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Making money with CorelDRAW®

Heat-applied graphics—The products

by Judy and John McDaniel, contributing writers

In this first installment, we delve into the popular products that can be created using heat-applied graphics.

What are heat-applied graphics?

Well, as the name implies, the process has something to do with graphics that are applied to products using heat as a catalyst. You might recall that some time ago, we examined image transfers. So you also might rightly ask, "What's the difference? Are we covering the same processes?" Well, close, but no cigar! As you will see, there is some equipment overlap, but the applications are different.

Even though in recent years, some heat-applied graphics are printed and then applied, the major difference in this category is that the created graphics are normally applied as an appliqué or sticker—think iron-on. Very often, the graphic applied is more akin to a vinyl-cut sign applied to a garment or some other fabric. Printing is not required.

This is in contrast to inkjet and laser printer image transfers, where the inks are applied (transferred) directly onto a garment, as well as dye sublimation image transfers, where the dyes penetrate and color the garment's fabric. In both of these processes, printing is required.

The need for this production process

In athletics, there has always been a need for team uniforms. The uniforms may have the appearance of being the same, but each is actually a *one-off*. It usually has the player's name and number, along with the team name and perhaps a logo. Before the advent of computerized graphics, uniforms may have been screen-printed with constant information, such as the team name and logo. (This step was probably omitted for children's teams or less wealthy

teams.) Players' names and numbers were applied using iron-on or sewed-on numbers and letters.

Then came the computer graphics revolution. Using a computer and computer-controlled cutter, it became possible to custom-cut materials that
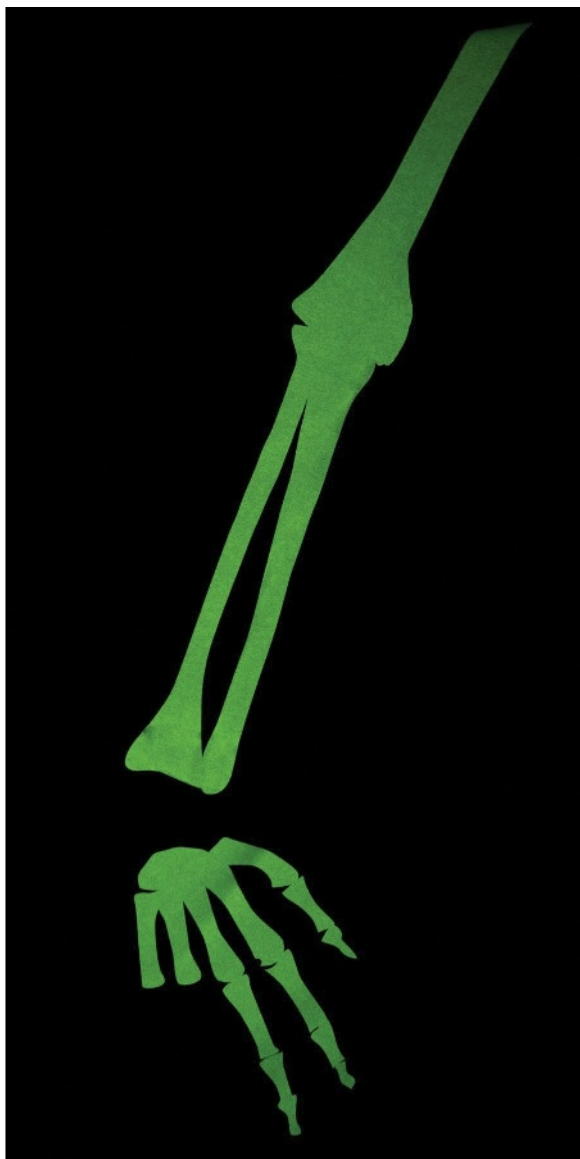
could be applied with heat for this task. Thus, the heat-applied computer-graphics process was born.

This process continues and prospers today for many reasons:

- It provides the ability to produce one-off products economically, although primarily for garment and fabric products.
- It's more suitable for this task than screen-printing, since screen-printing requires extensive set-up—one screen per color, plus one screen to lay down white if it's on a dark garment. In short, the set-up for screen-printing is not well suited for one-off products.
- It's more suitable for this task than either inkjet or dye sublimation image transfers, since those processes work best on light, uniformly colored materials.

In fact, with the advent of print-and-cut machines, the heat-applied graphics process has grown to include many printed elements, such as team name and logo stickers and players' names and numbers for athletic uniforms. For businesses, it's used for company and employee names on company shop floor uniforms, delivery vehicle uniforms or trade show uniforms. Once again, the advantages are one-off customization on just about any garment or fabric. Recently, this category has also grown to include the application of other decorative elements to fabrics, such as glitter and rhinestones, or in the current vernacular—bling. Bling has become popular in ladies' apparel and spirit wear (apparel for cheerleading and dance).

With the introduction of reflective materials that can be cut and then heat-applied, another new application area is also developing. It is used on safety apparel and other products that help people be highly visible to others at dusk or in the dark.

Reflective material can be used on shirts, jackets and pants for firefighters, police, road workers and other safety personnel. It can also be used on items for children, such as jackets, coats and backpacks; outfits for runners and joggers; and for pet products, such as sweaters and coats.

In summary, the products created in this process cover a wide variety of applications:

- Athletic garments, such as team uniforms
- Sports bags, backpacks and other bags to carry things
- Spirit wear—garments for cheerleading and dance
- Safety garments using some type of reflective appliqué
- Small- to medium-run promotional product wear
- Company uniforms

Conclusion

Heat-applied graphics are perfect for one-off and short-run projects. These are most often used for product and garment decoration projects covering a wide variety of materials and colors. Next time, we will cover what's required as far as equipment, graphics and skills to be successful with heat-applied graphics. M|m

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: John and Judy McDaniel are owners of CorelDRAW® Help, Inc. They started in the personalization business in 1989 with CorelDRAW version 1.0. John's background is in computers; Judy's is in art and retail. In their businesses, they apply CorelDRAW. They've used it with mechanical and laser engravers to produce awards, gifts and industrial products. They've also used it with all types of printers and vinyl cutters for creating sublimation and other image transfers; for making sandblast masks, screen-printing screens, pad-printing plates, signs and banners; and creating sales literature and flyers. With the release of CorelDRAW Premium Suite, they are adding website design to their use of CorelDRAW. In essence, they have more than 20 years' experience in applying CorelDRAW. They have written hundreds of articles and tips, lectured across the country and have been teaching CorelDRAW since 1991. For information on training services and video lessons available, visit www.CorelDRAWhelp.com. You may contact them via email at mail@CorelDRAWhelp.com.
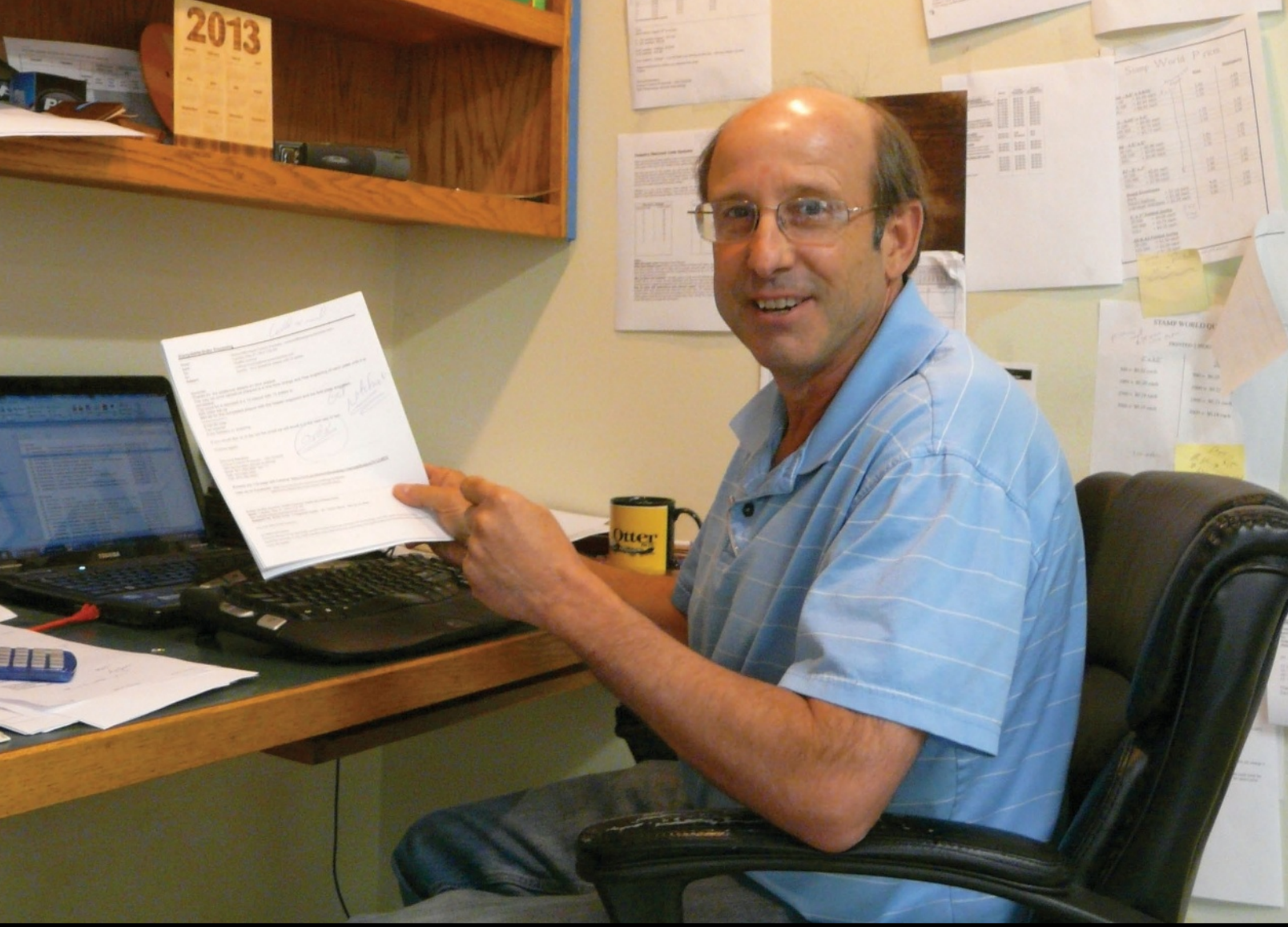
2013 Silver Manufacturer of the Year
Stamp World
Fort Collins, Colorado

A previous winner of the Bronze award in 2010, Stamp World has now moved to the next level and taken home the 2013 Silver Manufacturer of the Year award. Owner Ormond Barstow discusses his targeted marketing efforts using Google Adwords and his range of laser engraved wooden gift products with MIM *publisher David Hachmeister.*

David Hachmeister: Congratulations, Ormond, on being named the Silver Manufacturer of the Year! This is your second win, so congratulations on doing this again in a tough economy. Let me start by asking: How important is the Internet to your business? What percentage of your sales come from the Internet?

Ormond Barstow: Probably 85–90 percent. It's very, very important. Our business is modeled around our website, search engine optimization and Google Adwords. The 15 percent that doesn't come from the Internet is local, here in Fort Collins. We do a lot of business with the city, the county, the college and local businesses. I am a member of our Chamber of Commerce, so we do some additional business that includes more gift-oriented products, such as gift boxes. We are now a member of the ad specialty industry, so we can do screen printed pins and other items. Some of that business is local, but most of our core business is over the Internet.

DH: If I had to guess then, your stamp business is a little more local, and your other business is literally all over the world.

OB: All over the world. Australia is one of our favorite countries. The Australian customers are always cheerful—they always end their emails with "Cheers!" They always pay with a PayPal payment or an online credit card form, and we've learned a lot about shipping around the world. With our laser engraved wooden invitations and other laser engraved products, we're selling unique items that they can't find in Australia. So they will email us and say, "Can you ship this to Australia?" Those are always fun ones.

You're right—a lot of our stamp business is local. We do well with certain niche markets like bulk mail stamps, lien waiver stamps, some shop drawing engineering stamps that will be national. People are out there looking, and they find us because we have good rankings in those niche areas that we have tried to market. We have a few large repeat customers—one or two banks that are out of state, the city, the county, judicial courts and the local college.

DH: Do you sell many seals?

OB: A lot of seals. That's actually a target market for us. We do a lot of Google Adwords advertising for that, so embossing seals is an area that has grown for us over the last two or three years. That's a high profit margin item. The embossing seals and rubber stamps are very good profit margin items for us.

For many of our other products, because we are on the Internet, we have to remain competitive pricewise. We run off of lower profit margins.

DH: What works for you as far as online marketing and advertising?

OB: Well, it's still a moving target. I don't think I'll ever know the answer to that question because we keep testing and trying new things. We definitely spend a lot of money with Google Adwords. It's very simple, you can get started immediately, and because we're small, I can get my return on investment. I know how many orders and how many calls I'm getting. Basically, if I'm advertising and spending a lot of money in one area, and I'm getting a lot of orders in that area, then, hey, I'm happy. So that's an area where I've actually increased my spending.

We had a couple of very successful experiences in the fourth quarter of 2012. We upped the amount of money we were spending with Google on wooden Christmas ornaments, and our sales went through the roof. I spent $600 more a month, but I had $10,000 more a month in sales, so it was an easy decision.

I started doing that this year for gift boxes. So now I'm spending several
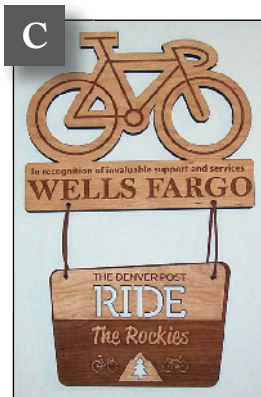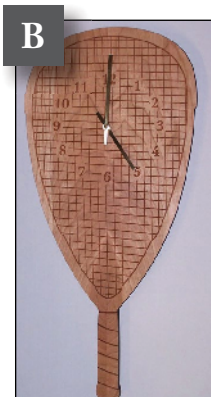
A: *Rectangular historic building ornament favor*

B: *Laser cut racquetball shaped clock*

C: *Laser cut-out Ride the Rockies Place with bicycle shape*

D: *Engraved cherry wood paddle, one of hundreds engraved every year.*

E: *Capitol Christmas tree ornament*

F: *Color sublimated coasters with recycled wood trivet engraved*

hundred dollars a month just on gift boxes now. But we've gotten orders that include a $5,000 order from one customer for gift boxes. If I get one or two orders a day, it pays for my gift box advertising. I am still happy with that. Additionally, we have been working very hard for seven years to get our organic rankings higher. We're paying an outside organization to help us do organic marketing. We think it's working, but it's very hard to measure.

DH: Circling back to stamps for a minute, what kind of stamps do you make and how do you compose them?

OB: We are pretty much a committed customer to Millennium Marking since 2000. When they came out with flash, we started doing that, so flash stamps are our preferred product. We focus primarily on the PSI line because it provides a wide range of sizes and they're very economical. It allows us to be competitive and has higher margins. Flash is probably about 80 to 90 percent of our business with PSI.

We do some wood mounted stamps when required—when it's a craft application or specialty ink that needs to go onto glass, metal or something of that nature. To make the wood mount stamps, we can do that in either polymer or laser rubber. Of course, we need to do that whenever we're dealing with any type of dater stamps. For all the embosser products, we're using the Millennium and Shiny embossers. Millennium is our primary vendor—we're really happy with them. They've done a great job training us, they've done a great job printing our catalog, and so we're committed to them as a key supplier.

DH: In your catalog, I noticed that you have a number of products that aren't rubber stamps and involve laser engraving. Could you tell us more about those?

OB: Our growth is driven by diversifying our business. We've been doing that now for many years. We've been adding product groups from stamps to other areas. Laser technology has allowed us to create unique gifts and favors. We can make just about anything out of wood with our laser—anything from small magnets or business cards to signs up to 15 feet.

We produced a sign that is 15 to 20 feet across for the entrance to a Hawaiian park. That was made in pieces, but it was all laser engraved. We had to flip the sign upside down and sideways in order to do it, but there is hardly anything we can't make out of wood and personalize.

In diversifying, laser engraved gift products are where we get the majority of our sales. Our target market for these products is primarily corporate America. But we have a very large number of sign shops, rubber stamp companies and promotional products distributors who buy products from us and then remarket them to their clients.

DH: Tell me a little about the wedding invitations you make.

OB: We make wooden wedding invitations, which is very unique. We sell those through event planners, as well as directly to brides and grooms all over the world. That is an example of a situation where people from other countries find us on the Internet and come to us because they can't find a source where they live.

DH: I also noticed that you were involved in the 2012 Christmas festivities in Washington, D.C.

OB: Yes, one of the highlights of 2012 was that we created 4,000 Christmas ornaments with the logo of the Capital Christmas tree. The Capital Christmas tree, Washington D.C.'s Christmas tree, was cut in Colorado, so it was an honor for Colorado that provided a great of

visibility for the state politicians. The governor and Colorado senators received these Christmas ornaments, and they actually sold them at the different events and parties during the cutting of that tree. The tree was driven back to Washington, D.C. by Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. He's no longer a sitting senator, but he was a U.S. senator, and apparently a truck driver. It was a great order with good visibility—our Fort Collins, Colorado newspaper found out that we made the ornaments, and we got into the newspaper about that.

DH: That's a really nice order! Can you describe how your business is structured?

OB: We've got four people that make up our team that coordinates our company. The four of us divide responsibilities in accounting, sales, graphics and operations. We're really the marketing and sales team for Stamp World. We are now doing business as Unique Custom Products since that better describes the full range of products that we offer. We've started using Unique Custom Products because we do so much more than stamps.

I do a little bit of everything: sales, Internet supplier negotiations and partnerships. We have a very good sales person and graphic designer, Nichele, who has been with us two years. Nichele specializes in wedding sales and does the proofs for our stamps and embossers. Dave is expanding our business with ASI ad specialty products and does all of the sales for our promotional products. He's focusing on that, learning the best suppliers and making calls to local corporations. My wife does the accounting to make sure we get paid.

DH: Getting paid is nice. What types of challenges are you facing right now?

OB: Our biggest challenge is that we're in a little bit of a growing pain mode right now. I was going to say the challenge was continuing to grow sales

to keep up with overhead, pay the people here a reasonable salary, and keep it an enjoyable process and also a financially solid business. Growing sales is not easy. We're at a stage where we have everything in place to continue to grow, but profits are always fleeting. Just getting more orders is the biggest challenge, and making sure that you're selling enough in order to cover your overhead.

DH: You mentioned that you belong to the chamber of commerce. How else are you involved in your community?

OB: The chamber is the primary one. Because we're an Internet business, most of our budget and time goes toward working with the Internet situations, which are not tied to the local scene.

I've been a chamber member for eight years, and I know all the people in the leads group that meets every two weeks. I buy just about everything from them, like my insurance and car repair. My financial advisor is part of the group. They all buy stuff from me—name tags, stamps, promotional pins and gifts—so there is a lot of interaction there. The idea behind the leads group is that you share the capabilities with the entire network of people that everybody else knows, and it just spreads. Our primary focus has always been the Internet. We're in a niche, manufacturing our lasered products and stamps, and we think we need to go outside our local area to make it work.

DH: I noticed that this is a nice-size community, but there isn't a lot nearby. In order to grow, you have to go somewhere outside the community.

OB: There are a couple of hospitals and some banks, but no big corporate headquarters. Our big corporations are Budweiser and Hewlett-Packard, which don't buy very many stamps. The best customers are the city and the college.

DH: Tell me about your background and what got you into this business.

OB: My degree was in computer science. My first job was with Texas Instruments, working with computers back in the old days when they had mini-computers. That lasted about four years. Then I moved into a sales environment as a sales manager for a computer business in California. I did that for another six years, and then I moved into a small business that automated retail stores.

One of the businesses that we automated was rubber stamps. We were selling point-of-sale computer systems to manage inventory for retail stores. It turned out that this craft store was just doing dynamite with rubber stamps. When I moved from California to Colorado for quality of life, I thought, "We should open a stamp store. If we could do a

third of what they were doing, we'd be rich."

We did open up a rubber stamp store, and we actually expanded to three stores in Denver. That was a really good business for us for about seven or eight years. Then the industry kind of faded and changed.

DH: That was art stamps, right?

OB: Yes. Art stamps primarily. The manufactured stamps still did well back when the art stamps were fading. So that was the piece of the business that we kept when we moved on. We were able to close all three stores and finished our leases in the malls.

We were left with just basically business rubber stamps. That was our core, and we built from that in 2004 to today. We expanded the business stamp part of our business, our laser capabilities and all of the other niches we got into. It just made sense at the time. We have enjoyed running our own business since 1993.

DH: When you started out manufacturing stamps, were you using lasers?

OB: When we got into manufacturing, our first machine was a polymer machine. We bought it from a stamp manufacturer who did both art stamps, as well as business stamps. He went out of business and we bought his polymer machine; that was our start. When flash became available, we bought a flash machine from Millennium. Millennium has been our only stamp supplier for 10 years. They have done a great job for us in all areas. We attend all their meetings and consider our company to be an extension and sales arm for their business.

Then, as we expanded the business, we developed several handshake partnerships with three different local companies. Unique Custom Products is the marketing and sales arm for these companies. Between all the partnerships we have created, we have six or seven lasers to make custom products. We have a really good relationship with them. We are helping them build their businesses and keeping them very busy. They do a great job for us by making sure we meet deadlines and making quality products. In the end, Unique Custom Products is the company that has to stand behind the quality of all the orders.

DH: What do you think are some of the benefits of owning your own business? I know it's a headache and a lot of hours, but…

OB: Well, in the last five years, the benefit has been that you can't get fired or laid off by corporate America. Honestly, I have felt very secure not working for a company. Fortunately, we've been doing well enough in the last five years with sales growing, and so we haven't had the stress of losing your job. We haven't had the stress of not making it because our sales have been good enough to cover our expenses.

The other benefit is that we're talking here in my basement, so when I get up to go to work, I don't really have to go very far. I don't have commutes or traffic. The quality of life, the enjoyment of what you do and making your own decisions are all great. I love what I do—it's really fun, and we're always coming up with new products. With any job, there are downsides; it's hard to get away and I don't make enough money *(laughs)*, but the trade-offs are positive.

DH: You've done a really, really good job in terms of expanding. Was there something in particular that drew you to lasering on wood?

OB: It was because the craft stamp industry was dying from 2000 to 2002, and we had to expand into new products to make our retail stores work. We realized the power and the impact of personalization. When our business was not doing well at that time, we opened up Christmas stores to make ends meet. We had phenomenal success with Christmas stores and personalized Christmas cards. We actually grew to six or seven locations in malls over a six-week period during the Christmas season. The Christmas product sales carried us through the end of the year so that we could hang in there for another tough year in retail craft stamps.

One of the major products we found was a laser engraved Christmas ornament that was really good. That was the beginning of a partnership that has lasted 10 years. We've really grown that laser engraved ornament into a whole line of laser products. We sell many, many niches in additional to those ornaments, but that's how Unique Custom Products got into lasering wood.

We try not to use our laser for rubber because we feel the laser is more valuable engraving our wood products. We can do production runs of 1,000 ornaments, business cards or coasters for a single job. Whereas with the rubber, we get a better return just running with a polymer sheet. So we try not to use the laser too much for that sort of thing.

DH: Well, congratulations again and I look forward to possibly meeting with you again next year.

OB: You bet.

DH: Thank you very much, Ormond. M|m

How to change settings in your website—Part 2

by Amanda Katon

Settings, settings and more settings! Last month we began to discuss some of the options available on your Stamp Shop Web website. With the vast amount of available settings, this section will be our focus for the next few months.

In this issue, we'll pick up where we left off by examining the *Category and Search* options and continue through to the mail server options. Now let's dig into the *Settings Tab* even further!

Steps to Follow

To view the settings available for your website, you must first be signed into the admin area of your Stamp Shop Web site. Once you are logged in, click the *Settings Tab*. Then click on the *Category* and *Search* link on the left hand settings menu.

Category and Search

Within the *Category and Search* options, you'll find additional setting options for both categories and search areas on your website. Let's look at them in greater detail (see Picture 1 on the next page).

Show "home" in category tree?: this option, if checked, will display "home" as a link at the top of the list of categories that appears on your website in the left navigation.

Show Categories Tabs in Header?: select this option to display your categories within the header (or top) section of your website. A horizontal bar, containing links to your categories, will appear across the bottom of the header just below your logo.

Always Show Expanded Categories: this option always shows sub-categories, even if a category is not selected. This works only when a "CategoryList2" is placed in the nav-column. (The

STAMP SHOP WEB™: *Step by Step*

working with categories for more details.

Search Results Grid Size: if you choose a grid from *Show Search Results* as noted above, this option lets you determine the size of the search results grid. Select the number of columns and rows of products to be displayed per page.

Flag products as "new": select this option and the system will automatically display "new" next to a recently added product when it is displayed in a category.
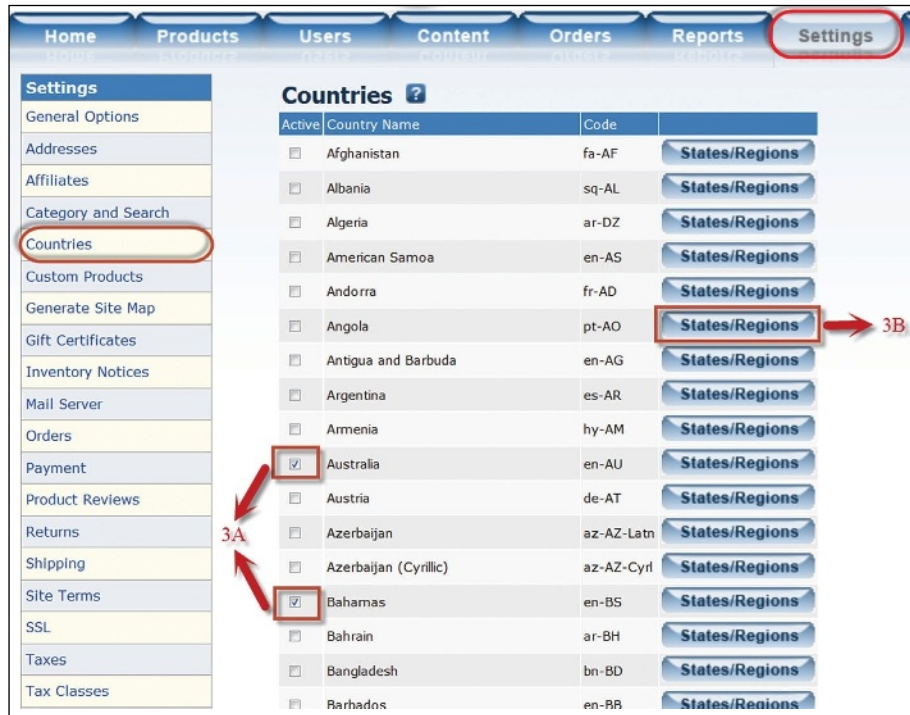
Countries

Within the *Countries* link, you will find a list of countries to indicate your company's shipping destinations around the world. To add a country to your "available" column, click the box directly next to the country name (see Picture 3a). Once you are finished, click the *Save Changes* button at the bottom of the page. You can also set up specific States/Regions within that country by clicking on the *State/Region* button to the right of the country name and code (see Picture 3b). To enter a new Country State/Region, you must type in the name of the country's State or Region, along with the Abbreviation (code). Then, from the drop down below, choose the country to which the state/region belongs and click the *New* button (see Picture 4).

Custom Products

Within this link, you'll find available options for the customizable products on your site. Here, you can prepare and design instructions to help your customers with the creation and design of their own stamps, daters, round products (such as round stamps and seals) and signs. Instructions for the

nav-column refers to the column, typically on the left hand side, that helps users navigate the website. It is displayed on all pages, including the homepage.)

Tabs per row: set the number of category "tabs" that will display in the horizontal category menu bar when the *Show Categories Tabs in Header* option is selected.

In general, a pager is a short numeral page link that is shown when the display of the content requires more than one page (for example, more products in a category than what will fit on one page—see Picture 2). A pager typically shows the page numbers and a previous and next link.

Pager Prefix: what is added in front of the pager display. By default, it adds a space ( ).

Pager Spacer: what displays between each page number. The default is set to a space, pipe symbol (|), space (|).

Page Suffix: what is added in back of the pager display. It adds a space by default ( ).

Next Page Text: the text for the next link. As a default, this text is set up to display a pipe, a space, the word "Next," and then another space (| Next).

Last Page Text: the text that displays as the previous link. This is shown as the word "Previous," followed by a space by default (Previous).

Show Next/Last Links?: if checked, this option will display the next and/or last links on the category pages. If it is left unchecked, it will not.

Show Search Results as: select how you would like the search results to be displayed. Choose from a detailed list, a simple list or a grid (the same options that are available in the "category display as" section under the *Products Tab*). Refer to the January 2013 *MIM* article on

Picture 3a: Checkbox to apply a country to the "available ship to locations" for your website.
Picture 3b: The State/Region button to add States/Regions to specific Countries.

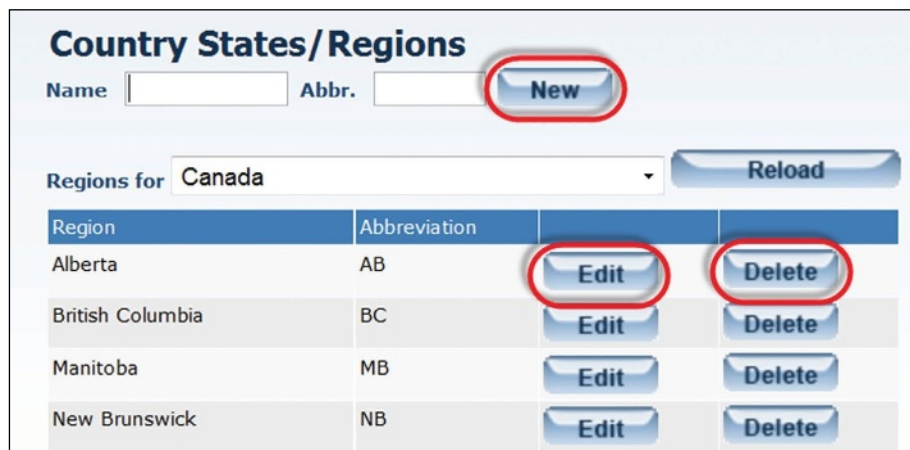*Picture 4: The State/Region add, edit and delete screen.*

click the *Continue* button to view the mount options.)

Show Help links in Design pages: select this option to allow the Help links to appear on all customization/design pages.

URL to help page Stamp Wizard: If you'd like a full page of help options that is independent of the customization page, then this is the help option for you! Here, type the path to the page you have created that will help customers (this can be an html page or a custom page previously built on your website). An example of a path to a custom page would be: */custom.aspx?id=6*. Once you have included a path to an existing page on your site and selected "Show Help Links in Design pages," a "help" link will

design wizard page can also be specified here. All of the instructions you create can be put on your customizable pages. In the various instruction areas, you can customize the "how to/step-by-step" instructions for your customers, based on the type of product they are customizing. You will find a few other options regarding custom products as well (see Picture 5 on page 20).

Preview Location: this option refers to where the preview will display on the custom product pages. You can choose

to show the preview on the top, bottom or both top and bottom of the page.

Allow Proof (PDF document): check this box if you will allow your customers to view a PDF proof of their product before placing their order.

Show products on the Stamp Wizard page: check this box if you would like to display stamp mounts to your customers as they use the Stamp Wizard. (The alternative would be to allow them to design the impression first and then

evostamp+ pocket

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The evostamp⁺ pocket offers all the same great features as the standard evostamp⁺ in a convenient and compact size…

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evostamp⁺ 20
evostamp⁺ pocket 20
$^9/_{16}"$ x 1 $^1/_2"$

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evostamp⁺ 30
evostamp⁺ pocket 30
$^3/_4"$ x 1 $^7/_8"$

Thank You
We appreciate your business

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fax 555 - 490 7102

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evostamp⁺ pocket 40
$^7/_8"$ x 2 $^5/_{16}"$

P

Patricia Peterson
2145 W. Wolfram
Ivesdale, NY 89521

stamp it...

STAMP SHOP WEB™: *Step by Step*

Picture 5: Custom Product settings *screen*

Continued from page 17

appear on the design page. When clicked, a window will pop up with the URL you have typed here.

Page Instructions for Stamp Wizard: As an alternative to creating the help link above, you can turn to the WYSIWYG editor and make a more simplified

instruction area that appears directly on the customization page (see the February 2013 *MIM* article for a refresher on using the editor). To add

instructions for the Stamp Wizard page, click inside the WYSIWYG Editor and design the instructions to your liking. These instructions will appear at the top of the design page for Stamp Design Wizard.

For the remaining *URL to Help Pages* (Daters, Rectangle/Square (stamps), Round and Signs), follow the same instructions as noted above under *URL to Help Page Stamp Wizard*. In addition, for the other four Page Instructions areas for Daters, Rectangle/Square, Round, and Signs products, be sure to follow the same instructions noted here in *Page Instructions for Stamp Wizard*.

Custom Image Resolution: choose from three different resolution sizes for the custom image resolution. We highly recommend 1200 dpi. If you change this setting, be aware that all your background and insert images in your CPD Custom Attributes will need to match the new resolution you choose.

Multi-Color Impressions (MCI) Font size of blank line between colors: this pertains to the font size of the line separating the two different regions of a multi-color impression.

Maximum Characters per inch/mm: set the maximum characters per inch by first clicking the radio button next to "Characters" and then typing the number of characters in the field provided to the right. This setting defines at what point text will compress, based on what the customer enters for text and the size of the text.

Maximum % of Compression: set the maximum percent of compression by first clicking the radio button next to "Percent" and then typing the percentage amount in the field provided to the right. Type in the percentage using only numbers and no decimals. This setting, like the *Maximum Characters per inch/mm* setting, defines at what point text will compress, based on what the customer enters for text and the size of the text,

but in a percentage versus characters per inch/mm.

The following line spacing fields determine the amount of leading between lines of text in generated stamps. We do not recommend making changes to these settings.

Generate Site Map

The Generate Site Map link pertains to creating a sitemap for your website. The sitemap generates a map of active products and non-hidden categories, as well as custom pages. The sitemap is a specially formatted document to aid search engines in indexing your site.

If you have custom code for your sitemap, you can add it by pasting it into the empty box provided and clicking the *Submit* button. This code will be appended to the bottom of the generated map. If you do not have special code, then you may generate a sitemap by simply clicking the *Submit* button (see Picture 6).

*Picture 6:* Generate Site Map *option screen.*

If you would like to see the file Stamp Shop Web generates, select the checkbox for *Also Send Me a Copy of the File* before clicking the *Submit* button (see Picture 7). Once you press *Submit,* you will be prompted to download a text file that contains the XML code found in the sitemap file. This prompt appears in different formats depending upon the type of browser (see Picture 8).

After delving further into the *Settings Tab,* I am sure you're amazed by what you can control! Stay tuned next month to continue this journey and uncover more of the many available settings and options to enhance your site's functionality and usability. MI*m*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Amanda Katon is a member of the Connectweb Technologies, Inc. family, a software development and Web hosting company that specializes in software for the marking devices industry. Katon is a graduate of Mount Ida College in Newton, Massachusetts, with a Bachelors of Science in Graphic Design. Upon graduating in May 2010, she started out working for a marketing company. After eight months, she went back to school at North Shore Community College in Beverly, Massachusetts where she earned her certificate in Web design. She joined the Connectweb family in June 2011, focusing her skills on designing custom websites for Stamp Shop Web customers. As part of Connectweb, Katon enjoys helping customers and building lasting relationships with them by implementing one-on-one customer service. Outside of work, Katon enjoys outdoor activities and doing crafts. For further help, contact Amanda Katon at 800/556-9932; Email: amanda@cwebtechnologies.com.

Picture 7: Sitemap file that is generated.
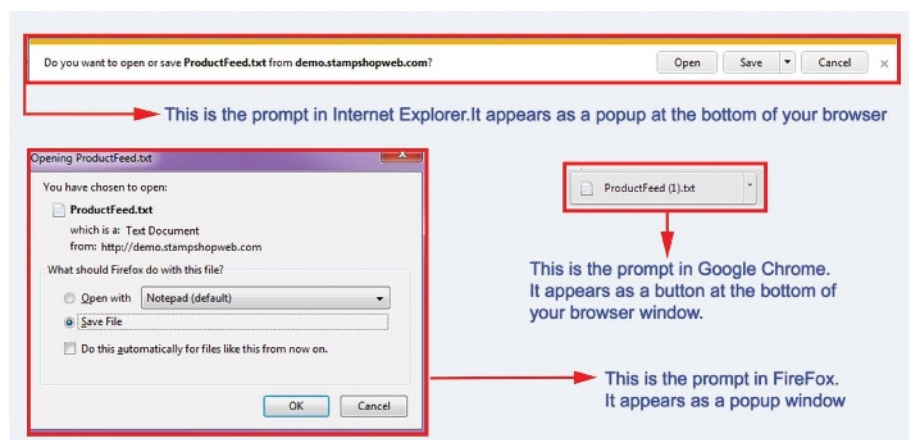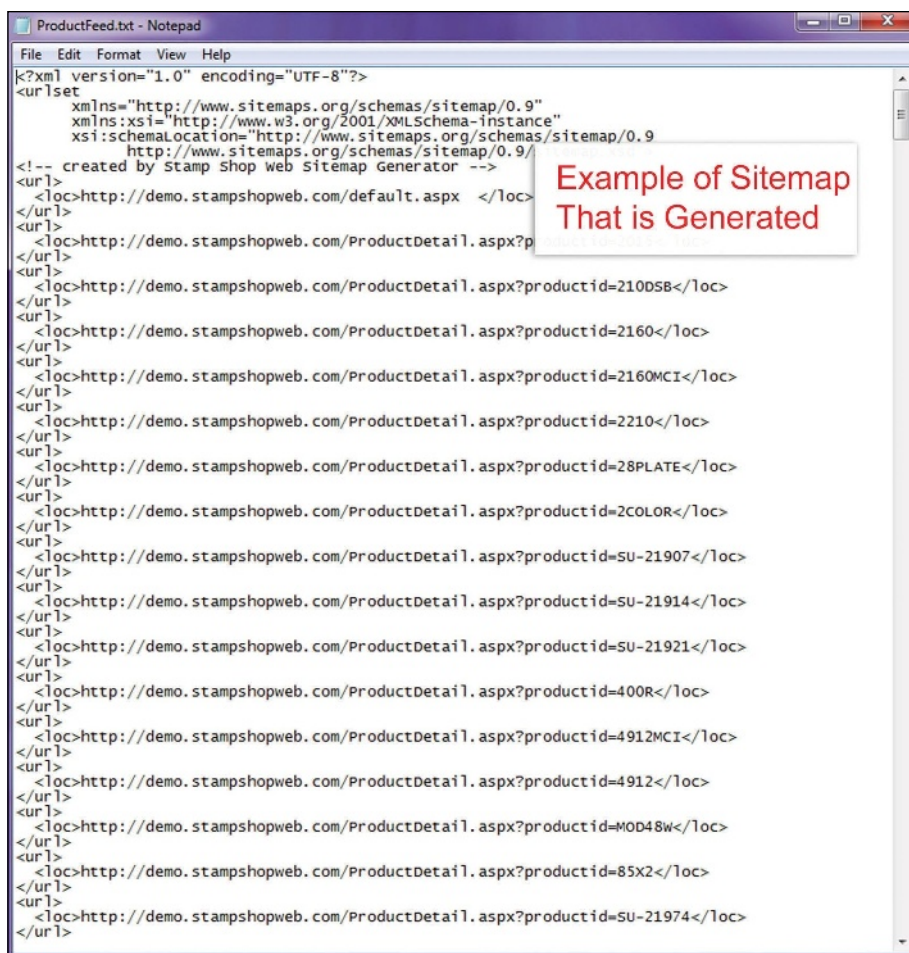
Picture 8: Download prompt for top three browsers: Internet Explorer, Firefox and Google Chrome.

COUNTERfinger on lanyard with retracting string connector.

2-in-1 Detector: An affordable solution for catching counterfeit cash

by Anne Shadis

This is the first in an occasional series highlighting diverse products that can expand your range and address customer needs.

As Stone Melet headed to his local sandwich shop in San Francisco, he realized that he only had a $100 bill in his wallet. It crossed his mind that the clerk might check the bill in some way to verify that it was real currency. He knew that one of the typical methods was to swipe a counterfeit detection pen across the bill to determine if the paper was genuine. As he walked, he thought about how these pens seemed like "old school" outdated technology and became curious about what other counterfeit detection solutions were available.

After researching the process of counterfeiting money and the available solutions to combat the problem, he launched his company, Counter Finger, and its signature product, the 2-in-1 Counterfeit Bill Detector, in 2012. Unlike the traditional counterfeit detection pen, which tests the authenticity of the paper, his product detects the presence of the magnetic ink that is used to print real currency. As an added check, the 2-in-1 Detector includes an LED light to verify the security strip in legitimate money. It also

COUNTERfinger with coil tether.

Our device doesn't judge the paper; it judges the ink. Genuine currency is made with magnetic ink, so if the beeper on the 2-in-1 Detector doesn't beep, there's no magnetic ink and you know the bill is washed. The other feature identifies that security strip inside the bill without having to hold the bill up to the light and offend a customer. Each U.S. denomination is printed with a security strip in a unique spot. If the security strip is in the wrong location, you know it's a washed bill."

What differentiates your detector from other products on the market?

"The big competition is larger, much more expensive units that sit beside the cash register and use various technologies similar to or the same as our product. The difference is that ours is wearable and much less expensive. Having it on a lanyard or anchored to the cash register makes it more likely to be used and may deter criminals who see it displayed so visibly."

What do you see as potential markets for this product?

"We started in June 2012. The past year has been about identifying which verticals make sense. So far, we're pursuing convenience stores, retail establishments (particularly through their Loss Prevention departments), bars and night clubs, restaurants and banks. It also makes sense for the promotion product industry. Imagine Sysco or Coke giving them away to their merchant clients as good-will builders!" M|m

For more information, contact Stone Melet at **stone@counterfinger.com**; Counter Finger, 1766A Union St., San Francisco, CA 94115; 415/999-3775; Web: **www.CounterFinger.com**.

Watch the video: **http://youtu.be/ IgDiVmYAChU**

features a lanyard so that employees can wear it and easily access it during transactions.

Stone provided additional details in answer to questions from *Marking Industry Magazine*:

Can you explain in more detail the counterfeiting problem that your product addresses?

"In the good ole' days, you had to be a printing 'mad scientist' genius to make fake money. Today you can go on YouTube, learn how to buy cleaning solution from an auto parts store to remove the ink from a $1 or $5 bill, and then use a laser printer to turn that blank genuine paper into a higher denomination bill. The net result is that anyone can make counterfeit money and thus, it's a major growing trend. The pens are not effective because they correctly judge the paper as genuine, even though what's printed on that paper is, of course, fake. Last year, the Secret Service took in about $600 million worth of fake U.S. currency, and most of it was washed.

Polymer 101:
A re-introduction to photopolymer stamp making

by Tom Jackson

"What's old is new again"—a review of the process of making photopolymer stamps for new industry members and a refresher for the veterans

If you've been around this industry long enough, you'll remember the early days of photopolymer stamp manufacturing. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, polymer exposure took the lead over vulcanizing rubber as the primary method of creating stamps. Now we are seeing the business evolve again—this time, laser engraving and flash foam processing are the new methods that are rapidly gaining in popularity.

I was surprised by the number of stamp makers who were completely unfamiliar with photopolymer when they visited my table at the Rubber Stamps & More Convention in Las Vegas. They started with and have only used laser and/or flash technology to produce stamps. I was happy to acquaint them with this "new" process and answer their questions. For the benefit of those newer members of our industry and as a refresher for the veterans, I'll review the process of making photopolymer stamps and point out the pros and cons of this method.

Definition

The word photopolymer explains exactly what it is: "photo" indicating that it is sensitive to light and "polymer" indicating that it is a plastic. "Photopolymer" therefore is light-sensitive plastic. It is supplied either as a thick liquid resin (about the consistency of honey) or in sheet form. Stamp producers usually use the liquid resin material.

The exposure equipment

A specific frequency of ultraviolet light causes the liquid photopolymer to harden. A machine called an "exposure unit" generates that light, usually by use of fluorescent tubes. All exposure units include a pair of glass plates to hold the negative and polymer, a pair of "bearer bar" spacers that go between the glass to regulate the thickness of the polymer die, a pair of metal clamps that hold everything together and a plastic or metal pan to hold water for the post exposure cycle.

This does not need to be an expensive piece of equipment. For less than $1,000, an A5 capacity (5-1/2" x 8-1/2") machine with processing accessories can be purchased. An A4 capacity (8-1/2" x 11") machine is less than $2,000.

It starts with the negative

Once the art/text for the stamps has been typeset, a negative is produced. This negative is a reverse image of the art/text—the background is black and the art/text is clear. One of three methods is used to make a negative:

1. **Negative film**
   A sheet of negative film is placed in contact with a toner-printed vellum paper containing the art/text and then secured between two glass plates in the exposure unit. When ultraviolet light is emitted through the toner-printed vellum sheet, the background emulsion of the negative film hardens while the emulsion covered by the toner does not. A "developer" solution is
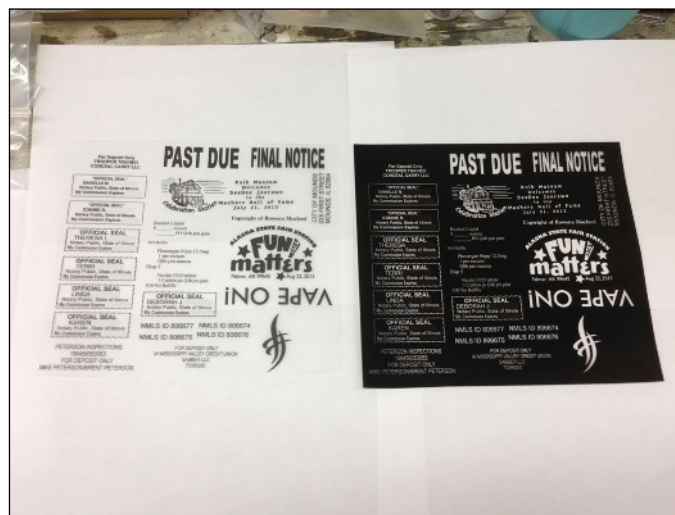
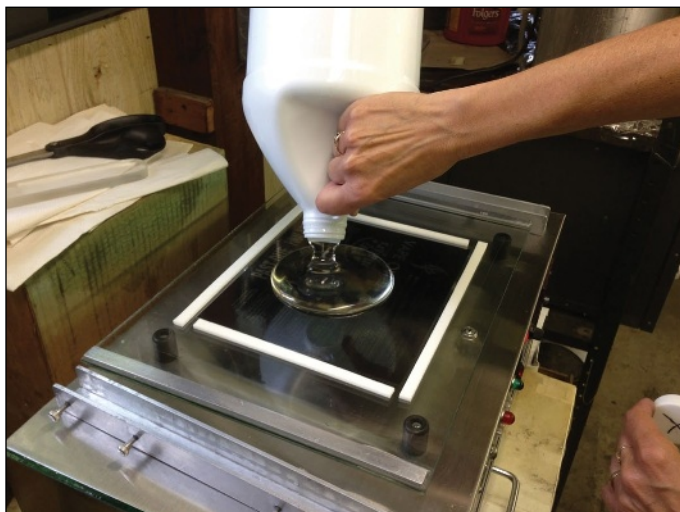*Laser printed vellum paper in contact with negative film before exposure.*

Laser printed vellum and negative film locked between glass plates and inserted into exposure unit.

Developer solution applied to film and wiped with cotton pad to create reverse image negative.

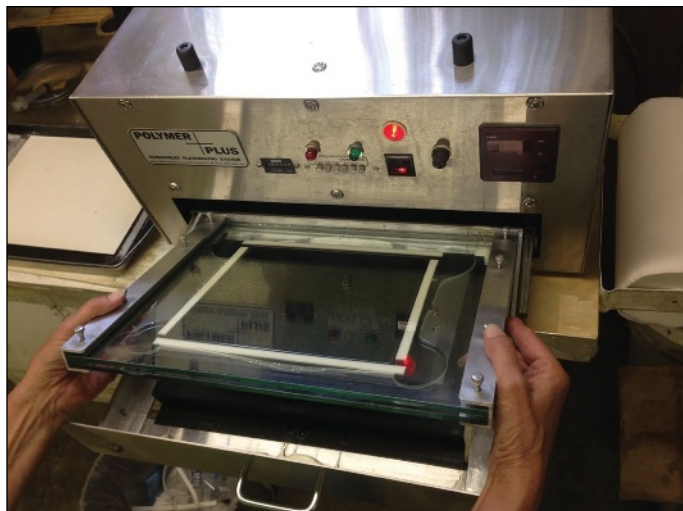*Laser printed vellum original and completed negative.*

Pouring resin over the negative within the boundaries of self-adhesive foam tape strips.

Applying substrate backing to the poured polymer.

Negative, resin and substrate locked between glass plates and inserted into exposure unit.

Exposed polymer plate being inserted into ultrasonic washout unit for removal of unexposed resin.

Washed polymer plate inserted into pan of water for post–exposure hardening in the exposure unit.

Completed polymer plate ready for trimming and mounting.

sprayed on the exposed film, and this developer washes away the unexposed emulsion. The result is an excellent negative that is very well suited for stamp production.

2. Toner-printed film

A laser printer that can lay down a heavy and evenly dense layer of toner is sometimes used to make a negative. The art/text is reversed in the design software before printing on heavy-weight vellum. Once printed, the heavy vellum is treated with an aerosol toner enhancing spray that darkens the toner, making it suitable for photopolymer exposure.

3. Ink jet film

An ink jet printer that can lay down a heavy and dark coating of ink is occasionally used to make a negative. The art/text is reversed in the software before printing on a special plastic film for this purpose.

Poured polymer versus pouch polymer

The negative is placed on a glass plate in a "right-reading" (left to right) orientation. The early pioneers of polymer processing would pour the polymer resin on top of the negative, trapping it within the boundaries of adhesive foam tape or Teflon barriers. This process is as much an art form as it is a skill. Knowing the quantity of resin to pour, the proper method to avoid trapping air bubbles and applying a rigid

substrate backing sheet to the poured resin puddle are not difficult tasks, but they do require some practice to get right. Once poured, the assembly is covered with a top glass plate and clamped securely together for processing in the exposure unit.

Some stamp manufacturers now use polymer that is contained in a plastic pouch or "sachet," eliminating the resin pouring process. Simply lay the pouch over the negative and clamp together between glass plates for exposure cycles. This method certainly expedites and simplifies polymer processing at minimal extra cost, if any (see diagram A).
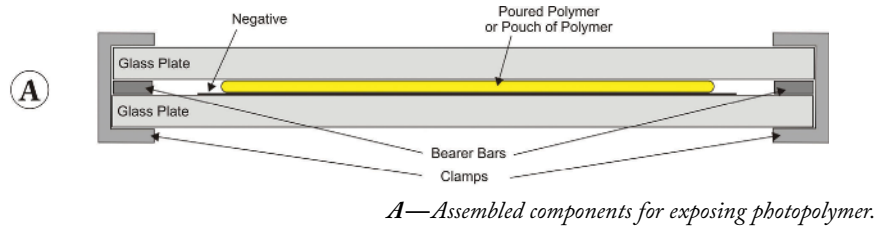
Exposure cycles

The polymer that is touching the negative becomes the front of the stamp die. The back of the die has a hard plastic "substrate" cover. This substrate will be the mounting surface for the die on your self-inker or stamp mount.

The first of two cycles bonds the substrate to the liquid resin and establishes the "floor" or background thickness of the die. This back exposure is usually a quick cycle under the UV light (see diagram B).

Face exposure is the second cycle. This is when the UV light passes through the clear parts of the negative, creating the printing characters of the die. The negative's dark background creates an opaque barrier blocking the UV light, so the resin in those areas remains in liquid form (see diagram C).

Washout

The liquid residue must be washed away. This is accomplished with detergent and water by any of several methods. Regardless of the method, the detergent should be specific for washing polymer as it will thoroughly break down and wash away the unexposed areas, which is a critical step to making high quality stamp imprints.

A—Assembled components for exposing photopolymer.

B— "Back Exposure" bonds the substrate to the polymer and establishes the floor for the stamp die. The light evenly permeates the polymer.

C—Assembly is turned over for "Face Exposure" through the negative. The light only passes through the clear parts of the negative, forming the printing characters of the die.
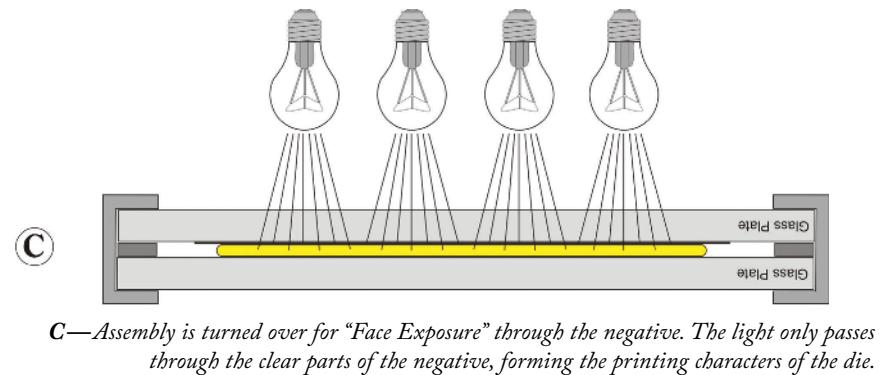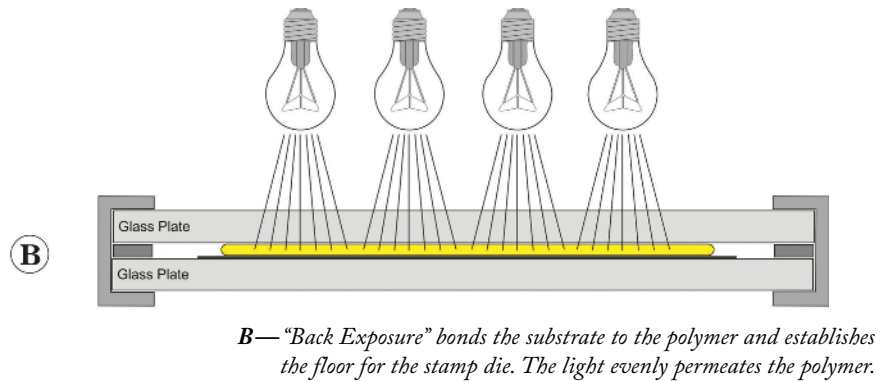
Hand washing of the polymer plate is common among small producers of stamps. A soft scrub brush is used with the detergent and water, and gentle pressure is applied as the die is scrubbed. Successfully washing polymer by hand can be a true talent as it is easy to over-wash and remove small letters or punctuation. Under-washing leaves resin on the plate and in the centers of characters which will make unwanted stray marks when stamped.

Mechanically washing polymer plates is the preferred method for assuring a quality finished product. The traditional washout machine incorporates a large pad of brushes, mounted at the same level as the detergent and water solution.

An oscillating arm moves the polymer plate over the brushes, removing unexposed resin. While the brushes can occasionally wash off small letters and punctuation, it is a very reliable method for cleaning a plate.

An ultrasonic washout unit works well if the sound waves are at the proper frequency to break up polymer. The sound waves travel through the detergent and water solution, resonating off of the polymer plate. This action breaks up and dissolves the unexposed polymer, leaving a plate that is completely clean and free of abrasion from brushes. These units are generally less costly than mechanical washout machines.

Post exposure

A final hardening process finishes the polymer production. A pan of water mixed with post exposure salt is placed in the exposure unit (or it may be built in to the machine) and the polymer plate is submerged under the water. A few minutes of exposure under the light will nicely harden the plate and minimize the stickiness that is sometimes associated with photopolymer. When dry, the polymer stamp dies are cut apart with scissors, a razor knife or a die-cutting machine and mounted on your choice of self-inker or hand stamp mount.

Pros and cons

From my experience, photopolymer is still the most common and popular method of producing custom stamps. Some of the reasons include:

- Investment is low—for under a thousand dollars, a person can be making polymer stamps. Compare that to the cost of a laser!

- Fast and easy processing—polymer was never difficult, but the invention of pouch polymer has made it even simpler. A full 8-1/2" x 11" plate of stamps can be processed in as little as 15 minutes. Depending on wattage, that same plate can require an hour or more when laser engraved.

- No smell or ash—engraving rubber can be a smelly and dirty proposition, and many owners of lasers don't like getting the ash residue inside of their machines. This is not a problem with photopolymer.

- Versatile—a photopolymer stamp die can be mounted in many different ways: regular hand stamp, self-inking, pocket stamp, inspector stamp, rocker mount, art stamp, etc. A flash die can only be mounted as a pre-inked stamp.

But polymer is not perfect. Some of the drawbacks include:

- Running water required—washout and post exposure require a nearby water source which can result in a plumbing project, depending on the situation.

- Sticky—the sticky nature of polymer can cause problems with the first few imprints on a new stamp, and handling the plate before washout and post exposure can get the fingers sticky, which is unpleasant to some people.
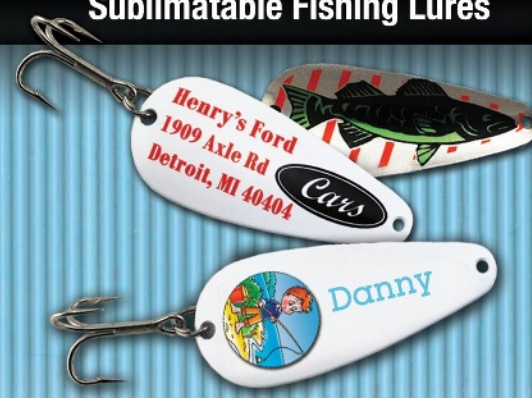
- Not compatible with caustic inks—polymer is great with ordinary water-based or glycerin-based stamp inks. But when exposed to oil-based or alcohol-based inks, polymer stamp dies can have a short life span.

"What's old is new again" is a phrase applicable to polymer stamps. I would anticipate that the simplicity and speed of production, combined with the low cost and versatility of the finished stamp die, will keep photopolymer viable for stamp production for many years to come. MI*m*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Tom Jackson is the general manager of Jackson Marking Products Co., Inc., a major manufacturer of rubber stamps, as well as an industry supplier for raw materials and a highly respected fabricator of equipment for customers worldwide. Email Tom Jackson at **tom@rubber-stamp.com**. *Jackson Marking Products Co., Inc., 9105 N. Rainbow Lane, Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62864; 800/782-6722 (U.S. and Canada); 618/242-1334 (local and international); Fax: 800/782-6732 (U.S. and Canada); 618/242-7732 (local and international); Email:* **jmp@rubber-stamp.com**; *Web:* **www.rubber-stamp.com**.

IIMAK announces acquisition of Specialty Ink Company

IIMAK (International Imaging Materials, Inc.), a leading manufacturer of printing and marking consumables, announces the acquisition of Specialty Ink Company's business, effective July 1, 2013. This includes all formulas, brands, processes and assets from Specialty Ink Company to produce inks, stamp pads and related items, with the exception of Mark II stamp pads. Gary Werwa, former owner of Specialty Ink, along with Keith Werwa, former general manager, have joined IIMAK to support the business transition.

"For over a year, IIMAK has partnered with Specialty Ink to manufacture their inks, so we are familiar with their products," states Scott Surma, IIMAK V.P. of Sales and Marketing N.A. "We are pleased to retain the Aero and Classic brands, which are well known in the packaging and marking device industries and also complement IIMAK's existing portfolio and channels for industrial inks."

Gary Werwa enacted a business succession plan to take a step closer to retirement while ensuring Specialty Ink customers will be supported for many years to come. "Customers will be happy with the new ownership," says Mr. Werwa. "IIMAK is global and very customer service-oriented. They will continue to produce high quality products and enhance programs to make doing business easy."

In addition to its thermal transfer ribbons, direct thermal films and industrial inkjet inks, IIMAK now manufactures a complete line of dye and pigmented inks for stamping and automatic coders. The wide range of water, solvent and resin-based industrial inks offers excellent durability and adhesion on porous and non-porous surfaces, including paper, corrugated, plastic, metal and rubber. Engineered features of these inks include various drying times, waterproofing and heat resistance.

Founded in 1983, IIMAK is a global leader in the development, manufacture and distribution of printing, imaging and marking consumable supplies and related services. IIMAK's primary manufacturing and distribution facilities are located in Amherst, New York, with additional manufacturing plants in Europe, Brazil and Mexico.

For more information, contact IIMAK, 310 Commerce Drive, Amherst, NY 14228; 716/691-6333; Web: www.iimakinks.com.

Trodat Canada wins Staples award

Trodat recently received an award from Staples: "The Best Services Level for 2012" went to Trodat Canada. Every year, Staples holds "Vendor Award Night," during which the company presents awards to its best suppliers. Among the five different categories of awards, Trodat Canada won the "Best Service Level for 2012" category. Staples is a worldwide leading company for office products, supplying customers in 27 countries across five continents. Around the world, Staples supplies its customers with all kinds of office products, including office supplies, furniture, technology and services.

For more information, visit www.trodat.net.

From left to right: Gary Quinell, Divisional Manager, Staples Canada; David Rawlinson, Director of Operations, Trodat Canada; Deborah Smith, President, Trodat Canada; and Steve Matyas, President, Staples Canada

JDS introduces new style of LazerMug

JDS Industries, Inc. introduces more promotional items for laser engravers. The newest style of LazerMugs™ is the best version yet. First came the Square LazerMugs™ and then the Round LazerMugs™. Now JDS has combined the best features of both in the Rounded Corner LazerMugs™. This newest style has the cylindrical inside for easy drinking. The outside of the mug has a slightly square shape but with rounded corners to mimic a traditional mug. The advantage of this design is that it can be easily laser engraved without using a rotary attachment. The mugs hold 10 ounces of liquid and come in seven colors: black/white, red/white, blue/white, green/white, pink/white, white/black and silver/black. All of JDS's many laserable promotional products are available in all 14 nationwide warehouses.

For more information on this new product or to get showroom samples, call JDS at 800/843-8853; Fax: 605/339-1467; Email: sales@jdsindustries.com or visit www.jdsindustries.com.

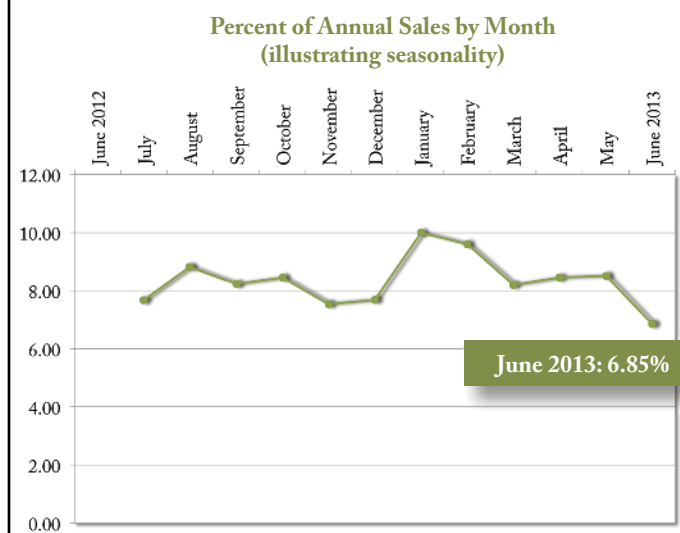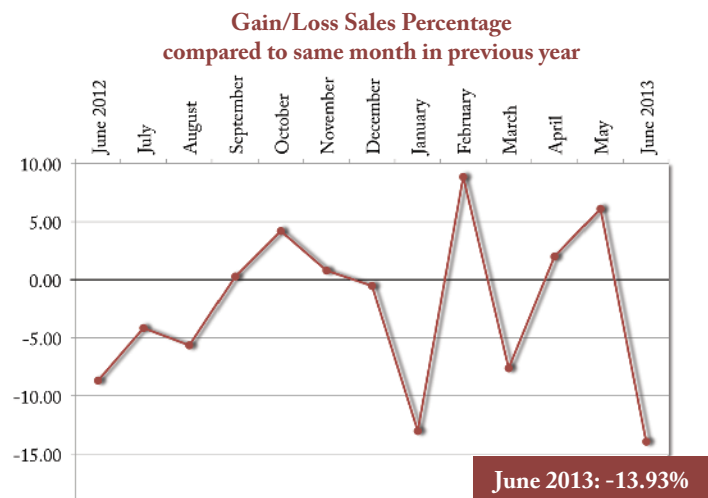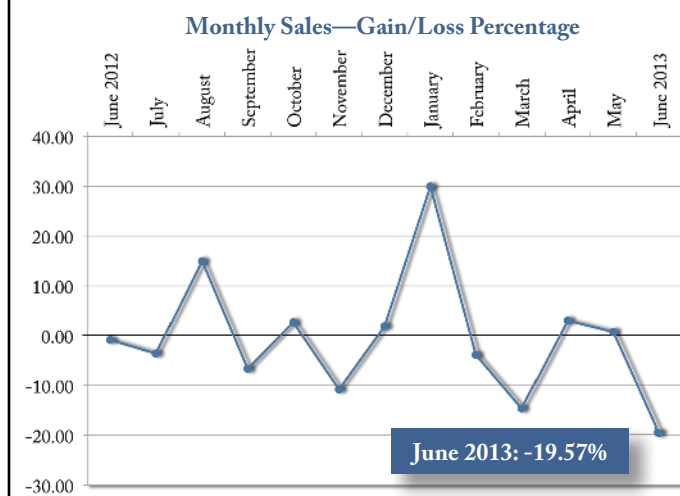# INDUSTRY INDICATOR

by Timothy Hachmeister

A silver lining

June was a tough month, but there is a silver lining. Total monthly sales were down 11.67% from May. Monthly stamp sales were down 19.57%, but only down 9.42% for small shops. June total sales made up 7.21% of the past 12 months of total sales. June stamps sales made up 6.85% of the same period.
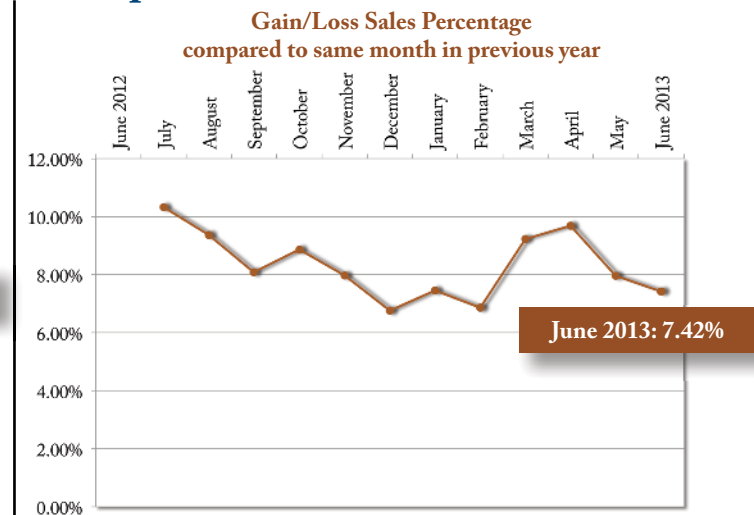
Compared with June 2012, monthly sales of all products, stamps and other products were down 13.76%, 13.93%, and 13.67%, respectively. For small shops, stamp sales were only down 4.44% compared with last June. Despite the decline across the board from May to June, total sales for all shops and total sales for small shops are still up from the beginning of the year by 1.51% and 0.32%, respectively. Ml*m*

Stamps only

Monthly Sales—Gain/Loss Percentage

June 2013: -19.57%

Gain/Loss Sales Percentage compared to same month in previous year

June 2013: -13.93%

Percent of Annual Sales by Month (illustrating seasonality)

June 2013: 6.85%

Other products

Gain/Loss Sales Percentage compared to same month in previous year

June 2013: 7.42%

INDUSTRY IMPRESSIONS

by David Hachmeister

Can you be new again?

If you have seen the movie "All That Jazz," you may be familiar with the song, "Everything Old Is New Again."* The song is played in the scene where the girlfriend and the daughter of the movie's star (it's complicated) dance for him. The star's portrayal is a very close likeness to Bob Fosse, a famous musical theatre choreographer. In the movie, the performers do a very cute retro dance number that adds a great light spark to a movie primarily about the main character's self-destructiveness. The idea that old stuff sometimes does become new again amuses us. What seemed like a dated or bad choice can come round to be a good one once more.

We are no longer amazed by the number of times we or others have been wrong—the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series, global freezing in the 1970s, pasta is good for you or is it bad? So much has been written about the upcoming complete demise of paper and snail mail that we have been on board with that notion ourselves. Now we are hearing otherwise.

It seems the marketing gurus have rediscovered mass mailing. After the inundation of online marketing tools and emails, people have become numb to them. Old-fashioned postcards, however, seem to have a great effect on well-segmented markets.

The problem with email is that because it is so easy and inexpensive to do, everybody is doing it, which of course, lessens the value of all email. It also increases the chances for accidental deletion. Good spam filters notwithstanding, we still get well more than 100 a day. Even though many are very much targeted to our wants and needs, we virtually never open them. This highlights the huge advantage of snail mail—and print publications. People have to at least look at them before discarding. Generally, people take at least a few seconds to review what they have received. Maybe their correspondence even gets date-stamped!

It is far more expensive to do a mass mailing, but the results can be much stronger than from an email blast. So snail mail may be a good option for you, especially if you have a really good list, such as your customer and prospect list. Besides, if business is slow, then you have the time to craft and post a few hundred cards or letters. If you do a phone follow-up, you might be surprised to find that many of your customers may not even be aware that you make the items featured in your mailing. Don't mope about the lack of business—turn on the radio, groove to some oldies and lick a few stamps!

We are still looking for more people to participate in the Industry Indicator. It's really easy and we only bug you once a month. If you join us, there may be a little something extra sweet in your Christmas stocking this year! M|m

*Everything old is new again.
Song by Peter Allen.

www.markingdevices.com

TRADE SERVICE

Size requirements and rates

The closing date for trade service ads is the third Friday of the second preceding month.

Add 50 percent for second color.

Trade Service Ads must be paid in advance and are non-commissionable.

size w x h	6 times	12 times
2 1/3" x 1"	$320	$480
2 1/3" x 1 1/2"	448	672
2 1/3" x 2"	544	816
2 1/3" x 2 1/2"	640	960

ADVERTISERS

CLASSIFIED

Rates are $40 for every 25 words and $25 additional for use of box number (payable in advance). The closing date for classified ads is the first day of the preceding month. Trade Service Ads must be paid in advance. Trade Service Ads are non-commissionable.

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