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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

April print dates



High print days this month start with April 1st jokes and pranks, and of course, it is Easter Monday.

Print some books on Children's book Day 2nd April and do something horny on the 9th as it is National Unicorn Day.

Send your siblings a personal printed gift on 10th April and more love on the 11th for Pet Day.

Double proof read on the 13th as it is Scrabble Day, something

Worldly on the 18th then move on to celebrate Earth Day on the 22nd and 23rd St. George's Day.

Don't forget old Bill, William Shakespeare on the anniversary of his birth and death, 23rd April. Take extra care at the counter as it is also World Book and Copyright Day.

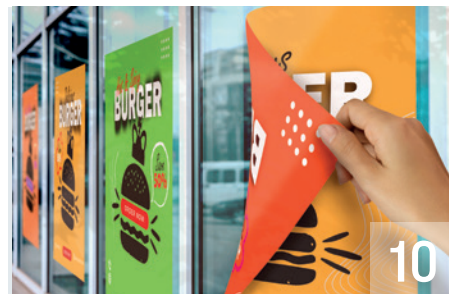
You don't need an excuse to talk print every day.

Peter, the Printer, Foulkes



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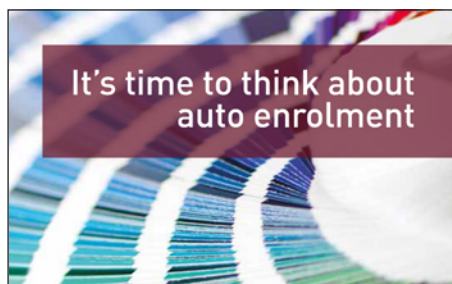
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The law on workplace pensions has changed and every employer in the UK must put certain staff into a pension scheme and contribute towards it.

This is called 'automatic enrolment'.

It's important that you understand what you need to do — and when you need to do it. This will depend on your circumstances and those of your employees. To work out what you need to do and when you need to do it contact our auto enrolment scheme advisers on:

0800 132100 or email alan.hudson@meridan.co.uk

Help is on hand from the Printing Industry Pension Scheme which has been running since 1986.

Meridan Financial LLP is the appointed advisers for the Printing Industry Pension Scheme (PIPS) and are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Not all Auto Enrolment services are regulated by the FCA.



NPC Print invests in a Konica Minolta AccurioPress C4070

Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd has installed an AccurioPress C4070 with large sheet feeder at NPC Print, a commercial printing services company in Surrey.

NPC Print produces short run leaflets, office stationery and forms, through to higher volume newsletters, brochures and corporate promotional gifts. The company works on simple and complex projects and with customers of all sizes and sectors, delivering locally, nationwide and internationally.

Since launching in 2019, NPC Print has grown rapidly and as demand has continued to increase the company decided to invest in a new main press capable of producing a wide range of high quality printed materials. Natalie Puttock, CEO & Founder of NPC Print explained, "We looked at different manufacturers, but once we ran test sheets through the AccurioPress at Konica Minolta's nearby office in Southampton the quality spoke volumes. In fact, the samples were almost indistinguishable from litho."

At the start of February 2024, an AccurioPress C4070 was successfully installed



at NPC Print's 2,000 square foot facility in Camberley. It now serves as its main production press, producing short run materials that the company also stores for its clients and delivers on demand.

Konica Minolta's AccurioPress C4070 enables professional printers such as NPC Print to have a single colour press that is good for everything: two sided banner printing, professional inline

finishing and real time automated quality adjustments. This is combined with excellent print quality and productivity, with speeds of up to 71 A4 pages per minute and 39 A3 pages per minute.

Natalie added, "When companies are preparing for events, print is often one of the last things to be considered. As such we need to be flexible and agile to provide a fast turnaround with quality promotional materials and a professional service. Our new AccurioPress gives us the capacity, reliability and step up in quality that we were looking for."

Russell Palmer, Commercial Print Account Manager at Konica Minolta Business Solutions (UK) Ltd, stated, "We are delighted that NPC Print has chosen to upgrade its production print capabilities with our AccurioPress C4070 and we look forward to supporting them as they continue to grow."

Looking to the future NPC Print is working with Konica Minolta to explore the potential to expand its capabilities further through its innovative Web2Print (W2P) online printing solution. Natalie continued, "With the stock holding service we provide our customers it makes sense to pair the personal service we pride ourselves on, with the convenience of ordering remotely."

www.konicaminolta.co.uk

Flexpress chooses Horizon HT-300 iCE Trimmer

Flexpress, Leicester, has taken another step towards highly automated end to end production with the addition of a Horizon HT-300 iCE TRIMMER from Intelligent Finishing Systems. The trimmer works with a Horizon BQ-500 iCE perfect binder to create a highly responsive book production solution.

"With skilled staff in ever shorter supply and margins constantly squeezed, we do everything we can at Flexpress to produce work quickly, accurately and cost effectively by investing whatever and whenever we can into becoming more efficient," explains Steve Wenlock, Managing Director. "The HT-300 is a perfect example as it enables us to turn what otherwise would have been two individual jobs into one streamlined process whilst gaining productivity as opposed to losing it."

He adds: "Initially we considered having the trimmer near line rather than fully connected, but within a few examples of seeing books come off the end of the



perfect binding line fully finished with no intervention, we knew we'd made the right choice. We've seen immediate improvements in productivity made possible by utilising staff elsewhere in the business and it's stopped us having to juggle staff, or jobs around to trim books."

He continues: "It frees up valuable staff time to focus on other areas of the business that we're currently unable to automate."

Flexpress also has a number of other systems with iCE

LiNK connectivity and is in the process of rebuilding its internal software systems to maximise the information iCE LiNK provides to help make more informed decisions.

Steve adds: "In this age, good information drives good decisions, so connected systems give you the power to analyse data more thoroughly and alert you to ways of making improvements."

The HT-300 next generation single knife three side trimmer features greater automation supporting higher productivity for

short and medium runs. It delivers variable production at up to 300 cycles per hour while accurate and clean cuts are achieved with precision automation. New features include auto book thickness measuring and table angle adjustment. It also offers versatile application possibilities by processing six and eight page flap covers.

It is pre-installed with Horizon's cloud based iCE LiNK workflow that provides access to an intuitive easy to use dashboard that reports real time production analysis for improved efficiency and profitability, remote update capabilities and scheduled maintenance resulting in less downtime.

The latest investment joins the Horizon BQ-500 perfect binder as well as a Horizon StitchLiner MKIII, a Horizon BQ-280 PUR single clamp perfect binder, a Horizon HT-30C three sided trimmer, a Horizon CRF 362 creaser folder and a Horizon AFC-566 folder.

www.ifsl.uk.com

HP, Wrexham AFC, and NABU celebrate

The bilingual book, *The Lucky Dragon*, is intended for children aged 6-10 years old and celebrates the richness of Welsh culture and language present in Wrexham.

HP Inc., Wrexham AFC and NABU announced *The Lucky Dragon*, a bilingual Welsh-English children's book was available for download from World Book Day. The book aims to inspire Welsh children through digitally accessible and culturally relevant literature, aligning with HP and NABU's efforts to bridge the digital divide through literacy.

"Accelerating digital equity means going beyond providing technology and focusing on the broader ecosystem, which includes literacy as a foundational building block," said Michele Malejki, Global Head of Social Impact, HP Inc., and Director, HP Foundation. "Through our collaboration with NABU, we're excited to promote literacy by blending the iconic Wrexham AFC spirit with engaging literature for children that reflects their own community."

Research shows that mother tongue language books are highly effective in boosting literacy and motivating children to read. Improved literacy enhances digital engagement, which is crucial for educational advancement and therefore economic opportunity. In line with its mission to become the world's most sustainable and just technology company, HP has pledged



to accelerate digital equity for 150 million people by 2030 and has worked with NABU since 2020 to provide equitable access to children's books globally, taking concrete steps towards closing the digital divide.

"At Wrexham AFC, we believe that football, like technology, has the power to connect and unite people all over the world," said Wrexham AFC CEO, Fleur Robinson. "To see the town come to life through the pages of this book is nothing short of spectacular – and for many the first chance to see themselves as heroes of their own story. As a club we're proud of the important role we play in Wrexham and we



will always have a focus on delivering a range of outreach initiatives that make a positive difference to the local and wider community."

The Lucky Dragon, created by storytellers and illustrators using HP technology in the NABU HP Creative Lab, draws inspiration from Wrexham's residents, featuring local heroes and locations. The story follows a young girl facing misfortune ahead of her upcoming football match – until her grandfather gifts her a toy red dragon, bringing luck not only to her family but also the community. The book is digitally available via the NABU reading app and web reader, while additional print copies will be available later at local schools, libraries, and at Wrexham AFC's STōK Cae Ras stadium. Proceeds from book sales will be donated to local nonprofits and NABU, with both digital and printed versions featuring side by side English and Welsh text.

www.hp.com • www.nabu.org
www.wrexhamafc.co.uk

The Big Ink Tank expands offerings with VeloBlade

Large format printing business The Big Ink Tank has invested in a VeloBlade Nexus 2516 wide format digital die cutting solution from Soyang Hardware, saying it plans to use the machine to expand its service offering and win new customers.

Based in Coventry, The Big Ink Tank offers a range of print services, specialising in exhibition graphics and large format work for galleries and museums. The printer works with a number of high profile clients including Peugeot and the Royal Shakespeare Company, as well as major local customers such as Coventry Building Society and Coventry University.

While already having an expansive service offering and customer base, The Big Ink Tank is always on the lookout for new opportunities and ways it can deliver more for clients. This thought process was a key part in its decision to invest in the VeloBlade Nexus 2516, a specialist machine manufactured by Vivid Laminating Technologies and distributed by Soyang Hardware.

One of four machines in the VeloBlade Nexus range, the 2516 is a wide format digital die cutter with a bed size of 2,500mm x 16,00mm. Combined with a CNC router, the system



enables users to work with stocks up to 25mm in thickness such as Dibond, MDF and acrylic.

Purchased in December 2023 and installed just a few weeks later in January 2024, the VeloBlade Nexus has become an integral part of the production setup at The Big Ink Tank. Working alongside other machinery, the cutter has already been put to work on a range of applications, with its innovative automation capabilities making life much easier for staff.

"The VeloBlade Nexus fits in with our existing workflow by allowing files for cutting, routing and creasing to be automatically uploaded with minimal input from our team," The Big Ink Tank's founder, Ty Power, said. "We are really benefitting from the speed of the machine; we no longer have to change the tools as they are automatic.

"The quality of the cutting is also excellent, while the fact that the vacuum keeps the cuts so clean results in a huge time saving. We are still learning about new processes that we can then launch into the market."

With this in mind, Ty said the focus for The Big Ink Tank is on how it can use the new machine to expand its offering and serve customers in new markets. This, Ty said, will involve speaking with its clients and working with specialist staff at both Soyang and Vivid Laminating Technologies to ensure the company gets the most out of the new device.

"Soyang is a long term supplier for us; they are a great company to work with and really knowledgeable," Ty said. "Vivid are also very interested in looking after you as a customer. So far, the training and interaction has been excellent.

"We are keen to demo the machine to our existing customers showing them all the new materials and options we can offer. It will open up more varied work and hopefully win us new customers. We are really excited by all the new product types we can offer and getting to learn what we can do with the machine."

www.soyang.co.uk

swissQprint's Impala doubles the impact at 3 Way

The Chesham-based business is expanding its printing capabilities in the cosmetics and fragrance sectors by adding its second swissQprint Impala.

Established in 2000, 3 Way Displays (3WD) has evolved into a premier print solutions provider, serving high-profile customers in the beauty and fragrance industries. Specialising in temporary and permanent point of sale displays and counting Harrods and Charlotte Tilbury as clients, the company has become synonymous with excellence in retail.

In 2017 the business chose a swissQprint Impala to deliver the detail and precision needed for luxury brands and retail displays. With the machine proving a resounding success, the 3WD team looked to add to its printing room to meet the growing demand



for its products. Impressed by a demo at swissQprint UK last year, they ordered a second Impala for February installation.

The new Impala aligns seamlessly with its predecessor, boasting a six-colour configuration including CMYK, light magenta, and light cyan, complemented by white and varnish. This setup, augmented by the 1350 dpi from the latest print heads, ensures unparalleled precision in reproducing intricate skin tones and the nuanced shades necessary in cosmetic imagery.

Indeed, precise colour matching and glossy finishes were vital for the business. The inclusion of varnish not only adds a touch of elegance but increases resistance to alcohol, scratching and moisture, which is crucial for the durability of the displays.

"Accuracy in colour replication is vital for us," said 3WD's Sales Director, Olivia Stroud. "With the Impalas' capabilities, we're able to meet the high demands of the sector to produce visually stunning displays that give off a luxury feel."

The new Impala introduces a roll-to-roll option to 3WD, optimising print times and streamlining workflow, as well as allowing the company to process roll stock along with rigid materials. Additionally, the shift from mercury to LED curing technology is not only a leap in production efficiency but also a stride towards greener printing. The reduced power consumption is significant, dropping to only two kilowatt-hours and together with the Greenguard Gold certified inks, the business can deliver more environmentally friendly print than ever before.

The decision to continue its partnership with swissQprint was driven by 3WD's trust in the brand, the Impala's unparalleled adaptability, and improved sustainability.

www.swissqprint.com

SUPPLIER OF THE MONTH: STANFORD MARSH GROUP



Stanford Marsh is the UK's independent market leader for wide format printing systems in the built environment and manufacturing sectors: **Wide Format Inkjet Plotters, Format Graphics Inkjet Printers, and Folders; Multifunctional CAD Printers; Contex, Colortrac and HP Wide Format Scanners.**

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www.stanfordmarsh.co.uk

Global availability of Drytac ReTac Clear PET

Drytac, the manufacturer of self-adhesive materials for the large format print and signage markets, has announced the global availability of ReTac Clear PET PVC-free film.

The award winning product was initially launched in North America in September 2023 but is now also being made available to Drytac customers in the UK and in markets across Europe.

A 3.0 mil (75µ) clear polyester (PET) film with a clear ReTac adhesive, ReTac Clear PET forms part of Drytac's popular ReTac range of solutions. It has been specifically developed with the environment in mind and is ideal for POP, retail and hospitality window, wall, and counter top graphics.

The film can be applied to all flat and simple curved surfaces. Installation is clean as the film does not require water to be applied. It also offers residue free removal, making life easier for users when a graphic has reached the end of its life.

Printable on both Latex and UV machines, ReTac Clear PET is available in roll widths of up to 54 inches (approx. 137cm). It is coated on one side with ReTac ultra removable adhesive, protected by a siliconised kraft release paper.

With an indoor and outdoor durability of up to five years, ReTac Clear PET offers a sustainable solution that can be easily applied, re-positioned



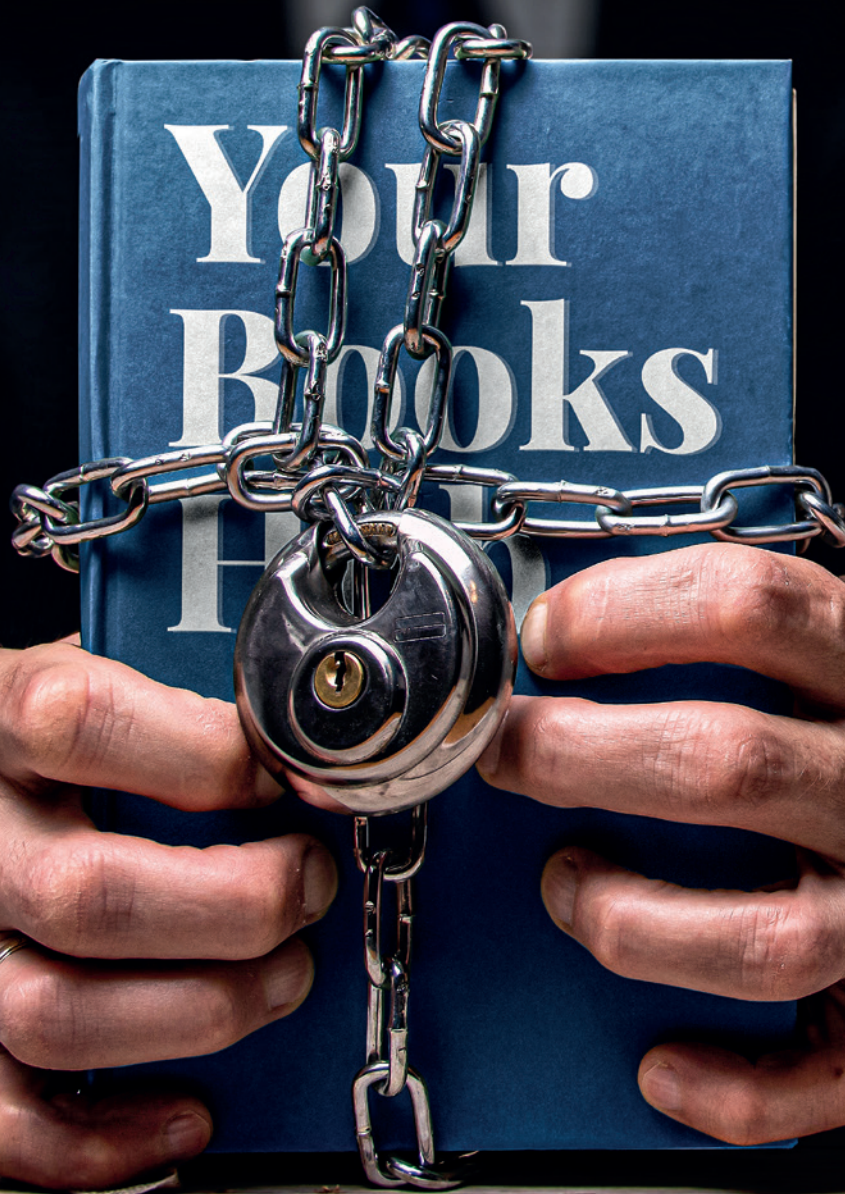
and removed without surface damage or loss of adhesion.

"Having received some excellent feedback from customers during the initial launch phase of ReTac Clear PET, we are delighted to be able to extend the availability of the film to users in the UK and across Europe," says Kieran Blacknall, Academy Manager at Drytac. "A highly flexible film with excellent durability, ReTac Clear PET is the ideal solution for creating eye catching applications across a range of markets."

www.drytac.com

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Canon updates varioPRINT 6000 Series TITAN

Since its launch in 2017, the Canon varioPRINT 6000 series TITAN has sold more than 1000 units across EMEA, securing a market-leading position in monochrome sheet-fed production printing. Building on that success, Canon is launching updates to the series with an upgraded user interface for all models, a more robust toner and a new Print Guard Module option for even higher print durability in transactional document processing.

Delivering the renowned reliability, productivity and print quality benefits of the series, the varioPRINT 6000 TITAN targets high-volume markets and is capable of handling up to 10 million A4 prints per month. Catering to a wide variety of monochrome environments, the series comes in three versions, Standard, TPxp and MICR, which cover different customer market segments – general commercial, book, manual or in-house printing, transactional, and security printing. Standard, TPxP, and MICR presses are available in multiple speed versions with the possibility of temporary or permanent speed upgrades and a choice of paper input and finishing modules. The Canon varioPRINT 6000 series TITAN will be shown on the Canon stand in hall 8a at drupa 2024.

TAILORED TO MEET NEEDS

The three versions, Standard, TPxp and MICR, have been optimised for operating in the commercial and in-house print, transactional and security markets, so users can produce a large variety of applications, including



on-demand books, manuals, transactional documents, direct mail and financial documents, as well as applications printed on lightweight media such as pharma leaflets.

All varioPRINT 6000 TITAN speed models of the TPxp (transactional printing with extra performance) range have been designed specifically for the production of transactional documents and direct mail. The newly developed, more hard wearing, TPxp toner, combined with the latest optional Print Guard Module (PGM), provides a higher cohesive strength to further increase the durability of prints, which is crucial to sustain optimal print quality in environments using heavy duty, near line finishing equipment.

SCALABLE TECHNOLOGY

The varioPRINT 6000 series TITAN is available with temporary and permanent speed licences of 182, 221, 272 and 328 A4 ipm to adapt to the

changing print volumes of print service providers, as and when they need it. Via its DFD interface, the varioPRINT TITAN connects with a wide range of standard and heavy-duty finishing equipment. The optional Light Weight Media kit enables users to print on ultra light stock (45 gsm).

CLOSE TO ZERO OZONE EMISSIONS

Energy efficient, exceptionally reliable, and highly productive at up to 10 million A4 prints per month, the varioPRINT 6000 series TITAN helps high-volume print operations deliver exceptional-quality applications with drastically reduced production time. Thanks to its Gemini technology, the monochrome printer combines offset-like, single-pass duplex printing with low power consumption, no toner waste, and minimal noise and ozone emissions.

www.canon.co.uk/business/products/production-printers/digital-presses/varioprint-6000-titan

BOOST YOUR BRAND AND ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS WITH INNOVATIVE PACKAGING PRINTING

Tired of generic packaging that doesn't reflect your clients' unique brand identity? Look no further. This amazing new digital single-pass printer allows you to create high-quality, custom-printed packaging in-house, from corrugated boxes and pizza boxes to shopping bags, coffee bags, and more.

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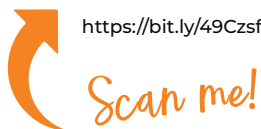
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Intec's new FB580 B3+ Digital Flatbed Cutter/Creaser

This incredibly compact dual tool head flatbed table supports cutting and creasing in one operation, boasting impressive tool pressures of up to 1.2kg for both creasing and cutting tools and comes complete with powerful vacuum system and high speed performance. With their combined industry-leading ColorCut Pro software, the FB580 brings many advanced features to aid design and production.

Powerful and accurate, the FB580 enables a broad range of products to be created, from sample and prototype packaging and protective cartons, to synthetic point of sale items and kiss-cut adhesive labels/stickers. A wide range of materials can be cut including folding box board, SBS, SBB and sheet card paper, rice paper, synthetics and polymers, sheet labels and vinyl's and more in weights up to 600 microns, with a max media area of 440 x 580mm.

Terri Winstanley, Marketing Manager, "Intec brings this very affordable, highly specified digital flatbed cutter into our ColorCut range, targeted at organisations requiring professional die cutting for on-demand or light production

work and prototyping. Its compact footprint and new operating system ensure that it can be placed in any environment for anyone to use. And with the FB580 being our entry-level flatbed table, we are conscious of customers whose business grows and, therefore, require easy equipment upgrade paths. So, when you purchase a ColorCut cutter, it allows for upgrades through the ColorCut model line, with all jobs being fully interchangeable between all the cutters."

Using a new high-powered controller and expanded graphics interface, available via the seven-inch touch screen and through its simple and intuitive ColorCut Pro 5 software, the FB580 enables you to work directly with provided plugins for Adobe Illustrator or CorelDRAW.

All Intec cutters offer instant job processing when reading a QR code and page marks printed on a sheet.

However, this is no longer necessary, and a fantastic new feature is now included on the FB580: reverse side cutting. The cutter processes printed jobs from the rear of the



sheet, where there are no QR codes or page marks printed, by reading the sheet edges, producing accurate cutting and creasing every time and expanding the range of media able to be finished.

The new 'no wires' working environment allows the cutter to be operated independent of a PC, for frequently repeated jobs, loaded on a USB stick, making the device even more flexible and convenient for all - no skilled operators required!

The FB580 is a highly specified yet incredibly affordable entry-level digital flatbed.

www.intecprinters.com

Drytac announces global availability of ReTac Duo double-sided mounting adhesive

Drytac, the manufacturer of self-adhesive materials for the large-format print and signage markets, is delighted to announce the global availability of ReTac Duo double-sided mounting adhesive.

Previously only available in North America but now offered to customers worldwide, ReTac Duo is a clear, double-sided mounting adhesive on a clear PET carrier. It has a permanent adhesive on one side and ReTac ultra-removable adhesive on the other.

The permanent adhesive side of the film sticks to the desired graphic, while the ReTac ultra-removable adhesive on the other means the graphic can be easily applied, repositioned, and removed for repeated use.

Such is the flexibility and adaptability of ReTac Duo that it can adhere to walls, doors, windows, or any other smooth surface, without leaving behind residue when removed. This opens up its use in a wide range of projects, including eye-catching wall graphics, double-sided window graphics, removable posters and more.



ReTac Duo is self-wound on a two-sided, PE-coated siliconised Kraft release paper, while the film is supplied with outdoor durability of two years, making it an ideal solution for both short- and long-term applications.

"We are delighted to extend the availability of this innovative solution to our customers all around the world," said Dennis Leblanc, Senior Business Development Manager - North



America at Drytac.

"ReTac Duo is a highly effective product suitable for use in a range of projects, and we look forward to seeing how our customers use the film to produce creative applications."

www.drytac.com

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[†]Trustpilot score is correct at time of printing.

New Mimaki Tiger600 industrial dye-sublimation printer

Hybrid Services Ltd, Mimaki's exclusive UK and Ireland distributor, has announced the addition of the Japanese manufacturer's fastest-ever dye-sublimation printer to its new showroom facility in Cheshire. The recently refurbished venue now features the Tiger600-1800TS alongside the already extensive range of Mimaki's industrial printing and cutting solutions.

Clocking print speeds of up to 550m²/h, the Mimaki Tiger600-1800TS is a production powerhouse designed to handle even the most challenging large-scale textile projects. The new 1.8m wide printer incorporates high-density four-colour dye-sublimation inks in 10kg tanks for nonstop printing operations and maximum production efficiency.

Its waterless printing technology and OEKO-TEX® approved inks are designed to meet stringent environmental standards, perfect for ecologically focused print providers. These inks also help the Tiger600-1800TS boast outstanding washability results to deliver long-term product sustainability and high user satisfaction with printed output.

The new Tiger600-1800TS is



installed in Hybrid's showroom alongside Mimaki's broad selection of wide-format dye-sublimation, direct-to-film, and textile printers, giving users the widest choice of fabric printing options in one location, all year round. The venue is designed as a working environment for training, sampling, events, and product demonstrations, enabling users to get first-hand experience with

Mimaki technology.

Beyond textile printing solutions, the extensive showroom also features solvent, UV, cutting, and full-colour 3D technology for those who operate print businesses across the range. As Andrew Gregory, Hybrid Services' Sales Director, states: "Hybrid and its resellers can bring potential customers here to make sure the technology they're choosing

exactly meets their needs, while at the same time seeing what the next Mimaki solution could be for them in the future as their business grows."

The Hybrid Services showroom is open five days a week, and prospective companies looking for a demonstration or training can get in touch or book an appointment through their Mimaki reseller.

www.hybridservices.co.uk

Solopress launches revamped design service

Solopress has announced a Design Service that signals a renewed focus on graphic design for the online printer.

Solopress has redeveloped its graphic design service, now branded 'Solopress Design,' to become more accessible and user-friendly to customers wishing to outsource their artwork.

The in-house design team at Solopress are clearly experienced in preparing artwork at the pre-press stage. The business has pulled designers from its own ranks, plus one new hire, to create 'Solopress Design' and meet the demand for commercial graphic design.

For customers, putting the Solopress Design team in charge of designing for print sidesteps many common issues such as those surrounding resolution, bleed area and colour gamut.

However, Solopress Design doesn't stop there.



The service also offers digital asset creation, enabling brands to maintain a cohesive identity across both physical and digital media. For businesses that are rebranding or starting from scratch, Solopress Design will even create a logo and brand guidelines.

Solopress Design offers five tiers of service, from minor amendments through to "Design Plus". With this top tier service, a senior

designer will help clients with no pre-existing assets to develop artwork from concept through to print. Each of the five tiers features clear guidelines and a pricing structure that manages customer expectations and avoids nasty surprises in terms of costs.

According to senior designer Richard Kemp: "Customers who aren't used to procuring design work are often apprehensive about the process. What assets would they need to provide? How do they brief the job in? Most importantly, will the costs spiral out of control?"

"The Solopress Design Service takes away those worries with a straightforward briefing process and a transparent pricing structure."

Customers can learn more about the new service or submit their own briefs on the website.

www.solopress.com/design

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Bridging the gap

Well, I promised that this column would be all about working practice. Still, I could hardly resist starting without a passing mentioning the Princess of Wales and the unfortunate Photoshop edit, which is entirely consistent with so much I have been writing about within these pages in recent years. **Martin Christie** writes...



In particular, there was a piece titled *Don't Try this at Home*, which I should now add even if that home is a small palace. The gist was to leave the proper jobs to the professionals and not the amateurs, even if they were using an apparently proper editing program.

I didn't take a close interest in the saga, unlike most of the tabloid pundits who suddenly became experts in photo manipulation, but even a brief glimpse revealed inconsistencies with the fingers of hands, which I have listed as one of the Achilles heels of AI and awkward joins of items common with careless use of content-aware or other cloning techniques.

The doctoring of photos is almost as old as photography itself. George Orwell's anti-hero Winston Smith had a job in the grim, dystopian novel *1984*, doctoring past and present news by airbrushing out of history people no longer in favour. It's a principle that has been used in recent times by unwelcome politicians or former colleagues and now awkward associations. I've done it myself in a less contentious manner to tidy up group shoots and remove stray heads and other body parts from what would otherwise be an attractive memory. A photo is, after all, just a snapshot in time — not a perpetual

monument. It's not real, only a reflection of reality. No more so in this increasingly artificial digital world.

Obviously, the royals didn't pass their edited picture to me for inspection before going to print. Otherwise, I would likely have spotted the errors and pointed them out, a service I extend to most regular customers as a matter of course. Understanding what the software can and can't do goes with the job, and correcting it is part of the professional print service, where an experienced eye knows instinctively what to look for. Producing a better copy reflects as much on the business as it does on the original.

BRIDGE: PRINT-ON-DEMAND POWERHOUSE

So, moving seamlessly on to the topic for this month, is Adobe Bridge the most useful and underused technical aid for print-on-demand workflow? With the caveat that other software is available, if you are subscribing to Adobe Creative Cloud, or just a couple of its apps, Bridge should come as part of it and is the essential link to any or all of them. But even if you don't use Adobe, you can still get Bridge as a free download to organise your assets.

It could really do with a more definitive name as bridges generally only link two places, whereas this one is more of a central hub, allowing traffic in all directions more like a complex roundabout.

At its most basic, it is a search engine that allows you to view thumbnails, details, or both. All files and folders in a drive or individual files in those folders. But it is far more because it allows you to organise, rename, remove or replicate any of them as well as move effortlessly into compatible editing or design software, primarily Photoshop, Illustrator or InDesign. And because they are all synchronised, any changes you make in one will be immediately applied to the other.

So it's a lot more than spotting your favourite footwear in the sock drawer as most browsers are.

DISCOVERING CONCEALED INFORMATION

The main issue we face over the counter or via the internet connection is the amount of concealed information in digital content beneath the simple names and numbers. Increasingly, customers are not completely aware of exactly what they are sending. Even if they have worked out how to forward it from their phone, they may not know the shape, size, or even what type of file it is. It may be something created and passed on by someone else, so they rely on and expect all the help we can give them. We may not be able to print it immediately, but we do need to know if we can, how long it will take, and how it will look on paper.

Bridge can give you most of this information at a glance — how it was created, when it was created, and what it is actually made of. It will display pixel dimensions, and if it doesn't, it's a good sign that this is a vector file, and in the case of multi-page PDFs, it will show the number of pages hidden behind the single face of the file. It will display transparency, so you will know which files are layers and, therefore, also potentially editable.

As I deal with a lot of digital images of unknown origin, I like to check first and foremost how it was shot and what it was shot with before I answer the familiar question of how big it will go in print. Bridge goes a long way to predicting that before I even open the file.

To start with, you want to select your preferences (Edit > Preferences), which will give you a list of options for opening, cataloguing, labelling and saving files, including a go-to source that you have in regular use — like a downloads folder. There is a cache where, if you have the room, you can store recently used files for recovery or automatically discard them after a certain time. You can prioritise files in a folder or sort them based on name, size or type. Alternatively, you can actually physically move files around by using the pointer tool to put them in the order you prefer.

This is particularly useful when a number of files are to be printed in

different sizes — A3 or A4, for example, or on different papers — so you can print one batch and then another. Under Tools there is an actual Batch Rename option which does more than its title as you can also copy to another folder -A3 in card for example — and add the quantity. You can then apply any edits — like bleed — to that copy without affecting the original. Within that folder you can simply duplicate one or several copies with a right click mouse action so you can edit several options.

ORGANISE & AUTOMATE PRINT WORKFLOW

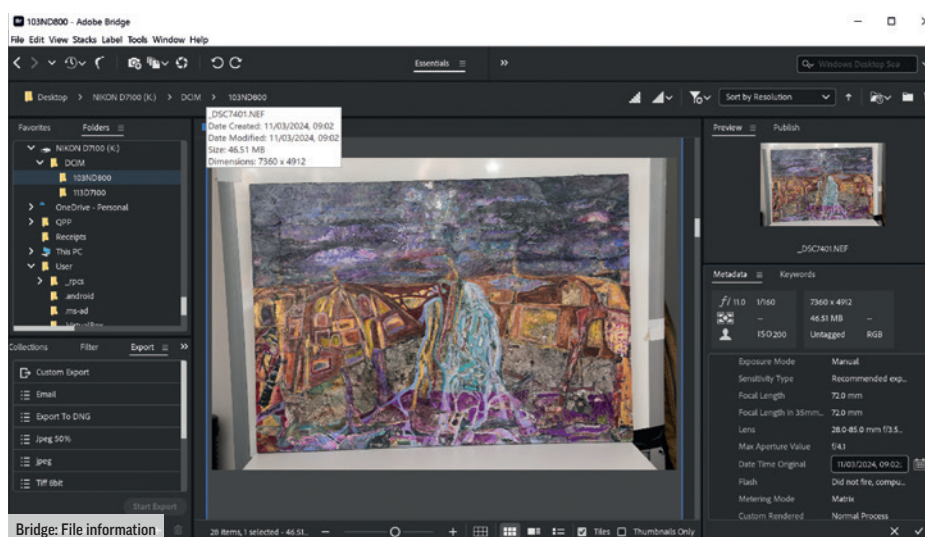
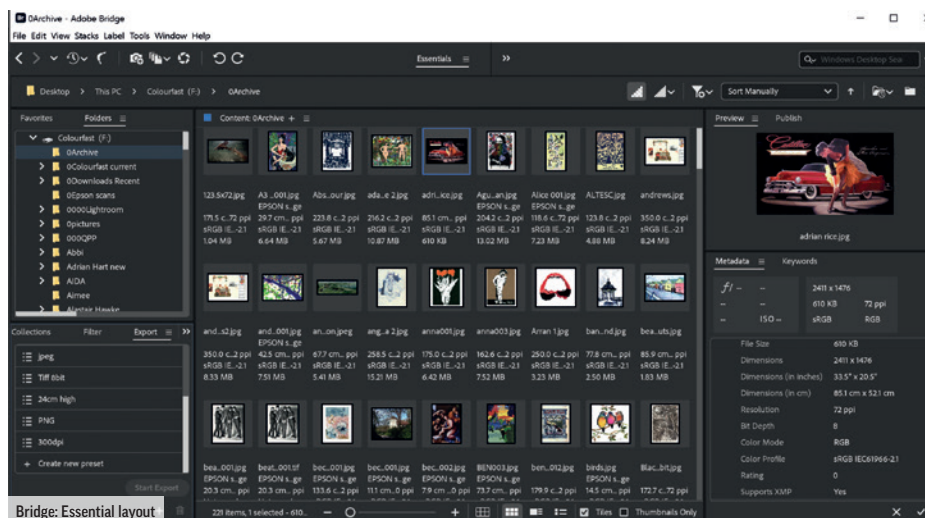
I can't cover everything that Bridge does, but I'm just highlighting the functions most often useful in the print room, and they come up on a daily basis, so getting an organised workflow is vital to an efficient production line. If you are using dual monitors — which is almost essential these days — you can not only have the editing app open on one, while browsing files in Bridge on the other, but Bridge itself can open a secondary window so you can follow files, folders and drives without having to minimise them, as well as transfer one to another. It's some of the little things that will make a difference to time in the working day.

The flexibility of a broad screen view of work is so important when customers are often working from a version smaller than the palm of a hand, typing text with a thumb, and mistakes that are easily missed are only revealed on a bigger vista. The fact that it may not be your full responsibility to check isn't much consolation when the print is going into the bin, or you have to negotiate the price of a reprint — or just find the time to do it when it's on a deadline.

If you are opening Bridge for the first time, it can look daunting with all its panels compared to the simplicity of Windows Explorer, for example. But that is its advantage when you are familiar with it.

In Explorer trying to customise the details or thumbnails to give you any useful information is quite tedious, whereas Bridge enables you to check drives, content and details all at the same time, and is completely adjustable.

This means you can create an individual working space that you find suits you and still have a default that will allow another user to drop into your seat without getting confused. You might want a side panel to show all the metadata of a file as well as a preview or choose the particular statistics relevant to a regular job. As well as the



basic facts it may be useful to know if a particular colour profile has been saved with the file — intentionally or not. This might explain why it prints a different colour to that displayed on the customer's phone screen. Camera data will reveal not only the device used but also the capture settings, which will largely dictate the quality and clarity of the file.

You can go directly from Bridge to processing functions in other apps. In Photoshop, this includes batch processing, photo merge and arranging a contact sheet. The latter can also be used to quickly lay up multiple images on a page such as creating a collage. You don't always have to work within the box!

The Output mode also allows you to produce a contact sheet as well as any other standard or custom PDF presentation or print. In addition, there is a relatively new Export option in the bottom left panel, which enables you to create a specific preset file as long as it is in pixel format — so JPG, TIF, PNG, etc — and in whatever size, and whichever folder you prefer. This way, you can complete several tasks automatically and almost instantly, saving print and proof

files for archive and email at the same time.

Bridge also has a very powerful search engine because it trawls the metadata. It can find things in folders or drives that you may spend ages looking for, trying to remember where you put them or where someone else would have saved them. In a shared studio environment, this can save a lot of heartache, especially when we move on to sharing workflow, which I shall cover in a future column.

A bonus is that you can search for images in Adobe Stock — that rapidly expanding resource of licensed content of pictures, graphics and templates that you can use legitimately if you have subscribed to it and according to the particular licence terms. This is in contrast to the plundering of copyright material that the general public seems to care little about which could well get a small or big business into big trouble if it came to the test.

If you have been using Bridge, I probably haven't told you anything you didn't already know, but if you haven't tried it yet, we'll continue the adventure next month.

PAULA O'BRIEN RICOH DIRECTOR OF SALES

Ricoh UK has announced Paula O'Brien as the new Board Director of Sales, succeeding Glenn Griggs who was appointed to lead Ricoh UK as CEO in July 2023.



Glenn Griggs, CEO, Ricoh UK, commented on the appointment: "I am delighted to welcome Paula to the Ricoh family. Our customers and sales teams are set to benefit greatly from the wealth of experience and the people first approach that Paula brings to the role. Paula's leadership and clear vision for the future will be crucial in underpinning Ricoh's market position as we further develop our service offerings, starting with becoming the leading workspace integrator in the UK."

Paula O'Brien, Director of Sales, Ricoh UK, said: "It's an incredibly exciting time to be joining Ricoh as both the company and the market are in a period of evolution. We have a great opportunity to help our customers solve a plethora of business challenges and support their business and technology functions, in what is an increasingly complicated digital journey."

"I look forward to working with Glenn and the rest of the leadership team to deliver success for our people and our customers and can't wait to meet and listen to my new colleagues as I get to know the business."

www.ricoh.com

VICKY HUDSON JOINS PYRAMID DISPLAY MATERIALS

Pyramid has announced the newest addition to their team. Vicky Hudson, starts as a Sales Representative working out of their Gateshead Branch. She brings



a wealth of experience and expertise to the team, after 10 years with William Smith Group as an Account Manager.

Pyramid are confident that she will make a valuable contribution to their organisation and help them continue to grow and thrive.

www.pyramid-display.co.uk

Hayley Hodgson: Signbox General Manager



Signbox Ltd has appointed Hayley Hodgson as General Manager. Hayley brings 18 years of experience working in the sign industry, 13 years in Project and Account Management and five years in Strategic Operations and Management.

Hayley joins Signbox after 14 years at Octink. During her time there, she project managed numerous high-profile signage contracts while running a small team of Junior Project Managers. Following her success, she became Head of Project Management, looking after a team of over 20 experienced Project Managers before taking on the role of General Manager at the company in 2020.

"In my time in the industry, I have focused on the professional and personal growth of myself and my teams. I have known about Signbox for a long time, and I know they are a forward-thinking company with a fantastic culture for innovation and excellence in sign making. I am also keen to get more involved in new sectors and products. There is great potential to do this with Signbox," says Hayley.

Mark Bartlett, Managing Director of Signbox Ltd, says, "Hayley brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success in the industry. She is a truly exceptional performer in our industry and we are extremely confident that she will play a pivotal role in taking Signbox into a new and positive era of innovation and success for our company."

www.signbox.co.uk

Michelle Thirlby: Operations Director at Inktec



InkTec has announced the promotion of Michelle Thirlby to the role of Operations Director. In her new position, Michelle will manage the daily operations of the company, including overseeing the finance

and service teams. Her responsibilities will also encompass employee welfare and development.

Joey Kim, Managing Director of InkTec Europe,

commented, "As InkTec continues to grow with new product developments being launched and more in the pipeline, it's an ideal time for Michelle to assume the role of Operations Director."

Michelle Thirlby said, "I've faced a variety of challenges during my time so far at InkTec so far, and this promotion allows me to continue building and developing the operations side of the business to push the company forwards. My core focus will be to ensure continuous operational development and support for our customers, while also working closely with the team."

www.inktec-europe.com

TANCIA GROUP ENHANCES PROCUREMENT OPERATIONS

Tancia Group (T/A The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products) has expanded their procurement operations with the additions of Tammy Lui as Buyer and Marietta Stamatakis as Merchandiser under the management of Noemi Lecce-Cleere. Both Marietta and Tammy have worked in other positions within Tancia Group for the past year providing a solid foundation for this transition.

Tammy has worked in various industries in Hong Kong and the UK, where she established compliance and supply chain management practices. Tammy will leverage this expertise in her role as buyer with



a focus on strengthening Tancia's sustainable product offering, elevate quality controls and closely monitor buying prices.

Marietta, Junior Merchandiser, having managed the consumable and internal ordering processes at Tancia Group for the past 12 months, will extend her scope of work to include management of life cycle of stock ordering and monitoring along with Noemi. This dedicated resource is set to streamline purchasing processes and improve operational efficiency, ensuring improved stock ordering and delivery times.

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FESPA – on the fly

Once again the QPP roving reporters are winging it. With the copy deadline during the FESPA festivities this report is live. A good mixture of first impressions from our team in Amsterdam and a sprinkling of insider knowledge on what has been projected pre-show.

This year FESPA Global Print Expo is co-located with European Sign Expo, Personalisation Experience and Sportswear Pro. With a strong focus on product innovation and delivering education and inspiration through a comprehensive content programme, the events support visitors to unlock new opportunities in speciality print, signage, personalisation and sportswear.

Headline partners for this year's event include Brother, Mimaki, CarbonQuota, ROQ and Stahls. swissQprint, AGFA, Berger Textiles, PrintFactory and ROLAND are among 525 suppliers with over 75 launches announced, including direct to garment printers, cutters, sustainable materials and consumables, FESPA 2024 is set to be a key launch platform.

New for 2024, within Sportswear Pro attendees could explore solutions for the entire sportswear manufacturing process, from design and production through to decoration, with products on display from Ara NV, Ricoma International Corporation, ORAFOL Europe, Aisten Lab Technology and more. On the 21 March, Sportswear Pro featured a one day conference programme of expert led discussions delving into sportswear trends, the future of the industry, near shore manufacturing and more.

In Hall 5, European Sign Expo focused on opportunities throughout the signage and visual communications industries with 115 exhibitors, including software partner Navori Labs and textile frame partner EFKA.

In Personalisation Experience visitors were able to explore the latest customisation enabling solutions from suppliers including Antigro Designer, Universe Production, Shirt Industries Ltd., Kit Builder and PunchCloud - discovering an array of personalised products and exploring how they can take advantage of the value add that customisation offers their business. A one day conference programme ran alongside the exhibition on 20 March, where expert speakers discussed the future of personalisation, on-demand production, the role of AI in customisation and more.

A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF EDUCATION AND INSPIRATION

The new Digital Signage Lounge, in partnership with Navori Labs and Apametal, highlighted recent innovations in digital signage and demonstrated how it can be aligned with print. Visitors were also able to network with peers and attend a series of fireside chats hosted by industry experts.

Also new, Personalise Make Wear showcased the end to end production of personalised sportswear and sports related merchandise across four workflows. Hosted by FESPA's Textile Ambassador and CEO of Textintel, Debbie McKeegan, the smart factory comprised of catwalks showcasing the finished products. Fireside chats focused on cutting edge solutions and processes, and there were expert guided tours of the latest technologies for personalised products.

Sustainability Spotlight displayed an array of environmentally conscious graphic and textile alternatives, each with its own information card, and World Wrap Masters hosted the European leg of the competition and the series final. Visitors were able to attend training workshops and demonstrations delivered by The Wrap Institute.

www.fespa.com

Drytac has long been a supporter of FESPA's events and once again featured at the showpiece Global Print Expo this year. Visitors had the opportunity to see Drytac materials in action on machinery from various major manufacturers including Mimaki, Epson and Ricoh, witnessing first-hand the quality they can achieve working with Drytac products.

In addition, expert Drytac staff were on hand to offer advice and guidance to visitors about the many solutions available from Drytac and the type of applications users can create by working with these materials.

"We're delighted to be working with manufacturer partners to showcase our leading products and solutions at the FESPA Global Print Expo 2024," said



Hayden Kelley, CEO of Drytac.

"As one of the best attended events on the global print calendar, we enjoyed speaking with visitors from around the world about the many applications we can support them with, and discussing how working with Drytac materials can help them access opportunities in exciting and profitable markets."

www.drytac.com

EFI NEW VUTEK Q3H XP AND EFI PRO 33R PRINTERS

"Our leading edge technology shown at FESPA gives customers unmatched capabilities and opportunities to achieve profitable growth in digital inkjet production printing," said EFI VP of Worldwide Marketing Ken Hanulec. "With a comprehensive portfolio of production printers with the most advanced technology and innovative inks and coatings for the sign and display, packaging, and textile markets, our exhibit in Amsterdam proved an essential stop for growth and profit minded print providers."



The new, 3.3 metre wide VUTEK Q3h XP hybrid flatbed/roll-fed LED printer, making its worldwide debut, is designed to provide high quality imaging and production level printing for faster turnarounds. The printer is available with four (CMYK) or six (CMYK, l, k) colours and optional white and clear inks. Industrial built for multiple shift operation and 24/7 printing, the VUTEK Q3h XP printer produces up to 96 boards per hour (up to 905 square metres per hour) and features advanced board/sheet and roll to roll media handling and high speed automation options, which are critical with today's labour issues and cost-reduction initiatives.

The new 3.2 metre EFI Pro 33r roll to roll LED printer is based on the highly

successful Pro 32r+ platform, with notable enhancements to overall printer performance — up to a 35% speed increase in POP mode — and higher imaging quality, reliability and dot accuracy with the new 5 pL Ricoh Gen-6 printheads. Standard features that drive process efficiencies include an integrated mesh kit for printing on porous substrates, a wrinkle analyser to help avoid printhead strikes, built-in backlit proofing lights, and a built-in Fiery digital front end (DFE). Value added options that add even more versatility and process efficiencies include white and clear (UltraClear Coat) inks, Y-slitters, automatic blockout and backlit printing, and more. With print speeds up to 260 square metres per hour, the Pro 33r platform is built to help customers be more competitive and profitable, win more jobs, confidently commit to larger capacity runs, and lower their operational costs.

EFI was also exhibiting the 3.5 metre wide EFI VUTEK Q3r roll to roll LED printer that provides a complete print to finish graphic workflow, from RIP to finished product. The fastest superwide format roll to roll solution in its class, it prints at up to 558 square metres per hour. The printer, which can print both white and clear ink together, has a true output resolution of up to 1200 dpi. The clear ink, EFI's UltraClear Coat, is a versatile spot or full clear coat ink that can be used for decorative, high quality effects on prints or as a final coating to help protect graphics against abrasion, chemicals and fading. UltraClear Coat prints inline, simultaneously with the image — without slowing down production speeds in certain printer models — in gloss or matte finishes.

www.efi.com

MIMAKI KEBAB HS TAKES DIGITAL PRINT BEYOND SHAPE LIMITATIONS



Mimaki Europe launched their brand new Kebab HS, debuting worldwide at FESPA. Serving as an optional system for Mimaki's renowned UJF Series flatbed UV printers, the Kebab HS enables seamless 360 degree printing on cylindrical objects, such as bottles and tumblers. This latest

solution can also print directly on tapered objects, including glasses and cups.

The Kebab HS is the latest entry into Mimaki's Kebab Series of optional systems for the UJF Series of flatbed UV printers. Over 1,600 Kebab units are already installed in EMEA with an average of one out of five UJF users choosing to add this optional system to their existing workflow. UJF flatbed printers equipped with a Kebab option can achieve three dimensional direct to object printing, furthering the variety of print applications possibilities.

Building on the capabilities of the Kebab MkII, the new Kebab HS takes productivity and performance to the next level. Three times faster than the previous model, the Kebab HS significantly increases production efficiency and takes approximately 10 minutes to print per material, ideal for users handling mid-volume orders with a single printer. It also broadens application possibilities in UV printing further, by allowing personalisation on both cylindrical and tapered items with sloping sides.

Arjen Evertse, General Manager Sales at Mimaki Europe, commented, "Here at Mimaki, we look to constantly innovate our existing products and create added opportunities for print service providers, and the launch of the Kebab HS is one of the latest examples of this. As an optional solution, it allows the users of our popular UJF Series printers to add another dimension to their product offering and up their competitive edge."

This option can be quickly installed, requiring only the attachment of the main unit to the UJF Series print table and certified service engineers are on hand to provide a seamless installation experience for all users. The current Kebab MkII and Kebab MkII L will remain available and are recommended for customers printing on small diameters (50mm or less) and materials longer than 280mm.

Mimaki is exclusively distributed in the UK and Ireland by Hybrid Services, with details of the UJF models, along with the full Mimaki range available on its website. www.hybridservices.co.uk

KORNIT DIGITAL REVEALS NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Kornit showcased new opportunities for brands and retailers, custom sportswear, home decor, and customised designers.

As part of these enhanced solutions, brands and retailers can capitalise on Kornit's next generation direct to garment offering, Atlas MAX PLUS — specifically designed to deliver the highest standards

of quality, reliability, and colour vibrancy across their businesses. Attendees were additionally offered a sneak peek at Kornit's breakthrough, direct to film solution, MAX Transfer, enabling both brands and retailers to expand application offerings with a unique hand-feel, enhanced durability, and placement versatility.



"Kornit has a proven history of innovation and pushing boundaries. At FESPA, we are proud to enhance this leadership with our latest solutions, providing customers with the creativity, flexibility, and productivity they and the industry need to address key challenges of speed to market, inventory reduction and sustainability," said Ronen Samuel, Chief Executive Officer at Kornit Digital.

FESPA's accompanying Sportswear Pro 2024 event featured the Kornit Atlas MAX POLY coupled with Orion Smart Curing. Targeting the sportswear segment, the solution transforms professional and recreational sportswear, teamwear and licensed gear with vibrant creations on polyester! and poly-blended apparel. Designers, producers, and creators in home décor can experience Kornit Presto MAX, which offers the industry's first brilliant white printing on coloured fabrics. The new NeoPigment™ Vivido ink achieves darker, deeper blacks and deeper colours, setting new standards with a pigmentbased process.

Quick print and screen printers experienced virtual demos of the Kornit Apollo, which delivers unprecedented scalable on-demand production, while learning about their innovative commercial terms, designed to reduce barriers to entry.

A DIGITAL PRINTING REVOLUTION: KORNIT MAX PLUS AND KORNIT MAX TRANSFER

Kornit MAX PLUS is an all in one system for decorated apparel — now incorporating smart curing, flexible pallet sizing, automated calibration, and unmatched colour consistency. The system takes the proven Atlas MAX platform to the next level with productivity of up to 150 garments per hour. The integrated solution pushes smart production even further for production flexibility, consistency, and quality.

In an industry clamouring for innovation and versatility, Kornit proudly

announced a technology demonstration of Kornit MAX Transfer – a breakthrough enhancement to its esteemed Atlas MAX PLUS collection. This marks a significant milestone, as the solution emerges as one of the industry's first industrial solutions tailored for direct to film printing. A transformative leap forward for a market in transition, the solution can produce hundreds of impressions per hour without the mess of powders. Designed for those who demand the best, the offering delivers unparalleled hand feel, print quality and durability while adhering to Kornit's commitment to sustainability.

Of course the Kornit may not fit into all our print rooms and to add these new product opportunities we suggest utilising the trade services of our friends at Snuggle.

www.kornit.com

www.snuggle.co.uk

SWISSQPRINT NOW GRANTS 36 MONTHS WARRANTY ON ALL MACHINES

Developed and built in Switzerland, swissQprint large format printers are renowned for their reliability and durability. swissQprint backs this up with a new warranty period that far exceeds the industry standard.

swissQprint announced at FESPA that customers will now receive a 36 month parts warranty starting from delivery of their large format printer. The industry standard is 12 months. "We make this promise with confidence, because we only ever use high quality components and our printers are robustly built and very reliable," emphasises Carmen Eicher, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer at swissQprint. "Customers have always appreciated our machines' high uptime."

The new warranty provisions apply with immediate effect to all new machines and for all models, namely the Kudu, Nyala, Impala and Oryx flatbed printers and the Karibu roll to roll printer. The provisions stipulate preventative maintenance intervals. "Preventative machine maintenance has always been a principle of ours to avoid problems arising in operation," concludes Carmen Eicher.

www.swissqprint.com

MIMAKI LAUNCHES END TO END UV PRINTING SOLUTION

Hybrid Services, announced the launch of a full UV print and cut solution, consisting of the JFX600-2531 large format flatbed UV printer, and the CFX-2531 flatbed cutter. Both solutions were demonstrated together for the first time at the Mimaki

Experience Centre in Amsterdam during FESPA 2024.



The Mimaki JFX600-2531 flatbed UV printer responds to market demand for a larger print area, following the positive reception of the JFX600-2513 launched in 2021. Offering the same high levels of productivity and maximum resolution of 1,200 dpi, the increased print-bed size of 3.1m in length opens new possibilities for printers, particularly in architectural applications. Due to the expanded print-bed, the JFX600-2531 can print directly on larger sized (for example 10' x 5' or twin 8' x 4') substrates making it ideal for signage and architectural applications. Printing on architectural substrates commonly involves applying a printed film onto the surface, so direct printing allows for the original surface texture of the substrate to remain, excluding the design area.

Another feature carried over from the JFX600-2513 is the 2.5D printing function, which creates texture to the surface of the print for added customisability and value.

To streamline production when printing standard 8' x 4' sheets, Mimaki has optimised the 'Toggle Print Function' for the JFX600-2531, which allows for automatic, consecutive printing at the front and rear of the print bed. Print operators can now set the print origin at two locations, meaning that manual processes, like replacing, fixing and cleaning the surface of a substrate, can take place while the printer continues to print on the other side. This works in conjunction with Mimaki's core technologies to create a seamless workflow, including the NCU (nozzle check function) and NRS (nozzle recovery function) to reduce downtime caused by missing or faulty nozzles.



Expanding Mimaki's cutting portfolio, the CFX-2531 is a high end solution which operates with increased speed and efficiency on substrates including popular 10' x 5' sizes. As a grand format

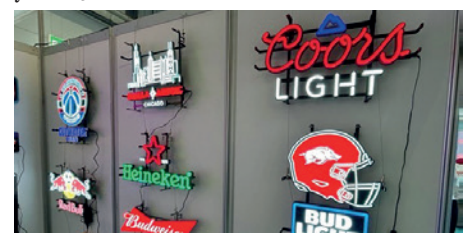
cutter, with a cutting area of 3,190mm x 2,540mm, the CFX-2531 can operate at the front and rear of the table, increasing productivity by simultaneously loading two 8' x 4' sheets. Offering an ideal solution for various sign graphics applications, the CFX-2531 can handle prints and materials such as stickers and signboards, as well as paper containers and corrugated boards. Improved accuracy, with the inclusion of a table plane tracking function, helps to ensure minimal material is wasted and is critical when it comes to V-cuts. In addition, the cutter can be equipped with up to four types of tools at once to reduce time required for tool changing and adjustment.

Hybrid's Sales Director, Andrew Gregory, anticipates a positive response to the launches. "We look forward to presenting these two new high end products during FESPA that further expand Mimaki's product line-up and deliver powerful grand format printing and cutting solutions for our sign and graphics, as well as industrial sector customers."

The CFX-2531 forms part of Mimaki's brand-new CFX Series, which also includes two additional models - the CFX-2513 and the CFX-2550 - with a print table of 1,300mm x 2,540mm and 5,080mm x 2,540mm respectively. This series is designed for those companies looking to grow their offering, due to the ability to expand the size even after the CFX is installed.

Arjen Evertse, General Manager Sales, Mimaki Europe, explained, "As a pioneer in UV technology, we are pleased to announce a high quality, high performing UV printing solution to add to our extensive portfolio, which will serve to further expand upon applications for print service providers. We understand how important substrate versatility is for printers, especially when expanding to new applications, so created both products in response to market demand." www.hybridservices.co.uk

We can promise you more FESPA insights in the next issue of QPP magazine and on the live website and newsletters. Till then, your QPP team are off for a beer.



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Navigator launches Home Pack 2X

Navigator has extended its Home Pack range with the recent launch of Navigator Home Pack 2X. This new pack with 200 sheets of 90gsm was designed to fulfil two main applications: double side printing and drawing/crafting, enhancing efficiency and reducing environmental impact.

Indeed, the top-quality double-sided printing capabilities of this thicker paper allow users to save up to 50% on paper by using both sides of the sheet while enjoying vibrant prints and impressive colour contrasts, thanks to its UHD Formula; at the same time, it is the perfect paper for children's artworks.

Navigator Home Pack 2X offers unparalleled versatility, empowering adults and children to explore endless possibilities. For families seeking inspiration for their creative projects, Navigator Home Pack 2X offers the solution: each pack includes a QR code that leads to a dedicated landing page featuring a variety of activities, starting with a sheet of Navigator paper: from crafting paper plane races to creating paper trees.



Navigator Home Pack 2X adds to the existing Navigator Home Pack – an 80gsm pack with 250 sheets – and Navigator Home Pack XS – a pack with 150 sheets of 80gsm, both tailored to meet the needs of households, particularly in an era of widespread teleworking. Paper is here to stay, and

Navigator paper is here for you, being part of people's lives across multiple generations throughout various stages of life.

Navigator is a global paper brand, present in more than 130 countries, produced by The Navigator Company, one of the first companies worldwide to officially commit to be Carbon

Neutrality by 2035. The company is also committed to an 86% reduction in direct CO₂ emissions throughout various stages of life. Furthermore, by 2030, 80% of its primary energy consumption will be sourced from renewables and by 2035 100% of the electricity will have that origin.

www.navigator-paper.com

Antalis Curious Metallics chosen for prestigious poetry book

The shimmering metallic lustre of Curious Metallics was selected for the cover of poetry book *An Druideog*, inspired by the iridescent feathers of the starlings of the title poem.

Antalis' Curious Metallics White Gold, 300gsm, was chosen for the book's cover for the way the metallic lustre of this creative paper subtly transforms when viewed from different angles.

The book, *An Druideog*, was designed by Gabriel Walsh of Capiche Design for Irish poet Ciarán MacAibhistín. It features a collection of poems which are a reflection of the poet's life as he approaches his twilight years.

The title poem depicts starlings as dull creatures until light shines upon them, and they are transformed from starlings to birds of paradise. Gabriel comments: "The iridescent nature of the print substrate beautifully captures this notion, echoing the words of the poet while illustrating the beauty of the starling feathers."

The cover was printed on an HP Indigo 7900.

Creative Papers Manager at Antalis, Vicky Weatherington, comments: "Curious Metallics



White Gold was the perfect choice for the cover of *An Druideog*. Its adds an extra dimension to the beautiful, abstract image of a starling that features on the cover. It's a great example of how choosing the right substrate can help bring a

project to life."

Curious is part of Antalis' creative papers range, all of which is carbon balanced as standard via World Land Trust.

www.antalis.co.uk

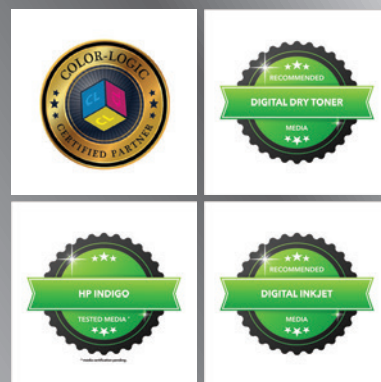


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Co-location attracted record visitor numbers

Printwear & Promotion LIVE! attracted record visitor numbers of more than 7,500 after a successful first co-location with Sign & Digital UK at the NEC in Birmingham.

With a total of 7,223 unique visitors attending the exhibition, this marks a huge increase of 2,247 visitors in 2023 (2024 unique visitors: 7,223 vs. 2023 unique visitors: 4,976). With 352 visitors choosing to attend for more than one day, visitor numbers at the exhibition reached 7,575 compared to 5,167 in 2023.

First-time exhibitor Gareth Gregson of Embroidery Machine Sales said: "We can't wait to come back. It's been really positive. We've had lots of new or potential customers come to visit us. It's been really good for us. As we're mainly internet-based, it's been good for people to come and see us. There's nothing like that personal touch in business."

While veteran exhibitor Jas Purba of ETC Supplies added: "As the last day came to an end, we reflected on the fantastic three days we'd had. We reconnected with hundreds of existing partners, catching up on their projects, and we also met hundreds of new faces. Printwear & Promotion LIVE! has become the main event for companies in the embroidery, printing and garment industry and with over 100 stands on display it's easy to see why. We can't wait to follow up with the connections we made and



we're already looking forward to next year's show."

These record visitor numbers and the overwhelmingly positive feedback from exhibitors have confirmed the value of the co-location in growing the show and the audience. In fact, over 80% of the visitors to SDUK took the time to visit P&P LIVE! during the three-day exhibition.

Event director Tony Gardner commented: "SDUK had struggled to recover since COVID-19, so we knew that this year's exhibition, the 35th but first under Datateam's ownership, was the

start of the rebuild. The show undoubtedly needed re-energising, and the new format made it feel like a re-launch. The success of the co-location has given us a real solid foundation to build upon for SDUK 2025, and in re-establishing the show as a central part of the calendar and an economic stimulus for the industry!

"Exhibitors reported that visitors were very keen to explore the technology, and many were ready to buy. Many deals were made on stands, with several announced on the Sunday – which is great news for everyone."

He added: "We've been delighted by the positivity from many exhibitors with regard to the two shows working together. Companies in SDUK say they have had lots of people come across from P&P LIVE! inspired by what they have seen and ready to talk about the equipment they need to get into these new markets. Over half of this year's exhibitors reserved stands for 2025 at the show!"

Both Printwear & Promotion LIVE! and Sign & Digital UK return to the NEC in 2025. Next year's co-location will take place from Sunday, February 23, to Tuesday, February 25, with P&P LIVE! in Hall 20 and SDUK in Hall 19. See you there!

www.printwearandpromotionlive.co.uk
www.signuk.com

swissQprint to exhibit a full product line up

A lot has happened since the last drupa eight years ago. swissQprint brought together all of their latest developments at drupa 2024. The entire range of large format printers appeals with a unique quality/performance ratio. These versatile machines achieve resolutions up to 1350 dpi and a maximum output of more than 300 m²/h. There are also plenty of new applications to discover at swissQprint.

DIVERSIFIED PRINTER RANGE

Kudu is the new high-end flatbed printer from swissQprint. This model has seen a meteoric rise in the first year since its launch, gaining solid market acceptance. The printer is built on a newly designed mechanical foundation and delivers amazing quality at high speed.

Karibu 2, the roll-to-roll printer from swissQprint, has made a



name for itself thanks to some unique attributes. Not only can it handle applications such as relief, varnish and neon printing, there are also clever features making this a very efficient machine. Two examples: the patented Tip Switch Vacuum and the integrated Mesh Kit.

The original swissQprint models – Oryx, Impala and Nyala – are now in their fourth generation. Nyala, the flagship, has for

nine years been Europe's most popular printer in its class. That comes not least from continuous development. All the printers feature a modular design enabling the right solution to be configured for particular needs.

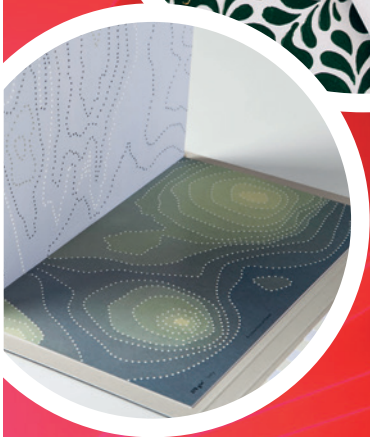
OUT OF THE ORDINARY APPLICATIONS

swissQprint users gain a competitive edge in several respects: firstly in terms of print

quality, secondly in terms of speed and adherence to deadlines as a result of the machines' reliability, and thirdly on account of their capability in out-of-the-ordinary applications. These include neon and texture prints, 3D visual effects, multilayer prints with 100% registration accuracy and many more. Plenty of inspiring examples were displayed in an application gallery on the swissQprint stand.
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Business Waste becomes first company in the UK to offer foil and label recycling services

Waste foil is one of the harder materials to recycle and most of the time it is sent for incineration. www.businesswaste.co.uk however, has successfully created a route for recycling that turns polymer based label waste and foil printing waste into new recycled products.

On the other hand, the waste from paper labels is shredded, blended, and turned into recycled paper of various grades.

Foil printing waste recycling involves collecting waste reels, transporting them to a recovery facility for weighing and documentation, and segregating paper for separate recycling. The material is then shredded, checked for contaminants, and then turned into recycled products.

Business Waste collects and recycles any type of waste from foil printing, including aluminium foil, polymer film, printer reels, polymer label waste, paper label waste, cardboard and carton



board. They offer free containers to store and dispose of the foil and labels and the collections can be managed at any time across the UK. Their customers are also rewarded with a 'Free duty of care' certificate and a 'Free zero waste to landfill' certificate.

One of the first companies to collaborate on foil recycling with Business Waste has been the OPM Group, a Leeds based printer specialising

in self-adhesive labels, flexible packaging solutions for the food and FMCG. They implemented new processes and equipment to store and recycle production waste, significantly reducing landfill contributions.

This partnership led to the OPM Group achieving Zero Labels 2 Landfill and Zero Foil 2 Landfill certifications from Business Waste.

Mark Hall, co-founder of BusinessWaste.co.uk says: "We know a lot of companies have struggled over the years with the sustainable disposing of foils and labels, incineration being the go-to process for them. This is why we couldn't be prouder to announce that we can now offer the option of recycling these materials into new products – a much greener option for our clients and the environment!"

More details about this can be found in the following blog.

www.bestblogsprint.co.uk/blog/foil-and-label-waste-recycling

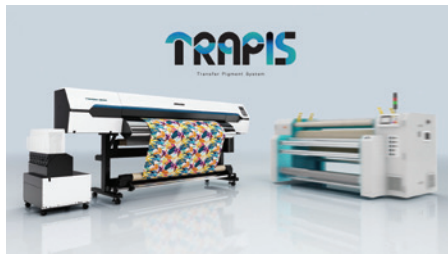
Mimaki launches environmentally conscious, two-step textile transfer printing solution TRAPIS

Mimaki Europe has announced the commercial release of its textile pigment transfer printing system, named "TRAPIS". Following the preview of the technology at ITMA 2023, this commercialised version, available later this year, offers an environmentally friendly and easy to operate solution for textile applications – saving almost 90% of wastewater compared to conventional methods.

SIMPLE TWO-STEP PROCESS

TRAPIS provides a simple two-step process, consisting of an inkjet printer and a calender. The design of choice is printed by the inkjet printer with a dedicated ink onto transfer paper, which is then transferred to the application via a calender. Unlike both analogue and digital conventional dye-printing methods, TRAPIS generates almost no wastewater, only that which is produced during the printer's automatic maintenance. Due to no pre-treatment or washing of the fabric being needed, this saves around 14.5 litres per square metre of water when compared to digital dye printing.¹

Additionally, this eliminates the need for wastewater treatment facilities, which can be both expensive and constrictive when it comes to where the solution is installed. Due



to the smaller size, it is possible for the TRAPIS system to be installed in a limited space, or even at the front of a print shop.

TRAPIS also offers print service providers an easy to use option for textile printing. As the process only involves printing and transferring, it does not require specialised skills to operate when compared to the more complex seven or eight step system for digital and analogue conventional printing. The lack of a fabric conveyor belt in the system further minimises the need for time intensive maintenance.

Print To A Range Of Materials

Further simplifying the process, TRAPIS is able to print on a wide range of materials, including natural fibres like cotton and silk in addition to blended fabrics, with just one type of ink. Due to this, the process can be flexible and adapt to customer demand, even with multi-material short runs. The accompanying ink has also

achieved the ZDHC MRSL Lv.3² certification and is bluesign APPROVED, to ensure that it is both worker and consumer safe, as well as an environmentally friendly product. As with Mimaki's existing textile solution portfolio, the prints produced with TRAPIS maintain stretchability and colourfastness, without impacting aspects like breathability and water absorbability, important for sectors like home textiles, activewear and fashion.

Arjen Evertse, General Manager Sales, Mimaki Europe, comments, "After the positive reception we received when we initially showcased the technology last year, we're pleased to now announce the release of this solution commercially at FESPA. Conscious of the evolving sustainability standards and customer demands, we created TRAPIS as an innovative and seamless system for print service providers looking to produce high quality and vibrant textile applications, while keeping cost, time and environmental impact to a minimum."

For further information on the TRAPIS system and the full Mimaki product line-up, visit: www.hybridservices.co.uk

1: According to Mimaki's original research, digital dye printing generates significant amount of wastewater by textile printing conveyor belt washing and fabric washing after dye fixation (steam). 2: ZDHC is a non-profit organisation based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, that works to eliminate the emission of hazardous substances in the textile and leather industry.



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Precise and fast labelling with new AP380e label applicator

Having a label applied accurately, precisely and wrinkle free is important as it elevates the product presentation, a critical factor in driving sales. DTM Print, an international OEM and solution provider for speciality printing systems, recommends semi-automatic labelling solutions like the AP-Series Label Applicators, as they offer a consistent look across all packages and help businesses speed up their production. The AP380e Label Applicator is the newest model of the AP-Series. This state of the art applicator is designed to streamline the label application process on round or cylindrical containers, offering increased speeds and new features, making the labelling process faster and more efficient.

With approximately 30% increased speed than the AP360e and AP362e Label Applicators, it ensures labels are applied swiftly and accurately, providing a seamless finish on a wide variety of containers. The inclusion of a new label liner re-winder further optimises operations by keeping the waste liner material off the floor and winding it into a roll for easy disposal.

Key Features of the AP380e Label Applicator

- **Precision Labelling:** The AP380e applies labels with impeccable precision, ensuring a professional appearance for every finished product.
- **Label Liner Re-winder:** The waste liner is rewound as the labels are applied to the container, allowing for less clutter during high usage periods.
- **Increased Speeds:** The applicator's enhanced speed capabilities result in a significant boost in labelling efficiency, allowing for more containers to be labelled per hour.
- **Reliable Performance:** For detecting the labels, the AP380e is equipped with a mechanical sensor flag that, unlike ultrasonic sensors, can process transparent labels without black marks. This purpose-built sensor flag has been installed in over 38,000 AP-Series applicators and is known for its longevity and reliability with various label types and thicknesses.
- **User-Friendly Operation:** The intuitive design of the AP380e makes it easy to operate, providing a hassle-free labelling experience.



Lea König, Product Manager for Labelling Solutions at DTM Print, summarises the benefits: "The AP380e optimises the production process thanks to the built-in liner re-winder. At the same time, it significantly increases the production throughput. With the AP380e labels are applied flawlessly and reliably, giving the finished products a highly professional appearance."

The AP380e is an ideal accessory to the label printing and applicator solutions offered by DTM Print, including the LX-Series of desktop colour label printers. It is also compatible with labels produced using various printing methods, such as flexographic, offset and thermal transfer.

www.dtm-print.eu

WidInnovations Laser Cutter adds new dimension for Manor Signs

Manor Signs is one of the leading sign makers in Buckinghamshire, with a host of local and national clients. Founded in 1991 in Amersham, the company was partly owned by Gareth and Becky Craythorne since 2016 and then taken over in 2018 when it moved to larger, more practical premises in Aylesbury.

"As the business has grown, so has our investment in larger equipment," says Gareth. He adds, "Amersham was our home, but the site we had in Amersham was very central, and while it was great for our awareness, it didn't give us the space we needed to match our growth. Having made the move to a much larger workshop and office space, we have been able to invest in the sort of equipment that helps us meet more customers' needs."

Manor Signs specialises in all types of signage and is always looking to innovate and invest where appropriate. Shortly after the move, the company made some significant investments, including a 3m x 2m CNC router, a hybrid roll-to-roll/flatbed HP Latex printer and a Bubble Jet applicator table, which opened a whole new range of applications it could offer.

Gareth visited the Graphtec GB stand at last



year's Sign & Digital UK exhibition and saw the WidLaser S1000 in action and was blown away, "The accuracy and sharpness of the cut with the WidLaser is incredible, and we could see immediately that this would be the right solution for us. The detail it can produce on materials like acrylic is light years ahead of what we were doing before, and we made the decision to purchase the S1000," says Gareth.

He adds, "The WidLaser seemed to tick all the boxes for us. It has a rotary option and adjustable bed heights, so we can work with different materials with different thicknesses. It also has a larger bed size, which means it fits in neatly with some of our larger production work. We investigated other machines and felt this



was the right one for us."

The WidLaser S1000 was installed at Manor Signs in the summer of 2023, and it soon settled in to become a vital part of the company's workflow and production process. "This was a whole new area for us, so we took the time to understand the machine and the technology properly. Even for more basic plotters, you need to understand the media you are using and adjust pressures and so on accordingly. It's the same with a laser, but probably even more so because the range of products it can cut is that much greater," he says.

He concludes, "We are still learning, and I think we'll never stop learning what the capabilities and potential of this machine are. I'll probably retire before we've exhausted all the possibilities! The important thing for us is that it is opening doors and helping us move into markets and businesses that we've never tapped into before. The WidLaser has been a fantastic investment, and we are looking forward to seeing where it will take us over the coming months and years."

www.graphtecgb.co.uk

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Signbox stands tall in the City of London

Surrey-based signage solutions provider Signbox has revealed how its HP Latex 800W printers, which were installed in the summer of 2023 by approved HP reseller Colyer, have helped it create a series of eye-catching interior graphics for 22 Bishopsgate, the tallest building in the City of London.

Signbox specialises in architectural signage, partnering with clients on all manner of sign projects for buildings around the UK. It began working with Multiplex, the global construction company behind 22 Bishopsgate, in 2019, producing a wide range of graphics and wayfinding signs for the 65-floor building.

Among the many applications delivered by Signbox on the 22 Bishopsgate project were experiential wall and ceiling graphics, which were installed in September 2023 at the entrance to the site's special public viewing experience. Located at the very top of the building, Horizon 22 is London's highest free viewing platform, offering 300-degree views of the city and showcasing its most iconic landmarks.

The entrance to Horizon 22 is now decorated with stunning graphics printed in-house at Signbox on its HP Latex 800W printers, some of the most recent additions to its production setup.



Using the HP Latex 800W machines ensured not only a high-quality print on all graphics but also offered a sustainable element to the project, given that all HP Latex printers use HP Latex ink, which is significantly kinder to the environment than solvent, eco-solvent, and UV inks.

In addition, the reliability of the duo of HP Latex 800W printers and their ability to deliver quality and accurate prints meant Signbox was able to meet the time-sensitive criteria of the project, delivering and installing the graphics on time for the client.

"We enjoyed many successes on this project," Greg Bailey – Senior Project Manager from Signbox, said. "We achieved all our self-imposed KPI targets set out at the start of the project and completed our works snag-free at the point of handover."



"Due to the project's dynamic nature, it required us to be hyper agile, reacting to changes in the design of the built environment as the project progressed. We managed to achieve all client variations and deliver these within the main project period."

"The final finishing detail of our work is outstanding; this was the opinion of the client team as well as ourselves."

www.signbox.co.uk

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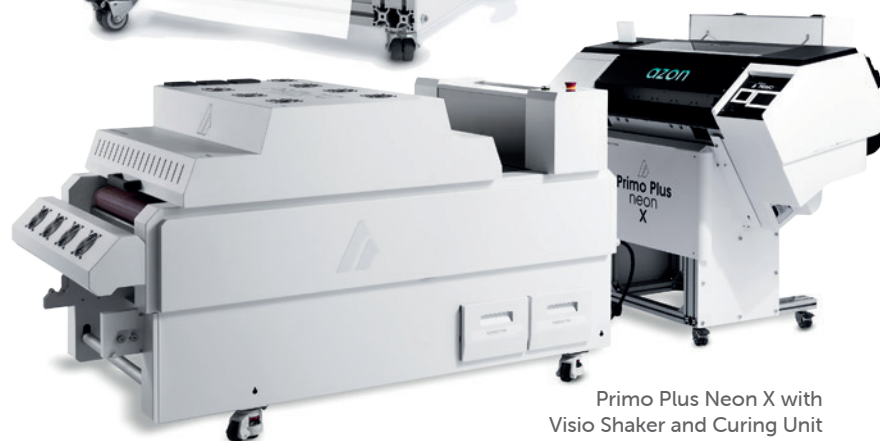
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Something to share?

FESPA FROLICS

A man goes into a pet shop, decides that he wants to buy a hamster, and takes it home. The hamster turns out to be not quite what he wanted so he called the pet shop and asked if he could return it.

The pet shop explained their no-return policy but said that he could try boiling the hamster and making jam from it.

The slightly perplexed man decides to do so, it takes a while, but he makes it.

On trying the jam, it was found to be bloody awful, so he threw it out of his kitchen window. He awoke the following morning to find a beautiful bunch of daffodils growing where he had thrown the jam.

He decided to call the pet shop and tell them, but they told him, 'but sir you must be mistaken, everyone knows you get tulips from hamster jam'.

APRIL FOOLS' WARNING

Believe nothing and trust no one this April Fools' Day. So it's just like any other day.

April Fools' Day is like a huge open mic night: Millions of people go out of their way to demonstrate how unfunny they are.

What monster plays the most April Fools' jokes? Frankenstein.

Did you hear about the guy who swapped the labels on the pumps at the petrol station? It was an April Fools' joke.

Excuse me, sir. Do you think they named April Fools' Day in your honour?

Why was the donkey annoying his friend? It was April Mules' Day.

NEW SECURITY JOB

I started a new job as a security guard last night. Before my boss left, he told me I had to make sure I watched the office all night. I am on season two already, but I don't know what it has to do with security.

HAVING A LAUGH IN AMSTERDAM

There is always time, at every great print exhibition, to swap a few jokes during downtime at the bar...

- I want to stay, but it's time to Van Gogh.
- In Amsterdam, everyone is a bit of a cycle-path.
- We had high expectations, but Amsterdam ex-ceed-ed them!
- You canal think what you want, but I'm never coming home!
- Tulips are better than one.
- Someone is always peddling something in the city.
- Having a cheesy time in Amsterdam!
- Living lager than life!
- This trip has been a piece of pancake.
- Skol and bones.
- I wish you were beer!
- I Amstel in love with Amsterdam.
- My favourite character in Star Wars in Heineken Skywalker.
- Why did the yogurt go to the art exhibition? Because it was cultured.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUATION

I'm not the easiest guy in the world to get along with. So when our anniversary rolled around, I wanted my wife to know how much I appreciated her tolerating me for the past 20 years. I ordered flowers and told the florist to enclose a card that read, "Thanks for putting up with me so long."

When my wife got the delivery, she called me at work. She asked, "Just where do you think you are going?"

"What do you mean?" I said.

She read the card aloud as the florist had written it: "Thanks for putting up with me. So long."

THE DEAD BAKER

Why couldn't the police identify the dead baker? He was a John Dough!

VOTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Discussing the environment with his friend, John asked, "Which of our natural resources do you think will become exhausted first?"

"The taxpayer," replied his friend.

HAVE YOU SEEN A DOCTOR?

Patient: Nurse, I keep seeing spots in front of my eyes.

Nurse: Have you seen a doctor?

Patient: No, just spots.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

A man was showing his friend a new set of matched golf clubs he had just bought.

"Doctor's orders," the man told his friend. "My wife and I have been gaining too much weight and we went to see the doctor about it. He said we needed more exercise, so I joined the country club and bought myself this set of golf clubs."

"What about your wife?" the friend asked.

"What did you buy her?"

"A new lawn mower," the golfer said.

HOME PRINT

Mum: Having trouble with your computer, son?

Son: My PC says it can't see my printer.

Mum: I'm not surprised. Look how messy your room is.

HAIR TODAY

The printshop manager recently made a casual comment about my shaggy mane of hair. He then went on to extol the virtues of a good haircut, which, he insisted, makes an elderly man look younger and a younger man seem more mature.

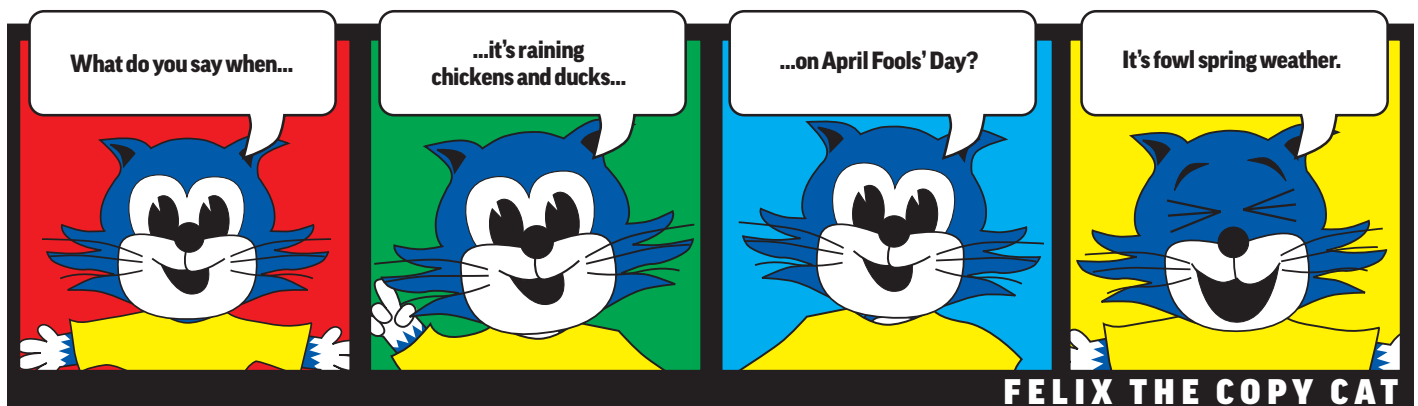
"How would a haircut make a middle-aged man like me appear?" I asked.

"Still employed," he answered.

2-30

Why wouldn't the dentist display his awards?

He wanted to prevent plaque build up.



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