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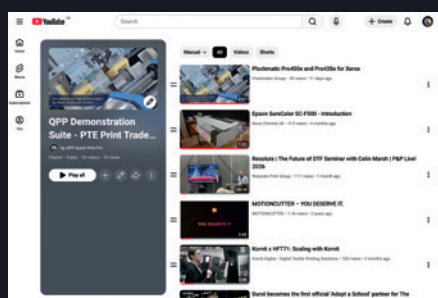
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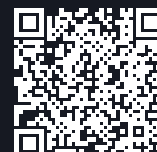


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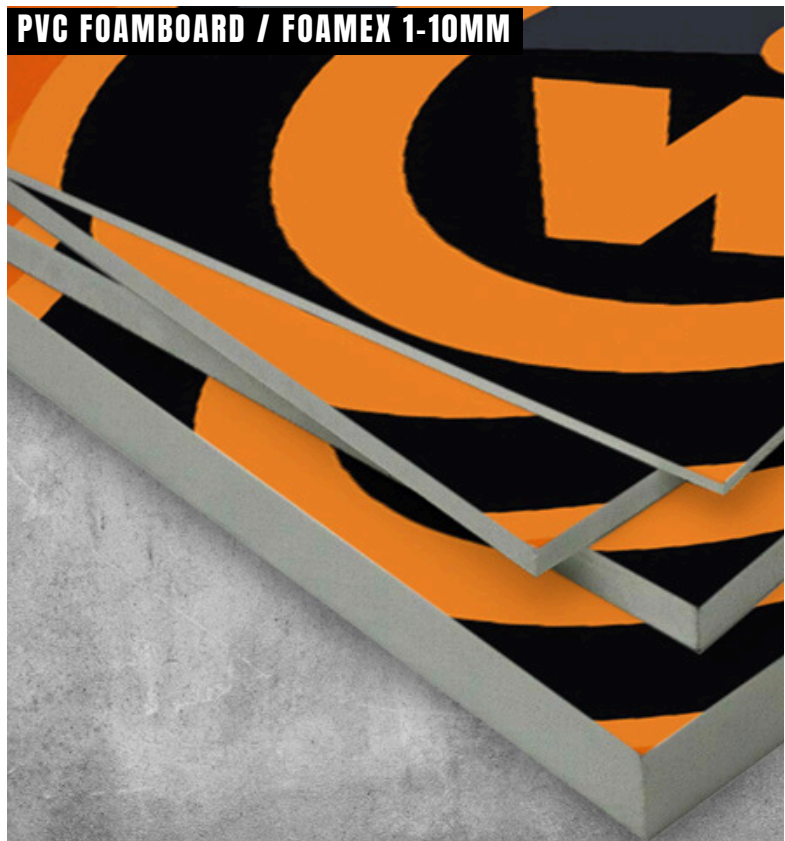
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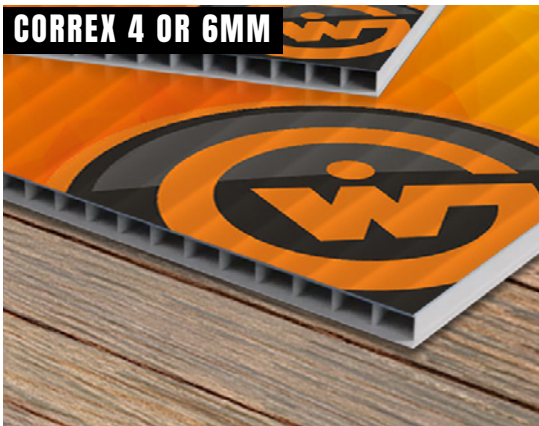


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Quick Print Pro (QPP)
 Colourfast Group Ltd
 16 Tichborne Street,
 Brighton. BN1 1UR
 Tel: 01273 674321
 Email: editor@quickprintpro.co.uk
 Web: www.quickprintpro.co.uk



EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
Maureen Foulkes

EDITOR
Peter Foulkes

CONTRIBUTORS
**Lara Groome, Becky Foulkes, Martin Christie,
 Dean Cook and Stuart Mason**

DIGITAL IMAGING & PHOTOGRAPHY
Martin Christie

MAGAZINE PRODUCTION
Dean Cook
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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 Seasonal Summer Sizzler



Summer events, flyers, banners, menus, beachwear and last-minute hot off the press stationery orders need to be designed, printed and finished before we get a few days away in the sun. This issue, in full glorious colour, is read all over the world!

As usual, we double up for the July and August issue to give everyone time to absorb what's new and plan for a fast re-start in September.

Meanwhile, QPP will be delivering the latest print news on the web, e-waves, blogs and social media.

Peter, Perpetual In Print, Foulkes
editor@quickprintpro.co.uk
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Mimaki 3D printing at Crewe Alexandra kit launch

Football shirt launches tend to follow a familiar formula: a dramatic video, a few close-up shots of the fabric, players walking through tunnels looking serious. So, when Crewe Alexandra F.C. began planning the reveal of its new 2026 – 2027 home kit, the club wanted to do something with a bit more personality.

Working with official printer partner and Mimaki distributor, Hybrid Services, the idea quickly turned into something far more unusual – creating a miniature version of club captain Mickey Demetriou using high fidelity 3D scanning and full colour 3D printing technology.

The concept came from Crewe Alexandra's Head of Commercial, James Beckett, who was keen to involve Hybrid in the launch in a way that felt authentic to the partnership between the two organisations. "We're constantly amazed at the capabilities of the various Mimaki technologies, and ever since we first saw the full colour 3D printer in action, we had an idea to somehow include it in a big production for the club," he commented.



Demetriou was scanned at the club using an Artec Leo 3D Scanner from Europac 3D, first in the outgoing shirt and then again in the new home kit. The process itself drew plenty of interest from players and staff, with the handheld scanner capturing everything from the texture of the shirt to fine facial detail and the intricate branding elements of the new Puma kit in a matter of minutes.

Once the scan data had been processed and colour balanced by the Europac 3D team, the files were sent to Hybrid for production on the Mimaki 3DUJ-2207 3D printer at the company's headquarters, located just a short walk from the football club's stadium.

3D PRINT IN 10 MILLION COLOURS

Unlike conventional 3D printers that produce single colour parts, the Mimaki system can reproduce more than 10 million colours, allowing realistic skin tones, subtle gradients and fine details to be recreated directly within the print itself. The finished result was a 20cm tall model of the Alex's captain that looked uncannily lifelike – particularly once placed alongside the real Mickey during filming.

That contrast became the centrepiece of the club's launch video, which followed the journey from scanning through to the finished print before revealing both player and model together on the pitch at the Mornflake Stadium. The finished film quickly gained traction online, generating nearly 40,000 Instagram views and plenty of comments from supporters enjoying the "mini Mickey" reveal.

For Demetriou and his family, the project also left something a little more permanent behind. Alongside the main print used in filming, Hybrid produced smaller commemorative models for his children. His wife, Aimee, later

posted on social media that their "new pocket sized Daddy" had been inseparable from their boys all week.

CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Beyond the football angle, the project offered a strong example of how 3D scanning and full colour additive manufacturing are starting to move into wider marketing and promotional campaigns. Whether for sport, entertainment, retail or live events, the ability to create accurate, personalised models opens up creative opportunities that simply did not exist a few years ago.

In Crewe Alexandra's case, the project turned a standard kit launch into something supporters continued to talk about afterwards – and long queues formed at the club shop the following morning, as loyal fans eagerly waited to purchase their new season's shirts.

"Kit launches are always popular with our fans on social media, but this one has done incredibly well," Beckett concluded. "No pun intended but the 3D print from the Mimaki added another dimension to it, making it all the more intriguing and memorable."

www.hybridservices.co.uk

Coventry e-commerce firm invests in new brand

A Coventry based e-commerce and fulfilment business has invested in new in-house printing capabilities to strengthen its end to end service and reduce reliance on third party suppliers.

The Pack Smart Group has installed direct to film printing equipment at its headquarters in Foleshill, Coventry, bringing print on demand services in-house for its clients while also supporting the launch of a new consumer facing brand.

The independent business, established in 2009, offers a full service fulfilment solution for clients across the UK and internationally, specialising in the music, drinks and sports markets.

The investment in the equipment totals more than £50,000 and will support the launch of direct to consumer platform Printopotamus, offering a fast turnaround on high quality customised products.

Customers will be able to design and create items using their own artwork, with a targeted turnaround time of three working days for orders.

The investment in the new equipment also forms part of a wider move to bring print on



demand services in-house, creating a more integrated and efficient approach for both existing and new business to business clients.

The move addresses a growing challenge for the business's client base, with many currently relying on third party providers for print on demand.

This can result in split fulfilment, particularly around time sensitive releases such as album launches, where one audio product will arrive from The Pack Smart Group and other items that require print on demand will arrive from

another supplier.

The business is currently recruiting additional staff to grow its workforce and deliver the new service, with further expansion of the Printopotamus range and potential applications in areas such as workwear and uniforms being considered.

Nick Walker, CEO of The Pack Smart Group, said: "As we continue to grow and develop the business, we identified print on demand as a clear gap in our services.

"This is a service that our clients are using, but often with different providers, which ultimately leads to a disjointed customer experience.

"We can now offer a more joined up service and simplify the process for clients, with speed and flexibility built into the delivery.

"After investing in the equipment to make print on demand possible, it felt like a natural fit to launch Printopotamus alongside it.

"We're confident our print on demand service and Printopotamus will be a hit with our clients and general consumers too."

www.printopotamus.co.uk

Birtwells increases production with Horizon BQ-300 iCE Binder

Birtwells has chosen a next generation Horizon BQ-300 iCE Binder to elevate its perfect binding capabilities. The Accrington specialist in NCR books and pads also produces a variety of business print produced on litho and digital technology.

Sue Preugschat, Company Secretary, explains: "We wanted to replace our existing perfect binding system to improve productivity. We have worked with IFS before so know and trust the Horizon solutions so we didn't look at any alternatives."

She continues: "We had a demonstration of the Horizon BQ-300 iCE Binder and were impressed. We particularly liked the quality of the finished product. We were also interested in the new and exciting iCE system that will enable us to track productivity."



Sue Preugschat with the Horizon BQ-300 iCE Binder

The up to 500 cycles per hour BQ-300 can achieve 50% shorter job changeover times than previous models. It offers enhanced variable thickness automation and templates can be created with style or substrate preferences that can be chosen at any time depending on

job requirements. Its 15" control panel and increased mechanical automation help improve productivity by shortening setup time and eliminating touchpoints.

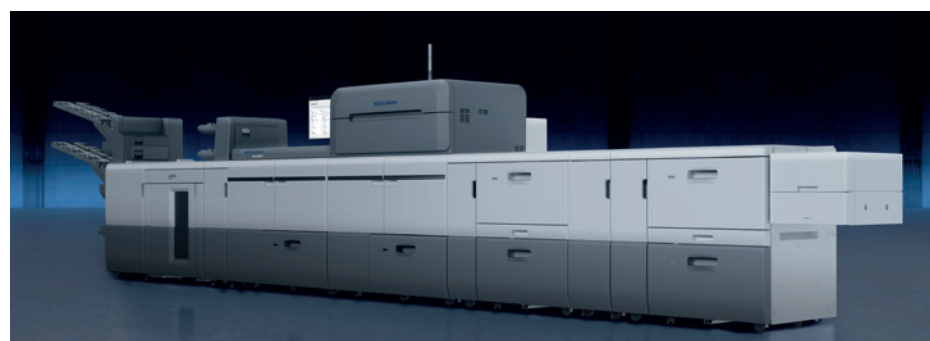
Birtwells' system is enhanced with automated workflow from upstream to post press with iCE LiNK. iCE LiNK is Horizon's cloud based post press management system that allows users to monitor production and machine status in real time, or automate their workflow by integrating finishing with their MIS and prepress.

She adds: "The new addition will help us increase the number of orders finished in house. We can also be more flexible with the jobs we say yes to as we can now deal with larger quantities than we were able to complete before. It will save us time, too, and be more cost efficient. We expect it will deliver a return on investment of 10% of our overall profit."

She concludes: "We deal with IFS in relation to many other systems we use in house and they are as always extremely helpful and proactive should an issue arise."

www.ifsl.uk.com

Fretwell expands capabilities with HEIDELBERG Versafire LP



Fretwell Print and Direct Mail, Yorkshire, has strengthened its digital production capabilities with the installation of a new HEIDELBERG Versafire LP with HEIDELBERG DFE. This investment further enhances the company's ability to deliver high quality, fast turnaround print, across a wider range of applications.

The new press replaces Fretwell's existing Versafire LV and forms part of the company's ongoing strategy to combine advanced digital and litho production technologies, within a fully integrated workflow environment.

For Fretwell, the new press brings not only improved speed and productivity, but also substrate flexibility. "The new machine gives us the ability to handle heavier stocks as well as 900mm banner capability," said Andy Gillett of Fretwell, explaining that this opens up new possibilities, both for Fretwell and for its customers.

Gillett added, "We've had excellent experience with HEIDELBERG in the past, which is why the

choice was an easy one. Since we have other HEIDELBERG machines, the Versafire integrates seamlessly into our automated workflows, which is a major advantage for us."

The new digital press joins a highly automated production environment at Fretwell, which already includes a HEIDELBERG Litho XL 75 five colour and a CX 75 four colour press. Both are fed through the HEIDELBERG Prinect workflow with the Bodoni Colour Control system.

The Versafire LP is expected to deliver a significant productivity boost for the business, with faster production speeds and the ability to work across a broader range of materials. "We expect around a 30% increase in productivity," said Gillett. "The machine gives us access to a much wider range of materials, which is increasingly important in today's market."

As demand grows for shorter run, highly targeted, and fast turnaround print, the investment positions the company to take on a variety of applications while maintaining

efficiency and production quality.

"The staff reaction, too, has been very positive," said Gillett. "The team were involved in the selection process from the beginning, and because the workflow is already familiar to them, the transition has been very smooth."

For customers, the new Versafire LP translates into greater flexibility, quicker turnaround times, and expanded creative possibilities. The ability to print on heavier stocks and for larger format applications gives Fretwell additional versatility across a range of sectors and campaign types.

"The industry has changed enormously in the past 30 years, and we recognise that continuous investment and evolution are critical to staying competitive and continuing to meet customer expectations," said Gillett.

The addition of the Versafire LP reflects the wider industry trend toward integrated hybrid print environments, where digital and litho technologies work together seamlessly to maximise efficiency and production flexibility.

Phil Buttress, Head of Sales for HEIDELBERG UK and Ireland quoted that "We are delighted that Fretwell's has decided to invest with HEIDELBERG and appreciate the time they took to visit Stockley Park for a Product and Prinect update, the business relationship we share is extremely important to HEIDELBERG and we look forward to building on this for the future."

Fretwell Print & Design Ltd was founded in Keighley over 40 years ago and is a specialist in litho print, digital print, and direct mail services. The company provides high quality colour sheet fed and digital print solutions to clients across the financial, retail, charity, and public sectors.

www.heidelberg.com

Konica Minolta marks partnership with Cancer Research UK

Konica Minolta has announced that it is expanding its volunteering and fundraising programme, as the company enters its second year of partnership with Cancer Research UK. Key events for 2026/27 will include two major walks – a London Royal Parks seven mile walk and The Konica Minolta Ultra Walk on 14th October. These events will sit alongside additional volunteering opportunities, internal awareness campaigns and new engagement initiatives.

Since launching the partnership in June 2025, Konica Minolta employees across the UK have taken part in a wide range of activities – from sponsored walks to awareness campaigns. The partnership forms a key part of Konica Minolta's wider ESG strategy and approach to delivering social value, which focuses on creating opportunities for employees to contribute to causes that matter most to them. Over the past year, employees have taken part

in challenges such as the 'Walk 30 Miles in November' initiative, team fundraising events, and awareness building campaigns across the organisation. The partnership has also helped promote Konica Minolta's wellbeing benefits, encouraging employees to stay active, connect with one another and support their own physical and mental health.

Gillian Nuttall, ESG Partner at Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd, said: "Our partnership with Cancer Research UK has brought colleagues together with a shared purpose. Over the past year we've seen teams across the business step up, get active and raise money for a cause that touches so many lives. As we move into the second year of our partnership, we're committed to doing even more – supporting our people, strengthening our communities and helping fund research that makes a real difference."

Konica Minolta will continue to share updates on its fundraising progress and upcoming activities



throughout the year, encouraging employees, partners and customers to get involved.

For more details on Konica Minolta's fundraising for Cancer Research UK, or to give a donation, visit: <https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/unite/konica-minolta-fundraising-for-cruk>
www.konicaminolta.co.uk

Mimaki celebrates triple EDP Award win

Mimaki Europe was presented with three EDP Awards at the association's 2026 ceremony, held at FESPA Global Print Expo. These highly acclaimed awards celebrate best in class innovation across the print industry, and Mimaki was honoured in three different categories.

The winning technologies were: Best Flatbed/Hybrid Printer – Mimaki UJ330H-160 hybrid UV printer; Best Direct-to-Shape – Object Printing – Mimaki UJF-7151 plus e UV-LED flatbed printer; Best Textile Roll-to-Roll Printer – Mimaki TS330-1800 sublimation printer

The first of Mimaki's three wins was for the UJ330H-160, the company's latest hybrid UV inkjet printer, developed for sign makers and print service providers looking to expand their application range without adding separate systems. Combining roll to roll and rigid board printing in one compact platform, the UJ330H-160 supports a wide mix of graphics applications, from signage, window graphics and banners to wallpaper, POS displays and rigid boards. Stable media handling, fast changeover between roll and rigid production, and value added UV capabilities, including white, clear and multi-layer printing up to five layers, make it a practical response to the demand for more flexible, space conscious and cost efficient production.



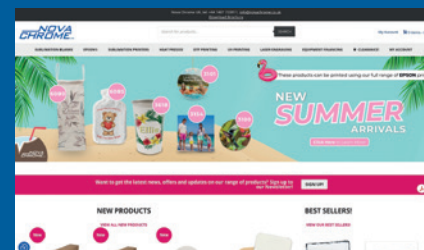
Danna Drion (pictured right), General Manager Marketing and Product Management, Mimaki Europe, accepting the awards on behalf of Mimaki 2026. She is pictured with Jean Poncet.

Mimaki's UJF-7151 plusII e was awarded by the EDP for direct to object printing. Built for industrial grade precision, the printer combines high resolution UV-LED output with the ability to print directly onto a wide range of objects and materials, supporting applications from promotional items and packaging to industrial parts and premium personalisation. Its ability to handle complex surfaces and objects, including cylindrical items with optional accessories, reflects the growing demand for high value, customised production.

Completing the trio, the TS330-1800 was recognised in textile roll to roll printing. Designed for modern sublimation textile and apparel production, the printer combines productivity, image quality and operational stability, with a wide print area and ink configurations that support applications ranging from fashion and sportswear to soft signage, interiors and promotional products. With extended colour possibilities, including orange, violet and fluorescent inks, the TS330-1800 helps textile producers deliver richer, more expressive output while maintaining reliable production.

www.hybridserives.co.uk

QPP PREFERRED SUPPLIER OF THE MONTH: NOVA CHROME



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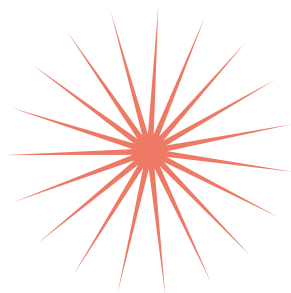
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Konica Minolta AccurioPress C5080 Print Presses launched

Konica Minolta has announced the launch of the new AccurioPress C5080 Series, which reduces operational complexity and enables faster and more efficient productivity for print service providers. Printing at speeds of up to 81 pages per minute, the entry level AccurioPress C5080 Series is designed to help customers take their first steps towards long term success in digital print production.

Replacing the AccurioPress C4080 Series, all models can be configured with a wide range of options, workflows and finishing capabilities to deliver cost effective, agile print through streamlined operation that is designed for ease of use and maximum efficiency.

Available now, the smart entry level A4 colour AccurioPress C5080/C5070 (81 ppm and 71 ppm) and AccurioPrint C5065 (65 ppm) systems are designed to make professional digital printing accessible for businesses of every size. Addressing key industry challenges such as rising costs, skilled labour shortages, and



increasing expectations around quality, sustainability, shorter runs and tight deadlines, these next level machines offer a simple setup, consistent output and highly efficient operation.

Intelligent media sensors – including the IM-104 and IM-105 – enhance print quality and efficiency, and assist users in selecting the correct paper type, for seamless operation. Additional software solutions; including Konica Minolta's new IQ-601 intelligent quality optimiser which delivers exceptional colour control and consistency, full colour profiling, sheet file detection and proofless inspection; further elevate production capabilities.

Konica Minolta's proven quality ensures confidence from day one.

Enhanced engine modifications maintain superior output and align performance with the latest industry standards.

Intuitive job submission, easy file handling, automated presets, and streamlined maintenance all contribute to a better user experience. Integrated colour management, on-press calibration and end to end workflow reduce setup, offering a unique value proposition.

Along with booklet making, a comprehensive range of finishing technologies further supports efficient, high quality production. These include Konica Minolta's TU-510e, the world's first inline trimming unit. This four edge trimmer, creaser and perforator

enables full bleed finishing support for banners, booklets, direct mail and dedicated business card cutting options. The enhanced capabilities of the TU-510e make it an ideal companion for the AccurioPress C5080 Series.

The new presses are offered with the option of three alternative controllers – the AccurioImage IC-613, the IC-421 Internal Fiery® Controller or the IC-321 Fiery Image Controller.

Malcolm Smith, Category Manager – Professional Print at Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd, said: "The AccurioPress C5080 Series sets a new benchmark for entry level production print, delivering superb colour quality, rapid turnaround, reduced waste and consistently reliable performance. It's designed to make high quality digital print accessible, intuitive and efficient from day one. With smart automation, simple set-up and the trusted reliability of Konica Minolta technology, these systems give commercial printers, the freedom to expand their print capabilities, explore new revenue opportunities and build a strong platform for future success."

Scan/click QR code for details.

www.konicaminolta.co.uk



New Kornit Digital Commercial Atlas MATRIX

Kornit Digital has announced the commercial availability of the Atlas MATRIX platform following the successful completion of a global beta programme across leading production environments in Europe and North America. The announcement, made ahead of FESPA 2026 in Barcelona, marked a major milestone in the evolution of digital apparel production.

Atlas MATRIX expands the capabilities of Kornit's proven Atlas MAX PLUS platform into polyester, blends and sublimated fabrics, enabling customers to produce across virtually any fabric type with one unified production system while maintaining premium retail quality, durability and industrial scale productivity. Recently unveiled at Konnections 2026, Atlas MATRIX introduces Kornit's proprietary Karbon Shield process, enabling direct decoration on polyester and sublimated garments while eliminating the dye migration challenges that have historically limited digital production capabilities. The platform allows producers to seamlessly transition between cotton,



polyester and blended fabrics in a single workflow, dramatically expanding application opportunities while simplifying operations and improving efficiency.

The system has already been validated through extensive production with multiple leading global customers across Europe and North America. Early adopters report exceptional print quality, superior hand feel, operational simplification and the ability to unlock entirely new categories of business

that were previously difficult or impossible to address with existing digital technologies.

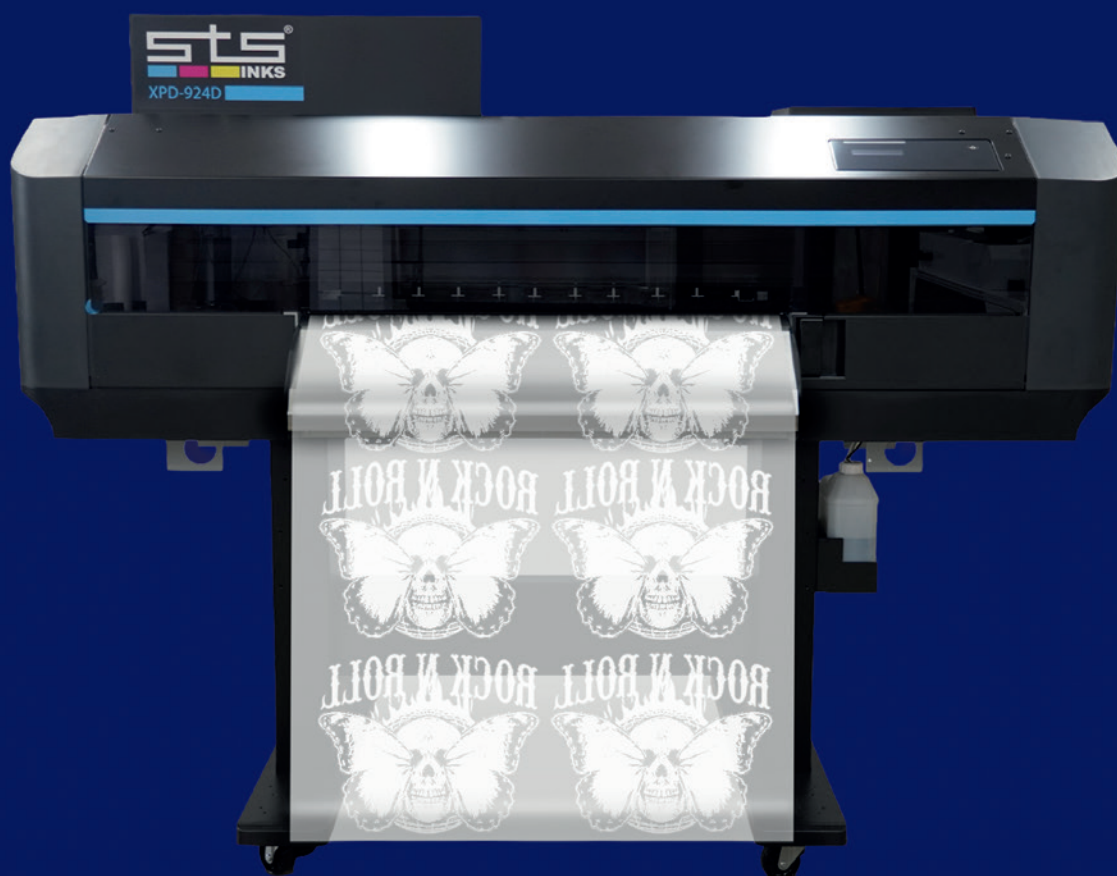
"The apparel industry is rapidly shifting toward agile, on-demand production models that require far greater flexibility, efficiency and responsiveness," said Ronen Samuel, Chief Executive Officer of Kornit Digital. "Atlas MATRIX represents a major step forward for the industry, enabling our customers to expand into new applications, simplify production and accelerate the transition to digital manufacturing at scale. The early feedback and production results we are seeing from customers are extremely encouraging. We have already generated a strong backlog of upgrade demand from our existing install base, alongside new system demand from both existing and new customers, further validating the market opportunity and excitement around the platform."

Among the companies participating in the global programme are leading production providers spanning print on-demand, customised apparel and large-scale fulfilment operations.

www.kornit.com

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New Helix high throw UV cylindrical printer

Inkcups has announced the launch of the Helix High Throw UV Cylindrical Printer, bringing Inkcups' pioneering High Throw technology into the Helix family of cylindrical direct to object inkjet printers.

Designed to accommodate height variations while decorating cylindrical and conical products, the Helix High Throw is ideal for cylindrically printing challenging and irregular shapes such as stepped and tapered vessels, those with posts for attaching handles, and items as varied as footballs and rugby balls, pet bowls and planters. The Helix High Throw expands what is possible with helical printing far beyond drinkware and bottles.

Capable of printing products with a diameter range from 2.55 inches (65 mm) to 71 inches (180 mm) and handling height variations up to 15 mm, this advanced direct to object inkjet printer delivers eye catching, seamless, full-colour, 360° graphics, all from a single workstation.

The key features of the Helix High Throw include:

- engineered to handle height variations up to 15mm, making it ideal for decorating stepped drinkware, drinkware with posts for attaching handles, wine bottles and tumblers, large diameter jugs, mini kegs, plant pots, pet bowls, and more



- advanced product scanning capabilities for precise placement on contours
- automatic programmable tilt and height adjustment system for operations requiring conical printing, delivering accurate and dependable results on every item

Two different ink configurations are possible with the Helix High Throw, enabling businesses to adapt their setup as their production needs evolve. The six colour configuration (WW+CK+MY+LcLm+Vv) delivers even smoother gradients, accurate skin tones and photo realistic images by adding light cyan and light magenta to the standard four colour process. Spot varnish also makes it possible to enhance the look and feel of designs, as well as to deliver a range of special effects.

Derek LaChance, Digital Product Manager,

Inkcups, comments: "Until now, there were always some products that traditional cylindrical inkjet printers just couldn't accommodate. It wasn't possible to achieve striking visuals on vessels with several different diameters and slants, but the launch of the Helix High Throw completely changes that, expanding the capabilities of the Helix range far beyond drinkware. This is something customers have been asking for since we first debuted our High Throw technology in 2025, so there's no doubt that it's going to be a powerful addition to many production environments."

Sarah Hall, Programme Manager – Cylinder Printers, Inkcups, adds: "What's especially exciting is the ability to decorate larger, uniquely shaped items such as plant pots and footballs, opening the door to entirely new application possibilities. It's inspiring to push beyond the traditional limits of helical printing, and we're looking forward to seeing the creative ways our customers use the Helix High Throw to expand and diversify their offerings."

The product is available in markets worldwide, with commercial availability for Europe planned for later in 2026.

www.inkcups.com/industrial-printing-equipment

New Canon ColorStream 7000 Series

The ColorStream 7000 series is a new web-fed inkjet press family designed for reliable, mid-range production across business communications, books, and direct mail. Marking the platform's 15th anniversary and over 2,000 global installations, the series includes three models – the 7075, 7100, and 7127 – offering speeds up to 127 metres per minute and monthly volumes up to 56 million A4 impressions. Available in mono and full-colour, it allows businesses to scale as requirements evolve.

QUALITY AND RELIABILITY

Featuring native 600 dpi printheads and water-based inks with Canon DigiDot technology, the series delivers a perceived 1200 dpi quality on standard offset uncoated, recycled, and inkjet-treated papers. It utilises the same technologies as the ColorStream 6000 series for a smooth transition. Production continuity is reinforced by a water-cooled printhead design



and pre-fire ink circulation, while professional colour management ensures consistent reproduction across repeat jobs.

INTEGRATED WORKFLOW EFFICIENCY

The series integrates into the PRISMA workflow ecosystem, including the cloud-based PRISMAlytics Dashboard for performance monitoring and data-driven insights. Practical features like waste-free print pause, inspection mode, and inline automation with finishing equipment help operators

control production without unnecessary paper loss.

A MODERN, EVOLVABLE PLATFORM

Built on an advanced infrastructure shared with the ColorStream 8000, the series features preventive maintenance, condition-based monitoring, and a network of sensors to maximise uptime. An intuitive touchscreen provides clear control. It includes Canon's latest SRA Massive Parallel controller for improved RIP performance, with a scalable architecture that allows upgrades from monochrome to colour.

SUSTAINABILITY AND PORTFOLIO ALIGNMENT

Designed with sustainability in mind, the series uses low power in both production and idle modes, featuring an efficient contact drying system. It helps providers meet environmental standards like the Nordic Swan Ecolabel and Blue Angel 195. Within Canon's portfolio, the 7000 series complements the high-end ColorStream 8000, offering a balanced solution to modernise mid-range production.

To read this article in full, click or scan the QR code.

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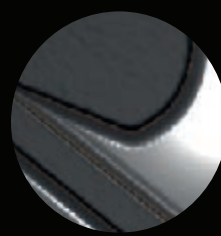
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Konica Minolta partners with GM Label Production

Konica Minolta has announced a new partnership with GM (Grafisk Maskinfabrik A/S), giving UK commercial printers and other print providers access to a fully integrated, end to end digital label production workflow. The collaboration brings together Konica Minolta's AccurioLabel technology with GM's industry leading finishing systems, enabling customers to produce premium quality, short run labels with greater speed, flexibility and profitability.

This combined approach supports the UK market's demand for shorter lead times, rapid job changes and high quality output – particularly as many flexo printers continue to transition into digital production. The partnership is also designed to make it easier for commercial printers to diversify into the fast growing short run label market – particularly artisan food and beverage, craft beer, gin, cosmetics, and private label brands where premium quality and fast turnaround are essential.

By offering the AccurioLabel press and the DC350Mini finishing systems from GM as a combined solution, customers benefit from a single, joined up supplier relationship – removing the complexity of sourcing a press and finisher separately.

These solutions provide commercial printers and label producers with a compact, easy to use finishing platform – ideal for short runs, fast changeovers and small production environments. Premium finishing options including varnish, lamination, die-cutting, and optional spot varnish or embellishment to produce eye catching standout results.

The joint offering also provides a scalable investment path – customers can start with a standard GM DC350Mini and retrofit additional modules as their label volumes grow. There is also optional inline synchronisation – allowing the press and finisher to run as a hybrid, single pass workflow when required.

The partnership strengthens Konica Minolta's ability to offer UK customers a complete, one



stop digital label solution, while giving GM new opportunities to support both established label converters and new entrants through Konica Minolta's national sales and service infrastructure. With joint demonstrations, customer visits and ongoing support delivered in close collaboration, the UK now mirrors successful Konica Minolta/GM partnerships already operating across Europe.

John Hopkins, Label & Packaging Consultant at GM commented, "Customers entering the digital label market need both a reliable press and a flexible, easy to use finishing system. By combining Konica Minolta's AccurioLabel technology with GM's modular finishing platform, we can offer UK printers a complete, scalable solution that delivers premium quality with fast turnaround. This partnership is a perfect fit for a market where short runs, quick changes and high value applications are becoming the norm."

Richard Kilduff, Channel Manager for Commercial Print at Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd also commented, "The digital label market continues to expand, creating new opportunities for print providers to diversify and develop additional revenue streams. At Konica Minolta, our goal is to offer a complete solution that makes it simple for commercial printers to enter label production, while also enabling established label producers to accelerate their digital transformation journey. Our partnership with GM allows us to deliver exactly that. We're excited to showcase GM's DC350Mini system at our Client Engagement Centre and look forward to demonstrating the new opportunities this combined solution can unlock for our customers."

GM's solutions are available now for demonstration at Konica Minolta's Client Engagement Centre near Luton.

www.konicaminolta.co.uk/en-gb/cec

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Hair of the Dog

With artificial intelligence increasingly dominating the print-on-demand landscape, **Martin Christie** takes a step back to look at the traditional, old-school Photoshop techniques that still require an indispensable amount of human skill and judgment.

Over the last few issues, I've looked at the good, the bad, and the ugly sides of AI as it affects us in print on demand. So for now, as this is our summer break, I'm going to concentrate on some examples that still require a healthy amount of human skill and judgement. I did try and consult some of the more popular cyber wisdom but had to conclude that I'm too old and set in my ways to learn a new language model. It may be fine for the new generation of university students, for whom artificial intelligence is apparently the automatic choice, and who are not phased by a continuous stream of new acronyms. But after more than a few decades, I already have more than enough obscure initials in my head without making room for new ones.

That's especially if they stand for things we are assumed to understand, or are created to sound more complicated than they actually are by people who want to sound more clever than they actually are. And as there are only so many letters in the alphabet, and a finite number of descriptive nouns, it's more than likely that some titles will be duplicated with possibly confusing or even dangerous results.

In doing my research for this month's column, I thought I'd better get up to speed on the latest trends in AI assistants but found that most of the online guides were full of exactly that sort of verbal abbreviation, leaving me even more at sea than I was before. So I thought I would find out where and when the acronym began, because there must have been a use of language without them. And rather than consult the latest bot, I asked the now ancient wisdom of Wikipedia, without the social embarrassment which might affect a younger person, even if they knew it existed.

What I discovered was very interesting because Wikipedia was, and is still, fed by people not only with a wealth of knowledge and a wish to share it, but a curiosity in all related things that encompasses not just the immediate enquiry, but other historic facts, details, and links that come under the

category of serendipity — useful things found by accident.

This is the very opposite of question-based enquiry, which is the basis of the popular modern programmes. The problem with a search engine is always that you only find what you are looking for, not something that may be equally relevant. So I found that the acronym became common in the 1940s, when technical progress was creating items with complicated descriptive names.

THE POWER OF THE PIXEL OVER THE MAGIC BUTTON

So we have AI as a shortcut now used for anything we don't really understand. There's a significant difference between the advances in machine learning that have vastly improved image editing, and artificial actions that generate an entirely new one, or one created from an original.

It is the former that is at the heart of this column, as we are primarily concerned with the repair or restoration of files we didn't create in order to make them suitable for print. So don't expect any magic buttons to be discovered here. Much of the development is entirely logical in computer terms as it is the progressive intelligence of all editing software — not just Photoshop — along with the increasing performance of the hardware. Where Adobe has an advantage is partly due to its long history and the accumulated data from which it can learn.

While there are now numerous alternatives, they all work around a similar process dictated by the very pixels on which they work. So any examples should translate to other programmes; even if they have different names, the actions should be the same. The basic principles of photography are the same as they have always been — capturing the contrast between light and dark. The difference with digital is how that capture is stored in that unlike film, which was relatively seamless, the electronic image is made up of very definite pieces — more like a giant jigsaw than a smooth painting. Using that analogy, you can appreciate that being able to identify the individual pieces — the pixels — is essential to



There is a limit to what can be recovered from a scarcity of pixels

do any comprehensive alterations. The better you can do that, the easier it is to make any changes, including colour and sharpness, as well as any duplication or replacement of parts.

That's why you struggle with a daily diet of low-resolution files, badly edited — effectively butchered long before they arrive in your inbox. And that's especially true of anything that's been generated or partly created by AI, and there is a limit to what can be recovered from a scarcity of pixels. But we will come to that below. In a recent column, there was an example of a cutout of a motorbike and model taken from an original studio shot and placed at a racetrack.

It's a job that would have been tedious previously as the tracing of the subject would have been mostly done manually — and with some likely errors. But in reality now, features that have some regularity — even the spokes of a wheel — are a pretty simple challenge. Some things, though, still defy the electric eye — like people's hair or a pet's fur — and these are also quite common requests.

This is where a knowledge of some old-school Photoshop technique comes in, but with a contemporary twist. A clipping path used to be drawn by hand using the pen tool, but now you can combine selection with a separate layer which has a transparent background. This gets round the limitations of select subject or object removal which, while now very fast and flexible, still require some fine-tuning for specific cases. This is most apparent if there is a colour conflict in the detail between one and the other. As you can see if you take a subject selected from a white background and place it on a much darker one, the difference screams out at you.

Sometimes it's because the selection isn't perfect and may need more refinement, but that is still tricky to do in selection masks and time-consuming. That's where a clipping mask may save some time by simply using the clone brush to paint over the edges of the mask to make a more seamless blend. Make

sure the brush only affects the clipping mask layer and the subject selection immediately below, and then use a small feathered one to selectively fill the edges. It may take a bit of practice because it's very much a case of being used to cloning — where to sample from, and how much to tackle at a time. This is very much old school with a new twist, but it will produce better results and can't be achieved at the moment by any type of quick fix.

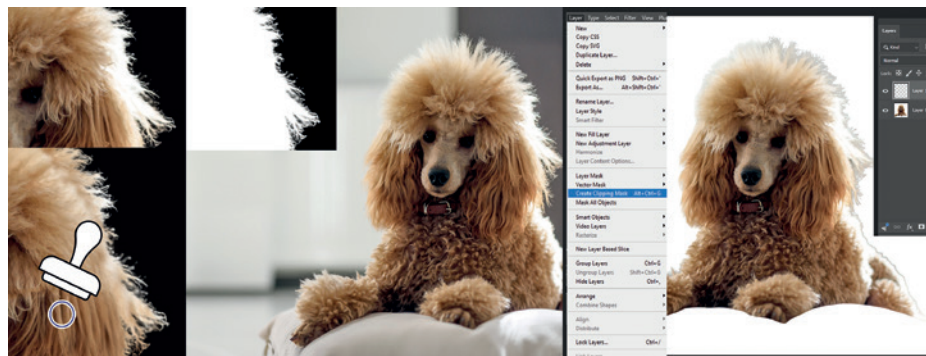
Such instant editing solutions, which are now widely promoted to catch the attention of the inexperienced or impatient, use very clever software which is actually already in Photoshop or any other comparable manipulation software. The difference is the manual control which allows actions to be minutely controlled, and if used correctly, restored or recovered for output. This is vital for printing as transferring the digital information into pixels per inch will tend to compound any flaws in the original.

The range of slider controls in PS may look a little daunting or excessive, but they all do things slightly differently, and the movement of each will make a difference in print, even if it is not immediately apparent on screen. That's why a familiarity with these functions is important, as it is unlikely to be the case with the customer. The most common issue, apart from a poorly taken image, is one that is over-edited. And these days, that is most likely caused by letting the processor decide what it thinks is best. Ever since the first days of digital, when the pixel count of all camera devices was very low, the quest for the Holy Grail has been to magic up bigger numbers, especially to output in print.

For most of the last decades, the search has produced not much more than the virtual equivalent of Fool's Gold. I've tried them over the years, and all had flaws — mostly because although computers produce a picture for us to see, it doesn't actually exist in an identical format for them, and often what seems simple and logical to use just doesn't compute.

TESTING THE ALTERNATIVES IN AI IMAGE RECONSTRUCTION

More recently, AI has opened opportunities to reinterpret existing pixels in a more creative manner, given that they are supposed to be trained to think more like us. So the restoration and repair of old, faded, and damaged photos is becoming easier with the use



of Neural filters, for example, which can better identify human features in order to replace missing information, or remove distracting marks. This can result in some curious anomalies if the processor is left to its own devices, but then it is a learning curve for all of us.

One of the complications is the confusing number of options available, all of which use valuable time and resources without any clear guarantee of a successful outcome. Adobe has their own Firefly, which has been in the toolbox for a while, but has more recently added partner models, Flux, and Gemini with Nano Banana. But there is no user-friendly guide to what they all do, or which is best for one particular picture. It's up to the user to be the guinea pig and report back what doesn't work and why.

The problem is you are paying for it in credits whether you like it or not, as there are no refunds, and there is a big difference in how many units are used up in each of the actions which is not immediately apparent. As a rule, I have generally avoided using too many actions that would be counted as generative and therefore chargeable. But that is Adobe. Each of the partner models, and others, are available independently of course; you just need to weigh up the cost options, although it does seem the PS one is the more expensive.

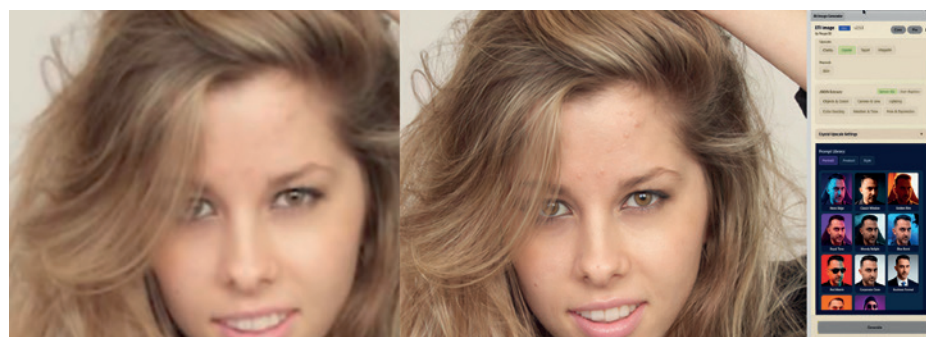
If your first choice is just to press a button for a result, then you inevitably pay the price. As an alternative, I am testing out a plug-in which has a much more user — and pocket-friendly approach. There's an initial fee with a small transaction

charge for each use if you go for the professional version. But that version gives you an extensive range of options for different types of images, which is a key feature.

For the moment, I have really only tested upscaling low-resolution people images, as this is where most AI reconstruction fails. People just aren't regular squares and shapes, and when a computer tries to recreate them, we immediately see the imperfections — or rather where human ones have been erased. Too many programmes that promise much just take a digital guess at filling in pixels rather than being able to recognise and reproduce existing patterns faithfully.

As a photographer, I'm not easily pleased, but I am impressed so far and will be able to report back after our summer break. The plug-in is called ETi Image Generator and is essentially an alternative to Adobe's offerings but with many more options. It's a little bit complex in its interface, but for the moment, I've been using Crystal to upscale low-resolution pictures from the old archives when you couldn't upload much more than a megabyte in size, and it's quite impressive. It's a function that won't just be useful for older low-resolution files, but for new ones saved and re-saved on phones and social media until they are a mere shrunken skeleton of the original. But being able to rescue those bones could be invaluable in future. ■

For more details on the plug-in mentioned, click or scan the QR code.



Solopress appoints Graham Hunstone as Head Of Partnerships



Hunstone joins Solopress with more than 30 years of experience across print production, print management, sales and commercial leadership. Most recently, he founded and led Visual

Print and Design, building the business into a print management partner serving more than 1,000 organisations across the UK, including universities, public sector bodies and national brands.

At Solopress, Hunstone will focus on developing strategic relationships within the trade while simplifying procurement and improving efficiency

for print managers and resellers. The role will also support Solopress' wider ambitions around workflow automation, customer engagement tools and smarter procurement solutions through innovative new platforms.

Hunstone said: "After more than 30 years in the industry, and 16 years building Visual Print and Design, I was looking for a new challenge and the opportunity to work with a larger business with ambitious plans.

"What attracted me to Solopress was the combination of manufacturing capability, industry experience and the work being done around automation and partnership development.

Having worked on both sides of the industry,

both supplying and outsourcing print, I understand the challenges businesses face as they look to grow. I'm looking forward to working with agencies, brokers and print management companies to develop strong partnerships, simplify procurement and help customers save time through more efficient workflows and ordering processes."

Simon Cooper, CEO at Solopress, said:

"Graham brings experience from every side of the industry, spanning production, outsourcing, print management, commercial leadership and customer relationships. Having built and grown his own business, he understands the challenges many print companies are navigating as the market changes.

"That perspective makes him a strong fit for a role centred on building long term partnerships and developing closer collaboration across the print sector."

www.solopress.com

Konica Minolta appoints James Pittick SD



Konica Minolta has announced the appointment of James Pittick as Sales Director. James will lead all of Konica Minolta's UK direct and indirect sales channels, driving growth for the company's Digital Workplace and Professional

Print business lines.

James joins with more than 20 years' experience across printing, technology, and managed services sectors. He has held senior commercial leadership roles with a proven track record of building high performing teams and delivering sustained growth across public and private

sectors, through direct and indirect channels. His extensive expertise includes solutions led sales, print and workflow technologies, and partner ecosystem development, alongside knowledge gained in adjacent technology and services industries.

His appointment supports Konica Minolta's ongoing transformation, strengthening its commercial leadership in the UK, as the company continues to evolve its operating model and deepen its engagement with customers and partners. James will play a central role in bringing even greater cohesion, consistency, and customer focus across the organisation's UK sales operations.

Commenting on his new appointment, James said: "I'm delighted to be joining Konica Minolta to lead the UK sales function at such a pivotal stage in its transformation. The company has a strong heritage in imaging technology and a clear vision for the future. Their reputation for customer focus, innovation, and trusted partnerships, enable the delivery of innovative solutions that help customers transform how they work. I'm looking forward to working with Konica Minolta's teams, partners, and customers to accelerate growth across all channels, helping customers realise the full value of our digital workplace and professional print solutions."

www.konicaminolta.co.uk

Compass strengthens team with appointment of Rob Hogg



Compass Business Finance has appointed Rob Hogg as a Finance Specialist, further strengthening its position within the UK print and packaging sector.

Rob joins with over 25 years' experience as Group Finance Director at Grafitec PLC, a well established business within the industry. During his time there, he was responsible for financial reporting, planning, risk management and statutory duties, while also developing extensive experience in the acquisition and disposal

of capital equipment from leading print and finishing manufacturers.

A highly respected and well known figure across print and packaging, Rob has built strong, longstanding relationships throughout the sector. His deep understanding of production environments, investment cycles and commercial pressures gives him a unique perspective on the challenges businesses face as they look to evolve and grow.

Having worked closely with Compass as a valued partner for more than 20 years, Rob brings a clear understanding of both the industry and the funding process. His background as a Finance Director enables him to support business

owners in navigating investment decisions, aligning funding structures with their wider ambitions and long term plans.

Commenting on the appointment, Jamie Nelson, Co-Founder and Director of Compass, said: "Rob is very well known within the print and packaging sector, and his experience makes him a valuable addition to the team. His insight will help us continue to deliver funding solutions that align with our customers' ambitions. We're delighted to be welcoming him to Compass."

Rob added: "It's great to be joining such a well respected team. Having spent many years in the industry, I'm looking forward to working with familiar faces and supporting businesses as they invest in their future and develop their capabilities."

Rob lives in Doncaster with his wife, Wendy. He is a Sheffield United season ticket holder and enjoys playing golf and travelling

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Granthams GT — Top of the QPP Demo Suite Charts

Granthams GT top the table in the QPP virtual showroom demonstrating the HP Latex 730 W printer being ably assisted with Graphtec cutter workflow.

Print to Play: PVC Banner and Sticker Set produced with HP Latex 730 W Printer and Graphtec Cutter Workflow.

In this video, Granthams demonstrate a complete print and cut workflow to produce a full colour PVC banner activity sheet, paired with re-positional sticker sets, all created entirely in-house from start to finish.

Using the HP Latex 730 W Printer alongside the Graphtec FC9000 Vinyl Cutter and driven by ONYX PosterShop RIP Software, this project showcases how easily you can move from concept to finished product with a seamless, integrated workflow.

The result is a durable, high quality activity banner designed for kids, combined with contour cut and perforated A4 sticker sheets that can be applied, removed, and repositioned without damaging the print.

LEARN WHILE YOU VIEW – WHAT THIS VIDEO COVERS

- Printing a 500gsm PVC banner with vibrant colour and durable finish
- Switching to white ink for

- printing on clear vinyl
- Creating re-positional sticker sheets with a white underlay
- Setting up artwork with white ink layers, contour cut paths and perforation cut paths
- Processing files through ONYX for print and cut integration
- Using registration marks for accurate alignment on the Graphtec
- Running contour cutting and perforation cutting workflows
- Producing clean, easy to use kiss-cut and pop out sticker sheets

WORKFLOW OVERVIEW

The artwork is created in Adobe Illustrator, where separate paths are defined for print, white ink, contour cutting, and perforation.

This file is then processed through ONYX PosterShop, which manages both the print output and cut data. Registration marks are automatically applied, allowing the Graphtec FC9000 to accurately align and execute the cut paths.

The HP Latex 730 W handles both standard and white ink printing, with

curing applied at the end of the job — helping optimise production time, especially when running nested jobs.

PRODUCTION TIMES

- PVC Banner Print: 4 minutes
- Total Banner Time (including curing): 7 minutes, 32 seconds
- Sticker Print Time: 24 minutes, 50 seconds
- Additional Curing Time: 6 minutes, 56 seconds
- Total Sticker Job Time: 31 minutes, 46 seconds

This highlights how short run, high quality products like this can be produced quickly and efficiently. Keep in mind that curing time would only be applied at the end of a run, so nesting multiple jobs would save on time significantly.

WHY THIS SETUP WORKS

- **Water based, odourless inks** — safe for handling and suitable for child friendly applications
 - **Durable, scratch resistant prints** — ideal for repeated use and repositioning
 - **White ink capability** — enables printing on clear media without losing colour vibrancy
 - **Integrated print and cut workflow** — reduces manual intervention and improves accuracy
 - **Versatile production** — easily switch between materials and applications
- This Type Of Workflow Is Ideal For:

- Educational materials
 - Children's activity packs
 - Events and exhibitions
 - Retail promotions
 - Custom short run products
 - Outdoor signage
 - Vehicle graphics
- If you'd like a step by step walkthrough of how to set up artwork for:

- White ink layers
- Contour cutting
- Perforation paths in ONYX

Let Granthams know in the comments, as they are happy to create a dedicated video.

If you found this useful, consider liking the video and subscribing for more real world print workflows, tips, and demonstrations.

Further research links

- [Metamark MD-FL500 500gsm Premium PVC Banner](#)
- [Metamark MD3-RC Removable Clear Digital Vinyl](#)
- [HP Latex 730 W Printer](#)
- [Graphtec FC9000 Vinyl Cutter](#)
- [ONYX Print and Cut RIP Software](#)
- [QPP Demo Suite Link](#)



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Packaging Week 2026 — Packagings boldest ideas are back at London

Whether you're looking for fresh ideas, new partners or a more complete view of where packaging is heading, London Packaging Week on 16 and 17 September is where it all comes together.



London Packaging Week returns to Excel London with registration now officially open for the UK's leading platform for packaging innovation, design and sourcing across the luxury, beauty, premium drinks and FMCG markets.

A key meeting place for the global packaging industry, London Packaging Week brings together the brands, designers, suppliers and innovators shaping the future of packaging. Following a record breaking 2025 edition, the show returns for two days of discovery, collaboration and commercial insight in the heart of the capital.

The 2026 edition is set to welcome more than 5,700 visitors, over 220 exhibitors and thousands of packaging solutions from across the global supply chain. From materials innovation and structural design to sustainability, regulation and brand experience, it provides a focused environment where the sector's most important conversations take place in real time.

Across the show floor, visitors will explore the full breadth of the packaging ecosystem through five core sectors: luxury packaging, beauty and personal care, premium and luxury drinks, FMCG and consumer goods, and packaging design and innovation. Together, these areas reflect the complete lifecycle of packaging — from concept and material development through to production,

compliance and consumer experience.

Alongside the exhibition, visitors will access a free to attend content programme featuring talks, panels and industry discussions. The agenda will explore the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing the sector, including sustainability legislation, EPR, circularity, accessibility, material innovation and the evolving role of packaging in brand storytelling.

Josh Brooks, Divisional Director — Packaging Portfolio at Easyfairs, said: "London Packaging Week is where the industry connects as a single, unified ecosystem. It is no longer defined by separate sectors or silos, but by shared challenges across the entire packaging value chain.

"The momentum from last year's record breaking edition has carried into 2026. We are seeing that energy continue to build, with strong engagement already across all sectors from luxury and beauty to drinks and FMCG. It reflects an industry that is not only present but actively invested in what comes next."

The 2026 edition also reflects continued momentum across its exhibitor base, with leading global and specialist suppliers confirmed. Returning exhibitors include Amcor, Fedrigoni, Billerud, Autajon, Kurz, Sun Branding and Ecosurety, alongside a wider network of converters, materials innovators and packaging specialists from across Europe.

The event also welcomes a strong cohort of first time exhibitors, including Sabert, PakTech, Coppice and Sustain Holdings, reflecting continued expansion across foodservice, circular materials and sustainable packaging systems.

London Packaging Week continues to strengthen its position as a uniquely London platform with global influence. With 92% of visitors based in the UK and participation from leading British and international brands including Diageo, William Grant & Sons, Jo Malone, Harrods, Selfridges and Penhaligon's, the event reflects the commercial strength and creative influence of the UK packaging ecosystem.

Supported by organisations including WRAP, INCPEN, Walpole, British Beauty Council and BCMPA, London Packaging Week remains closely aligned with the institutions shaping the industry's future direction.

Registration is now officially open for London Packaging Week on 16 and 17 September. **To registered click or scan the QR code.**



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The Print Show launches dedicated Podcast Studio



Organisers of the co-located The Print Show and The Sign Show have unveiled a brand new feature for this year's events – The Print Show Podcast Booth.



Running throughout the events, the booth will play host to podcasters from across the print and sign industries, with both live and recorded sessions set to take place. The feature marks the first time The Print Show has offered a dedicated podcast and content creation space for exhibitors, visitors and industry commentators.

Located within The Print Show area of the hall, The Print Show Podcast Booth will operate in collaboration with both Ultima Displays and Eye on Display. Ultima Displays will support the feature with the design and build of the booth, while Jack Gocher, editor of Eye on Display, will host the feature area alongside partner, Kathryn Ridout.

Jack, who is also co-host of dedicated print industry podcast, JAM in the Print Room, will be hosting live interviews and discussions with exhibitors, visitors and Knowledge Zone speakers. Industry professionals will be able to book sessions in

advance to make use of the facility during the exhibition.

With many print and sign podcasters expected to attend the events, the booth will provide a dedicated space for interviews, discussions and content creation, helping exhibitors, visitors and industry experts share insights with

the wider market.

Featuring large glass viewing panels, the new booth will also allow visitors to watch live recordings and gain a behind the scenes look at how industry podcasts are produced.

Whether recording a podcast episode, conducting a video interview or sharing insights from the show floor, attendees will be able to create engaging content and connect with the wider print and sign community throughout the events.

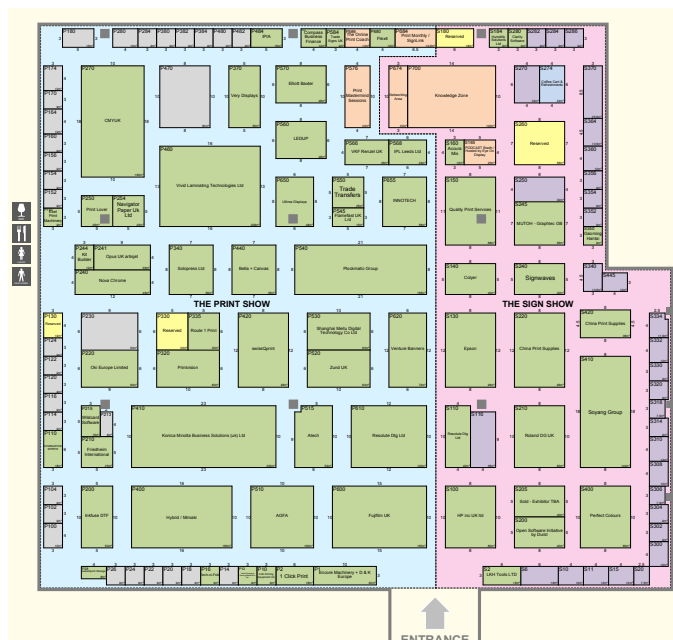
“Podcasting has become an increasingly important way for people across the print and sign sectors to share ideas, discuss industry trends and engage with customers,” said Chris Davies, Event Director for The Print Show and The Sign Show, “By introducing The Print Show Podcast Booth, we’re creating a dedicated space where exhibitors, visitors and industry experts can share ideas, discuss innovation and engage with a wider audience before, during and after the exhibition.”

Jack added: “The Eye on Display team is honoured to host the new Print Show Podcast Booth. It’s a fantastic opportunity to bring the conversations, innovation and excitement of the show to a much wider online audience. I am delighted to host the booth with Kathryn. We’ll be talking to visitors, exhibitors, speakers, and organisers throughout the show to

keep people up to date on the new and exciting stories as they happen.

“Whether we’re interviewing leading suppliers, speaking to visitors about the opportunities and challenges facing their businesses or covering product launches from the show floor, the aim is to capture the energy and innovation that make these events so important to the industry.”

To secure your place at The Print Show Podcast Booth this year, contact Jack Gocher (jack@eyeondisplay.com) and Kathryn Ridout (kathryn@eyeondisplay.com). ■ www.theprintshow.co.uk www.thesignshow.co.uk



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SustainaTex Ocean Fabric launched by Moss

Global place maker Moss has launched a new sustainable fabric for the UK graphics, events and retail display markets. SustainaTex Ocean is made from SEAQUAL® MARINE PLASTIC and recycled polyester and adds to the group's extensive range of global sustainable options.

The new 100 percent post consumer waste recycled content SustainaTex Ocean fabric is exclusive to Moss and perfectly suited for dye sublimation print, making it ideal for silicone edged graphic (SEG) applications.

The fabric is made from 62 percent SEAQUAL® YARN, a traceable material produced from up-cycled marine plastic retrieved from oceans, beaches, rivers, and estuaries by the SEAQUAL INITIATIVE, with the remainder supplied from recycled polyester.

Customer's choosing SustainaTex Ocean can have some of the most sustainable graphics available on the market, with the material, dye sublimation inks, PVC free fittings and



sustainable packaging minimising its environmental impact. In addition, once the event has finished or retail graphics been used, they can be sent back to Moss for re-processing, ensuring a responsible end of life for the product.

Initially launched in the US, the introduction of the SustainaTex Ocean into the UK further boosts Moss's global sustainable practices in the industry, minimising waste and reducing the business's — and clients' — carbon footprint.

“The introduction of SustainaTex Ocean in the UK underlines our unwavering dedication to sustainability,” said Moss UK Managing Director Michael Green. “This fabric provides our clients with another high quality, environmentally friendly option for their graphics and displays. We are place makers, and that means we also want to make our oceans a better place, too. This partnership is the perfect way to help keep our oceans clean and minimise our clients' environmental impact.”

Moss already has several environmentally friendly solutions for customers to take advantage of. Its newly launched rental banner scheme, zero to landfill waste approach, and a host of materials made from recycled plastics and bottles have all been welcomed by clients.

SustainaTex Ocean is made with SEAQUAL® YARN produced from up-cycled marine plastic retrieved from oceans, beaches, rivers, and estuaries by the SEAQUAL® INITIATIVE
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How to stop ignoring your best customers

Stuart Mason reveals why a simple communication gap is costing you money every month, and shares a tool to help you identify gaps

Every small print business owner reading this has spent money chasing new customers. You have run ads, attended networking events, handed out cards, and watched your marketing budget disappear without a lot to show for it. And yet, sitting right there in your customer database, there is a goldmine you are walking past every single day.

Your existing customers already know you, already trust you, and have already given you money. That is three enormous hurdles you do not have to clear when you want to make a sale. So, before you spend another pound on cold outreach, ask yourself this: do your existing customers actually know everything you can do for them?

The answer, almost certainly, is no. And that gap between what they know and what you offer is costing you real money every single month.

THE KNOWLEDGE PROBLEM NOBODY TALKS ABOUT

Here is how it works in practice. A customer comes to you for business cards. You produce great print work, they are happy, and they come back for more business cards, and maybe leaflets. That is it though. In their mind, you are the printing company, they have no idea you also produce exhibition banners, branded workwear, vehicle graphics, promotional merchandise, large-format signage, and a dozen other things they

are probably already buying from someone else.

This is not their fault, it's yours. You don't have a marketing problem; you have a communication problem.

You have not told them because you "assumed" they knew. After all, your website and brochure clearly show all this... you have been so focused on delivering the order in front of you that you have never stepped back and shown them the full picture of what you can do. And so, they go to three different suppliers for three different needs, while you sit there wondering why growth is so hard.

BUILD THE MATRIX. THEN WORK IT.

There is a tool so simple it will make you feel slightly embarrassed that you have not been using it already. Take a spreadsheet, put every customer down the left-hand column, then put every product and service you offer along the top row. Then go through the grid and mark which customer uses which product or service.

What you are left with is your Customer-Product Matrix, and it is one of the most powerful commercial documents your business can have. Every empty box in that grid represents a conversation you have not had yet. Every blank square is an opportunity you are leaving wide open for a competitor to walk into.

BUILD THE MATRIX AND MARKET TO THE GAPS.

If you have a customer who buys roller banners and exhibition graphics from you but has never bought branded clothing, that is a gap. If you have a customer who orders printed stationery but has never asked about vehicle wraps, that is a gap. If you have a customer who comes back year after year for one product while spending money on five other things elsewhere, every single one of those is a gap.

Every product gap is a profit gap.

THE LINE THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

When you start having these conversations with existing customers, marketing to the gaps you have identified, you will hear one phrase so often it will become almost comical. Over and over again, customers will say: "I never knew you did that."

Not "I tried someone else and preferred them." Not "I looked at your website and decided against it." Just "I never knew." That is the whole problem laid bare in just five words. They were not disloyal, they were not difficult, they

just did not know. And because they did not know, the money went elsewhere.

The Customer-Product Matrix makes sure that never happens again. It turns a vague intention to "upsell more" into a structured, systematic programme of targeted communication with real customers who have already demonstrated they are willing to buy from you. It doesn't get any easier than that.

You can reach out by email, by phone, or even just by mentioning it on the next order. "By the way, I notice we have never done your vehicle graphics. That is something we handle here. Can I send you a few examples?"

That is all it takes. You are not cold calling; you are calling someone who already has your number in their phone and has already spent money with you. The conversion rate on those conversations will dwarf anything you are seeing from cold outreach.

HERE IS YOUR NEXT STEP

Do not put this down and carry on as you were. Open a spreadsheet today, then list your top twenty customers down the left side. List every product and service you offer across the top. Spend an hour filling in what you know. Then look at the gaps... MARKET TO THE GAPS.

Pick three customers with obvious gaps and reach out to them this week, CALL THEM.

Not with a newsletter or a generic email. Pick up the phone or send a personal message that shows you have looked at what they buy and noticed what they are missing.

One conversation could be worth thousands of pounds. You already have the customers; you already have the capability. The only thing missing is the conversation.

Stop leaving money on the table that should already be yours. ■ www.linkedin.com/in/stuart-c-mason

CUSTOMER PRODUCT MATRIX

Identify what each customer buys – then market to the gaps

CUSTOMERS	OUR PRODUCTS & SERVICES							
	BUSINESS CARDS	FLYERS	BROCHURES	SIGNAGE	VEHICLE GRAPHICS	WORKWEAR	WEBSITES	PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS
Customer A	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Customer B	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Customer C	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Customer D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Customer E	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
Customer F	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Customer G	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Customer H	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Customer I	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Customer J	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

✓ = CURRENTLY BUYS
✗ = DOES NOT BUY (OPPORTUNITY)
💡 FOCUS HERE: These are your growth opportunities. Market to the gaps and grow revenue.

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Laminating Machines and Supplies, all types.....	Elmstok
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Labels and stickers.....	Baker Labels
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Large Format MFP Solutions.....	Stanford Marsh
Large Format Printers from HP.....	Perfect Colours
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LFP.....	HP
Leaflets.....	Flexpress
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Magazine Printing.....	The Magazine Production Company
Marketing Solutions.....	Xerox
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Mugs.....	NovaChrome UK
Mutoh.....	Data Direct
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Polypropylene Boxes.....	Duraweld
PosterJet Software.....	Perfect Colours
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Presentation Packaging (Printed).....	Duraweld
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Promotional merchandise.....	Promotrade
Promotional pens.....	Promotrade
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Printing Systems.....	OKI Europe
Raffle Tickets.....	Raffle Tickets Direct
Receipt Books.....	Abbot Print
Recycled Media.....	Premier Paper
Register Sets.....	Abbot Print
Retail POS.....	Route1 Print
Ricoh.....	Connect Print
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Something to share?

SPARE WORLD CUP SEAT

A man takes his seat at the World Cup final. He looks over and notices there's an extra seat in between himself and the next guy.

The man says, "Who would ever miss the World Cup final?"

The guy replies, "Well that was my wife's seat. We have been to the last five World Cup finals together, but sadly she passed away."

The man replies, "That's terrible, but couldn't you get another close family member to come with you?"

The guy says, "No. They're all at the funeral."

QUICK SUB SAVES THE DAY

I have a wedding at the same time of my World Cup match; can anyone take my place? The place is St. Parish Church and the Bride's name is Paula.

MYSTERY GARDEN

Someone keeps dumping soil all over my flower bed, and I don't know who's doing it? The plot thickens...

LFP LINGO

BOSS: "What should we call this giant advertising board?"

PHIL: "A philboard!"

BILL: "No, wait... I have a better idea!"

YES, ANOTHER MOTHER-IN-LAW JOKE

A woman calls her mother.

"My husband and I have been fighting so much lately. I am going to come live with you again."

Her mother replies, "No dear, he should pay for his mistakes. I am coming to live with you."

SALES TRIP

A copier salesman went to New York on a business trip. When the trip was over, he took a cab to get to the airport. The cab driver decided to have a little fun at the salesman's expense, so he asked, "My mother had three kids, one was my

brother, one was my sister, who was the third?"

The passenger had no idea. The driver replied, "The third one was ME!"

The salesman went home to his wife and said to her, "Hey honey, here's a riddle for you. My mother had three kids, one was my brother, one was my sister, who was the third one?"

His wife was stumped and said, "I don't know, who?"

The man responded, "Believe it or not, some cab driver in New York."

A SMALL VALUE JOKE

Did you hear about the mathematician who's afraid of negative numbers? He will stop at nothing to avoid them.

NEW GARLIC DIET

Did you hear about the new garlic diet? You don't actually lose weight, but you look thinner from a distance.

BEST TIME O'CLOCK

6:30 is the best time on a clock. Hands down!

SALAD FOR DINNER

I came home from work this evening and said to my wife, "Are we having salad for dinner?"

"Yes we are, how did you know?" she asked.

I replied, "Because I can't hear the smoke alarm."

SALES TRIP

A salesman and a printer were fishing in the sunny Caribbean. They were discussing their previous great holiday when the salesman said, "I'm here because my house burned down, and everything I owned was destroyed by the fire. The insurance company paid for everything."

That is quite a coincidence," said the printer. "I'm here because my house and all my belongings were destroyed by a flood, and my insurance company also paid for everything."

The salesman, quite puzzled, asked, "How do YOU start a flood?"

T-SHIRT IS SHORT FOR

T-shirt is actually short for tyrannosaurus shirt. It's because of the small arms.

NO ZOOM CHAT FUN

My boss always laughed at my jokes at work, but since we started using Teams online zoom meetings she has stopped laughing. I asked her why she doesn't laugh at them anymore.

She replied, "Because your jokes aren't remotely funny."

KIDS FOOTBALL

"Look, Ben," the coach said, "you know the principles of good sportsmanship. You know the FA League doesn't allow temper tantrums, shouting at the referee, or abusive language."

"Yes sir, I understand."

"Good, Ben. Now, would you explain that to your father?"

VAN GOGH FAMILY

Vincent Van Gogh had a really large family. Here's a listing of some of the lesser known relatives:

The obnoxious brother – Please Gogh

The brother who ate prunes – Gotta Gogh

His dizzy aunt – Verti Gogh

An aunt who taught positive thinking – Wayto Gogh

And his magician uncle – Wherediddy Gogh

GOOD DECISION

I took my bike to the off licence the other day. I got a bottle of vodka and put it in the bike's basket.

As I was about to leave, I thought to myself that if I fell off the bottle would break. So, I drank all the vodka and then headed home.

It turned out to be a good decision, because I fell off nine times on my way home.

DOWN UNDER SALES

Fun fact: Australia's biggest export is boomerangs. It's also their biggest import.



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