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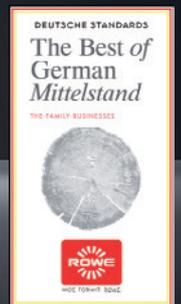
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QPP is an independent publication and not affiliated with any manufacturers or suppliers. QPP celebrates publishing the professional print trade's favourite magazine, formerly known as Copy Shop News (CSN), since May 1998.

Sharing best practice through both print and digital media, QPP magazine is in front of 36,000 quick print pros each month.

Each day the live web version is updated with the hottest stories in frontline printing, including news, views, new products and suppliers information.

Avid readers include Digital Printers, Commercial Printers, Copy Shops, On-Street Instant Printers, In-House Print Room Managers, FM and Conventional printers specialising in On-Demand, Short Run, Variable Printing, CRDs (Corporate Reprographic Departments), PSPs (Print Service Providers), Graphic Arts Businesses, Sign Suppliers and CAD Bureaus.

Welcome

March into April



Like most quick print pro printers, we love April; to and fro work in daylight and our lovely customers now have a spring in their step.

Those that require guidance and look a bit sheepish deserve your eggs-tra special attention. More printable Easter puns on page 34.

As you peruse these pages, please do check out our print trade partners' advertising. You will discover encouragement to move up a gear in May.

Peter, have an egg-cellent Easter, Foulkes
www.QuickPrintPro.co.uk



4 News In Print

Hot news in print for quick print pros

8 New Products

What's new to print and finish with?

14 Martin Christie

Digital Imaging Lead – Colourfast

16 PIP People In Print

Top print peeps on the move

18 Barcelona – The Printers Perfect Dream

FESPA Show Preview

20 Erreà Upgrades Sportswear

Performance Mimaki Digital Textile Printers

22 Paper Chase

Digidelta Evolution of Decal

24 What A Show!

This year's Printwear & Promotion LIVE!

26 Green Issues

Turn Waste Into Storytelling Gold

28 New Profit Centre

Promo Pet Range - Promotional Print

30 Business Guidance

The Dangers Of Discounting

32 Finda Product / Supplier

QPP preferred suppliers in print

34 Readers Scribes

Your jokes in print.



CDS Print Services Strengthens With Plockmatic

As one of the UK's leading providers of high quality, end to end print solutions, CDS Print Services continues to invest in technology and partnerships that keep its operations at the forefront of print production. Following a major investment programme in 2024 – 2025, the company has upgraded multiple finishing lines with the latest Morgana and Plockmatic systems – reinforcing a relationship spanning almost 20 years.

A TWO DECADE RELATIONSHIP BUILT ON TRUST

CDS Print Services' long standing partnership with Morgana began nearly two decades ago. Over that time, the company has commissioned numerous installations, each aligned to its goal of delivering quality, consistency, and efficiency for customers across both commercial and public-sector sectors.

Investments with Morgana have included a broad suite of systems. They include the BM5035/SQF3000/FTR/VFX, Aerocut X, DigiFold Pro XL, DocuBind Pro VFX, Band-It 50, MOHR 80 Plus – forming a comprehensive, automated finishing workflow. The company also operates a PowerSquare 224 system with Canon feeder, and uses wire binding solutions from RENZ, part of the Plockmatic Group portfolio.

"We chose the Morgana and Plockmatic systems for their reliability and the strength of our relationship," explains Darren Burley, Head of Operations, CDS Print Services.

"Over the years, we've come to rely on Morgana for robust engineering, knowledgeable support, and machines that perform precisely as we need them to."

EFFICIENCY AND VERSATILITY DRIVING REAL-WORLD RESULTS

Installed in 2024, the Morgana BM5035/SQF3000/FTR/VFX booklet maker has already produced more than 380,000 books for CDS, transforming digitally printed sheets into fully finished booklets with sharp, professional quality. Typical production runs range between 100 and 2,000 copies, though many longer run projects also pass through the system.

Ease of use and automation remain key benefits. The company highlights intuitive touchscreen



controls, simplified feeding and job memory features, and quick changeovers between tasks. Together, these features have reduced setup times and allowed operators to process a wider range of substrates (80-400gsm across uncoated, gloss, silk, board, and NCR materials) without compromising consistency.

"The automation and versatility of Morgana's latest technology delivered immediate productivity gains," says Burley. "We've reduced waste, maintained consistent finishing quality, and increased throughput – making it easier for our operators to focus on quality rather than adjustment."

Unexpected advantages have also emerged from the equipment's flexibility. On the BM series booklet makers, turning off the stapling function allows flat sheet folding at speeds exceeding 6,000 sheets per hour – a substantial increase over previous capabilities. Paired with other systems such as the DigiFold Pro XL and Aerocut X, this has opened new workflow efficiencies and helped futureproof the finishing department for upcoming growth.

STREAMLINED SERVICE AND PREDICTABLE COSTS

"It's a genuine partnership approach," adds Burley. "By aligning everything under one agreement, we gain cost stability and the confidence that our key production systems

are fully backed by the manufacturer. One of the things we are most proud is the three year fixed term servicing contract demonstrating strong commitment from both of us. It shows we know where we stand. Instead of coming out on separate occasions, we now have an engineer on site once a year."

DELIVERING MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS

Across CDS's print operation, the combined benefits of automation, precision, and flexibility have led to measurable improvements in productivity and overall output. Reductions in setup time, waste, and manual handling have allowed the company to handle higher volumes and tighter deadlines while maintaining the consistent quality for which it is known.

A partnership for the future

For CDS Print Services, technological investment and partnership go hand in hand. As the company continues to evolve, its focus remains on initiatives that drive operational efficiency and sustainable growth.

"Our investment decisions always balance productivity, quality, and customer value," concludes Burley. "Morgana and Plockmatic's finishing systems fit seamlessly into that vision – helping us to deliver print that performs, every time."

www.plockmaticgroup.com

Label Production FAQs

QPP inbox shared best practice. Thanks to Baker Labels for sending this short tutorial.

Baker Labels have some quick answers to the most frequently asked questions that quick print pro customers ask at the printface.

"When you want to know if we can print a certain kind of label you need, or how to set up the artwork file before sending it to us? Or how quickly we can turnaround your order then our FAQ page will guide you in the right direction.

www.bakerlabels.co.uk/faqs-what-you-need-to-know/



Print Scotland warns of “Skills Cliff Edge”

Print Scotland, the sector's trade body, has issued a stark warning during Scottish Apprenticeship Week that Scotland risks a “skills cliff edge” unless apprenticeship funding disparities with England are urgently addressed.

Under the current system, a Print Industry Occupations apprenticeship in Scotland attracts just £3,200 in training contribution (age 16-19) and only £1200 for 19-24 year-olds. In England, comparable Print Technician apprenticeships attract funding closer to £10,000, representing a gap of almost £7,000 per apprentice.

Leaders from across Scotland's print, packaging and label industries say the disparity places Scottish businesses and training providers at a serious disadvantage.

Richard McCombe, Managing Director of Graphic Warehouse, representing the large format print and signage sector, and Vice President of Print Scotland, said: “How can a Scottish apprentice be worth less than half of their English counterpart? The qualification level is comparable. The industrial skill level is comparable. But the funding support is nowhere near comparable.”

McCombe said the industry remains committed to developing the next generation of skilled workers but warned that employers are increasingly being asked to carry an unsustainable share of the cost.

The issue is shared across the wider print supply chain. Michiel Molenaar, President of Print Scotland and Managing Director of Kennedy Smith, representing the packaging sector, said:



Michiel Molenaar

“Packaging supports some of Scotland's most successful export industries, including food and drink and pharmaceuticals. These industries depend on highly skilled technical operators.

“If apprenticeship pipelines weaken because funding does not match the real cost of training, that will ultimately impact the wider economy.”

Susan Carr, Managing Director of CV Labels and Print Scotland Board Member, representing the label printing sector, said the disparity is becoming increasingly visible to employers. “Label and packaging production relies on precision manufacturing skills that take years to develop. Apprenticeships are the most effective way to build that capability.

“When Scottish employers see similar apprenticeships in England receiving significantly higher funding, it raises serious questions about how Scotland values technical skills.”

Garry Richmond, Managing Director of Print Scotland, said the organisation sees the pressures facing both employers and training providers. “Businesses across Scotland want to recruit apprentices and invest in the next generation.

But the current funding structure makes that increasingly difficult to sustain.

“Across print and manufacturing we are seeing large numbers of experienced professionals approaching retirement. Apprenticeships are the only sustainable way to replace those skills. If funding does not properly support those placements, the pipeline of new talent will inevitably shrink.”

Print Scotland says the funding gap comes at a critical moment for Scotland's manufacturing and infrastructure sectors. Richard McCombe added: “We are heading towards a skills cliff edge. If we do not replace retiring skills now, Scotland will struggle to deliver the infrastructure, manufacturing and export projects it depends on.”

Print Scotland is calling for: a review of apprenticeship funding bands; alignment of print funding with comparable technical frameworks; greater parity with English apprenticeship funding; stronger incentives for SMEs to recruit apprentices.

“Scottish businesses are ready to invest in young people,” McCombe said. “But without proper funding support we are asking employers and training providers to carry a disproportionate burden.” He added: “Celebration during Apprenticeship Week is important – but celebration alone will not prevent a crisis.”

For more information, please contact Garry Richmond, 07776 493740, garry@print-scotland.com

www.print-scotland.com

Ecosystem innovation at future of Xerox Production Print



Xerox recently held ‘The Future of Xerox Production Print,’ Attendees included commercial print providers, channel partners and industry leaders from across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Taking place at the Xerox Innovation Centre in Uxbridge, the event features hands-on demonstrations, technology previewed executive briefings designed to accelerate growth in the production print market.

“Print providers are at a defining moment where intelligence, automation and differentiation will separate leaders from followers,” said Terry Antinora, President of Global Production Print Services at Xerox. “Production print is a strategic pillar for Xerox, and we are investing boldly in high speed inkjet, AI

driven workflow and digital embellishment to help our clients enter a new era of print.”

The event also marked the global debut of several new technologies, including:

New Xerox® Proficio™ PX300 – a compact digital colour press that combines automation, ultra HD image quality, an optional fifth colour station and application versatility, helping small print providers deliver higher value work.

New Xerox® Proficio™ PX500 – a high speed, high volume digital press built to scale with growing print operations. The PX500 delivers advanced automation, exceptional image quality, robust media handling and an optional fifth colour station that expands into premium applications

and extends colour gamut to hit a broader range of high value print opportunities.

New Xerox® IJP900 Inkjet Press – a mid-volume inkjet press that helps print providers expand into transactional and direct mail applications with high impact colour while improving efficiency through streamlined operation and integrated workflow automation.

Xerox® PrimeLink® C9200 Series – entry level production colour printers now featuring FOGRA certified colour with the EX Fiery print server, expanded envelope support, advanced finishing options and productivity tools that streamline job management.

Xerox FreeFlow® Vision Connect Software – a cloud based production monitoring and analytics platform with faster onboarding, expanded predictive monitoring, and new support for the Xerox IJP900 Inkjet Press.

Together, these presses and workflow software expand opportunities for print providers across high quality colour, high volume inkjet, and automated production, offering more ways to streamline operations, capture new markets and accelerate growth.

www.xerox.com

Innotech's Pets in Print is back!

Innotech Digital launched printing's cuddliest competition of the year; **Pets in Print 2026**. The creativity of the print industry was on full show last year, with Garry the Boxer dog from Print.com taking first place.

Sam Lowe, Marketing Manager for Innotech, says, "This competition has really captured the hearts of printers all over the country, and we saw some incredible entries this year. For 2026 we have partnered with the Dogs Trust and donated £2 for every online order over £150 during March". The criteria for entry was:

1. Make sure your pet is wearing the Pets in Print bandana

2. Your pet must be photographed in the work environment
3. Give a description of the role your pet plays in the workplace with as much detail as possible.
4. Post your masterpiece on social media, tag Innotech, and use the hashtag #PetsInPrint to make it count

The bandanas were available on request by emailing sales@innotechdigital.com and pictures posted on any social media platform.

The judges included Gail Coles from the Dogs Trust, and industry pet lovers Carys Evans from Karis Copp Media, Colin Sinclair McDermott (the

Online Print Coach) and Jack Gocher and Kathryn Ridout from Eye on Display.

The 2025 competition was rocked by scandal as Alfie from Graphic Warehouse attempted to bribe two of the judges with cheques from Barkley's Bank for crypto dog vouchers worth 1000 doggy biscuits. Although the attempt was uncovered before judging began, Alfie was disqualified.



He was still described by his owner, Richard McCombe, as a "good boy"

Sam continues, "We love seeing the pictures come in, the higher quality image the better and of course it's the descriptions that also really give the full story of the role the pets play in the business."

As this issue is sent to bed, judging is in sitting. Results to be posted here: www.innotechdigital.com/pets-in-print/

Tickets available for the Print Mastermind 2026 Summit

Tickets are now officially available for the Print Mastermind 2026 Summit, a dedicated one day event designed to help print business owners achieve structured commercial growth. The event will take place on Thursday 4th June 2026 at the offices of Howden Insurance at One Creechurch Place, London.

The event is being organised by Colin Sinclair McDermott, founder of Print Mastermind and The Online Print Coach. He explains, "The first Summit in 2023 was very well received, and we are delighted to bring back this tried and tested format. The day will be packed with high level sessions designed to drive value for every attendee.

Attendees will participate in eight 30 minute sessions across five dedicated tables, covering a range of topics, including:

- **Business Growth and Sales:** Raising prices without losing work and increasing order value.
- **Marketing and Visibility:** LinkedIn strategies and email campaigns that drive repeat orders.
- **Systems and Operations:** Streamlining workflow and fixing production bottlenecks.
- **Leadership:** Shifting from an operator mindset to a business leader mindset.
- **Future and Innovation:** AI, automation, and sustainability conversations.

COMMERCIAL PARTNER SHOWCASE

In addition to the peer discussions, the Summit features a Commercial Partner Showcase. Unlike traditional exhibitions, these partners are already embedded in the Print Mastermind community and are present to answer honest operational questions regarding finance, MIS, garment



printing, production workflow and much more. "The goal is for every attendee to leave with a tighter 30 day focus and ideas that have been pressure-tested in discussion with peers facing the same challenges," concludes Colin.

EVENT DETAILS & REGISTRATION

Date: Thursday 4th June 2026; Time: 9:30am – 4:15pm, followed by drinks until 6:00pm; Venue: Howden, One Creechurch Place, London, EC3A 5AF. Pricing: £49 + VAT for Print Mastermind members; £79 + VAT for non-members

Tickets include full access to all sessions, a buffet lunch, and refreshments. With places allocated on a first come, first served basis, early booking is highly recommended.

To book: www.printmastermind.co.uk/summit

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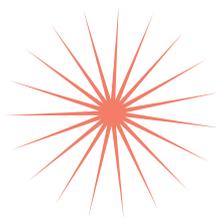
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Mimaki UJ330H-160 sets new hybrid benchmark for versatile production

Mimaki has announced the launch of the UJ330H-160, a new hybrid UV inkjet printer designed to help sign makers and print service providers expand their print capabilities within a small footprint. As part of Mimaki's renowned 330 Series, the UJ330H-160 brings the series' advanced image quality and productivity into a versatile hybrid configuration. Developed in response to growing market demand across EMEA for flexible, investment conscious production environments, the system enables seamless switching between roll media and rigid substrates in one platform.

Arjen Evertse, Director Sales at Mimaki Europe, comments, "In today's printing industry, companies need to be more agile than ever. They are expected to deliver diverse applications with fast turnaround times and uncompromising quality, often within limited production space. With the UJ330H-160, we provide a hybrid UV printing solution that enables customers to do more with one system, without sacrificing performance."

The newly developed conveyor belt transport system ensures stable feeding of various roll materials without wrinkling or sagging, including previously challenging substrates such as thin window films, fabric, and synthetic leather. For rigid materials, the integrated vacuum functionality and lock roller units enable reliable handling of large and thick media up to 50.8mm, including aluminium composite panels and foam boards. Mimaki's UV inks deliver strong adhesion and excellent scratch resistance on



these demanding substrates, helping businesses produce a wider array of applications in-house and reduce outsourcing. Low temperature UV curing technology further expands substrate compatibility, including heat sensitive materials.

Powered by Mimaki's 330 print engine, the UJ330H-160 delivers high definition output with smooth gradients, uniform solid fills and high density white for impactful backlit and window graphics. Clear ink expands creative possibilities further, enabling gloss and matte finishes as well as textured and embossed effects.

Thanks to LED UV curing technology, the system requires no warm up time and is ready to print immediately, supporting faster job changeovers and consistent productivity. With practical production speeds of up to 14m² per hour when configured with white ink and up to 22m² per hour when configured with 2x CMYK inks, the system balances premium image quality with reliable commercial productivity.

Ease of operation is central to the machine,

with automation features including the automatic adjustment function which helps maintain optimal print conditions without requiring specialist expertise, ensuring consistent output. Combined with RasterLink7 RIP software for advanced UV effects and the PICT cloud based monitoring tool for real time production visibility, the UJ330H-160 supports more efficient and controlled workflows.

"The UJ330H-160 represents the next step in our UV strategy," Arjen Evertse adds. "It combines versatility, stability and advanced UV printing capabilities at a competitive price point, helping customers future proof their business in an evolving sign graphics market."

Reflecting Mimaki's ongoing commitment to sustainability, its eco-friendly ELS-170 UV inks are SVHC- and CMR-free, contributing to safer working environments and supporting compliance with evolving European regulations.

Mimaki is exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services and the company's Sales Director, Andy Gregory comments, "The introduction of the new hybrid model delivers a powerful combination of Mimaki's wide format UV printing and flatbed technologies in a device that offers real world productivity gains, low energy consumption and Mimaki's latest and most sustainable UV inks."

The UJ330H-160 will be available from April 2026 and will be showcased at major industry exhibitions across Europe, including FESPA Global Print Expo 2026 and in the UK at Crewe Alexandra FC's Hybrid Lounge, on 15th April.

www.hybridservices.co.uk

Motioncutter digital high-speed laser system

How does this work? This interesting homework has been set for QPP to research over the Easter break. When you unpack the cardboard cut out to release your Easter eggs, consider how this cardboard engineering is designed and finished.

More than just cutting different weights of media, we will be flirting with filigree and kiss cuts. Further, engaging with engraving, creasing and perfecting perforating and finishing with personalised name cutting letters and signs. Personalised stencils one of our test jockeys asks? Watch this space and we will report back.

This Motioncutter flagship technology is a laser based digital finishing system developed by printers, for printers, to solve longstanding industry challenges. Motioncutter's philosophy is simple: digital print needs digital finishing. Greetings cards, labels, packaging, books and direct mail.

The system enables printers to move from conventional, labour intensive finishing islands to a streamlined, one touch digital workflow, delivering measurable gains in speed, automation, and creative capability.

We are promised a Motioncutter blog to share, covering digital print, finishing, workflow, and automation. Best practice applications are in our readers domain to contribute ideas. Please drop me a line editor@QuickPrintPro.co.uk

www.motioncutter.com



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Friedheim expands digital book production with Digibook Technology Sagl

Friedheim International, a supplier of print finishing, converting and binding solutions has announced it has secured exclusive sales representation rights in the United Kingdom for Digibook Technology Sagl – digital book production equipment – enhancing its portfolio with cutting edge digital and short run bookmaking machinery optimised for book on demand and digital print workflows.

This strategic development cements Friedheim's position at the forefront of digital book binding technologies and complements its extensive range of finishing and post press solutions supplied to commercial, digital and litho printers across the UK and Ireland.

The Digibook Technology range of book production machinery is designed specifically for the needs of modern short run and book on demand manufacturers operating in digital and hybrid print environments.

Digibook Technology equipment enable (digital) printers to perform all phases (360°) of book manufacturing in house. From perfect binding including end sheet and backlining, layflat binding for photo/child books, three side trimming, case

making and casing in – all these steps are covered via one supplier.

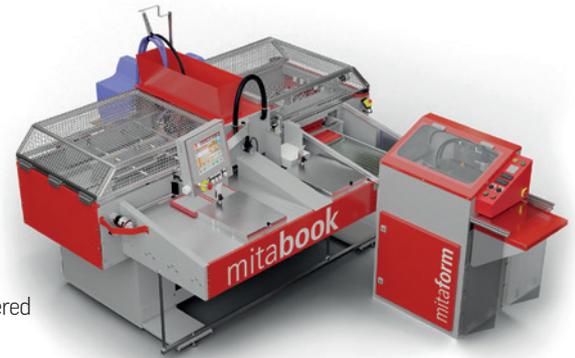
The key factors behind the equipment are the ease and flexibility of producing on demand book quantities with a high degree of automation and simplicity.

The Digibook product range, closes the gap between semi-automatic and industrial book production systems and supports customers in meeting today's challenges.

"We are thrilled to represent the Digibook range exclusively in the UK," said Howard Cherry National Sales Manager for Finishing Solutions at Friedheim International. "This partnership reinforces our commitment to equipping printers with best in class technologies that enable profitable short run and book on demand production."

The short run book market continues to grow as printers diversify into digital on-demand book production and niche publishing. Digibook Technology machines are designed to meet these evolving needs by offering:

- Automation and ease of use for operators without binding specialisation.



- Rapid changeovers and setup for varied job runs – reducing waste and downtime warehouse costs
- High quality binding comparable with traditional perfect binding solutions.

These capabilities align with the broader market trend toward increased automation, flexible run lengths and efficient digital finishing.

"Digibook Technology offers advanced book finishing technology with the automation and flexibility today's printers demand," added Seth Morgan "Together, we can help UK print businesses capture new markets by bringing premium book production in-house."

Digibook machinery will be available for demo, sales and UK installations through Friedheim's national sales and service network. Customers will benefit from comprehensive installation support, training and after sales service, backed by Friedheim's experienced technical team.

www.friedheim.co.uk

Digital embellishments in the Italian wine market

Xaar's partnership with Polipress International in Italy is delivering advanced digital embellishment solutions to the premium label market. Through the installation of Xaar's Versatex printbar the collaboration is transforming label production for high value applications, particularly in the wine industry.

With over 20 Versatex printbars now installed across the country, Polipress has firmly established itself as a key player in the digital embellishment space, supporting the country's renowned wine label sector. These installations span both printing and converting stages, reflecting a growing trend toward high end, premium features on labels that are innovating to meet evolving market preferences.

The growing importance of premium labels in wines and other beverages reflects a shift in consumer expectations and brand



storytelling. Techniques such as tactile varnishes, cold foiling, and high opacity whites allow producers to integrate creativity and innovation into their packaging, raising the perceived quality and uniqueness of their products. These embellishments not only enhance visual impact but also create a sensory experience that resonates with consumers seeking authenticity, craftsmanship, and

luxury in each bottle.

The Versatex stands out for its dual capability to apply varnish and cold foil digital embellishments in a single unit, with a single fluid offering unmatched flexibility and efficiency. Being available in both left to right and right to left configurations ensures seamless integration with digital workflows, including compatibility with Nilpeter and HP Indigo label presses alongside ABG label finishing lines. This versatility is crucial for converters seeking to enhance label aesthetics while maintaining streamlined production.

"Polipress's success in the Italian wine label market is a testament to the power of partnership and innovation," said Tom Mooney, Versatex Product Manager at Xaar. "Versatex enables converters to deliver stunning embellishments such as high opacity whites, tactile varnishes, and cold foiling with

precision and speed, helping brands stand out on the shelf."

The collaboration between Xaar and Polipress reflects a shared commitment to pushing the boundaries of digital print. By combining Xaar's leading inkjet technology with Polipress's market expertise, the partnership is enabling Italian converters to meet the demands of luxury label production with confidence and creativity.

Angelo Tribocco, Sales Manager at Polipress International added, "Together with Xaar, we have introduced a technology that quickly proved to be a real game changer. From the very first installations, our customers immediately recognised the value: the ability to unlock new levels of creativity while achieving an efficiency and cost performance that traditional analogue solutions simply cannot reach."

www.xaar.com

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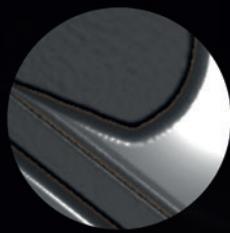
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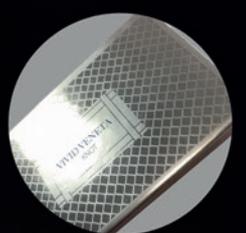
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Konica Minolta new JETvarnish 3D Web 400

Konica Minolta has unveiled the JETvarnish 3D Web 400, a new digital embellishment solution designed to help label converters accelerate time to market, enhance brand impact, and deliver greater value to their customers. By enabling premium finishes in a single, efficient digital workflow, the system supports faster product launches, more agile design changes, and stronger shelf differentiation for brand owners.

Available now, the JETvarnish 3D Web 400 is the latest generation of roll to roll digital embellishment press from MGI Digital Technology. It enables single pass spot UV varnishing and hot foil stamping, using a 100% digital process, on a wide range of substrates, and for offset, flexo, toner or inkjet printing. It meets the most varied requirements for short, medium, and long runs by enhancing labels with digital spot UV varnish and hot foil stamping in fixed or variable data, flat or 3D.

From a brand owner's perspective, this supports faster, more agile product launches while enhancing shelf impact and overall brand perception. Consistent, high quality digital embellishment enables brands to respond quickly to market demands, introduce new designs with confidence, and differentiate more effectively at the point of sale. The result is reduced time to market and labels that strengthen brand recognition and perceived value, without the constraints of traditional finishing processes.

With its modular concept, the JETvarnish 3D Web 400 is available in six configurations – with one or two print engines, with or without hot foil unit, and with or without an inline semi-rotary die cutting unit – to suit all needs and budgets. Controlled by a simple and intuitive interface that can be replicated on a digital table, the JETvarnish 3D Web 400 enables operators to



perform complex finishing operations that cannot be achieved with conventional technologies. Its MGI Connect software suite integrates cost calculation, predictive maintenance, and a realistic visualisation of the embellishment effect.

With its 100% digital integration and unified workflow, and real time monitoring, the JETvarnish 3D Web 400 can deliver the benefits of Factory 5.0 for optimum quality productivity.

Key features of the JETvarnish 3D Web 400 include:

- Unique online 3D and augmented reality proofing solution, enabling customers to remotely visualise the real impact of digital embellishment on their project.
- AIS Scanner controlled by artificial intelligence ensures perfect on the fly registration.
- In addition to the application of a regular spot UV varnish in the first printer unit, there is an option to apply a special varnish in the second printer unit that does not adhere to hot foil. This combination enables varnishing and foiling in a single pass.
- Print speed of up to 42 m/m on roll widths

from 200 mm up to 350 mm width, which can optionally be extended to 420 mm.

- Small footprint and low power consumption reducing CO2 emissions.
- Automatic on the fly makeready to eliminate waste, optimising raw material consumption. This system makes it easy to run back to back prints one after the other.
- An automatic cleaning system that takes just 10 minutes a day.

Toshi Uemura, Head of Industrial Print Business, Konica Minolta Business Solutions Europe, said: "With this groundbreaking technology that enables single pass spot UV varnishing and hot foil stamping using a 100% digital process, the JETvarnish 3D Web 400 is another example of how we help printers, converters and brand owners to rethink possibilities and maximise efficiencies. The launch is a manifestation of our dedication to pioneering digital transformation, fostering resilience, and contributing to the sustainability of the printing industry, especially as the era of print Industry 5.0 comes to life."

www.konicaminolta.co.uk

Be among the first to see Mimaki's new Hybrid UV printer

Hybrid Services is excited to host the launch of the all new Mimaki UJ330H-160, an innovative hybrid UV printer that combines roll-to-roll and rigid printing in one powerful solution.

Where: Crewe Alexandra Football Club, walking distance from the train station

When: Wednesday 15th April 2026, Drop in anytime between 10:00am – 4:00pm (pre-registration required)

Join Hybrid for this free event and see the Mimaki UJ330H-160 in action at the home of Crewe Alexandra FC

Why the new Mimaki Hybrid UV Printer could be the right fit for your business

The all new Mimaki UJ330H-160 is designed



for print businesses looking to expand their capabilities without expanding their space. If you currently run a roll-to-roll printer but want to say yes to more customer requests such as rigid signage, display boards or short run panels, this hybrid solution could be the answer.

Combining both roll-to-roll and rigid media printing in one machine, the UJ330H-160 removes the need for separate printers, making it ideal for businesses where space is limited or where installing a flatbed simply isn't practical.

With support for a wide range of rigid and flexible materials, along with Mimaki's UV LED printing technology for vibrant, durable output, the UJ330H-160 opens the door to new applications while keeping production efficient and versatile.

Don't Miss Out

Whether you're looking to expand your services, boost productivity, or simply see the very latest in Mimaki innovations, this event is not to be missed.

Register your free place today and join Hybrid in Crewe: <https://hybridservices.co.uk/news/be-among-the-first-to-see-mimakis-new-uv-hybrid-printer/>

www.hybridservices.co.uk

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They think it's all over...

Martin Christie explores the distinct gap between the logical patterns of machine learning and the spontaneous creativity of the human touch, offering a cautionary guide for professionals navigating the “black box” of generative AI in print and image restoration.

You didn't have to be alive in that summer of 1966, or even like most of the country glued to a black and white television, to recognise that catch phrase; it's been recycled so many times since. It was the closing moments of the World Cup, with England poised for a dramatic victory over Germany, and as the referee fumbled for his whistle, fans began to invade the pitch in anticipation. BBC commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme noted the crowd, but with the score already 3-2 in extra time, it was still possible that a late shock could spoil the show. That's when Geoff Hurst hammered in the deciding shot that triggered the now-famous punch line. It was spontaneous, unscripted, and entirely unpredictable, and sealed the moment in history with just three words.

Sport is one of those activities, whichever is your preference, that can produce moments of magic and despair in equal proportions, entirely because it can never be entirely predicted or planned. That in itself is remarkable, considering the immense preparation, research and training now undertaken for almost any sporting venture. This places it alongside great music, arts and invention as human traits that are truly creative. In the words of the verbal genius, Murray Walker, 'anything can happen — and usually does.'

I was reflecting on this conundrum after listening to yet another discussion on the place of Artificial Intelligence, and it just seemed to me that here was a good example of its benefits and probable limitations. Imagine a computer bot doing

a commentary on that football match. We would no doubt get a much more detailed description of tactics, positions, and the trajectories of spherical objects. But would it deliver that final sentence that sealed the moment in people's minds long after most of the match had been forgotten?

Well, I'll let you decide on that one. Personally, I think it shows that both have something to contribute and that, combined, they make a much greater whole.

But it may be that simply going for manual input becomes too irksome or time-consuming so that it is no longer the first choice, or even a consideration. When AI becomes the go-to option, it becomes a knee-jerk rather than a complete solution.

The pervasive use of the term AI covers a multitude of tasks, as the phrase itself has become so familiar, especially as a marketing tool, that it is often applied to actions that are not actually artificially generated.

So I make no apology for explaining this at some length because it may help clear some of the confusion, and throw some much-needed light on more than the creation and manipulation of images. Intelligent processors are so much a part of so many of the things we use daily, it's very important to clarify how they work, and why, sometimes, they don't.

MACHINE LEARNING VS. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

A good deal of what is now classified as AI through convenience is actually Machine Learning, and as I've probably

been guilty of making this assumption in the past, this is a chance to correct an important misunderstanding. The two are quite different in how they work, and while both have been around in computer circles since the early days, it is only in recent years that AI has become the dominant force.

From the beginning, computers were very good at making calculations, like Alan Turing, the seemingly impossible Enigma code. Machine Learning recognises patterns to predict outcomes. The more it is given, the more it learns. So it became possible for it to learn to play chess and anticipate moves on the board because it is a very logical game. By the same logic, predictive text became feasible — but only a word or two at a time. No giant leaps, or whole sentences, and often awkward failures. Without a clear path, it couldn't take giant leaps in creativity.

Facial recognition worked on the same principle: it could identify a particular face as long as it provided a recognisable profile; otherwise, it was a dismal failure. But from these early lessons, it was a comparatively short technical hop for search engines to find pictures of food, friends or cute kittens.

The only limitation on the machine's ability to learn was the available resources from which to research patterns and put them together like matching pieces of a jigsaw. It was the very growth of popular digital imaging and its transmission by social media that made the next giant leap possible.

As human beings, we learn from our mistakes as much as we do from our successes. Computers can't do that because they have no way to judge which is which without some formula that can be tested and proven. That's why Artificial Intelligence feeds on the vast human resource of information available on the internet to draw examples, and direct its output. And it's the fallibility of that resource that is the Achilles heel

of AI when it comes to making more ambitious conclusions.

By breaking free of the restrictions of established patterns, AI doesn't learn from mistakes; it can actually reproduce them if not held in check or supervised. That's the important difference. It's learning from example, but is unable in itself to test the integrity of its output without correction. Now we have Generative AI, which is a massive leap of faith in the process, as it is actually providing entirely new creations in words and pictures with limited reference to the original source. Not just predicting the next word, but dictating the next page.

In researching this column, I discovered that there is a thing the IT experts call the 'black box problem' which is an inability to actually understand how AI makes some of its apparently random judgments. I'm certainly no IT boffin, but in simple terms, it rather mimics a puzzle I illustrated in this column many years back, being the black cat in the snow — an image which totally baffled the automated sensors of digital cameras as the colours — or absence of them — were outside of their electronic comfort zone. As photographers, we learned to override the camera's processing, which assumed there was no blue sky or green grass to work with: we switched to manual.

THE PITFALLS OF AI IN IMAGE RESTORATION

Last month, I used the example of colour restoration of a family group, where the original photo had become badly faded through age. Without a little organic assistance, AI struggled to achieve acceptable results because it didn't have enough reference to what the original colours would have been, and was creating new ones that looked too artificial. But there was one more thing I learned which didn't register significance at the time. I use layers in Photoshop to blend in edits as seamlessly as possible, but I noticed that the AI layer didn't exactly match the perspective of the one below. I thought I had just made a slight mistake with the mouse and moved an anchor point, but I've since learnt that AI works to specific aspect ratios — it was changing the shape all on its own.

That's why some restorations don't look quite right. It may not make any difference to a landscape, but people's facial structures are quite specific, which is why we, as humans, recognise friends and family in a crowd of others. So it's a cautionary note: if you are doing image repair for customers to produce print,



Computers don't have to answer for their mistakes — you are the one who has to take the rap at the front counter

be careful to check how closely the new version matches the original. We have always had the digital challenge of producing the colour the customer believes is correct. Potentially, AI editing opens up a whole new can of worms. Computers don't have to answer for their mistakes — you are the one who has to take the rap at the front counter.

The caution also extends to files submitted that may have been doctored by a person or person's unknown. Because of computing demands, images generated by AI — particularly on phones — may well be low resolution, or contain elements that are. They may look fine on a mobile screen, but in print, they will be rejected.

Of course, it's your job to notice that, not the customer! Just one more minefield to pick your way through in the print room. It's all very well explaining that it's the customer's responsibility to provide suitable files, but they will point out that you are supposed to be the expert, not them. And in a world where you have to print a warning on a pizza box to remove packaging before eating, it's well worth covering your back.

One further important point is that, as I have mentioned previously — and you should be aware — Adobe is now charging for generative actions on its subscription plan. You have a certain number of credits depending on your plan, but the debits vary considerably depending on which of several options you choose to employ, and they are not refundable if you or the customer doesn't

like the results. So it can be a waste of time and money, and another reason why resorting to AI as a first response may not be the best practice.

There are alternatives: many more actions in PS don't rely on AI. As mentioned earlier, machine learning uses in-depth knowledge of existing pixels to effect changes rather than create new ones. Content aware is a perfect example of this; it does exactly what it says on the tin, and if you don't like the results, you can use it as a workaround until you come up with a compromise you do.

As mentioned, machine learning works by recognising patterns, so selective editing becomes much easier and faster than previous purely manual methods, as it is not trying to paint over an image with a crude brush but to separate its pixels in minute detail because it can. It has become much improved and refined over the years because of the wealth of examples fed into the system by the umbilical cord of the internet.

This is where the professional, using a programme like Photoshop, will continue to have an advantage over the instant-fix solutions available to the general public, as they will increasingly be entirely AI-based, offering a simple solution rather than an accurate one. I've certainly learned more tricks in PS over the years than I can immediately recall, but next month I'll try to recall some for those who prefer to do more than press a single tab.

They may think it's AI all over. It's not yet! ■

Drytac promotes Kieran Blacknall to UK MD



Drytac has announced the promotion of Kieran Blacknall to the role of Managing Director in the UK.

Kieran will assume full responsibility for Drytac's UK business, overseeing strategic

direction, commercial performance, and operational leadership. He will work closely with the global leadership team to align UK operations with Drytac's wider international strategy, while continuing to strengthen customer partnerships and drive sustainable growth across the region.

Kieran takes on his new position having most recently served as Operations Manager at Drytac UK. In this role, he oversaw day to day operational activities, ensuring efficient production, quality control, and on time delivery, while playing a key role in long term strategic planning and cross-department collaboration.

He joined Drytac in July 2023 as Academy Manager, bringing with him extensive experience from previous management roles within the print industry, including Visual Communications Manager and Operations Manager at Minuteman Press Bath. Since joining Drytac, Kieran has

played an integral role in strengthening internal processes, enhancing team performance, and supporting the continued growth of the UK business.

"We are delighted to promote Kieran to Managing Director in the UK," Hayden Kelley, CEO at Drytac said. "Since joining Drytac, he has demonstrated strong leadership, strategic thinking, and a clear commitment to operational excellence. I am confident that under his direction, Drytac UK will continue to build on its success and deliver outstanding value to customers."

Drytac continues to invest in leadership, innovation, and operational excellence as it supports print service providers, sign makers, and visual communication specialists worldwide with high performance adhesive films and mounting solutions engineered to perform.

www.drytac.com

James Cropper duo triumph at Future Trailblazer Awards 2026

James Cropper is celebrating the achievements of two of its rising stars at the Future Trailblazer Awards 2026, announced at Packaging Innovations & Empack.

Jordan Scott, Head of Marketing, won the Brand Visionary award, while Genevieve Dowson, Senior Technical Specialist, received a Highly Commended certificate in the Operational Excellence category. The awards, presented on the Circular Economy Stage at Birmingham's NEC, recognise young professionals driving innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence across the packaging industry.

Jordan Scott has been recognised for her outstanding creativity in brand packaging and visual storytelling. Since joining James Cropper in 2021, she has led the launch of Coloursource™, setting new standards for coloured paper while championing sustainable, design led solutions. She also spearheaded high profile initiatives such as Message in a Wrap with paper artist Nathan Ward, blending strategic marketing with imaginative design and demonstrating how paper and moulded fibre can elevate responsible packaging. Through cross industry partnerships, rebrand leadership, and digital innovation, Jordan consistently drives creativity, collaboration, and the future of UK packaging.

Jordan said: "In today's market, collaboration is key to success, and within this role, I have been given the freedom to explore some fantastic and powerful opportunities, allowing us to effectively communicate our world class capabilities and creativity. Over the last few years, I have had the privilege of playing a small role in many exciting



projects and partnerships. It never ceases to amaze me how far our product truly reaches and what possibilities this opens for us."

Genevieve Dowson's Highly Commended award acknowledges her rapid impact across technical, operational, and product development projects. Since joining James Cropper in January 2025, she has applied hands-on expertise – from troubleshooting machinery to supporting the launch of the Coloursource™ range – while collaborating across teams to deliver innovative, sustainable, and design led solutions. Her attention to detail, problem solving skills, and ability to turn complex challenges into successful outcomes have strengthened processes, improved product quality, and elevated the overall customer experience at James Cropper.

Genevieve said: "Every day I come into work at James Cropper, I'm inspired by everyone I meet because there's a level of passion surrounding you every day. It's an unbeatable environment, surrounded by supportive and hardworking

individuals who are always willing to help and share their expertise. The culture here is something special, and being part of a team that blends heritage with innovation makes it a truly great place to work."

Paul Barber, Managing Director at James Cropper Paper & Packaging, commented: We are immensely proud of Jordan and Genevieve. Jordan's award winning creativity and Genevieve's Highly Commended recognition reflect the talent, dedication, and collaborative spirit that drive our business forward."

Launched in partnership with the Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3), the Future Trailblazer Awards aim to support the next generation of packaging leaders. From 78 initial nominees, including Jordan Scott and Genevieve Scullion, 26 finalists were selected across seven categories. A distinguished panel of industry experts determined winners and commendations.

www.jamescropper.com



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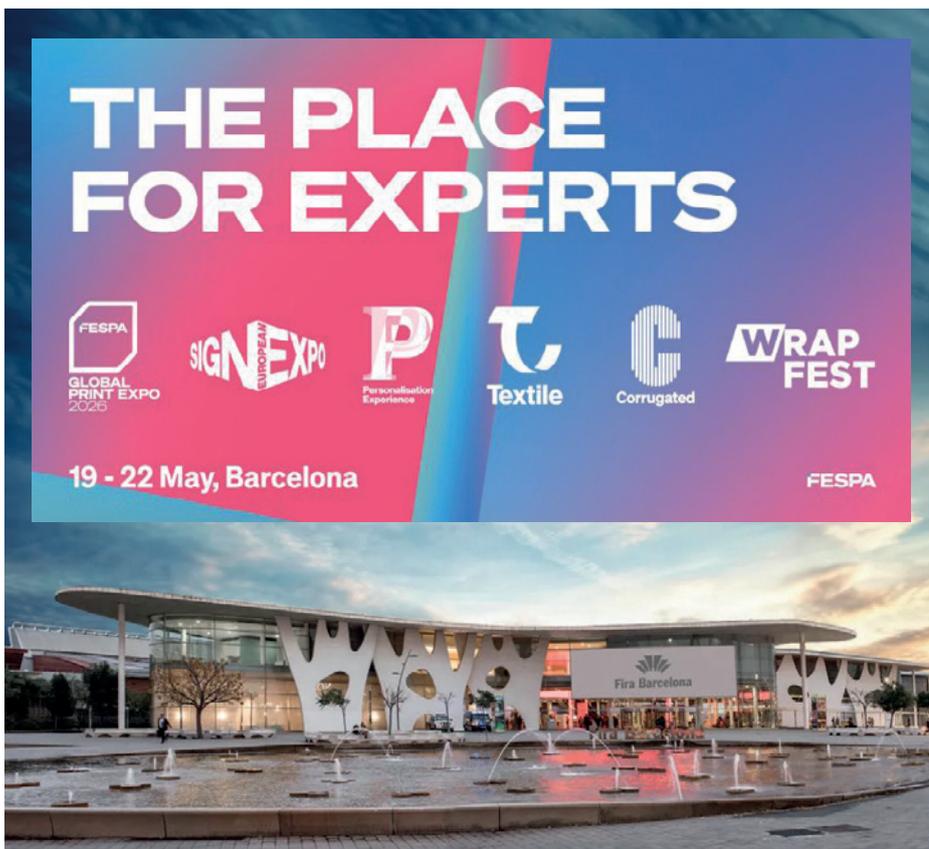
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Barcelona — the printers perfect dream

FESPA Global Print Expo 2026 returns to Fira Barcelona Gran Via, Spain, from 19–22 May 2026, bringing together over 500 exhibitors for the leading screen, digital, and textile printing event.

The four day event features innovations in wide format, signage, and personalisation, co-locating with European Sign Expo, Personalisation Experience, Wrapfest, Corrugated and a new dedicated Textile show.

With a nod to The famous “Barcelona” song is a 1987 operatic pop duet by Queen vocalist Freddie Mercury and soprano Montserrat Caballé, FESPA Global Print Expo is the perfect printers dream. More than just a show, a performance for the world to see. A miracle sensation. A guide to inspiration.

Discover the latest technology, materials, and applications across print, personalisation and signage. You’ll experience live demonstrations, get



hands-on with the latest tech and get your business ahead making new connections at networking events. It’s the perfect chance to explore how print is evolving — and how your business can evolve with it.

Whether you’re a print service provider, a brand owner, or a creative professional, see the future of print coming to life at FESPA 2026.

DYNAMIC EXHIBITORS FOR EUROPEAN SIGN EXPO 2026

The exhibition space will showcase products and solutions spanning all areas of signage and visual communications, including channel lettering, dimensional signage, digital signage, display systems, engraving and etching, illuminated displays, LED, neon and out of home media. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the technologies and applications that are involved with signage design, production and deployment across a wide range of markets.

During the event, visitors will also be able to hear advice and insights from experts and visitors – on trends, the changing expectations of customers, and insight on how to leverage opportunities.

Michael Ryan, Head of FESPA Global Print Expo and European Sign Expo, comments: “We can’t wait to welcome visitors to European Sign Expo 2026, where visitors will be able to explore the latest opportunities in signage and visual communications. The event offers a valuable platform for them to network with experts in the field and discover new trends affecting the market landscape.

For more information on European Sign Expo, visit: <https://europe.fespa.com/european-sign-expo>

PERSONALISATION EXPERIENCE AT FESPA 2026

Personalisation Experience will bring together experts from across the personalisation supply chain to offer them access to the systems, technologies and experts shaping the landscape of customisation.

Personalisation Experience will serve as a hub for brands, retailers, printers, manufacturers and technology providers to explore how customers place significant value on personalised products. They will learn about how to leverage commercial opportunities in this field — from implementing variable data print and scaling up customisation production, to intelligent automation and connected workflows.

Visitors to the event will also be able to experience free to attend, expert led conference sessions, taking place on the show floor and covering topics including personalisation, printing, textile and signage.

Duncan MacOwan, Head of Marketing and Events, FESPA, comments: “Personalisation is now fundamental to how brands connect with their customers. It has also shifted from being a specialist feature to a more widely available offering — and for printers, this presents huge commercial opportunities.

“Visitors to the show can explore creative solutions to capitalise on the customer demand for customised products and learn how they can make it central to their offering. I also encourage visitors to explore the co-located events, as there will be several suppliers displaying customisation enabling solutions.”

For more information on Personalisation Experience, visit: <https://europe.fespa.com/personalisation-experience>

FESPA INAUGURAL TEXTILE EVENT

In the Textile exhibition space, visitors will be able to explore digital textile printing and garment decoration technologies for screen, direct to garment (DTG), direct to film (DTF), transfer printing, dye sublimation and roll to roll textile printing. Confirmed exhibitors include leading manufacturers of print on demand production (POD) and high volume textile printing and garment decoration, such as: B-Flex Italia, Brother Internationale, Chemica, Coldenhove, EPSON, Forever Digital Transfer, Hotronix, Klieverik, Kornit Digital, Melco International, Mimaki, Monti Antonio S.p.A, M&R Printing Equipment, Inc, Polyprint, ROQ International, STAHLs’,



Tajima Europe and ZSK.

In addition, solutions for workflow efficiency, colour management and production will be showcased by brands such as: Crea8iveSkill, DRAWstitch International, Embodee.com, Fiery and Fulfill Engine.

Callum Legg, Group Sales and Project Manager, FESPA, comments: “Textile printing and garment decoration is one of the most dynamic growth areas across the speciality print sector. Considering this, we’ve developed our new event – comprising a strong line up of exhibitors and a dedicated conference programme – to provide our community with access to textile related technologies, expertise and applications that can benefit their businesses. We look forward to seeing and supporting members of our community in Barcelona!”

Debbie McKeegan, CEO of Textintel and

FESPA’s Textile Ambassador, adds: “FESPA Textile is providing a vital platform for the conversations that matter. We must confront the immediate challenges facing textile printers, whilst examining exactly how technology is being applied in the here and now. More importantly, we need to understand how these innovations — and the trends driving them — will fundamentally reshape the manufacturing landscape for printed fashion, sportswear, furnishings, and interiors in the years to come. Together we will define our industry’s future.”

While at the show, visitors to Textile can also attend ‘The Conference’ for free, which will cover intelligent production and customisation.

For more information on Textile, including the exhibitor line up, visit: <https://europe.fespa.com/textile> **www.fespa.com**



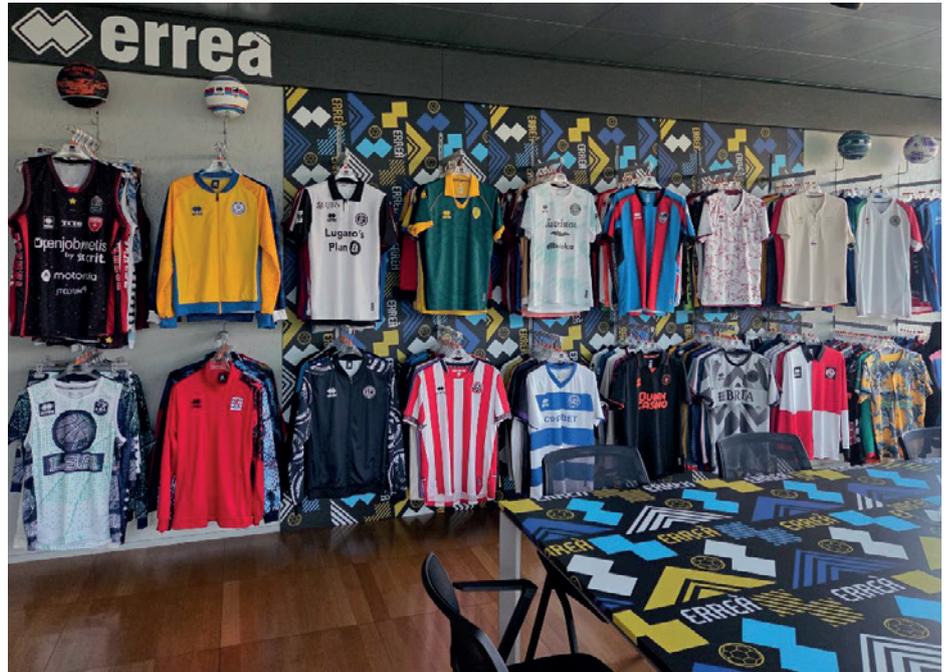
Erreà upgrades sportswear with seven high-performance Mimaki digital textile printers

Mimaki Europe has supported renowned Italian sportswear brand, Erreà in upgrading its digital textile printing operations with the installation of seven high performance Mimaki systems. The new installation includes three Tiger600-1800TS industrial dye-sublimation printers and four TS330-1600 solutions, replacing a previous fleet of 28 digital printers. This major upgrade marks a significant step forward in Erreà's production strategy, enabling the company to streamline its printing infrastructure while improving efficiency, colour consistency and overall production control.

Operating in a sportswear market increasingly driven by mass customisation, shorter lead times and high expectations for colour accuracy, Erreà undertook a comprehensive review of its printing setup to support the next phase of its industrial development. "Quality and innovation have always been a core value for Erreà since the company was founded," says Angelo Gandolfi, Founder and CEO of Erreà. "This is why we decided to take a decisive step forward and rethink our printing operations. After carefully analysing the solutions available on the market, we identified Mimaki as the partner best able to meet our needs — not only in terms of technology, but also for its ability to support us throughout this transformation."

The new Mimaki configuration enables Erreà to manage a wide variety of orders — from large volumes for clubs and federations to highly personalised, small batch runs — within a single, streamlined production environment.

By combining the industrial productivity of the Tiger600-1800TS with the agility of the TS330-1600, Erreà can switch seamlessly between volume driven production and customised jobs, while ensuring stable colour reproduction and consistent print quality across machines and production sites. One TS330-1600 unit supports creativity, design development and sampling at Erreà's creative headquarters in Italy, while the remaining systems operate at the company's



production facility in Romania. As a result, mass customisation is fully integrated into daily operations as an efficient, repeatable process, rather than an exception.

The consolidated Mimaki setup also simplifies machine management and maintenance, optimises production space and ensures reliable, repeatable results across different production locations. "With the new installation in place and fully operational and Mimaki as a reliable technology partner, we strongly believe

that we will be able to continue our path of industrial evolution with confidence", add Angelo Gandolfi.

Mimaki is exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services, and the company's Sales Director, Andy Gregory comments, "The installation of a raft of production dye sublimation hardware at Erreà is a great example of how Mimaki's latest solutions can make an effective transition to localised production in the sportswear and apparel sector. Businesses in the UK and Ireland interested in exploring similar setups can view both models at Hybrid and our specialist textile reseller partners' showrooms."

Commenting on the installation, Marco Vanzini, Sales Manager at Mimaki Bompan Textile, says: "This installation reflects Erreà's clear strategic vision: simplifying production while increasing performance, flexibility and colour consistency. By combining industrial productivity with digital agility, the Tiger600-1800TS and TS330-1600 systems provide a solid, future ready platform to support Erreà's growth in a highly demanding sportswear market." www.hybridservices.co.uk

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Digidelta to elevate industry standard with evolution of DECAL

Central to Digidelta's appearance at FESPA 2026 will be its renewed DECAL collection, with a focus on how the range is setting a new industry standard in terms of product performance and customer value.

Previously, solutions offering bubble free and dot matrix features were positioned as premium or upgraded versions of standard products. However, within DECAL, these have become structural features across the entire portfolio, with DECAL Bubble-Free and DECAL Dot Matrix adhesives now both being offered as standard.

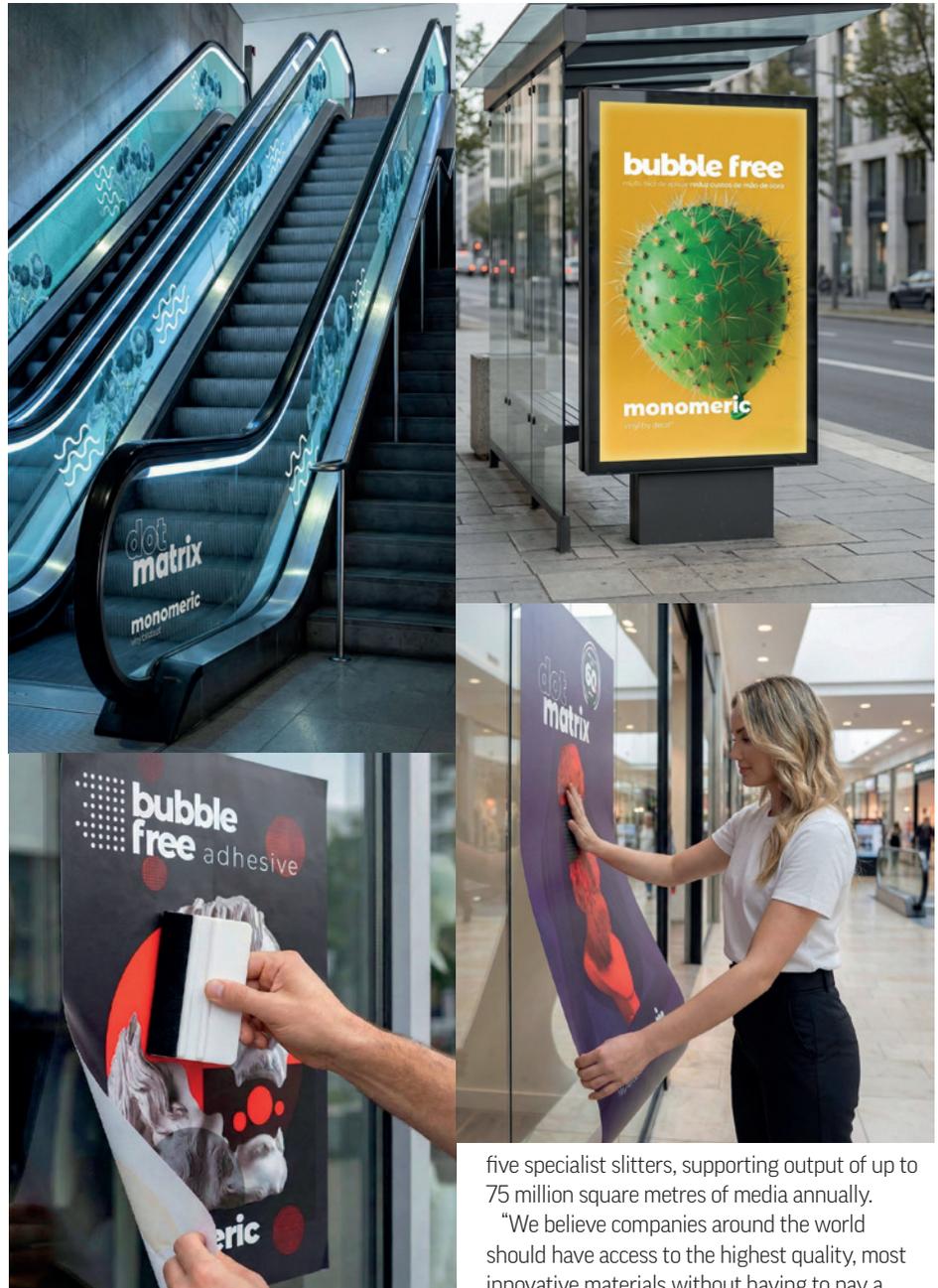
DECAL has been a key part of Digidelta's offering since the brand was first introduced in 2009. The range has been continuously developed and expanded over the past 17 years, with customers in regions worldwide using DECAL solutions for a wide gamut of graphics applications.

DECAL Bubble-Free is a high quality self-adhesive vinyl with air escape technology, which allows for a fast and clean installation. With traditional vinyl, users must work with several ancillary tools to install a piece. However, with DECAL Bubble-Free, users simply place the printed graphic in position on the surface and squeegee over the top to ensure it is properly stuck down, before sitting back and admiring their work.

DECAL Bubble-Free is available in multiple formats – including Polymeric Vinyl, Monomeric Vinyl and Glass Decor – and is particularly popular for large format graphics applications, window graphics, vehicle wraps and similar projects where surface appearance and ease of installation are critical.

Meanwhile, DECAL Dot Matrix has been designed for short term promotional applications, allowing customers to easily install printed graphics on flat, smooth and non-porous surfaces. This special adhesive eliminates common vinyl issues such as wrinkling and bubbling, allowing users to reposition the material several times without leaving residue and helping them to achieve a professional finish. In addition, once a campaign has concluded, graphics can be cleanly removed without leaving residue or damaging the surfaces to which they are applied.

DECAL Dot Matrix is available in both clear glossy and white matte options, while the product also features a double layer PE liner, protecting the vinyl from humidity, thus eliminating issues such as waving and curling during printing, finishing and installation. In addition, durability of up to six months makes the solution ideal for short term retail graphics, promotional campaigns and other installations where speed, flexibility and removability are key.



The quality of the entire DECAL range is supported by Digidelta's collection of internationally recognised and respected certifications such as fire resistance certification B S1 / D0, in line with the European standards of ISO 13501-1 and ISO 11925-2. In addition, products are manufactured from European raw materials that meet both REACH and RoHS requirements.

All DECAL products are manufactured in-house by Digidelta at its specialist facility in Torres Novas, Portugal, where the company is in the process of building a new 15,000 sq. m. production facility, scheduled for completion later this year. Once fully operational, the site will incorporate four coating lines, 1,300 racks and

five specialist slitters, supporting output of up to 75 million square metres of media annually.

"We believe companies around the world should have access to the highest quality, most innovative materials without having to pay a premium," said Armando Mota, CEO of Digidelta. "Our DECAL range reflects this belief, with both bubble free and dot matrix solutions available to customers as standard, allowing them to achieve first class results without having to pay over the odds.

"We're excited to be sharing details of our renewed DECAL collection at the FESPA Global Print Expo 2026 in Barcelona in May, and very much look forward to meeting with visitors to showcase what is possible with DECAL materials."

If you would like to learn more about Digidelta and its solutions, do drop by stand E95 in Hall 3 at the FESPA Global Print Expo.

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What a show!

FESPA Global Print Expo 2026, European Sign Expo, Personalisation Experience, WrapFest and two new additions, Corrugated and Textile, will welcome over 500 new and returning exhibitors from over 40 countries, bringing together the global speciality print community to experience innovation, insight and practical solutions across print, signage, personalisation, corrugated packaging and textile production and wrapping (19-22 May 2026, Fira de Barcelona, Spain).

This year's Printwear & Promotion LIVE! was another huge success! The co-located event welcomed 165 exhibitor stands with visitors across the three days almost touching 6,500, just shy of 5,000 coming in via the Printwear entrance, and another 1,500 attending via Sign & Digital UK! As usual, the first day on the Sunday was the busiest with 2,700 in attendance!

The show has for many years been a launch pad for new equipment and this year's event did not disappoint with latest additions and expanded ranges on display from more than a dozen of the industry's major suppliers. Once again, the vibrancy and diversity of the industry was on display with over 60 garment suppliers showcasing their latest styles, colours, and fabrics!

Event Director, Tony Gardner, commented 'Feedback from the industry indicates that the printwear sector in the UK has remained static over last year. Consequently, we were very pleased to see a virtually identical turnout to the number of visitors to last year's P&P LIVE! What really stood out this year was the investment made by the exhibitors in the quality of their stands and displays. There is always a buzz at the show, and you could really feel the energy across the halls. We are delighted to have received so many positive comments on the event from both visitors and exhibitors.'

While over in the adjoining hall, visitors could discover all the equipment, products, services and advice they could need should they wish to diversify into the sign making world.

Exhibitors and visitors alike were full of praise for the exhibition. Martin Lowe, Marketing Manager at Resolute, said the team had been pleased with the event.

"Both stands have been incredibly busy the entire time," Lowe said during the event. "So we've been really fortunate in how it has been going so far."



Rob Goleniowski, Regional Manager for Roland Europe, said it had been a 'vibrant' event as he noted a particular interest in DTF, while customers were asking more questions to find the right fit for them.



Goleniowski quoted: "We're finding that the customers are a bit more educated now, that there is no kind of one perfect solution. So whilst DTF has advantages, there are other technologies, eco solvent, UV, for example, that have also got their own relative strengths."

"We're seeing that customers are more understanding about choosing the right technology for the right application."

This diversification of interest was also noted by the IPIA's general manager Brendan Perring, who told us the event had highlighted increasingly blurred boundaries between areas of the industry.

"It's interesting to see every year how the different boundaries between our sectors are breaking down," commented Perring.

After a successful show, Printwear & Promotion LIVE! will be back at the NEC next year, provisional dates for 2027 are 21-23 February. ■

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From coffee cups to children's books – turning waste into storytelling gold

James Cropper Paper & Packaging has partnered with century old sustainable waste management company Biffa to produce Whitney the Wasteater and the Wrong Bite, a playful new children's storybook designed to encourage proper recycling habits and community engagement.

Launched to coincide with World Book Day and aimed at children aged 2-7, the story follows Whitney, a lovable yet 'picky' Wasteater who thrives on clean, dry recyclables but falls ill after taking a wrong bite from mixed or contaminated bins. The tale blends imaginative storytelling with practical lessons on sorting materials correctly, making recycling both fun and educational for children and families alike.

James Cropper supplied the storybook's paper through its world first CupCycling process, a system that has the capacity to upcycle up to 700 million used coffee cups per year, but only around 58 million are recycled annually, depending on whether people buy, use, and return the correct type of cup. Each copy of Whitney the Wasteater and the Wrong Bite is made from approximately 15 recycled coffee cups, turning everyday waste into something children can hold, read, and enjoy.

With an estimated 3.2 billion disposable cups used in the UK each year, less than 2% are currently recycled, showing that while the infrastructure exists, participation remains a challenge. Programmes like CupCycling™ demonstrate how industry led innovation can step in where policy falls short, turning everyday waste into high quality, environmentally responsible products and offering young readers a tangible example of the Circular Economy in action.

Major high street brands, including Costa Coffee and Greggs, are part of this system. Customers can return their PE-lined cups to Costa stores to ensure they are collected and brought back into the CupCycling process. Many cups claim to be recyclable or compostable, but only PE-



lined cups are suitable for this system, so it's important to check the material.

Jordan Scott, Head of Marketing at James Cropper, said: "We're proud to support Biffa on this project by supplying CupCycling paper. Whitney the Wasteater and the Wrong Bite brings recycling to life in a playful, tangible way. Children can see, touch, and hold proof that everyday materials, like a simple coffee cup, can become something beautiful when we sort and recycle correctly. It's a story that connects imagination with real world sustainability."

The Wasteaters programme, created by Biffa in 2016 and relaunched last summer, uses colourful monster characters to make recycling fun and visible. The storybook will be incorporated into around 1,000 school visits per year and community engagement activities, with 100% of proceeds donated to WasteAid, supporting global initiatives that help communities manage and repurpose waste safely and sustainably.

Georgia Gibson, Biffa's Social Value Manager in Manchester, said: "Breathing life into one of our Wasteater characters in a children's book is a wonderful way to spark curiosity about recycling from an early age.

"By using rhyme and imagination,



we're helping youngsters see how their choices matter, and how small everyday actions can make a big difference to the environment."

Author Yasmine Anane, said: "Whitney is kind, funny and very picky, which makes her the perfect character to help children understand recycling. The story shows that when we all get it right together, everyone benefits."

James Cropper's CupCycling technology is one of only two processes in the UK capable of recycling PE-lined post consumer coffee cups at scale. It rescues 95% of paper fibres for use in bespoke papers, while 5% of the plastic lining is used for energy recovery. The facility exemplifies how circular innovation, supply chain collaboration, and material expertise can deliver measurable environmental impact.

Whitney the Wasteater and the Wrong Bite is available via wasteadaters.giftfindershop.co.uk, offering families, schools, and libraries a playful introduction to recycling and a real world demonstration of circular economy in action.

For more information on James Cropper Paper & Packaging and CupCycling, visit <https://paperandpackaging.jamescropper.com>

The logo for 'revive' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter 'e' is stylized with a green swirl that loops around it. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is positioned to the upper right of the 'e'.

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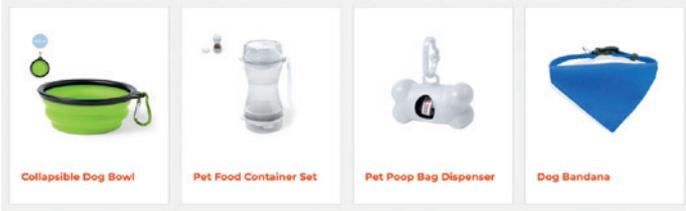


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Bar branding on trend

Cheers to Nova Chrome for another new print personalisation product.

These round or square bottle stoppers top the bar choice which includes bar coasters, bar runners, aprons, sign boards, table mats, plates and drinkware. The concept of saving wine rather than finishing the bottle is a new one to our print team, even so the quality chrome style is appreciated.

Personalise bottle stoppers with dye sublimation inserts. The metal insert has a thickness of 0.5mm which sits flush in the stopper. Sold individually in their own presentation box. A form of adhesive / double sided tape is required to stick the insert into the stopper.

Take some time to research new Nova Chrome print opportunities to expand your offerings to customers old and new.

Download the new digital decorators Nova Chrome catalogue with pricing: www.novachrome.co.uk/resources/Nova-Chrome-Brochure.pdf

Check out matching gift tins and shapely compact mirrors.

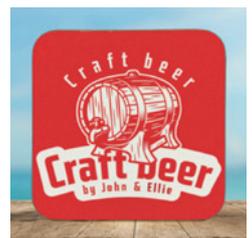


Print your own bar

Create a coordinated bar range your customers will love with Nova Chrome UK's 'Build Your Own Bar' Dye Sublimation Collection.

Designed specifically for businesses to print and resell, each blank product offers a high-quality sublimation surface for sharp detail, vibrant colour, and long-lasting results. Ideal for promotional merchandise, personalised gifts, hospitality clients, and retail lines. This collection gives you versatile, high-margin blanks ready for custom branding.

Square Coaster – The blank Square Coaster provides a smooth, reliable print area that delivers crisp, full-colour designs. It protects surfaces from heat and moisture while giving your customers a practical product they can personalise with logos, names, artwork, or event branding. Durable and easy to print, it's a strong addition to any sublimation range.



The Large Bar & Bar Blade – The blank large bar and blank bar blade complete the range with high-visibility branding opportunities. The runner offers generous print space for impactful designs, while the bar blade provides a compact, everyday item perfect for logos and promotional use. Purchase these blanks to provide your customers with a professional, fully customisable bar collection perfect for home bars, social clubs, and a variety of other settings.

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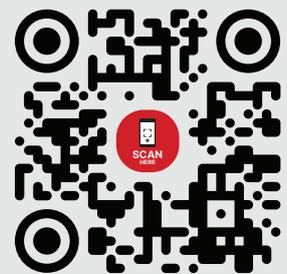
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The dangers of discounting

This article is brought to you by **Stuart Mason**, author of the #1 Best Seller, *How To Wreck Your Business*. Stuart has seen the incredible highs of building something spectacular in print, and the hull crushing lows of losing it all. Stuart brings a VERY streetwise, practical and BLUNT approach to help business owners avoid the mistakes he made.

Discounting is the Red Bull hit of the print industry. It feels amazing at the start, it gives this month's sale wings, but the crash comes later.

That's means thinner margins, weaker positioning, and a business that's worth less than it should be. And in print, where margins are already tight, that is lethal.

Let's be blunt. Most small printing businesses are not enjoying 40% net profits. They're maybe operating on 10 to 15%. So, when you casually throw out a 10% discount to "get it over the line", you are not winning sales, you're losing profit.

Have a look at the Discount Insanity Checklist. If your margin is 25% and you give a 10% discount, then you need to sell 67% MORE just to make the same profit. Look what happens if you're talked into a 20% discount, 400% more.

Every single penny of that discount comes straight off the bottom line. Paper costs don't fall, click charges don't shrink, your ink doesn't get cheaper, and wages don't reduce either. The only thing that moves is your profit... downwards.

Now have a look at "The Crazy Label Company" and you'll see how discounts

can kill margin AND operational capacity.

And once you discount once, you've trained the customer. So, for those thinking; "I'll discount to win the business", it rarely works.

In today's print market, with online trade printers, and a price comparison culture, discounting feels like a defensive move. A way to survive in the "red ocean" of commoditised print work.

But in reality, it reinforces the very commoditisation you're trying to escape. You are telling the buyer that your work is interchangeable and your price is flexible. You are signalling weakness.

Worse still, discounting damages perceived value. In print, where clients often don't fully understand the technical craft, your pricing is part of your positioning. If you drop it quickly, the unspoken message is: "There was margin to spare. I was overcharging you."

Instead of discounting, print businesses need to shift the conversation.

The first alternative rather than reducing price, is to add value. If I ask for £40 discount, that full £40 comes out your pocket, but if you give me £40 of flyers, that "cost" to you far less. Same value to



Stuart Mason

me, different cost to you.

Next, stop selling the FEATURE and sell the BENEFITS. Sell outcomes not technical names. What am I looking for? 5000 A5 leaflets on 130gsm gloss for £99 or 5000 leads for less than 2p each. Get the idea? Don't sell what print is, sell what print does.

Third, build structured pricing. Good / Better / Best options. Let the client self-select. Often, they will trade up when they see the contrast. This also reframes the decision away from "WILL I buy" to "WHAT will I buy".

Fourth, be confident enough to walk away. Not every job is worth it. Work that only makes sense at a discounted rate is often the work that causes production stress, cashflow pressure and zero loyalty. You end up busy but not profitable.

Finally, remember the compounding effect. A 5% price increase can dramatically lift net profit. A 10% discount can destroy it. Because profit sits at the end of the chain, small movements in price have disproportionate impact.

In a market under pressure from digital alternatives, automation and rising costs, the print businesses that thrive will not be the cheapest. They will be the clearest on value, the strongest on positioning and the most disciplined on margin.

Protect your price. Protect your margin. Protect your future.

So, if you ARE going to discount, be AWARE of the real bottom line impact. ■

This article is brought to you by Stuart Mason, author of the #1 Best Seller, "How To Wreck Your Business". Stuart has seen the incredible highs of building something spectacular in print, and the hull crushing lows of losing it all. Stuart brings a VERY streetwise, practical and BLUNT approach to help business owners avoid the mistakes he made.

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The Discount Insanity Checklist

You're going to offer a discount of...	If Your Present Margin Is...									
	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	55%	60%	
2%	11%	9%	7%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	
4%	25%	19%	15%	13%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	
6%	43%	32%	25%	21%	18%	15%	14%	12%	11%	
8%	67%	47%	36%	30%	25%	22%	19%	17%	15%	
10%	100%	67%	50%	40%	33%	29%	25%	22%	20%	
12%	150%	92%	67%	52%	43%	36%	32%	28%	25%	
14%	233%	127%	88%	67%	54%	45%	39%	34%	30%	
16%	400%	178%	114%	84%	67%	55%	47%	41%	36%	
18%	900%	257%	150%	106%	82%	67%	56%	49%	43%	
20%	-	400%	200%	133%	100%	80%	67%	57%	50%	
25%	-	-	500%	250%	167%	125%	100%	83%	71%	
30%	-	-	-	600%	300%	200%	150%	120%	100%	

We're not saying don't discount - just be aware of the dangers of discounting and the REAL impact on the bottom line.

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The Dangers Of Discounting

This Is Just A 10% Discount

Danger Stickers
£1 Each

Danger Stickers sold at £1 Each

Pre Sale Revenues
5000 Stickers @£1 = £5000

Cost (75p) £3750 Gross Profit (25p) £1250

5000 units sold to make £1250 profit.

10% OFF
Danger Stickers
£1-Each

Danger Stickers sold at 90p Each

To Achieve the SAME Profit
8333 Stickers @90p = £7500

Cost (75p) £6250 Gross Profit (15p) £1250

8333 units sold to make £1250 profit.

With Just A 10% Discount This Means...

- More capital tied up
- More resources required to fulfill orders
- Increased distribution costs
- Cash flow implications
- In reality the same profit is of course LESS profit
- 67% More SALES to make the SAME
- This was just a 10% discount.

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Granthams GT have 30 years experience supplying leading brands of sign printing and print production systems including Mimaki, Roland, HP Latex, Graphtec, Summa and EasyMount, whilst also acting as a source for a wide range of software and large-format consumables and media. Advice to quick print pros is freely available to match your media to your customers marketing. Discuss your next move into print and cut, latex, resin, solvent, UV, cutters and more. Ask about Granthams' fleet of finishing equipment including heat presses and laminators.

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Booklet Making.....	Morgana Systems
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Recycled Media.....	Premier Paper
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Retail POS.....	Route1 Print
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Something to share?

WHO GOES THERE?

A gnome is in the garden busily destroying some bushes when a house cat appears.

"What are you?" asks the cat.

"A gnome," comes the reply. "I steal food from humans, I kill their plants, I make annoying music at night to drive them crazy, and I love mischief.

And what, may I ask, are you?"

The cat replies, "Um, I guess I'm a gnome."

POTHoles BUDGET

One morning a local highway department crew reaches their job site and realises they have forgotten all their shovels.

The crew's foreman calls the office and tells his supervisor the situation.

The supervisor says, "Don't worry, we'll send some shovels... just lean on each other until they arrive."

IDEAS FOR A MUSICAL

A guy kept boring his friends by going on and on about his ideas for a musical based on his life.

Eventually one of them said to him, "Look man, there's no need to make such a song and dance about it!"

GIVE ME SOME GOOD NEWS

A secretary walked into her boss's office and said, "I'm afraid I've got some bad news for you."

"Why do you always have to give me bad news?" he complained. "Tell me about some good news for once."

"Alright, here's some good news," said the secretary. "You're not sterile."

SALES APPRAISAL

What do you call a man who just lost his brain? Sales trained

PRINTERS VERSUS SALESPeOPLE

What's a copier salesman and a pint of Guinness got in common? A black suit, white collar and the ability to be a pain in the arse!

TAKE YOUR KID TO WORK DAY

An eight year old girl went to the office with her father on 'Take your kid to work day'.

As they walked round the sales office she started crying and getting cranky.

Her father asked what was wrong.

As the staff gathered round she sobbed loudly, "Daddy, where are all the clowns you said you worked with?"

WIFE WANTED

A man inserted an 'advert' in the classifieds: "Wife wanted."

Next day he received a hundred letters.

They all said the same thing... "You can have mine."

THE LACKLUSTRE LIMO DRIVER

There was this limo driver who was in business for 25 years without a single customer...

All that time and nothing to chauffeur it.

APRIL FOOLS' WARNING

Two peanuts walk into a bar, one was a salted

A and C were going to prank their friend ... but they just letter B.

What's a stepladder's favourite holiday? April Stools' Day.

What did April Fools' Day say after it won an award? Prank you.

FOOTBALL HEAVEN

Two 90 year old men, Mike and Joe, have been friends all their lives. When it's clear that Joe is dying, Mike visits him every day. One day Mike says, "Joe, we both loved football all our lives, and we played football on Saturdays together for so many years. Please do me one favour, when you get to Heaven, somehow you must let me know if there's football there."

Joe looks up at Mike from his death bed," Mike, you've been my best friend for many years. If it's at all possible, I'll do this favour for you.

Shortly after that, Joe passes on.

At midnight a couple of nights later, Mike is awakened from a sound sleep by a blinding flash of white light and a voice calling out to him, "Mike – Mike."

"Who is it? Asks Mike sitting up suddenly. "Who is it?"

"Mike – it's me, Joe."

"You're not Joe. Joe just died."

"I'm telling you, it's me, Joe," insists the voice.

"Joe! Where are you?"

"In heaven", replies to Joe. "I have some really good news and a little bad news."

"Tell me the good news first," says Mike.

"The good news," Joe says, "is that there's football in heaven. Better yet, all our old friends who died before us are here, too. Better than that, we're all young again. Better still, it's always springtime and it never rains or snows. And best of all, we can play football all we want, and we never get tired."

That's fantastic," says Mike. "It's beyond my wildest dreams! So what's the bad news?"

"You're in the team for this Saturday."

WHATEVER

What lies at the bottom of the ocean and twitches? A nervous wreck.

Where do you find a no legged dog? Right where you left him.

What did the fish say when he hit a concrete wall? 'Dam'.

What do Eskimos get from sitting on the ice too long? Polaroids.

What do prisoners use to call each other? Cell phones.

What do you call a boomerang that doesn't work? A stick.

What do you call cheese that isn't yours? Nacho Cheese.

What do you call Santa's helpers? Subordinate Clauses.

What do you call four bullfighters in quicksand? Quatro sinko.

Email your jokes to: editor@QuickPrintPro.co.uk



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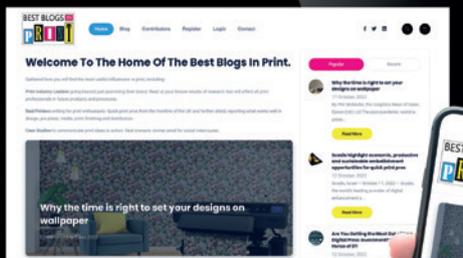
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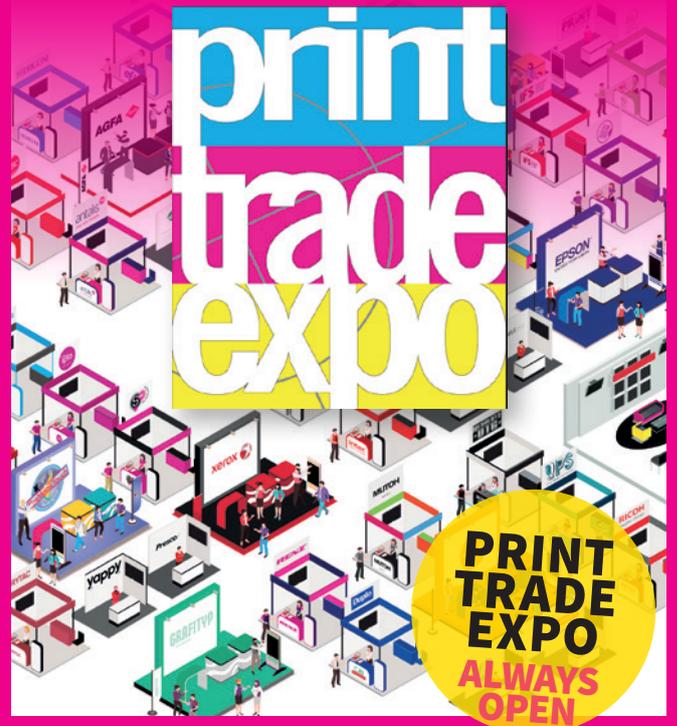
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