map Your Show” platform that lets you—via an app or the show website—see the show floor, find individual exhibitors and get more information. The virtual version uses an advanced hybrid version of “Map Your Show,” and will let attendees go to exhibitors’ virtual booths (which PrUA is calling “showcases”) to

download additional white papers and case studies, watch additional videos, chat online with sales people or schedule an “offsite” meeting, and exchange virtual business cards.

The number of exhibitors is certainly not going to be as big as the IRL show—Subers says he expects about a 50% conversion rate—but even at that it’s not going to be a virtual reproduction of a show floor. Rather, it will be more editorially curated.

“The concept is, let’s give the audience the educational sessions, show them some demos of new product launches, and tell them, via the host, You just saw the demonstration of the new Prosper. We invite you to click below to go over to Kodak’s showcase.”

The virtual show is also retaining, albeit in digital form, a familiar vestige of trade shows past: the show daily

“We’re creating custom daily guides for each day we’re going to be sending out in a digital format,” Subers said. “These are roughly 16 to 20 pages, with some advertising. It’ll have a cover page, the programming for that day, descriptions and articles about what they’re going to see, and write ups of some of the new products.”

And what about another important aspect of IRL shows: actual print samples? After the event, PRINTING United will send out print samples from the exhibitors participating in each day. The sample boxes will

be sent out post-event—starting Oct. 26 and running through November—which gives the logistics folks time to collate all the samples so that an attendee that requests a sample box from multiple days isn’t overwhelmed with multiple shipments (and the show company doesn’t spend a fortune on shipping).

“These will be branded boxes that we send out,” Subers said.

No one really expects this to ever completely replace IRL shows and events. PrUA’s own polling indicates that once it’s deemed safe to do so, people will be leaving the house and office in droves. But some elements will remain.

“I think there will certainly be a sense of a hybrid model moving forward,” Subers said, “and we’re certainly planning on keeping what we’re building.”

The hybrid show is also perfect for engaging with people in an organization who never get to go to shows.

“Sales folks, CSRs, internal production folks, the pre-flight staff—they all now have an opportunity to attend educational sessions and see product demos about stuff that might hit their floor in the coming years.”

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*Continued from page 23*

*one- or two-day event, and the general efforts toward community building.*

**FM:** We believe that community outreach, especially now, is so important. We had over a thousand people show up, and the chats were pretty amazing.

**WTT:** *Two things that I took away from thINK: Canon customers partnering for disaster recovery efforts, and customers that were exchanging supplies so they could keep their operations going. The networking that happens at events like thINK really allows us to show how, if we're all in this together we can succeed.*

**FM:** COVID does present a huge opportunity: we can change the print industry for the better. None of us can do it by ourselves, but together, we can create something really big and beautiful and important, and that delivers something better than it probably ever could have been because we now look at things differently than we did just a few months ago. If you're selfless and and take your ego out of it, you can really do some amazing things.

**WTT:** *A lot of it has been driven by fear that a competitor's going to steal a customer or that you're going to share a trade secret. At the end of the day, your business is more than just ink on paper.*

**FM:** Print does have a much deeper meaning than just putting ink on paper. The value of a book, the learning you get from a book, the person that's being inspired by reading that book and how that person's life changes based on what they learned from the book. And direct mail. You could be helping some small company that could be hurting. All of a sudden, they get business they never would have had before because somebody read their print communication that showed up in their mailbox. When you really start digging deep and thinking about what print does to people's lives, that's what makes our industry so exciting.

**WTT:** *Obviously everyone is eager to return*

*to in-person events, but to what extent is the virtual component of an event going to continue?*

**FM:** We had triple the attendance for [virtual] thINK this year, so that really opened our eyes to say, hey, next year let's get the same number of people that we normally get, but now let's have film crews in every session and broadcast live so that all these people that can't come are able to participate.

**WTT:** *Like a lot of people, you're largely working from home and not traveling. Has that helped your sales effort or contributed to closing the deals faster? How has the current situation affected that side of the business?*

**FM:** An inkjet sales guy needs his technical specialist. They may get them on the phone and ask a couple of questions, but they really need that specialist with a customer. We'd have to wait two, three weeks until that person was available to go visit the customer. It never even occurred to us before to do a Microsoft Teams meeting. Now, that specialist can sit at home and do seven one-hour or half-hour Teams meetings and reach seven different clients in one day. We have more orders sitting in-house today than we've ever had, or at least since I joined the company 10 years ago, because we can do a better job in front of the customer because we have more experts they can talk to on a Teams meeting.

**WTT:** *Any closing remarks or final thoughts?*

**FM:** You start reassessing your values when things like this happen, and you get down to what's really important. I think a lot more about our people working, about the service people in the field, and what we need to do to protect them. I really feel like this is an awakening for all of us to just do better, period.

For people reading this, from everybody at Canon, we just want everybody to be healthy and safe. We want to help any way we can. Our goal is to just help get our customers and get our industry through this. However long it takes. ●

Continued from page 16

adhesive-backed vinyl.

"FUJIFILM customers can select from a variety of finishes as well as various substrates," Pierce said, adding that the product line will expand with demand. "Our J Presses use aqueous-based [AQ] inks, and water on top of plastic is a challenge. It doesn't dry. But Permalite has developed a 'bullet-proof' coating ... that includes a bonding agent with a receptive coating on top."

It mimics offset uncoated and coated sheets, depending on the finish (matte or satin). It's durable and scratch-resistant, "and the color gamut really pops," he said.

The product also features adhesive-backed vinyl that is "permanent and removable," according to Pierce.

Permalite's use of polypropylene helps to keep costs down, he says, allowing for market-based pricing.

"We were immediately impressed by Fujifilm's latest generation of digital presses with the J Press 750S," Chris Cudzilo, Permalite sales/marketing VP, said. "The speed, accuracy and simplicity it showcases are totally focused on the future for printing. When we designed the media portfolio to match both the J Press 720S and 750S needs, we knew it had to be built to match or exceed these qualities for a seamless experience and beautiful results."

FUJIFILM's Piece also points to strong relationships with other coating partners, including FLEXcon, Michelman, MGX and Teslin, as well as working closely with its own chemists at Sericol.

### Synthetic sustainability is real.

From a sustainability standpoint, plastics printing poses landfill and water-supply concerns. In Hop-Syn's case, its synthetic substrates are free of toxins, heavy metals and stearates that are detrimental to the environment, Risdon said. The substrate can be recycled under category five (polypropylene) and reconstituted into a range of products such as park benches, planters, horticultural edge trim, brooms, bike racks and basketball backboards. For nearly two years, Hop-Syn's durable line of

synthetic paper has complied with the 2018 revision to California's Proposition 65 environmental, "safe harbor" standards for "No Significant Risk Levels" of toxic chemicals, heavy metals and phthalates.

California Prop 65 requires the state to maintain and update a list of chemicals known to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity, and products containing those chemicals must carry a warning label. Compliance renders the synthetic papers for safe use in a variety of packaging, labeling and printing applications. Products that use Hop-Syn do not require the warning label.

"Prop 65 is an important environmental standard that now has implications beyond the state of California," said Senior VP Jack Smith. "Throughout the nation, customers are requiring that their products meet these environmental standards as well."

The substrates also are compliant with three other major, global environmental standards. Hop Industries encourages its customers to use the respective logos to demonstrate that their synthetic paper projects are compliant:

- Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) requires reductions in the amount of four heavy metals (mercury, lead, cadmium and hexavalent chromium) in packaging and packaging components sold or distributed in the participating states.
- Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS), the European Union's directive, restricts the use of heavy metals and hazardous chemicals used in the labeling and packaging of consumer products.
- Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), a European Union regulation that addresses the production and use of chemical substances and their potential impact on human health and the environment. ●



*Mark Vruno, a Chicago-based business publishing professional, has reported on the global commercial print industry for more than 20 years.*

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## Make your company competitive in the hiring marketplace.

Now you need to make sure that your compensation package is competitive. It should reflect our culture – for example, do employees get paid time off to do volunteer work? Are you offering flexible work hours for parents struggling with kids still at home as schools figure out how to reopen? Does your company support any philanthropic efforts? Are you working to have a more sustainable business with a smaller environmental footprint and incentivizing employees to contribute to that effort? For many job seekers, it's not only about money and benefits. It's also about work/life balance and support for causes that are important to them.

## Balance remote and on-site work.

Especially during the pandemic, many companies have put infrastructure in place to accommodate remote workers on a long-term basis. Obviously, a press operator can't work remotely, but perhaps prepress and customer service can, if you have the right infrastructure in place. Using cloud-based tools such as Slack and Basecamp to help with communication and project management can help better integrate remote workers. And, of course, Zoom meetings have become a daily diet at many companies who have remote workers. Not as good as in-person, but people are getting used to this way of working and it can be effective. So don't shy away from remote employees in situations where it makes sense.

## Hiring and On-Boarding

Okay, so you've got the word out about how great it is to work in your company. Your executives have increased their social media footprint. You've figured out how to best incorporate remote workers. You have a great job description in place and a competitive compensation package. Now it's about choosing the best candidates and getting them on-board as quickly as possible.

First, make the application process as

simple as possible. According to CareerBuilder, about 60% of all job seekers quit in the middle of filling out online applications because of the form's length or complexity.

It's also important to develop a clear and consistent interview strategy. Plan for the progression of interviews, the venues you will use, who will participate, and what the feedback and review loops look like internally. This is one of the most important parts of the candidate experience and can make a difference whether someone you really want to hire will accept the job offer. It also makes for a more thorough and consistent vetting process for potential hires.

Of course, you always want to check references. But you also want to take a look at a candidate's social media persona. It's a small investment in time that can save you from bad hires. People can often put forward one persona in an interview but an entirely different (and more accurate) one in their social media presence.

Finally, after all this effort in finding the right hires, make sure you have a solid on-boarding process. Especially if they are going to be working remotely, it's important to make them feel welcome and part of the team. And it's important to provide the ability for other team members to get to know the new hires and understand their role. This will allow your new employees to be successful and comfortable as they start their new jobs, and to begin to contribute quickly and effectively.

Following the path laid out here will help your company with a solid path to success in the future, even beyond the pandemic. ●



*Arnold Kahn, a respected authority on staffing issues for the graphic arts industry. He has owned and managed printing and prepress companies for over 25 years. In 1994, Arnold formed PrintLink to successfully help candidates and hiring managers find each other.*



*Dino Scalia is the senior vice president, managing partner at PrintLink. He has spent over 30 years in the Printing Industry. He has lead cross functional teams in sales, business development, and account management serving the enterprise account marketplace.*

Continued from page 31

the entire team engaged in the identification and improvement process. This will build excitement, accountability and buy-in for all involved. Your team will now begin to see the tangible results of building agility into your organizational design.

## Reimagine the organizational structure.

When I arrived as a new executive at an already successful online printer, a recurring pattern emerged from early team member meetings: a large number of incredible ideas never made it out of the ideation stage. To solve the ideation-to-execution issue I engaged the team to design new roles and departments and aligned responsibilities creating speed to market as well as new opportunities for team members.

In a matter of weeks more than 100 team members were excelling in a new structure that was continuously reimaged and refined. This agile approach enabled a fast evaluation process and the timely assignment of resources to execute prioritized projects fostered from a spring of great ideas. The result was one of the fastest growing, most

profitable organizations in the industry.

Great ideas can come from customers, your team or leadership, but if your organizational structure isn't designed for agility and consistently reevaluated, you may miss out on opportunities. Whether your company is functionally aligned, departmentally aligned, matrixed or a hybrid design, there is room for improving the way people and teams work within company structure. Too often that structure is restrictive rather than agile. Lean on your learnings from the people, process and technology assessment phases to guide a thoughtful pace of structural change that will streamline your operations and sustain your scale of growth.

No matter the phase in which your organization is functioning today, you are not alone. Companies are strewn across the unfortunate landscape of a pandemic economy trying to find footing. Taken holistically, the three phases described herein can become an exit ramp from the chaos. Build purpose and agility into your organization and continually nurture it with the discipline of continuous improvement. Then go out and be remarkable. ●

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Requester Publications Only)		
1. Publication Title WhatTheyThink	2. Publication Number 500-850	3. Filing Date September 14, 2020
4. Issue Frequency January/February, March, April, May, June/July October, November and December	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 10	6. Annual Subscription Price Free to Qualified Subscribers
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State, and Zip+4) WTT Media, Inc. 2038 Ford Parkway #218 Saint Paul, MN 55116		Contact Person  Telephone 612-424-5090
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher WTT Media, Inc., 2038 Ford Parkway #218, Saint Paul, MN 55116		
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor		
Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address) Kelley Holmes, Publisher 2038 Ford Parkway #218 Saint Paul, MN 55116		
Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address) Amy Hahn, Production Editor 2038 Ford Parkway #218 Saint Paul, MN 55116		
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PS Form 3526-R Facsimile		

13. Publication Title: WhatTheyThink		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below September 2020	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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g. Copies Not Distributed		225	94
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		33858	33599
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c / 15f x 100)		54.9%	53.6%
16. Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet.			
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the October issue of this publication.			
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner			Date

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# CHEESE, SAUSAGE, MUSHROOMS, SHIPPING

*Expand your reach and find your niche.*

**A**s editorial page editor for the Chicago Tribune, Kristen McQueary is no stranger to controversial topics. Earlier this year she really went out on a limb by asking readers a question, and on Twitter no less:

"Need your advice: I'm shipping deep dish to my grandparents in Ft. Myers. Do I go with Giordanós, Gino's East or Lou Malnati's?"

If you want to start a fight in Chicago, express an opinion about pizza. If you want to start a fight in cyberspace, pose an innocent question. If you want to start a fight with those who are opinionated, vocal and of limited vocabulary, use Twitter. McQueary did all three.

Chicago-style pizza is controversial the world over. Just ask a New Yorker. Even Chicagoans can't agree what exactly constitutes Chicago-style pizza. Is it deep dish or stuffed? How much cheese? The rest of the country may not believe it, but thin-crust pizza is also tremendously popular in Chicago, thus adding to the controversy.

Chicagoans (and anyone within a 150 mile radius of the city) can argue forever about pizza, and thanks to social media, they do.

Everyone has their favorite pizza place. Everyone has their favorite pizza recipe. And everyone, and I do mean everyone, is certain that everyone else is wrong.

But wait, there's more. There is always more to the story in Johnson's World.

McQueary didn't ask the Twitterverse to name their favorite pizza. What she asked about was the best pizza for shipping a thousand plus miles across the country. By adding that one caveat to her question, she completely changed the conversation.

Let's take a look at some of the comments, shall we?

"For shipment, Lou Malnatis. Perfected shipping"

"Do Lou's on Taste of Chicago. All done on-line.

Shipped on dry ice. Will deliver frozen ready to cook. Used to send to Florida all the time. Even specify delivery date. More you send, cheaper it is as shipping stays the same"

"From first-hand experience, Lou's frozen shipped stuff bakes the best and most authentically."

"Lou's. Used them several times to ship pizzas to my parents in Florida. No issues"

"Lou To Go is the way to go"

"Lou's - I just sent some to my in-laws for Xmas"

"Lou's has the most experience shipping pizza nation-wide."

"Agree. Lou has been doing this about 20 years."

As you can see, Lou Malnati's won, hands down. Not necessarily as the best pizza in town, but as the best pizza for shipping out of town. By perfecting long-distance shipping (an entirely different animal than local delivery) Lou's expanded its market from its home region in the corner of one state to the entire nation.

Looking for new markets? Tired of the same ol' conversations about quality and price? (Notice that price was never even mentioned in the pizza postings.) Think: is there a simple action or additional service that will take out the competition?

What can you do to change the conversation? ●

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*Steve Johnson is a successful print owner and digital pioneer. Each month in Johnson's World, he offers up his take on the day-to-day world of graphic communications.*



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