REPRO REPORT

Superwide
Color Printing Comes of Age

Naming–or Renaming–Your Shop

Building Your Online Identity
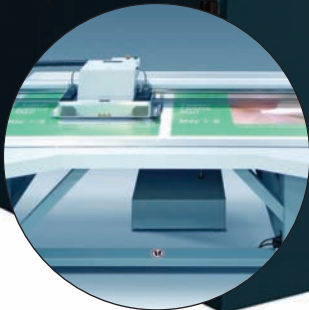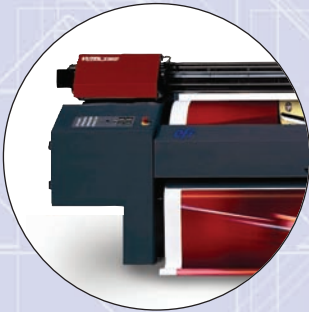
Building Information Modeling: An Opportunity for Reprographers

By Sal Sheikh, *VP Marketing*
Océ Wide Format Printing Division

Building Information Modeling (BIM) is poised to change the building industry. To reap the benefits of emerging opportunities, reprographers must have a clear understanding of what BIM is and the effect it will have on printing needs and volume.

BIM: A Catalyst for Collaboration

As the next generation of CAD software for the building industry, BIM is a new way of approaching the design and documentation of building projects—changing the way parties involved in the building lifecycle collaborate. BIM facilitates creating and working with a common 3D model associated with a comprehensive database that can be accessed by all project decision makers.

As owners begin to see the benefits of BIM, such as dramatically improved interoperability, improved delivery time frames and lower overall project costs, they are beginning to require its use. For example, the General Services Administration has recently mandated the use of BIM for all major federal building projects receiving design funding in 2007.

Despite these positive benefits and federal mandate, BIM adoption has been slow. This is due to three primary issues: in the building industry, change is difficult and costly; there are several different suppliers of BIM software with no single standard; and the use of a single information model requires inherent trust and partnership between all stakeholders.

BIM's Impact on Printing

BIM brings mostly good news for reprographers, with three likely areas of impact:

- **More sheets per set:** BIM is much richer in content so more views can easily be created.

- **Increase in color CAD prints:** The use of 3D design will drive up the number of color prints.

- **More print volume in the design phase:** Since new ideas from designers and owners are easily simulated, more revisions will be made during the design phase and less during construction, thereby shifting part of the print volume from the construction to the design phase.

Five New Areas of Reprographic Business Growth

Changes introduced by BIM will mean stronger relationships within the building industry for reprographers, thus creating new opportunities to capture additional revenues.

- **Visualization:** BIM creates new possibilities to visualize designs in all new ways, with limitless 3D views. Reprographers can provide the color graphics needed for presentations and site graphics, including not only design and print services but also the installation of the printed graphics.

- **Quality information to contractors:** As more 3D design is used, more details are being included in a drawing, increasing the use of color in construction documents. Reprographers can distinguish themselves by offering top-notch, easy to read monochrome and color plots. Solutions such as the Océ TCS500 color CAD print/copy/scan system help reprographers swiftly handle the increasing volume of complex technical color documents and monochrome jobs.

- **Digital services for end-to-end communication:** As the digital exchange of information increases, digital plan rooms and online project collaboration will be interim steps to a fully integrated BIM. The reprographers that come out on top will be those who offer these services and ensure critical project documents are secure and protected against disaster. Reprographers can leverage Océ's online digital plan room software, Océ Plan Center, to view and manage plans online.

- **On-site services:** Digital information exchange will result in a shift from print-and-distribute to distribute-and-print. Reprographers can prepare for this by having client software integrated in the customer's user environment and with the reprographer's shop workflow plus offer on-site services for immediate printing needs. Customizable software solutions, such as Océ Repro Desk® software, make it easy for the end user to send jobs to a local print device or his reprographer of choice.

- **Printing construction components:** Commercial projects contain many custom signs and displays. There are also a wide variety of interior design applications that can be printed with today's display graphics printers like the new Océ Arizona® 250 GT. By demonstrating and marketing the possibilities to architects and interior designers, you can develop a new BIM-related business for yourself.

For more information on how Océ can help reprographers provide new products and services to the building industry, call 800-714-4427, or email us.info@oce.com.

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2007 Brings Increased Emphasis on Education

Mike Carter

President
2006-2007

Each year, the IRgA president travels to the regional association conventions with his or her spouse and the executive director, representing the IRgA. It's a tremendously rewarding experience both personally and professionally. I would like to share with you some observations about our industry that Dottie and I gained from our travels last fall to the CRA, ERRA and SRA conventions. (My thanks go to Bryan and Beth Thomas who represented the IRgA at the WRA.)

Emphasis on Education

During the past few years, there has been a shift in culture within the reprographics industry toward more emphasis on education, not only within the IRgA but also within the regional reprographic associations. Each of the regional organizations has committed to providing more education while maintaining the social and networking opportunities that have made each regional organization unique. The meetings are offered in locations where many attendees can drive, providing an opportunity for several people within a shop to attend and benefit from the learning and camaraderie. As our business continues to change, the evolution toward more quality education within our industry will become even more important.

Passing of the Torch

This is no longer our fathers' industry. The reprographics industry has evolved into a high-tech, service-oriented business that is attracting many new faces. Still, the regional meetings are attended by loyal reprographers and vendors who continue to support the regional associations and the IRgA. However, the law of attrition says that each year we will lose a few loyal members to

retirement, business sale or a host of other reasons, which means it is necessary to replenish those lost members with new faces. It was enlightening to see so many first-time members at the various conventions, which springs more hope for the future of our industry.

80% of Success is Showing Up

It's clear, however, that the regional meetings are not as well attended as in previous years. Time away from the business is a competing factor, as are other educational opportunities throughout the year. Competition is another threat to the regional associations. But the reprographics industry remains a relationship business. It's important to attend your regional association meetings to stay in tune with the issues affecting your section of the country.

Branding the Industry

At the CRA Convention, there was a panel composed of an architect, an engineer and a sub-contractor who confirmed that their perception of the reprographics industry is that we are printers. Despite the deep relationships that have been forged for many years, and despite the advances in technology that enable us to provide more than printing services, we are still seen as nothing more than printers.

Many of the CRA attendees appeared shocked to learn of the panel's perception, but their responses echoed what more than 150 architects, engineers and contractors said in the IRgA's brand perception study of the reprographics industry. (Hopefully as an IRgA member you have a copy.) More often than not, the decision to go with one reprographer over another comes down to price.

AIA's Baker to Deliver Opening Session at IRgA Convention

Kermit Baker, chief economist for the American Institute of Architects (AIA), will deliver the Opening General Session at the IRgA's 81st Annual Convention and Trade Show, May 9-11 in Dallas.

His presentation, "Business Conditions and Emerging Trends in the Design Profession," will address recent business trends at U.S. design firms, the future outlook for the U.S. construction industry, the evolving structure of architecture as a profession and the organization of architectural firms as well as key issues facing design professionals. It's a can't-miss session for reprographics professionals!

As chief economist for the AIA, Baker analyzes business and construction trends for the U.S. economy and examines their impact on AIA members and the architectural profession.

Baker has had many accomplishments during his four years at the AIA. He originated the AIA's "Work on the Boards" Survey; became a regular columnist for AIArchitect, the AIA member electronic newspaper; and is the project director of the Remodeling Futures Program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University.

16th Annual Bukovsky Award—Call for Nominations

The IRgA is accepting nominations for the 16th Annual Bukovsky Award, to be presented at the 81st Annual Convention and Trade Show, May 9-11 in Dallas.

The Bukovsky Award honors the memory of George K. Bukovsky, who worked in the reprographics industry for more than 30 years. During his career, he served as a champion for the IRgA and actively promoted the industry. More importantly, he served as a friend and advisor to countless IRgA members. His enthusiasm and spirit were an inspiration to all those with whom he worked. George Bukovsky passed away in 1990, at which time the Bukovsky Award was established to honor his great contributions by awarding others who have similarly made a lasting impact on the reprographics industry.

Nomination Criteria

Bukovsky Award nominees must be living and meet the following criteria:

• Nominee must be a current or former member of IRgA.
• Nominee must have made significant, long-term contributions to the reprographics industry.

Current IRgA Board Members and officers are not eligible to receive the award. Judging committee members are not eligible to receive the award. Judges include the five most immediate past presidents of the IRgA that are available to serve. There will be a minimum of three judges. The committee will be chaired by the Immediate Past President. All nominees remain eligible for five years unless selected. There is a maximum of three recipients per year.

All IRgA members are encouraged to visit www.irga.com to download a form and nominate someone who has made a lasting contribution to the industry. Nominations are due by January 31, 2007.

IRgA Member Benefit—Online Membership Database

Make it one of your New Year's resolutions to start using all your IRgA member benefits!

As an IRgA member, you are a part of the interactive online membership database that provides all active members with a free comprehensive listing on the IRgA Web site. If you haven't already, ensure that your company is a part of the membership database. Or review your listing and update it with further detail on your business. Make sure you link to your company Web site as well as the types of services you offer. In addition, you can use the membership database to find other reprographers around the world that you can exchange ideas with.

The IRgA will be doing even more to promote this searchable IRgA member company database to the industry, so make sure your business is represented!

IRgA Announces 2007 Webinar Schedule

In 2006, the IRgA successfully launched its new Webinar program, and 2007 promises even more opportunities to strengthen your business and educate your staff.

The Webinar is a live interactive Web conference, hosted by an industry expert on a specific topic. Registration includes one telephone connection at one location, one Internet connection, and an unlimited number of participants from your organization. All participants must register in order to receive login/dial-in information.

2007 Scheduled Topics

February 7	Operational Efficiency
June 6	Quality Control
September 12	Operational Efficiency
December 5	Sales Force Management

Webinars are free to IRgA Members; $99 for non-members. For more information about the upcoming Webinars, contact the IRgA at 800/833-4742.

Start Your Year Off Right with IRgA Publications

Job Description Sample Guide

This sample guide consists of more than 350 pages of employee job descriptions provided by IRgA members. It is intended to supply a variety of samples for many reprographic job titles. This valuable tool can help your firm in creating and updating job descriptions for your employees.

The 2006 IRgA Operating Ratio Study

The IRgA's 2006 Operating Ratio Study is packed with useful, up-to-date information detailing key financial ratios in the reprographic industry.

This second edition features color charts and graphs highlighting some of the most important ratios in the industry, such as ratios for cost of goods, payroll and overhead expenses that can be used to compare your firm's performance against others in the industry. Best of all, these ratios can be used to set practical goals for attaining higher profits in 2006 and beyond.

The study also includes

- An executive summary by industry consultant and author Larry Hunt
- 27 profit and loss statements
- 14 balance sheet breakouts
- Comparisons of annual sales volume, single versus multiple locations and market size
- A "profitability worksheet" that can be used with the data in the study to improve your company's profitability and set goals for the next 12 to 24 months.

The 2006 IRgA Operating Ratio Study is now available for $99 for IRgA members ($249 for nonmembers). For more information, call the IRgA at 800/833-4742 or visit www.irga.com.

2007 Mounting and Laminating Seminars Coming Soon!

The IRgA is offering our popular mounting and laminating seminars for the 11th year. The training is open to both experienced and novice operators who are interested in integrating theory with hands-on training in the latest technologies and techniques. Drytac Corporation will once again host and administer the sessions.

For those who have little mounting and laminating experience or who need a refresher course, the first day of the seminar begins with basic training and tips. Those who already have some basic knowledge will benefit from the more challenging second day, which concentrates on more advanced troubleshooting and special applications training.

Seminar Dates:

March 15-16	Richmond, Virginia
June 14-15	California
August 9-10	Chicago, Illinois

For more information, or to find out more about how to register for the courses, visit www.irga.com.

UV-Curable Wide-Format Printer Revenue to Increase 38% by 2007

Lyra Research's Wide-Format Printing Advisory Service predicts that worldwide revenue from the sale of wide-format UV-curable printers will climb from $310 million in 2005 to $427 million in 2007, while revenue from the sale of wide-format aqueous and solvent printers will decline. Advances in UV-curable printing technology, an expanding number of UV-curable printers at prices ranging from $50,000 to $850,000, and new applications are fueling the growth in the UV-curable segment of the market. Overall revenue in the wide-format printer market will remain relatively flat, at a little more than $1.8 billion annually from 2005 to 2007.

"Manufacturers of UV-curable printers have made improvements in areas such as printer speed, hardware reliability and ink durability, opening the door for a slew of new applications using this technology. Print jobs such as point-of-purchase displays that were once output on roll-fed wide-format printers and subsequently laminated to a rigid substrate can now be produced on UV-curable printers," commented Grey Held, director of Lyra's Wide-Format Printing Advisory Service. "These improvements, recent market consolidation, and the marketing efforts of companies such as HP Scitex, EFI Vutek and Fujifilm Sericol have combined to create a marketing 'buzz' about UV-curable printers."

For more information, contact Brian Jones at 617/454-2641, or visit www.lyra.com.

Drytac Acquires Durotech Business Assets

Drytac Corp. has acquired the adhesive film and related marketing and technology assets of Durotech Corp. According to Drytac, Durotech's line of pressure-sensitive mounting adhesives and overlaminating films are compatible with its existing product line. The silicone adhesive business is not covered by this agreement and will stay with Durotech.

"Drytac is making this acquisition based on the fact that we offer compatible and complementary product lines in the same geographic area," says Marc Oosterhuis, president of Drytac. "With both companies headquartered in the Richmond area and Drytac's five additional North American locations, we will be able to ensure Durotech's existing customers an uninterrupted and expanded supply of finishing products, as well as our customer support."

Current and former Durotech customers are encouraged to contact Drytac for more information

LexJet Teams with FLEXcon

LexJet has been named the direct sales force for FLEXcon's line of imaging products for wide-format digital printing technologies.

"Adding FLEXcon's imaging films to the LexJet portfolio effectively rounds out our product offering," explained Dean Lambert, LexJet's vice president. "LexJet now has a solution for virtually any wide-format digital printing application and printing technology."

FLEXcon manufactures graphic films, adhesives, and laminates for use in transit advertising, point-of-purchase displays, promotions, graphic advertising for floors, wall murals, window graphics and other applications. FLEXcon's line of printable films, including vinyls, are compatible with UV-curable, solvent and low-solvent printing technologies.

LexJet began selling and supporting FLEXcon's wide-format digital products in December 2006.

Contex Joins Ricoh Technology Alliance

Ricoh Corporation and Contex recently announced Contex's entry into the Ricoh Technology Alliance Program.

The deal allows Contex to offer its customers a more extensive range of printing and scanning capabilities.

By connecting a Contex scanner and a Ricoh wide format printer, users are able to perform both printing and scanning functions at one location, saving time and reducing costs.

"Aligning with Contex reinforces our goal of providing channel customers a full range of document management solutions and services to help streamline operations and reduce costs," said Hede Nonaka, senior vice president, Document Solution and Services Division, Ricoh Corporation. "We look forward to broadening our relationship in order to develop further benefits for Ricoh and Contex, as well as our customers."

Ricoh's Alliance Program was created for companies whose products and technologies can integrate with and support Ricoh products and solutions in the marketplace.

ARC Names New CFO; Mohan to Retire in 2008

American Reprographics Co. has named Jonathan Mather as its chief financial officer. Mather, former CFO of NetGear Inc., replaces Mark Legg, who is retiring.

"We're delighted to welcome Jonathan to the team," said ARC's chairman and chief executive officer S. "Mohan" Chandramohan. "He is not only a CFO at the top of his game, but he also brings tremendous operational expertise and experience to the company."

ARC also announced that Mohan will retire in February 2008; chief operating officer K. Suriyakumar will succeed him as CEO. Chandramohan, who has served as the head of the company since 1988, will remain chairman of the board and the company's largest individual shareholder.

"After twenty years at the helm, I look forward to moving from an operations role to an investing role with ARC as my principal focus and interest," said Chandramohan. ●

News Bits

Industry Leaders Awarded by ReproMAX

During ReproMAX's fall executive conference, A&E – The Graphics Complex, of Houston, Texas, was given the first annual ReproMAX Shop of the Year Award. Kalblue, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, received the first annual Rookie of the Year Award.

The ReproMAX award serves to acknowledge those leaders in the reprographics industry whose long-term commitment to excellence is consistently noted and admired by industry peers. Each award recipient was chosen through a system of voting and meeting the following criteria:

- Involvement in and contribution to ReproMAX conferences, IRgA, and regional reprographics associations
- Demonstrated technical innovation
- Process innovation
- Leadership
- Continually learning and adapting to changes in the industry
- Generously sharing with their employees, customers, community and industry.

Other ReproMAX awards were given to McGraw-Hill Construction and Adenium Systems for their work with ReproMAX DFS and their efforts to integrate cross platform collaboration to all areas of the AEC market.

MBC Precision Imaging Expands

MBC Precision Imaging has acquired the production facility of National Graphic Imaging, in Washington, D.C. This acquisition brings the total number of MBC locations in the region to eleven.

MBC Precision Imaging's new branch is located on 1200 18th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. The entire staff of National Graphic Imaging, headed by Derrick Williams, will remain at this same location and will continue to serve its current client base.

New Region Manager at Sepialine

Sepialine has appointed Michael Jacobs as its general manager for the United States Central Region. Mr. Jacobs joins Sepialine from Canon Business Solutions, where he was a major account executive representing digital printing and imaging solutions.

Mr. Jacobs will serve the United States Midwest with an emphasis on the Chicago, St. Louis and Kansas City metropolitan regions.

InteliCoat Appoints New Product Manager

Cindy Coughlin has joined the InteliCoat marketing division as product manager, digital imaging. Coughlin previously worked at William E. Wright Co., where she held a product management position. She also previously held marketing and market management roles with Omniglow Corporation and Empire Imports. Coughlin will be based at the South Hadley, Massachusetts, headquarters of InteliCoat.

NRI Acquires Bay State Reprographics

New York's National Reprographics Inc. (NRI) has acquired Bay State Reprographics Inc., a Boston-area reprographics firm. NRI now has nine locations in the Mid-Atlantic region.

"We are thrilled about the opportunity to acquire a firm with such an excellent reputation in the important Boston metropolitan market," said Solomon Magid, president of NRI. "The scope of services offered by Bay State Reprographics makes it an excellent addition to the National Reprographics family."

Thomas Buys A&E

Texas-based Thomas Reprographics, the industry's second-largest company, has acquired A&E – The Graphics Complex.

Thomas Reprographics' three Houston locations will take on the A&E name, bringing A&E's Houston-area locations to seven.

"The acquisition enhances the abilities of both Thomas and A&E customers," said Bryan Thomas, the president of Thomas Reprographics. "They will have unparalleled production capabilities, more convenient access to services, and Thomas customers will have access to longer hours of operation."

"We are very excited about the opportunities it will provide us and the employees of both Thomas and A&E in Houston," said Chuck Gremillion, president of A&E. "My brothers and I look forward to the opportunity of growing with Thomas, both locally and nationally."

ARC Buys Elite Repro

American Reprographics Co. has purchased Elite Reprographics, a firm with three locations in Northern California.

"Elite Reprographics is a strategic fit for our California base, especially in regard to its historical success of capturing business in the government sector and other public work," says S. "Mohan" Chandramohan, chairman and CEO. "With California voters passing construction-related bond measures 1B through 1E, and Proposition 84 in November, we expect to take advantage of Elite's expertise immediately to acquire part of the $42.7 billion of work represented by these new state initiatives."

What's in a Name?

Naming your shop, or renaming it, is a vital first step toward branding your business

By Ed Avis

Reprographics

Blueprint

Graphic Imaging

Digital Imaging

Supplies

Copies

Printing

Graphics

Color
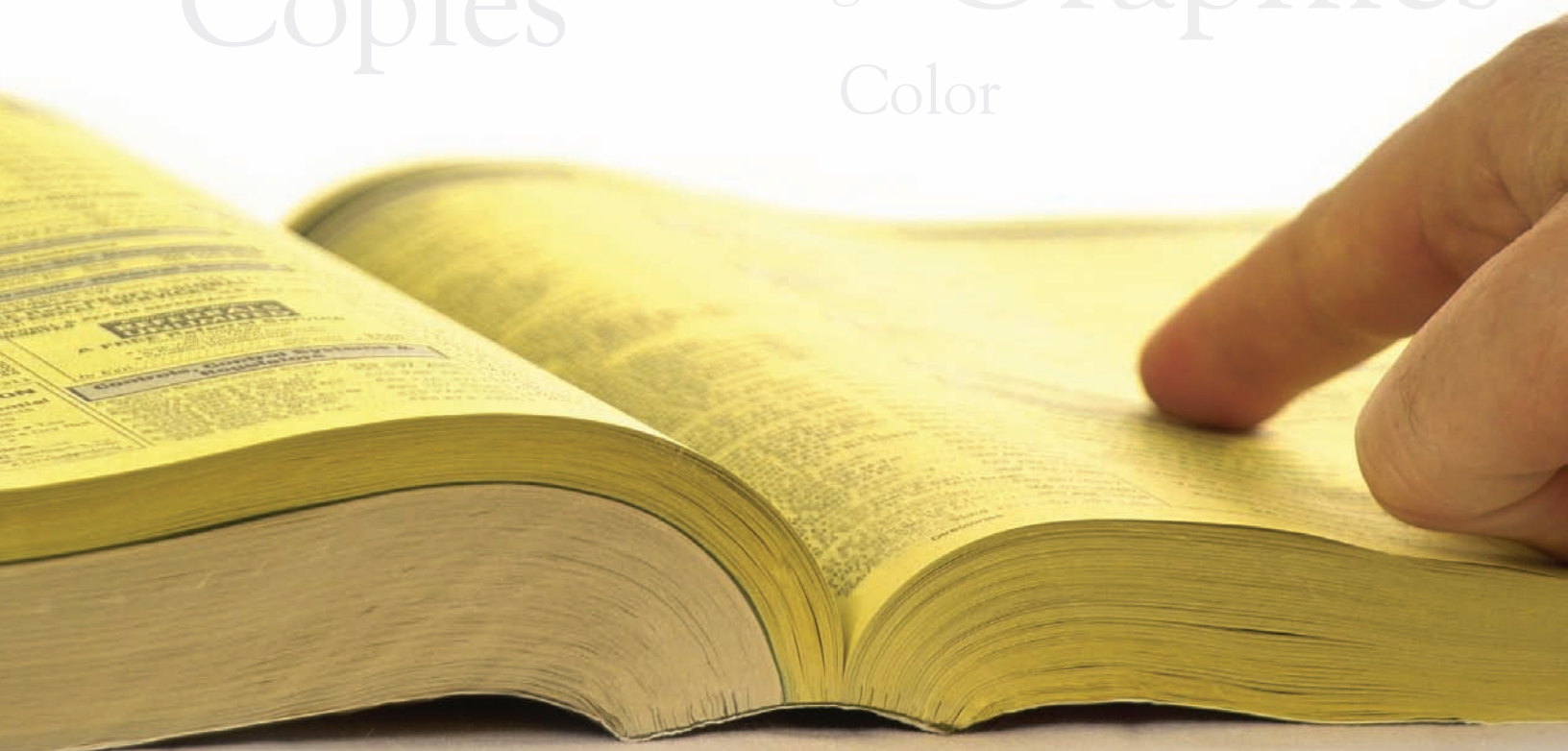
Atlas Blueprint. The name sounds strong, like the firm could carry all the blueprints in the world. Jerry Schueller, a principal of Atlas Blueprint & Supply Co. in Columbus, Ohio, wasn't around when the firm was started in 1937, so he's not sure how the founder, Red Harrison, chose the name. But he does know that it's kept the same name ever since, even through three ownership changes (Atlas is part of American Reprographics Corp. now). And why not? The name does the business justice.

Naming a reprographics shop, or renaming one, is a special challenge. "Branding a company is essentially creating the 'big idea' that will meet expectations that one has about a company," says Julia Cronin Gilmore, a professor of advertising at College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska.

You want a name that can be easily remembered, is fun or interesting, will still be fitting years from now, and that you'll be able to legally protect, Cronin Gilmore says.

Consider Airpark Reprographics in Scottsdale, Arizona. It fills many of Cronin Gilmore's requirements. It's easy to remember, particularly because it's near an airport. It's kind of fun, and, unless the airport shuts down or they move the shop, it should be fitting forever. And the name has a couple of bonuses: It sounds high-tech, which is an image a repro shop wants to convey; and it starts with an A, so it shows up near the top of Yellow Pages listings. Finally, "the name Airpark conveys our area location to many customers," says owner Lee Wearly.

Sometimes reprographics shop names fit Cronin Gilmore's requirements but need to be updated once in a while.

BarkerBlue Digital Imaging in San Mateo, California is a good example. The company started life as Barker Blueprint Co. in 1961, named after the owner, Jerry Barker. Gene Klein bought the company 15 years later, but he liked the alliteration, so kept the name. He wanted to keep the name up to date, so in 1981 it was changed to

Barker Blueprint & Photographic Co. The word "reprographics" caught on shortly thereafter, so in 1989 they changed it to BarkerBlue Reprographics. Finally, when digital imaging took over the industry, the firm became BarkerBlue Digital Imaging.

The name works—Barker is a familiar name to its clients, so it's easily remembered. BarkerBlue still alliterates, so it's fun. And with "digital imaging" tacked on, it's fresh and timely.

"We'll probably change it again soon, but we'll keep Barker," Klein says. "The names change to keep up with the technology shifts in our industry."

Time to Rename?

Does your name meet the requirements? If you've been in business a while, you probably aren't going to change it even if it doesn't. But if you're thinking about a new name, or you're opening a new shop, here is a seven-step method Cronin Gilmore uses:

1. Define your objectives. What do you want your name to convey? High-tech? Local? Solid?

2. Then come up with a bunch of possible names. Don't do this yourself-involve other people. "One way to generate names is to bring in noncreative people that are not normally involved in the marketing or advertising process at all," Cronin Gilmore says. "It is amazing that some of the best ideas can come from the accounting or other departments due to the fact that these people are not asked to think creatively on a regular basis; it is an untapped resource due to the pureness or naivety of it all."

3. Screen the names based on the objectives you set up in step one. Also delete those that might have double meanings, those that are hard to pronounce, those that might be too close to other names and those that could create legal problems.

4. Select the two or three best of the bunch, then research them more in depth. Make sure they're not already in use and/or registered with the state.

Go online and see if they're already being used as Web addresses; if not, acquire them.

5. If you plan to have international customers—and with a good Web site, that possibility is more likely than it was a decade ago—make sure your name doesn't translate to something embarrassing in other languages.

Send a survey to your existing customers or post the survey to your Web site. See which name they like the best and why.

6. Now do some customer research. For example, send a survey to your existing customers or post the survey to your Web site. See which name they like best and why.

7. Take the info from the survey, compare it with your objectives, and select the best name.

One issue that many owners of reprographics shops—and other small businesses—face when naming their business is whether to use their own name as the company name. The repro industry is full of examples: Barker Blue (see above), Matthias Reprographics in Pittsburgh, Cushing & Color in Chicago, to name just a few.

There are pros and cons to using your own name. If you've got a catchy name that is easily remembered, or if it's a name that's already well known the A/E field, you might want to use it.

But using your own name is not always the best decision. If your name is hard to pronounce, forget it! Or if your name is extremely common, think twice.

Another reason you may not want to use your name is that if you ever sell your company, you may lose the rights to that name.

"Think of Wally Amos and the Famous Amos brand or Vidal Sassoon trying to reclaim the rights to his name from Proctor & Gamble," points out Liz Goodgold, author of *DUH! Marketing: 99 Monstrous Missteps You Can Use to Learn, Laugh, and Grow Your Business*.

Naming your company is an essential job. You'll see that name every day, probably for the rest of your career. Spend the time, work and money to get it right! ●

Ed Avis is a freelance writer in Oak Park, Illinois. He tries harder.

Naming Dos and Don'ts

Steve Cecil, who goes by the title "manufacturer of fine ideas," is an expert on naming. His Web site is www.wherewords.com. He offers these DOs and DON'Ts when choosing your company name:

DO identify your brand "promise." That is, what you want to let people know your company does.

DON'T try to make a hole-in-one off the first tee. If fact, don't worry about the name at all yet. Start by making up a list of words that describe how you work, what you stand for, why people do business with you.

DO look at your competitors, and see what language they use.

DON'T imitate or emulate someone else's intellectual property. Revise and refine yours until your position and promise are unique.

DO find names you like, from many companies within and outside your market. Also find names you don't like, and try to figure out why.

DON'T start naming until you have prioritized the criteria to evaluate potential names.

DO come up with many, many names. Many will be bad. That's OK.

DON'T try to evaluate the names the same day you have created them. Instead, wait a few days, try some different directions, let all the options settle in your brain. Then pick the winner.

2007 Brings Increased Emphasis on Education

To overcome price as an objection, reprographers must do a better job of selling the value of what they do. In order to sell the value, as an industry, we must do a better job of understanding the needs of the construction industry. Which brings us back to education.

Delivering Membership Value

The IRgA Education Committee is planning four Webinars in 2007, beginning with a session on improving your operational efficiency on February 7. The committee is also looking at the association's publications and identifying which ones need updating. Committee members include John Cronin (chair), Woodie Rush, Tanner Bechtel, Trevor Hansen, John Kamp and Phil Hudson.

The Annual Convention program details are contained with this issue of *REPRO REPORT*. Gary Wilbur, serving as program chair, has done an excellent job of developing sessions based on the needs and interests of attendees and on industry trends.

Bob Roperti and Kip Young represent the Communications Committee. They are spearheading an effort to expand the IRgA Web site and our organization's strategic focus to provide value to the AEC community and construction industry.

It is clear that we, as an industry, need to change the perception of reprographers from printers to information managers specializing in the construction industry. At the same time, as an industry, we must further solidify our relationship with the AEC community by demonstrating that we are knowledgeable about their business and understand their needs. This can only be accomplished through continuous education. This is the IRgA's commitment to you in 2007—improved value through industry education. ●

Mike Carter is president and chief operating officer of Lynn Imaging in Lexington, Kentucky. He can be reached at (859)255-1021 or mcarter@lynnimaging.com.

The Human Side of Mergers

By Debra Thompson

Business trends data point to significant changes in the makeup of companies in the graphics industry. All facets of the industry, including reprographers, are seeing continuing sales growth but a downward trend in the number of companies that are sharing in that growth. Many owners are giving up. Some are closing down and selling their assets, but others are allowing themselves to be acquired by stronger companies. In other cases, companies are merging together to build a stronger, more competitive operation.

In the typical scenario, the owners and managers determine the approach that is the solution for them, then they work out the numbers and move forward. Later, rather than sooner, they realize that there are enormous consequences to bringing the two companies together. Whether it is a merger or an acquisition, there are very significant human resources problems that emerge. A recent study from the Society for Human Resource Management identified that three out of four mergers and acquisitions fail to achieve the anticipated strategic and financial objectives:

- Only 43% reported success in achieving the expected predeal synergies
- Only 49% reported achieving growth in market share.
- The major obstacles to merger and acquisition success were:
  - Inability to sustain financial performance (64%)
  - Loss of productivity (62%)
  - Incompatible cultures (56%)
  - Loss of key talent (53%)
  - Clash of management styles (53%).

Three of the five obstacles listed above fall squarely within the people-management arena. Selecting the right mix of talents, skills and abilities is a complex undertaking. Jim Collins in

Good to Great talks about determining the seats on the bus, getting the right people in those seats, and getting the wrong people off the bus. It is essential to avoid the loss of key employees. Perhaps equally damaging and just as costly is allowing employees to stay who have "checked out" emotionally and don't perform at their previous levels of productivity. If a merger is not done well, a company may end up with those employees who simply had the fewest alternatives.

Management must assess the skills, capabilities, potential and motivations of key employees involved in the merger or acquisition. The new owners must interview and evaluate all employees. I would encourage personality profiling and Wonderlic testing to identify the behaviors and intelligence of all personnel. Make the key management decisions quickly, and then identify the others who will remain. Take immediate steps to "rerecruit" and place these employees into key positions of the newly merged entity.

The employees' initial reaction to the merger or acquisition will be preoccupation with their personal security and identity and what the deal means for their future. Managers, on the other hand, close the deal with anticipation, ready to get on with running the new business. If left unrecognized, this vast difference in emotional states can be disruptive to the integration process and can lead to failure.

Critical to a successful integration effort is open and honest communication about what is happening and what is planned. The one thing that the employees of both companies will appreciate most is the truth. The truth also means acknowledging some of the stress and other emotions that are undeniably present. Never tell employees that everything will be "business as usual." The reality is that

change is occurring. Most importantly, don't call the deal a "merger of equals" when one company is the majority stakeholder and can drive the decisions.

Treat those employees who are negatively impacted with dignity, respect and support. It is the right thing to do, and it is an effective way of showing those who remain what kind of company they are now working for and helping them begin to develop some positive feelings toward the new organization.

While urging employees to move on from their recent past, it is important that leaders honor the past for what it has accomplished and show respect to the people who were part of it. But be clear about what needs to be created now and be prepared to explain the strategy for how this new future is expected to come about—over and over.

If you are considering a merger of acquisition, much of the emphasis in the beginning should be focused on people issues. Showing genuine respect for the people involved and treating employees with honesty, dignity and fairness—even if the truth sometimes hurts—are key strategies that will drive success (or failure). ●

Debra Thompson is President of TG & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in human resources for the graphics industry. Debra can be reached toll free at 877-842-7762 or debra@tgassociates.com. Visit www.tgassociates.com for help in finding, developing and retaining top performers and the tools to help rebuild your culture after a merger or acquisition.

Building Your Online Identity

Repro shops can profit from good Web sites

By Ed Avis

When MasterGraphics in Wisconsin launched its first Web site a decade ago, it was elementary—a listing of services, an address, a phone number. Bob Kraft, the firm's vice president, calls that first site "brochureware," because it was little more than a brochure posted online.

Visit www.masterg.com today, though, and you won't be reminded of a brochure. Instead, you're more likely to think you've walked into a full-service reprographics shop. You can upload files and check on existing jobs in the Plan Room, register for AutoCAD courses or order a supply of inkjet cartridges and paper for your printer.

"It's well beyond brochureware now," Kraft says. "It's very active. We want our end users to be able to interact with us online, whether they're looking up past orders, registering for events or placing new orders."

The Web has become a vital part of MasterGraphics' business. Kraft estimates that a third of the firm's printing business comes through the Web site and about half of supplies sales.

And these supplies sales aren't just from regular customers. They're often new, distant customers who learned of MasterGraphics only through the Web site.

"We do business in every state of our country. If you look at merchandise sales, 50% is coming from outside our geographical territory," Kraft says.

It's likely none of that business would be occurring if the firm didn't have a Web site.

MasterGraphics' Web site is a success story. How can you create your own successful Web site? There is no shortage of Web experts ready to consult for you (and take your money), but keep your wallet in your back pocket and follow some of these tips:

1. Start with a plan. "You need to establish your goals," Kraft says. "What would you like your customers to do when they're at your Web site?"

Most successful reprographics shop sites these days do a lot—they offer some form of a plan room, where customers can submit and check on jobs; they allow customers to order supplies; and they provide a communications conduit to the shop, such as online chat help. All this can make for a crowded site, so take the time to organize things before you go to the design stage.

"The number one flaw most sites have is that the companies don't take the time to organize the site, using the basic Web rules of site navigation and creating clean site hierarchy," says Les Kollegian, principal and creative director of Jacob Tyler Creative Group in San Diego.

2. Pay for quality design. Remember that many of your customers are smart, clever, creative people. They don't want to do business with a firm that has an amateurish Web site.

"The site's look and feel should immediately instill confidence in the visitor," says Tom Harpointer, CEO of AIS Media, a Web design firm in Atlanta, Georgia. "Clean layout, high-quality images, clear and concise messaging—all build or kill visitor confidence."

A good, professional site sometimes is very simple. Sites that are loaded down with Flash and other bells and whistles just irritate the user.

"A graphic here and there is appealing to a degree, but too many graphics simply distracts people and slows the load time of the Web page," explains Harry Husted, a professional Web writer who runs the site www.creatingwords.com.

Remember that a good Web site can make your firm appear much larger than it is and instill a sense of confidence and stability in your customers. You want your customers to think you've been around a while, and will continue being around for years to come.

3. Make your site easy to navigate. This is all part of quality design, but it deserves special attention. Make your site logical—if you know the most common thing people will do is submit files through your plan room, put that front and center. Don't make your customers have to hunt around, or click deep, to do that.

"The navigation should be like a chutes and ladders game," explains Harpointer. "The visitor should be able to move all over the site without losing sight of where they are."

4. Write well! If you have trouble with grammar and spelling, find someone else to write the copy of your site. Writing for the Web is a special skill—the paragraphs are shorter, the sentences are tight, the action comes fast.

Husted suggests writing copy that stresses the talents of your business and gets the reader to take action. "If you have copy that is rich in benefits and uses words that can hypnotize the reader, you have accomplished everything," he says.

Ninety percent of people who visit a Web site read only 10% of the content, according to Gerry McGovern, author of the book *Killer Web Content*. McGovern stresses that the important information needs to be easily accessible if you want your visitors to stay in your site.

When you're thinking about what content to add to your site, remember that everybody loves "people" stories, so share the story of your company. Include some company history, bios of the key employees, maybe even employee news. Put a face on your company.

Another valuable bit of content is customer testimonials. Reprint letters you get praising your work, or even ask your regular customers to share a few comments about why they stick with your firm.

Lots of Web sites have links to news sources and other external features—skip that. You want people to come to your site to learn about your company and/or to submit jobs and buy supplies, not read international news headlines. "Unless you're MTV or Comedy Central, people aren't going to your site to watch a movie," stresses Kollegian.

5. Stay in touch. Keep your company front and center in your customers' minds by offering some kind of regular reminder about your Web site. The most common way to do this is to ask your customers to subscribe to your company newsletter. This is easier than it sounds—companies such as Constant Contact (www.constantcontact.com) provide Web-based e-mail list

management systems for as low as $15 per month. This service gives you a "sign-up" box to put on your Web site, manages the list for you, and sends out as many e-mails to your list as you want.

What should you put in a newsletter? Special offers, new products and services, changes to hours, anything you think your customers will find useful. Skip the pure self-promotion stuff like new customer testimonials though (except maybe within a newsletter that also contains truly useful information), because you don't want your subscribers to start thinking your newsletter is just fluff.

Many of your customers are smart, clever, creative people. They don't want to do business with a firm that has an amateurish Web site.

6. Be reachable. "Don't hide behind the Web," advises Harpointer. "Make your full contact information easily accessible on your site. Encourage them to contact you and make them feel welcome."

7. Market your Web site. "Build it and they will come" doesn't work on the Web! You need to let people know your site is there and why they should visit it. You are probably targeting three audiences with your site: your existing customers; potential new, local customers; and potential distant customers who may be attracted to your supplies sales or who may temporarily need repro services out of town.

There are whole books written about Web marketing, but here are two essentials:

- **Tell your customers.** Make sure your Web address is printed on your stationery, business cards, invoices, packages, delivery trucks, advertising, yellow pages, you name it.

If you want your regular customers to start doing some work through your site, you've got to let them know about it. If you launch a new site or redesign your current site, send a notice to everyone to come check it out.

- **Tell others.** Take time to register your Web site with all the search engines. These days the big search engines add sites all the time using their own "Web crawlers," but you can still register your site to make sure they don't miss it. Registering your site is just the beginning, though. Ways to get your site to show up higher on search engines include asking other sites to link to your site, making sure your content contains the appropriate key words,

and keeping your content fresh. Check out "Webmaster Central" on Google for lots of tips and cool ways to see how your own site is doing.

8. Finally, measure your success. If you're getting new customers through your site, it's pretty easy to determine that it's a success. But there are other ways to evaluate your site's success. Services such as OneStat (www.onestat.com) and Ominture (www.omniture.com) track your visitors, measure how your online advertising is doing, optimize your site visibility, etc. These tools let you know what people are doing while they're in your site, and whether they become customers.

"It's like having a little camera behind them following everything they do," Kraft says.

Having a great Web site doesn't guarantee sales, but developing a decent site, marketing it properly, and tracking the results can help you approach the success of MasterGraphics' site. In a competitive market, you need every edge you can get. ●

Ed Avis is a writer in Oak Park, Illinois. Check out his company's Web site at www.marionstreetpress.com.

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Superwide
Color Printing Comes of Age

Is it right for your shop?

By Scott Cullen

Bigger *is* better. That's indeed the case with a relatively new generation of superwide-format color printers that can print on textiles and other flexible materials. Superwide, or "grand format" printers, as some manufacturers still call them, fill a nice little niche within the printing industry—although they're not yet for everyone.

Before we look at what's new in grand or superwide or grand format and how one graphics house is using the technology, let's define the product category.

Ain't That Grand Format?

Definitions seem to vary among manufacturers as to what makes a grand-format printer versus what's considered superwide. "Grand format is over 100 inches," says Cory Brock, director of marketing for Gandinnovations. "I really don't see a lot [of printers] under 100" that print on fabric."

Vutek FabriVu

Dave Bartram, marketing director, Nur Macroprinters, offers a slightly different take. "Superwide is more of a roll-to-roll reference, and grand-format encompasses both the 10' and 16' roll as well as the 10' flatbed," explains Bartram.

Meanwhile, Sal Sheikh, vice president of marketing for the Wide Format Printing Systems division of Océ North America, defines grand-format as machines that can print images wider than 60-64". "They tend to be in the meter ranges," adds Sheikh. "Three meters tends to be superwide- or supergrand-format. That's how I segment the roll printers."

VUTEk uses "superwide" for printers that print 72" and higher. "That's basically agreed upon in the industry," says Jane Cedrone marketing communications manager for EFI VUTEk. "'Grand format' isn't used anymore."

Confused yet? Okay, with those definitions in mind, we'll stick to the "superwide" designation when discussing the current crop of color printers that print on flexible materials and textiles. One more thing: the superwide color printers we're discussing aren't solely roll-to-roll machines, but encompass flatbeds with a roll-to-roll option.

Major players currently marketing superwide-format printers in either a roll-to-roll configuration or a flatbed with a roll-to-roll option include Nur Macroprinters, Océ,

VUTEk, Gandinnovations, Leggett & Platt, and Durst (Durst did not respond to *REPRO REPORT*'s request for an interview or information).

Sheikh is bullish on superwide-format flatbed models with the roll option. "Because most of these flatbeds have roll options, they can get a lot of throughput through them because when they're not doing direct to board they can still be using them as a roll printer," he explains. "Companies are buying them because they're so flexible."

Dye Sub vs. UV Technology

Superwide-format color printers that print on fabrics and textiles typically use either a dye sublimation or ultra-violet process.

Dye sublimation machines use a combination of oil and solvent in the ink for printing on fabric, flag, banner and textile materials. Depending on the system, graphics are printed on transfer paper, directly to fabrics, or both. A heat laminating press is required after the image is printed on transfer paper or printed directly on the fabric. The heat process sublimates the colors, making them permanent. The caveat though is that if you opt for a dye sub machine, you'll most likely need a separate heat press.

Dye sub produces vibrant colors that don't wash out and won't crack when the material is folded or rolled. "The thing about dye sub technology is that it fuses the ink into the fabric, so you've got brighter colors, better draping and a softer feel than vinyl," explains Cedrone.

Nur's Bartram sees limited demand for dye sub machines, compared to printers that use UV curable inks. "Dye sub is a fairly small subset of the overall market," reports Bartram. "There's always going to be a certain segment of the population that wants to understand that technology, buy the equipment, and learn the production craft that's involved, but there's 10 times as many people who have solvent presses today. In the future I think there will be 10 times as many people with UV presses, and those presses will have a big impact on the soft signage market because we can produce soft signage graphics on a UV press at a much lower cost than a dye sub can."

Bartram admits dye sublimation has an advantage from an output perspective. "There is no question that none of the traditional solvent or UV inks can rival dye sub for the feel in the hand," he says. "I think you can get perfectly acceptable quality from a lot of different ink technologies, it's just a question of what applications is it adequate for? Clearly dye sublimation has a feel and a graphic quality that is difficult to match in any other process."

Bartram says the company will keep a close watch on the dye sublimation market as it evolves. "I think the major movement in the market will be towards direct inkjet-direct to untreated and uncoated fabric inkjet technology, which is still in the early stages."

Nur's superwide-format color printers are the Expedio 5000 and Expedio 3200. "Traditional UV printers or conventional non-dye sublimation UV inkjet systems, such as our Expedios, offer many of the advantages of dye sublimation in a soft signage environment because you can print on a wide variety of fabrics, both coated and uncoated with a UV system. "You can't do that with a dye sublimation solvent system because it requires heat presses and many of the systems require transfer papers."

"But for fabric and what we do, the solvent printers can't produce the vibrant colors that dye sub does and it's a lot more durable," says Paul

An example of tradeshow graphics created and output by Moss, Inc. on the VUTEk FabriVu.

Choiniere, graphics director for Moss, Inc., a Belfast, Maine, print shop that creates tensioned fabric for the exhibit, event and retail interiors industries. "Any solid stuff that's printed on fabric is susceptible to damage, and with a lot of the solvent inkjets that print direct onto fabric, the image is sitting on top of that fabric, which means it can crack or scratch or flake or rub off. The advantage of dye sub is that it's dyed into the fabric at temperatures of about 400 degrees. Also, because it sublimates right on top of the fabric, it can really hit a wider color gamut than a lot of the solvent printers at this point."

Superwide Format in Action

Moss was one of the first print shops in the U.S. to install a VUTEk FabriVu four years ago. Since then it's added a second while a third machine
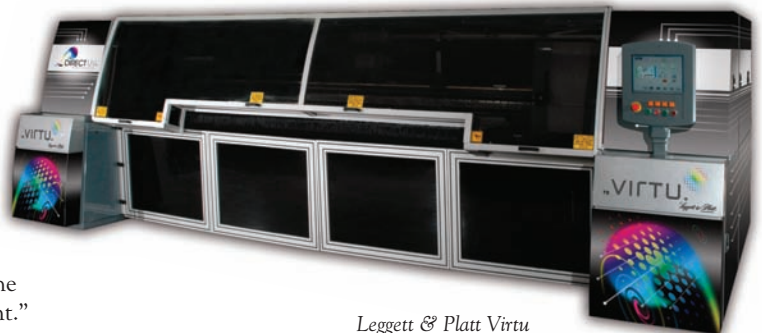
Leggett & Platt Virtu

is in its Chicago location. "One of the reasons we went with the FabriVu was because of saturation of color on fabric," explains Choiniere. "There still isn't anything out there that compares to that."

Everything Moss prints is on fabric. "We make aluminum tube frame structures that we can skin with graphics that can also be broken down and put in a bag," says Choiniere. "We do really big stuff and some simple square or circle signs, but it's all on fabric.

Moss was doing similar work even before they added a FabriVu to their shop. "We started by doing simple vinyl graphics," he says. "We'd laminate fabric and cut it like plotter-cut graphics and apply onto signs, and then probably nine or so years ago we started off with Xerox printers doing e-stat, which is similar to what we're doing now."

That process involved dye and a carrier that would then be printed onto paper then transferred onto fabric and sublimated. The limitation, however, were the seam widths. "We maximized our print width at 48" even though the printer width was 52"," explains Choiniere.

Asked if there's anything he'd change about the FabriVu, Choiniere responds, "It would really be great to just print on a fabric and be done with it. To really get a good saturation of color
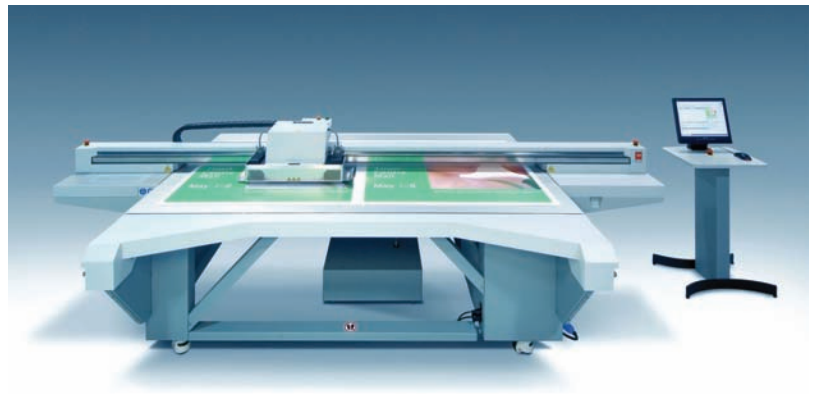
Océ Arizona

with this process you have to print on paper and sandwich it with fabric and run it through a heat press. So there's a little bit of waste and it adds an extra step compared to solvent printers where you print it and it's done."

Learning Curves

Gandinnovations' Brock says that working with superwide-format dye sub is a whole other story compared to traditional solvent printers. "We really have to train these guys." The onsite training is usually scheduled for a week, but it usually doesn't take that long, according to Brock.

"The learning curve is dependent on a number of components," adds Sheikh.

"You need a good operator who understands digital printing, and they have to have an operator that understands the ONYX workflow— our primary RIP. If they have both of those components, it's very quick. If they don't, the learning curve is longer and more training is required. We find that most people who are going to spend $160,000 on a flatbed already have gone through a learning curve with other products…it's more learning the nuances of the new device they purchased and printing different material types."

"I think someone with printing background who has worked on a grand-format printer can pretty much start printing on the FabriVu," says Choinere. "There's some things you learn over time. With this printer it has a little more dot gain, and the way it handles and RIPs the files is a little different than printing onto a substrate and seeing what it's going to look like. It looks a lot different on paper before you sublimate it. Adjusting the colors, learning how to work with different fabrics and materials has a learning curve, but for someone with a background in grand-format printing, it's not a bad curve." ●
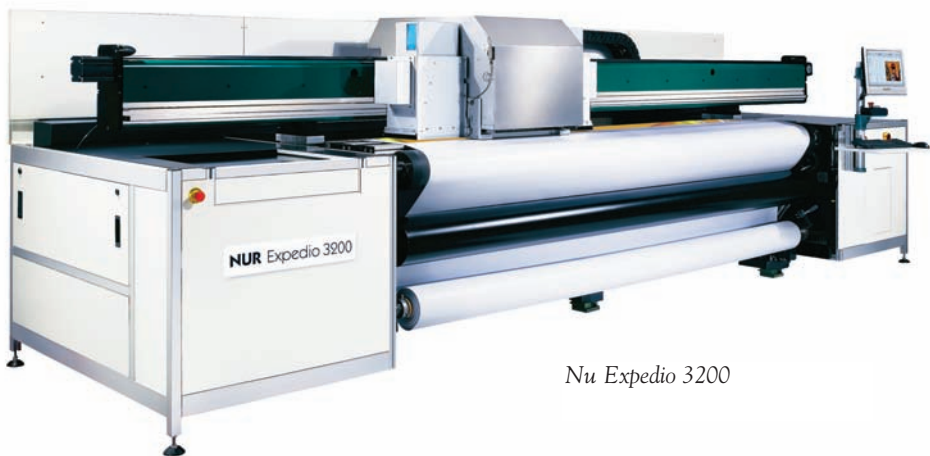
Nu Expedio 3200

Scott Cullen is a writer and editor based in Ewing, New Jersey. He writes frequently on office and printing technologies.

Dollars and Cents

Although manufacturers expect to see the superwide-format market grow whether we're talking dye sub or UV curable machines, Gandinnovations' Cory Brock believes that the initial capital expense is an obstacle to growth. "At these prices you need to have a customer base to get you going," says Brock.

Océ's Sheikh notes that the entry level for superwide format flatbed machines tend to be between $50,000 and $100,000.

Océ's superwide format machines are in the $100-$200,000 range, what Sheikh considers the mid-sector of the market. "What you're paying for is predominantly speed and engineering," says Sheikh. "When I say engineering, I'm talking about the industrial design of the printer. You're not going to find printers at $50K with a lot of industrial design in them. You're not going to run them 24/7."

Nur Expedio 5000
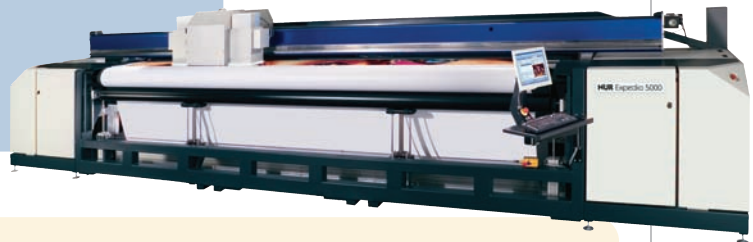
What's New in Superwide

What follows is a representative sampling of products from some of the leading manufacturers marketing printers in the superwide-format category.

Gandinnovations' superwide dye sublimation models, introduced in 2004, include the Jeti 3312 and Jeti 3324 with 12 and 24 heads, respectively. They have a 10' 10" print width and print in six colors at 600 dpi resolution. The Jetis use a combination of oil and solvent in the ink and can print on fabric, banner, and textile materials. www.gandinnovations.com

Leggett & Platt offers the VirtuTX Grande Format Printer that prints, rigid, roll-to-roll, and UV-curable textiles as well as the recently announced Virtu with DirectUV, what the company is calling "the industry's first production digital textile printer." The DirectUV Printing System has been designed to provide substantial savings to

textile manufacturers by printing direct to textile without transfer paper on uncoated textiles. www.lpdigital.com

Nur Macroprinter's superwide printers include the Tempo Series, which encompass three-meter and five-meter presses, and the Expedio 3200 and 5000 roll-to-roll machines. The newest model, introduced last fall is the Tempo Q, a flatbed model that can be specified with or without a roll system. Most of the Tempos also have roll-to-roll media handling capability built in. The Tempo Q begins shipping in March. Nur also offers the Fresco, a three-meter solvent machine. www.nurusa.com

Océ's Arizona 250 GT printer uses UV-curable inks and Océ VariaDot imaging technology to deliver near-photographic image quality and includes a flatbed platform to print onto a wide variety of rigid substrates as well as an optional roll-to-roll module for printing onto flexible media up to 87" wide. www.oce.com

In addition to the FabriVu, **VUTEk** also offers the UltraVu II 3360 three-meter digital printers. It's the same size as the FabriVu but can switch from solvent roll-to-roll to dye sub in less than five minutes because it has a separate ink caddy. www.vutek.com

Vutek UltraVu II 3360

Preparing for the Storm

By Brett Scully

The world is evolving around us at an exponential rate, more than at any other time in our history. CNBC's Jim Cramer said that the next five to seven years could "develop" faster than the previous 25 years combined. I love weird statistics like that, especially coming from my man Cramer. The type of change he talks about is inconceivable in its enormity. Take a look at how much our society has advanced since the year 2000. "Back then," most people didn't even know who Google was; now that same company is threatening market leader and dominator, Microsoft. What will have been in our rearview mirrors by the time we hit 2012?

Don't be the blueprinter who refuses to invest in the future.

In the progression to our New New World, we will also see a wake of devastation to vulnerable industries and certain defenseless human labor pools. I'm not saying that this destruction will be horrific for everyone, just those unable to escape the ferocious digital rip-tide enveloping our globe. We can already see industries reeling from being in the midst of mind-blowing transformations that leave new or revitalized firms on one side of the fence and atrophied firms wasting away on the other.

I've talked certain industries in the past, but mostly in theoretical perspective, being that only a slow degradation had been realized from digitization at that time. But now, these same industries are hip deep in MASSIVE CHANGE. There is a mad rush to squeeze every bit of analog information in our society into topical digital alternatives. Some invent and succeed wildly, like MySpace and YouTube, while others like Polaroid and Kodak continue to corrode from rusty thought.

Another annihilation steadily increasing is the saga of Blockbuster and Movie Gallery. They are currently just biding existence via incestuous merger schemes causing bloated mutant by-products that will fall even harder when Comcast and Time Warner pounce on them with on-demand/pay-per views. Even my mom, a devout $50-a-month customer to the Naples' Blockbuster, has given up the two-mile drive and succumbed to the 1,000-title movie library available on Cox Cable "at a touch of a button."

The next latent digital destruction is happening on Wall Street. Somehow, institutions like the New York Stock Exchange and the Chicago Board of Trade are "demutualizing" themselves into publicly held for-profit companies, paying off the old seat holders with grossly inflated stock, but finally allowing the 200+-year-old "open outcry" to open their digital doors while slowly closing their physical doors, and relegating storied floor trader occupations to that of the blacksmith, buggy whip maker and American auto worker.

I recently heard that the printed annual reports that are required by the SEC to all shareholders of publicly held companies will not have to be in print soon. Companies will have the choice to send out their annual reports via electronic media or post the reports on their Web sites. In Cleveland, I know of a big printer about 20 blocks from us that specializes in the printing of annual reports. I spoke with him about a month ago regarding the new SEC annual report guidelines, and he said, "I didn't see it coming so soon." Because this company is so big, he is anticipating revenue to drop by as much as 30% in the next few years unless he can come up with a replacement for that revenue.

He didn't see it coming so soon? Sometimes we can't. Other times we can see it coming but fail to

proactively put up the shutters by the time the storm hits. Don't be the blueprinter who refuses to invest in the future where our survival is dependent on the revenue from the paper coming out of our print machines. If you do, it's like opening the windows when the dark clouds start rolling in.

How does a blueprinter even start to think about how to replace the paper revenues that exist now? We must start to think about why our print volumes are trending downward in the first place. For one, the Océs and HPs that I sell now are faster than the machines that I used in-house 10 years ago. However, they now cost 90% less than those same boxes! What does this tell us? SELL BOXES…either by outright sales or through FM-type arrangements.

Some of you might be saying, "Well, I don't sell boxes." I'd say, "Look into it…otherwise, your competitor who does sell them will get your client a box, and then grab whatever 'scrap' repro is floating around." A box offense of a $2,000-per-month repro client can be salvaged into an even more profitable $1500-per-month FM deal that includes equipment rental, supplies and maintenance contracts if structured the right way.

How else do we start to proactively prepare for the future? Start with technology. If you don't believe that the AEC community is heading towards technology in full force, then get ready to be steamrolled by the time 2012 hits. Similar to what Cramer had to say, I really believe that the AEC community will change more in the next five to seven years than at any time in the existence of our industry. If you are not prepared, get ready for some unwelcome monetary changes to your company's financial statements. ●

Brett Scully is CEO of eBlueprint Holdings of Cleveland, Ohio. You can reach Scully at bscully@eblueprint.com

Better Living Through Technology

By John Marquardt

I think I can keep up with most technical discussions and reviews, but I have to admit there are many times when I'm left confused about how the technical details will play out in a real-world application—you can't know everything about everything. For instance, what are the differences between the various cellular network standards? OK, I know the technical differences (speed, interoperability, providers, etc.) but what does this mean to the way I work in my daily life? What do those differences translate to when I'm talking to people on the phone?

I'll give you a simple example. When USB 2.0 first came out, I was perusing the aisles at a local electronics chain. As usually happens, I came across a shopper who was being ignored by the sales staff, and he asked me if I knew anything about "this stuff." I said I might be able to help. He asked if he should get a USB 2.0 or FireWire (400 at the time) external HD. I told him FireWire was faster for things like that, and that if he has a FireWire adapter, he should try for that in almost every case—DV cameras, HDs, DVD burners and the like.

Another shopper steps in and says, "That's not correct—trust me, I've been doing a lot of research about this, and USB 2.0 runs at 480Mbps and FireWire is only 400Mbps." He seemed pretty proud of his technical information but I politely explained that those are theoretical limits and don't properly reflect how devices communicate in the real world. He just kept saying, "Trust me, I've done the research, you want USB 2.0, man." The poor guy between us was probably going "OK, who do I trust here?" The interloper saying he's done the research or me. I didn't care to see who could out-geek who, since no one ever wins those deals—they get ugly. I eventually told the original shopper not to take either of our words for it and look up some actual tests comparing the two specs.

We have so much technobabble to wade through; I know from experience that it's almost impossible to really know what the impact on your life will be. However, I've found there is some technology that I just can't live without. Some of these things might seem like common sense, and they generally are, but I know the average Joe just sees these as more technology-for-technology's sake. Well I can tell you, that's not always true, and I've weeded them out for you. These are not in any particular order, but certainly the more obvious ones are going to be on the top.

Flash-drive, thumb-drive, etc… This is the little UB memory fob you see everywhere these days. If you don't have one, get one—they are cheap; I found my current 2GB SanDisk model for $50. I can't live without them. I have a few—some are encrypted and some aren't, it just depends on the content. Just make sure you get one that's 1GB plus so it's more likely to be useful.

Bluetooth headset. Indispensable—I know I've beaten this drum before, but with studies showing that using a hand-held phone in the car impairs your ability to drive as much as being intoxicated, I think it's irresponsible to drive without one of these. Using a corded model just makes for another distraction. Again, these are cheap—if you use your cell phone with any regularity, get one. I like the Logitech models, but this is so much about personal preference that you really should try a few out before making the purchase.

Wireless mouse. Again, I can't live without it. I have one for my laptop and two for my home PC. The batteries can die on these (which is why I have two for my home rig) so make sure to carry extra batteries if you get one for the road. The Targus Bluetooth model is the way to go for a laptop, Logitech MX1000 for desktops.

Wifi. Another indispensable piece of technology. I think everyone has some exposure to this, but I just have to mention it for one reason: Don't just buy a wifi access point, plug it in, connect and call it good. Make sure to lock it down with WPA security. Some of this technology helps the hackers too, so be diligent.

Wireless broadband. This is the little PC card that goes into your laptop. The speeds here are finally getting usable, so take another look at it if you gave up on it previously.

VMWare. This is actually old-school, but it's just recently become free. Basically this is a piece of software that lets you create virtual computers inside your OS. They even have a BIOS! You can take "snapshots" of each Virtual Machine, make changes, and then revert back to your snapshot. For instance you can have one VM running Linux, another running Windows XP and yet another running Windows 2000 or FreeBSD all on one PC! I can't live without it.

USB extension cable. This is a single cable that plugs into your PC on one end and has a USB receptacle in the other. Much less bulky than a hub and not requiring any external power connector, this $10 cable has probably saved me more headaches than any other $100 purchase I've made.

Leatherman. To some it might not really be "tech" in the modern sense, but this is a geekier Swiss Army knife. There are many permutations—get one.

I know many of you are already on this bandwagon, but there will hopefully be at least one or two items above that you will find new and useful in your daily life. Most of this stuff isn't anything that will clutter your life with ring-tones, vibrations and other annoyances, but little pieces of tech that will actually make life easier. If you have some other examples of simple tech you can't live without, I'd love to hear about it. ●

Formerly the I.T. manager for Engineering Repro Systems in Minneapolis, John Marquardt is an industry speaker and educator. You can reach him at john@offblue.com.

Reconsider Reprographic Products and Services

By Doug Hoek

Doug Hoek

In my past two columns, we've focused on how our customers are changing ("Customers Reconsidered," May/June 2006) and how our competitors are changing ("Competitors Reconsidered," July/August 2006). Today we will consider the third part of this competitive investigation by examining how our products and services are changing, or should be changing.

The three topics when combined (competitors, customers and products) define a broad and basic outline for an investigation of any industry, including our own. Because we are in a period of extensive change it is well worth our while to examine and come to grips with the forces causing the changes that are redefining our industry. Reprographics is no longer the industry of our grandfathers or even our fathers. Radical shifts outside and inside the industry are already redefining reprographics.

My local newspaper, *The Grand Rapids Press*, made a change in its product recently that provides an interesting example that can be used to discuss our own changing collection of products and services.

Sometime in the second half of 2005 the executives of *The Press* were searching for ways to cut costs and improve the bottom line. In the newspaper industry, as in the repro industry, paper is a major component of their overall costs.

For years *The Press* produced a weekly supplement included with its Sunday edition that was basically a local TV and radio guide. For as long as I can remember, my wife has taken the Sunday supplement out of *The Press* and folded it neatly on the coffee table in our den for reference during the coming week. Apparently, thousands of other households in the Grand Rapids area have done the same.

With the great proliferation of television, cable and radio stations in recent years, the supplement had grown from a thin little insert of just a few pages to an obese weekly tome of scores of pages. The Sunday supplement was consuming tons of newsprint to satisfy its growing appetite and bloated *The Press*' costs for newsprint.

Therefore, at the conclusion of 2005, the executives of *The Press* decided to celebrate the New Year by eliminating the Sunday supplement. The supplement was not regarded by *The Press* as an important part of its product, because its product—as the executives understood it—was news. Thus, a local listing of TV and radio stations seemed expendable.

Almost immediately the phones began to ring, the letters began to arrive, and the subscriptions began to decline. The executives of *The Press* did not understand what they had done because they did not completely understand what their customers wanted.

The digital revolution and the Information Age changed the needs and wants of newspaper's customers. Beginning in the mid 1990s the convergence of news, data and entertainment over our country's expanding digital infrastructure made finding your favorite TV program much more difficult and time consuming than before. In effect, what started as a convenience to keep track of four channels of television programming in Grand Rapids became a necessity in order to find anything as hundreds of stations cropped up in the past decade.

So, let's ask some of the really tough questions this little example highlights for our own industry: Do we understand the tremendous impact the new digital and information-based world is having on our traditional analog-based products and services? Are we still making decisions based upon what our clients wanted 15-20

years ago? Do we think the products of the analog age will be sufficient to sustain the industry into and through the next decade? Do we know what new products our customers want and need and why they want and need them? Are we addressing those "new model" wants and needs today assuring the industry of a bright future?

The forces at work within our industry are exactly the same forces that are transforming the newspaper industry. In fact, because reprographics is almost completely based upon gathering, storing and distributing information, our little industry might expect to experience more and greater changes than many industries; our small size certainly provides no insulation against powerful and converging forces.

The concept of convergence is a potent one. Convergence has been heralded for many years as the great force that would, in a sense, unify the news, entertainment and data industries. But convergence exerts forces that disintegrate as well as integrate.

Convergence is going to be the driving and defining concept within reprographics over the next 10-15 years. It will have the same effect on reprographics as it had with the newspaper. It certainly is generated by the exact same influences: computers, networking, the Internet. This juggernaut of convergence within our industry is going to define a completely new group of products and services that our clients (our *reconsidered* clients) need and want desperately. In fact, they are already buying them, but, unfortunately, not from us.

We produce and sell paper prints. Paper prints contain content. But packaging content on paper is the old model product of our industry. The digital revolution will demand that content be packaged in new and different ways (CDs, DVDs, online). This, in turn, will necessarily spawn

new products. The industry needs to identify the new products that address the new model or it will encounter increasingly strong and effective competition from our new competitors (our *reconsidered* competitors).

Convergence is the pathway to our future; the convergence of construction content and construction news. The digital revolution and the Information Age have created an environment in which construction content and construction news can easily cohabitate; and thus, reprographic convergence is defined. Our customers want this new group of products; they are searching for a centralized one-stop source for that family of products now. They are like the customers of the *Grand Rapids Press* searching for their Sunday supplement—a product newly defined, outside the traditional "news" product, driven by a new need, born from converging forces.

I am afraid that for too long I did not listen to my customers when they asked for these new converged products, and they have been asking for years. Like the newspaper, I did not know really what was going on; I did not comprehend the impact of convergence on my traditional products and services. For years customers have been asking, "Hey, Hoek, what new projects are going on in town? What new projects are XYZ Architects working on these days? What projects do you hear ABC Consultants are working on for next year? How about Mammoth Construction? What new projects do you see coming from them over the nest 12-18 months?" They were asking for construction news while picking up their construction content (sets of prints) because their needs had converged. But, I did not hear them; I did not understand.

Do you hear them? Others have.

Such convergence has already been accomplished and confirmed by many

businesses and organizations, though sadly, few, if any, of those businesses are considered reprographic businesses. The companies and organizations that currently seem to be leading the march towards convergence in construction information are the local Builder's Exchanges, FW Dodge, CIN, and others.

Those entities have merged construction news and construction content, forming construction information companies that are becoming the centralized one-stop meeting spots (online meeting spots, for the most part) for a good portion of the construction industry.

Convergence is a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path. Convergence is the most positive and exciting road

to our future; maybe the only road. The new products (the reconsidered products) our customers need and want are converged products—not just content but news as well.

Friends, construction information is the converged future of our industry. Reprographics as defined today will grow into the Construction Information Industry. It will be a great and exciting industry. It will provide opportunity for growth, innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurialism. It can be our industry—we must begin soon. ●

Doug Hoek is an instructor for the ARC Leadership Academy and former president of Veenstra in Grand Rapids, Mich.

InteliCoat Glossy Canvas for Solvent Inkjet

InteliCoat Technologies' Magic GFCVG is a glossy poly/cotton blend canvas for solvent inkjet printers. A 23-mil, premium, water-resistant canvas designed especially for high-volume art reproduction, Magic GFCVG's heavy textile base provides added durability and resists edge-cracking during the stretching and framing process.

Magic GFCVG complements InteliCoat's extensive solvent inkjet product line and provides a glossy printing surface with increased densities over matte-finished solvent canvas products.

Magic GFCVG is immediately available in 20' rolls (36") and 75' rolls (36", 50", 54" and 60"). For more information, call 800-628-8604 or visit www.magicinkjet.com to request a free sample roll.

ONYX Adds Support for HP Designjets

ONYX Graphics has added support for the HP Designjet 10000s Series printer. The driver is available for all ONYX version 7.0 workflow solution software products including ONYX ProductionHouse and ONYX PosterShop.

In alliance with HP, ONYX has optimized the HP Designjet 10000s driver and profiles to operate the printer at its top performance capabilities. ONYX software solutions include PANTONE Spot Color Matching, Contour Cutting Workflow and Job Nesting, which enhance the performance capabilities of the HP Designjet 10000s printer.

The HP Designjet 10000s Series printer is a 100" inkjet that creates long-lasting outdoor signs. The ONYX driver includes color profiles for all HP media for the HP Designjet 10000s in addition to profiles from third-party media providers such as 3M, Avery, Kapco, Océ, Oracal and Multi-Fix.

The HP Designjet 10000s Series printer driver is included in ONYX PosterShop and ONYX ProductionHouse Version 7.0 software packages. The driver is a $499 add-on for ONYX RIPCenter Version 7.0 software.

ONYX Graphics has also added support for the 64" HP Designjet 8000s printer. The driver is available for all ONYX version 7.0 workflow solution software products including ONYX ProductionHouse, ONYX PosterShop and ONYX RIPCenter.

The ONYX driver includes support for the following HP Designjet 8000s features:

- Printer Resolution: 720 x 720 dpi, 540 x 720 dpi and 360 x 360 dpi.

- Ink Configurations: CMYK, CMYKcm.

- Media Options: supports heater settings for front, print and rear; print direction; cutter; media feet length and media feed adjust; and mode select.

- Superior Error Handling: bi-directional communication support for error handling; displays select printer warnings before printing.

The ONYX driver includes color profiles for all HP media for the HP Designjet 8000s. Additional third-party profiles from media providers such as Avery, Kapco and Océ will be available on the ONYX Web site.

The HP Designjet 8000s printer driver is included in ONYX ProductionHouse, ONYX PosterShop and ONYX RIPCenter Version 7, in new software packages purchased after December 11, 2006. Registered Version 7 users with licenses obtained prior to December 11 can purchase the driver for $495.

Users can download the driver and media profiles from the ONYX Graphics website. For more information, visit www.onyxgfx.com, or call 800-828-0723 (international +1-801-954-5380).

Colortrac ValueJet Eco-Solvent Multi-functional Printer

GEI Wide Format Solutions has bundled the popular Colortrac SmartLF scanner with the Mutoh ValueJet 1204 printer to create a new multi-functional printer (MFP) specifically designed for outdoor-durable wide format sign-making.

GEI Wide Format is the North American master distributor of the line of Colortrac SmartLF wide-format scanners and has been developing partnership programs with Mutoh for many years. In this alliance, the companies combined the ValueJet 1204-48" solvent printer with GEIs adjustable "repro-stand," which consists of a Colortrac scanner, desktop computer, monitor, keyboard and mouse. By including a comprehensive suite of software applications, a versatile, multi-functional system with a compact footprint was created for high-speed outdoor sign and banner production using new Eco-Ultra inks.

The Colortrac ValueJet MFP has state-of-the-art features including Colortrac's instant on, no warm up, "scan-once," solid state CIS technology and Mutoh's new X-Rail design and piezo printhead technology. It has variable dot technology to produce photo-quality images at resolutions up to 1440 dpi and features the new 540 x 720 dpi mode for banners. Print width is 48" with up to 51" media width and because it employs the most updated generation of eco-inks, prints last up to three years outdoors without lamination.

Visit www.geiwideformat.com for more information.

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ORACAL Adds Reflective Films

ORACAL USA has introduced ORALITE Series 5600 Fleet Engineering Grade Reflective Film and ORALITE 5300 Economy Grade Reflective Film.

ORALITE Series 5600 combines reflectivity, flexibility and removability (with heat). Series 5600 is designed for applications over curved surfaces, rivets and corrugations and complies with various international standards for retroreflectivity, including ASTM D 4956. Available in 14 high-impact colors, 5-mil Series 5600 features a solvent-based adhesive, an 84-lb. PE-coated liner and is compatible with solvent-based inkjet, eco-sol and UV-curable printers. Series 5600 is offered in widths of 15" (punched), 24", 30" (punched), and 48", and in 10-yard and 50-yard lengths.

ORALITE Series 5300 reflective film is a new 3-year, 4-mil film available in six high impact colors including white, yellow, orange, red, green and blue. Intended for short- to medium-term outdoor use, Series 5300 film features a permanent solvent-based adhesive and an 84-lb. PE-coated paper liner. It is resistant to weather, corrosion and solvents. Its smooth, alkyd resin surface offers high scratch resistance, impact strength and compatibility with thermal transfer printers.

This film is suitable for the manufacture of economical traffic, guidance, warning and information signs as well as reflective lettering, numbers and symbols that are not required to comply with national specifications for retroreflectivity. ORALITE Series 5300 reflective film is available in splice-free widths of 15" (punched), 24", 30" (punched) and 48" and is offered in 10- and 50-yard lengths.

For more information and product samples, call 800-672-2251 or visit www.oracal.com.

LexJet Adds Natural Gloss and Satin to Fibre-Based Photography Line

LexJet extends its line of fibre-based papers with Sunset Air Dried Fibre Gloss Natural 300g and Air Dried Fibre Satin 300g. The new products meet photographers' demands for a full line of fibre-based inkjet-receptive papers, which now includes Sunset Air Dried Fibre Gloss, Matte, Satin, and Natural Gloss.

All of the fine photography products in the Sunset Air-Dried line are modeled after traditional fibre-based material used in conventional photography. The products feature an acid-inhibiting layer, are compatible with popular photo inkjet printers, and are available in various sheet and roll sizes.

Applications include digital fibre prints, fine art and photographic reproduction, photo restoration, greeting cards and postcards, and presentation art graphics. The new materials are backed by LexJet's customer service, warranty, and one- to two-day UPS ground delivery anywhere in the Continental United States.

Visit www.lexjet.com for details.

Reel E-Z Display Ceiling Graphics Suspension System

Drytac's Reel E-Z Display system allows users to hang and change out ceiling graphics without ladders, tools or screws. Compatible with standard T-Bar suspended ceilings, Reel E-Z Display is a simple retractable hanging system that allows one employee to change signs from floor level. Reel E-Z Display clamps right into the ceiling grid using an easy-to-squeeze-open spring.

Reel E-Z Display hardware hangs signs and graphics up to two pounds with maximum drop distances of 15'. The neutral color and design of the unit blends in with the ceiling, putting the focus on the graphics. Signs are self-leveling, with accurate height adjustment ensured by spaced, color-coded markings on the retractable cords.

Adapters are also available for drywall and open ceilings. For more information on Reel E-Z Display, please visit www.drytac.com/reel_ez_display.asp.

New Display Options from Rose

Rose Displays, Ltd.'s Butterfly Mount series allows graphics to be hung from any type of ceiling—not just grid ceilings—using the company's patented Butterfly Clips.

The new Butterfly Mounts come in three different styles that attach quickly and securely to virtually any

surface: Magnet for metal ceilings, Screw Base Mount for drywall and Adhesive Mount. Each of the three styles works with any Butterfly Clip to offer a wide variety of looks and display options. Once the appropriate mount is affixed to the ceiling, simply squeeze together the "wings" of the Butterfly Clip and attach it to the Butterfly Mount in one quick step.

The Butterfly Clips come in three versions to accommodate a variety of hanging alternatives including hooks, cables, monofilament and barb, and ball chain.

Butterfly Mount Kits are also available, offering an easy and effective solution for multistore rollouts. Kits include the Butterfly Mount of choice; Butterfly Clip; Cable and Saucer in 36", 66" or 96" length; Clear Cable Clip; and Spider Ring for easy length adjustment.

Also from Rose Displays is the Contour Stand, the first product in the company's Contour Line. The Contour Stand provides a curved application front and back with an upscale, contemporary look. The stand, which accommodates 22" x 28" poster-sized graphics, is double-sided, so that graphics can be viewed from any angle.

Poster changes can be made without any disassembly, and putting the stand together at requires just a hex key driver (included with the stand).

The Contour Stand is ideal for high traffic areas. Two optional literature baskets hold 8.5" x 11" printed materials, such as brochures, catalogs, flyers and promotional material, providing added versatility. The Contour Stand is compatible with semi-rigid graphics, such as poster board and styrene.

For additional information or to request the latest catalog, call 800-631-9707 or visit www.rosedisplays.com.

Drytac BlackTac Blockout Adhesive Allows Reuse of Mounting Substrates

Drytac's new mounting adhesive saves users money by allowing the reuse of mount boards without adding significant thickness to the graphic. New BlackTac pressure-sensitive adhesive was specifically engineered to mount new graphics over old graphics with no show through. This practice can create significant savings when using more expensive mounting materials such as Sintra and Gatorfoam.

This new finishing product consists of Drytac's solvent acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive coated on both sides of a white polypropylene carrier. The adhesive on the exposed side is semi-clear, while the reverse side is a deep black light-blocking opaque. The opaque side blocks out the color from previously mounted images, while the white side provides a bright backup for newly mounted graphics. The white surface intensifies the colors of the newly mounted image.

BlackTac is available in 51" x 328' rolls. Visit www.drytac.com for more information.

Sepialine Cost Recovery Suite 6.3

Sepialine Cost Recovery Suite 6.3 provides the tools to capture, analyze and report office activity including print, copy, scan, fax and more. Version 6.3 builds on the Sepialine 6 family by adding new billing and administration features.

Version 6.3 enhances the Sepialine Desktop Billing Client, which is the software component where end users account for their office expenses. New features include:

- Favorites—the feature that allows users to flag their most frequently-used billing codes—is now two-tiered and allows users to flag both primary billing codes and subcodes (e.g., phase, client) as frequently-used billing codes.

- Favorites are separated from the full billing code list and are accessed through a new flyout menu. The result is a more streamlined and efficient billing experience for end users.

- Offline recovery. When a Sepialine-enabled print server loses connection to its database server, it caches printing data locally. When the database connection is restored, cached data is now automatically recovered and routed.

Sepialine 6.3 is available for download immediately at www.sepialine.com/download.

GBC Improves Laminating Films for More Vibrant Graphics

GBC now includes PreLume in the adhesive of select low-melting thermal films. Available in gloss, lustre and matte finishes, GBC's Octiva Lo-Melt films with PreLume enhance the appearance of laminated display graphics.

PreLume is a light management system that controls the amount and distribution of ambient light that is reflected back to the viewer throughout the visible color spectrum, yielding "whiter whites" without altering other colors.

PreLume offsets the natural yellow or gray tint inherent in the substrates used for laminating films. With the addition of PreLume to GBC's Octiva Lo-Melt Thermal Films, print operators no longer have to change printer settings or color correct for this color shift.

The yellowness of lower-grade, aged, or UV damaged papers is also offset when laminated with film containing PreLume. This whitening effect lasts longer and exhibits greater reflected light intensity over time compared to traditional optical brighteners.

GBC's Octiva Lo-Melt Thermal Films with PreLume continue to offer all the qualities and benefits of lamination: scratch resistance, surface protection, durability, strength and graphic depth. These low-melting adhesive films require lower activation temperatures than other thermal films. Octiva Lo-Melt Thermal Films, designed for heat-sensitive inkjet papers, also provide UV protection.

ORACAL Inkjet Media Selection Guide

ORACAL USA's updated Inkjet Media Selection Guide features the latest information for the ORAJET product line, including new inkjet media with RapidAir Technology.

The new guide also includes user-friendly tools to select the proper material by application as well as an enhanced laminating film cross-reference chart, updated printer compatibility and the latest information on the ORALIFE Component System warranty.

To receive a copy of the Inkjet Media Selection Guide contact ORACAL USA at 800/672-2251 or visit www.oracal.com.

Neschen filmolux Laminating Film

Neschen has expanded its economy line of filmolux Jet-Pro pressure-sensitive laminates with the addition of Jet-Pro Satin. According to Neschen, the new Satin finish offers the image enhancing sharpness of gloss with the glare-reducing, easy-to-read characteristics of matte.

Now featuring gloss, matte and satin finishes, the filmolux Jet-Pro line employs 3 mil polypropylene films with water-based acrylic adhesive. The films are "budget friendly" and are ideally suited to protecting and enhancing images mounted to rigid substrates. Jet-Pro films are recommended for short-term indoor applications such as rigid displays, temporary signs, presentations and in-store retail graphics. Rolls are available in 41" x 164', 51" x 164' and 61" x 164' sizes. Sample rolls (38" x 15') are available by contacting Neschen Americas at 800-257-7325. Visit www.neschenamericas.com for more information.

Paradigm imagePRO Large Format CCD Scanner Line

Paradigm Imaging Group's new imagePRO line of scanners leads with the imagePRO 42 scanner series.

The new imagePro Gx scanners with imageFLOW scan, print and copy software using the most up-to-date CCD technology with 1200 dpi optical resolution. The scanner promises quick, superior-quality scans, flawless reproductions of posters, graphic designs, artwork, satellite images, or large format photos. The scanner is ideal for scanning documents that contain detailed images with a wide color gamut and high dynamic range. The scanners are also designed to provide detailed scans of engineering drawings, maps, blueprints, site plans, architectural drawings and many other technical documents in either color or monochrome. The scanner will scan from original media anywhere from 6" to 48" wide with any length. The imagePRO GxT model will scan thick media up to 0.8" thick.

Three versions of the imagePRO 42 scanners are available: monochrome, color and enhanced color. The ability to make an onsite upgrade to these models allows the buyer to choose the appropriate model for their current needs but still have the option of making an easy upgrade themselves at a later time via e-mail.

imageFlow features include touch-screen compatibility, with an easy-to-use interface for scanning, printing and copying. Printing and copying functions support over 550 printers and 325 ICC output profiles. The software also has the ability to edit ICC profiles and print postscript files.

Océ TDS 700 Large Format Multifunction Printer

The new Océ TDS700 large format monochrome printer is a productive, mid-volume system that prints, copies and scans technical documents quickly and with exceptional quality. The modular design of the Océ TDS700 allows thousands of different hardware and software configurations, including optional color scanning, for a wide range of business environments from corporate engineering workgroups to central reproduction departments to commercial reprographic service bureaus. Its design adapts to changes in document workflow as businesses evolve.

The Océ TDS700 handles up to nine, D-size prints per minute and provides over 10,000 sq. ft. of uninterrupted printing capability, without the need to stop the system to load toner or paper. Its up to six-roll media capability and ergonomically designed roll loading system means users spend less time reloading media. Its Radiant Fusing Technology eliminates warm up and waiting time. The Océ Power Logic Controller processes print, copy and scan jobs quickly and allows for concurrent processing of the next file while the previous file is printing, reducing waiting time between prints.

With the scanner option, users benefit from Océ Image Logic image-enhancement technology. The single mirror, single camera design of the Océ TDS700 scanner eliminates the need for image stitching and minimizes distortion.

Software options include Océ Print Exec Software Suite, Océ Repro Desk and Océ Account Center. Other software options can be added to the Océ TDS700 as and when they are needed.

The Océ TDS700 will be available in early 2007. For more information on the Océ TDS700, visit www.oceusa.com, or call 800/714-4427.

IDEAL WiseImage X for AutoCAD 2007

IDEAL's WiseImage X offers full support for all versions of AutoCAD 2007. WiseImage X for AutoCAD 2007 is based on WiseImage X for AutoCAD 2006. WiseImage for AutoCAD incorporates scanned raster data into a CAD environment by adding native CAD-style raster editing and raster to vector (R2V) conversion inside AutoCAD to facilitate revision creation and new drawing production. WiseImage for AutoCAD offers an updated exclusive set of enhancement tools for black/white as well as grayscale and color images.

WiseImage allows users to edit, update, and convert (both semi-automatically and automatically) to vectors, scanned maps, drawings, sketches and other graphics. WiseImage X for AutoCAD can be used for many applications—such as GIS, cadastral, aerial and satellite image processing, architecture, engineering and schematics.

IDEAL offers interactive Webinars featuring live WiseImage software demonstrations. To sign up, visit www.ideal.com/news/webinars.asp.

Quality Media & Laminating WindowBond

Quality Media & Laminating Solutions' WindowBond is a 2-mil, clear, "bubble free" window adhesive. WindowBond has a permanent adhesive on the print side and a removable adhesive on the window side, which also has an embossed release liner that forms slight grooves in the adhesive to allow air to escape upon installation.

WindowBond is available in 41" and 51" widths. Visit www.qmls.com for more information.

New Avery Media

Avery Graphics' 4165 Perforated Window Overlaminate is a 1-mil, optically clear, gloss polyester film designed for the company's MPI 4065 Perforated Window Film. The overlaminate offers 1-year outdoor durability and is designed for retail windows, airports, public transportation stations, theaters, P-O-P, offices, and trade-show graphics.

Avery's new DOL 5100 Anti Graffiti film is a 1-mil polyester substrate with a gloss finish and a permanent clear acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive. The film protects graphics for up to three years outdoors and will not deteriorate when cleaned with most commercially available graffiti-removal solvents. In addition, it resists abrasion, UV light and other weather exposure.

For more information, visit www.averygraphics.com.

VUTEk BioVu Inks from EFI

EFI has released its VUTEk BioVu inks—the first environmentally friendly solvent inks made with totally renewable resources and the only ink recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EFI's BioVu ink is made from food-grade ingredients yet delivers the benefits of traditional solvent inks without the compromises inherent in eco-solvent and aqueous inks. This includes the same color gamut as traditional solvent inks so that users can seamlessly switch to these environmentally conscious inks with no workflow or prepress process modifications.

The patent-pending, preferable chemistry inks include VUTEk's BioVu in Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black and BioVu Light Cyan, Light Magenta, Light Yellow and Light Black for superwide format inkjet printing operations. BioVu inks are manufactured for use on EFI's VUTEk 3360 solvent printer. EFI plans to extend BioVu inks to its currently offered superwide format solvent printer models in 2007.

DuPont Cromaprint 72" Printer

DuPont Imaging Technologies has introduced the DuPont Cromaprint 18UV digital printing system. The Cromaprint18UV features combination flatbed/roll-to-roll printing up to 72" wide edge-to-edge on up to 1" thick substrates, print speeds up to 680 sq.ft. per hour with quality production modes of 118-399 sq. ft. per hour, and a safe operational design including fully covered UV lamps and direct vent capable.

The complete DuPont Cromaprint 18UV system is composed of: the printer, including rigid media tables; gamut-enhanced four-color ink set (eight heads—two Galaxy256 heads per color); DuPont Cromanet CS color control and digital workflow software suite and print server; and DuPont service and support. Designed to meet the industrial performance requirements for most wide-format graphics and signage applications, the new Cromaprint 18UV comes standard with roll-to-roll and flatbed functionality to print directly to a wide range of rigid board and flexible substrates.

The Cromanet CS software performs PostScript RIP functions, spectral color management, advanced digital workflow tools and print control functions. Cromanet also features flexible output control with an easy to use operator interface for choices such as resolutions (up to 1000dpi), number of passes, interlacing, and color match functions including advanced spot color rendering.

The 18UV features an entry-level price of $99,000. For additional information visit http://www.color-communication.dupont.com.

CADlink Supports Mutoh ValueJet

CADlink Technology Corporation has announced its support of the Mutoh ValueJet printers. SignLab Print and Cut 7.1 includes drivers for the four-color ValueJet 1204-48", the four-color ValueJet 1604-64" and the six-color ValueJet 2606-100". Included within the software are dozens of color profiles for the Mutoh Diamond Shield media as well as a variety of the most widely used third-party media available to signmakers and digital print shops.

Visit www.cadlink.com for more information.

HP Fine Art and Photo Media

HP has expanded its line of digital fine art and photographic media. Professional Satin Photo Paper is designed for printing large museum-quality photos. The paper is compatible with the HP Designjet Z2100/3100 photo printers and HP 70 Vivera inks, and is available in 24" rolls.

Premium Instant-dry Gloss Photo Paper and Premium Instant-dry Satin Photo Paper substrates are compatible with HP pigment and dye inks, are durable for outdoor applications. Both the papers are available in rolls 18" to 60" wide.

HP's digital fine art media are designed to produce museum-quality output using the Designjet Z2100/3100 printers with HP 70 Vivera pigment inks and the Designjet 5000/5500 printers with HP pigment inks. The canvases feature an acid-free base with a pH-neutral coating and are stretchable for framing. New substrates include:

- HP Collector Satin Canvas is a 22-mil, 100%-cotton double-weave fabric. Available in 24" to 60" rolls.

- HP Professional Matte Canvas is a poly/cotton double-weave fabric that and produces water-resistant prints when used with HP 70 Vivera inks. Available in 24" to 60" rolls.

- HP Artist Matte Canvas is an 18-mil single weave poly/cotton material that is water resistant and offers a fade resistance of 200

years when used with HP 70 Vivera inks and the HP Designjet Z2100/3100 photo printers. Available in 24" to 60" rolls and 13" x 19" sheets.

- HP Hahnemuehle Smooth Fine Art Paper is a 100% cotton rag, bright white paper offered in 24" to 42" wide rolls and 13" x 19" sheets.

- HP Hahnemuehle Textured Fine Art Paper is a textured, 100% cotton rag paper with a textured, natural white, matte finish and a handmade look and feel. Available in two weights, 265 and 310 gsm, the media is water resistant when used with HP 70 Vivera inks. Offered in rolls 24" to 42" wide.

- HP Aquarella Art Paper is a 50% cotton, warm-white, textured, matte paper with and acid-free base. It is available in 24" to 36" rolls and in 13" x 19" sheets.

- HP Matte Litho-Realistic Paper, designed for poster art and art reproductions, is a wood-free, natural-white paper that looks and feels like heavy offset paper. It is water-resistant when used with HP 70 Vivera pigment inks. The 13-mil paper is available in 24" to 36" rolls.

For more information, visit www.hp.com.

MACtabs from MACtac

MACtac's MACtabs industrial-strength bonding adhesive is available in 1" x 3" tabs or 1" x 60" rolls. Ideal for sign fabrication, banner seaming and POP display fabrication, MACtabs provide an immediate, permanent bond.

MACtabs feature a rubber-based, zero volatile organic compound (VOC) adhesive that sticks to metals, plastics, low-density polyethylene and nylon, and bonds uneven, irregular or low-energy surfaces. MACtabs feature quarter-inch ungummed edges that allow users to remove each liner easily.

MACtabs are now available through graphics distributors in "Contractor Packs" (250 tabs), blister-card retail packs (eight tabs) and in 60" rolls. For more information, visit www.mactac.com. ●

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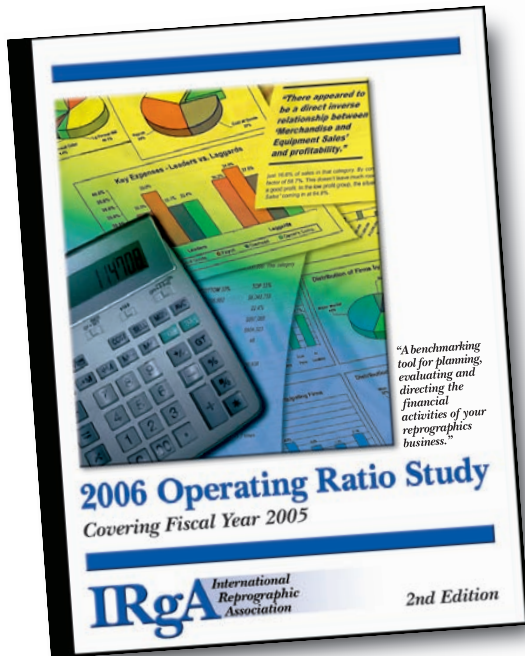
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Ad Index

Lead, Connect or Stay the Same

Steve Bova, CAE

Executive Director

After attending the four regional reprographics association conventions, I reflected on what I had gained from this year's experience. While there were many take-aways, my observations may be somewhat controversial:

1. Generally, reprographers, as small business owners, are more engaged in the day-to-day management functions of their businesses than they are in leadership.

2. Networking is a powerful way to make important industry connections and gain information necessary for reprographers to effectively lead their companies.

A Need to Focus on Leadership

Reprographers are classic entrepreneurs—incredible people with loads of energy and can-do spirit, risk takers who are fast and flexible and who run their businesses using a hands-on management style.

This is both good and bad. As owners of small businesses, it is necessary for reprographers to become involved in the day-to-day operations of their businesses, often as the salesperson, accountant, production manager, repair person, IT specialist and everything else in between. Over time, as the reprographics business grows, it develops more complex needs. Ultimately, an owner needs to make the transformation from hands-on manager to visionary and leader.

Many remain in this comfort zone, although they have competent people in place to run their operations. As a true CEO of their companies, an owner's most important responsibility is to set the tone and direction of the company.

The IRgA Board of Directors refers to the analogy of a bicycle. The front wheel (the Board) sets the direction—where the organization is going—while management (the hired staff) provides the power-how to get to where the board wants to go.

It is critical for reprographer owners to look at the factors affecting their companies, both internally and externally. This leadership responsibility cannot occur if the owner is doing the day-to-day work. As I fly home to Chicago from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, after the SRA Convention, there is a much different view from 30,000 feet than there is at 5,000 feet. Of course, the scenery is much more detailed closer to the ground, but more of the overall landscape can be seen from 30,000 feet.

If you are a reprographics company owner, it is an essential part of your corporate duty—it's in your job description—to have the high-level view for your company, set the direction and communicate it to those who can take you there.

If You're Not Networking, You're Not Working

During my travels, I read Jeffrey Gitomer's *Little Black Book of Connections*. You may remember Gitomer as the rather opinionated luncheon speaker at the IRgA's 2006 Annual Convention. Like him or not, he has practical advice about developing rich relationships and becoming more successful through other people.

"All things being (not so) equal, people want to do business with their friends," according to Gitomer. In the book, he poses four connection questions:

1. Who do you know?

2. How well are you connected?

3. Do you know how to make a connection?

4. Who knows you?

If you have put yourself into the reprographics marketplace as a person of value, people will want to connect with you. Your job is to expose yourself to the marketplace in a valuable way, so this will happen. "It's not who you know, but who knows you," says Gitomer.

The Rich Get Richer

Together, these observations are simple: the most successful people in the reprographics industry are those who step back from their businesses and see things from a different, larger perspective, through education and networking. They are the "choir" to whom we preach about the value of networking.

These are the people who will attend the IRgA's 2007 Annual Convention and Trade Show in Dallas, May 9-11. These same folks will be attending the educational sessions and making necessary adjustments to their businesses as a result of their learnings. They will attend the trade show and cocktail receptions to gain insight on what others are doing within the business. They will be seeing the industry from a higher perspective.

If you view yourself as being successful in the reprographics business, you need to be engaged in your industry. Your company needs to be a member of the IRgA, and it needs to have someone in attendance at the IRgA Convention. If your business requires you to be involved in a hands-on capacity throughout the year, at the very least, you can spend three days in May seeing the industry from a perspective you cannot see every day. ●

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