Your business and your brand

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MARKING INDUSTRY *magazine*

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Cloud computing—Part 6
The next computer revolution

by John McDaniel, contributing writer

Cloud computing is the next big ongoing movement within the computer revolution. What we'll explore in this series is how cloud computing will impact our personal lives and the way we do business.

As we have noted in this series, cloud computing, or "distributed computing," has been a part of the computer revolution from the start, used for some time in universities, government agencies and large businesses. What has changed is that distributed computing is now available to anyone with Internet access. Think of it as computer power delivered as a utility to our homes and businesses, similar to the way electricity is supplied. Remember that, for all practical purposes, cloud computing is nothing more than remote processing available via the Internet.

In this series, we've explored some key elements that have made distributed computing possible. Now let's take a look at some of the ways cloud computing affects the way we do business.

Written communications

Communicating with customers has already been significantly affected by the Web. Email accounts are used for the bulk of customer communication in our business. In the past, we've struggled to keep our computers synchronized with our email files. When traveling to a show or other event, we always went through the ritual of synchronizing our desktop (which we use in the office) with our laptop (which we use on the road).

With the advent of cloud-based email services that can handle multiple email accounts, our task has been greatly simplified. Now we can read and interact with all of our email from any device— from our desktop, laptop, tablet and potentially from any new smartphone.

In essence, from any of these devices, we can handle communication that might require immediate attention, even if we're just out of the office for the day.

We are currently in the process of moving all of our email communications to a cloud-based online email service. We still have some historical files associated with our old desktop email program, and we've chosen to move them to cloud storage. They are not very large and don't take a lot of space. Having them stored on the cloud lets us access and update them from multiple devices. Within a year or two, most of that history will be outdated, and the only things we will need will be stored online.

Voice and fax communications

We have been using VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) in our business for voice communications for some time. The advantages of this service are:

- **Cost**—the cost of a VOIP service is much less than the cost of traditional business landline services. Having no land lines for telephone communications also means that we don't pay all the taxes associated with telephone landlines, which contributes to the savings.
- **Telephone number database**—this is where the cloud comes in. Our contact information for our telephone service is stored online. When we add a new device, computer or a tablet, all of that contact information is immediately available. The cloud keeps our telephone number database synchronized across multiple devices. Make a change on any device and they are all updated.

In the past for communication via fax, we required a dedicated landline. We have eliminated that need by using an online fax service. The service costs significantly less than what we formerly paid for the landline. In addition, we send and receive faxes from our desktop email program, so we don't need any dedicated fax equipment or supplies.

Here's how the cloud factors in: our fax service retains a copy of the faxes we send and receive on its servers. Because our fax service is cloud-based, we can't misplace or lose an important communication.

Another benefit of an online fax service is that it filters fax communications and virtually eliminates all junk faxes. Furthermore, we don't need to print out any incoming faxes since they are sent to us as email attachments. In fact, because they are sent as PDF files, we can import them into CorelDRAW, add anything that's needed and then send them back, if necessary. Everything is digital; no trees are harmed in the process.

Critical data storage

We have always been proponents of computer backups. The question is not *if* my computer will fail; rather, it is *when* it will fail. Losing critical business data is not an option. This includes customer communication, layout files and your website—essentially, anything that is critical to your business operations.

We've been in business long enough that we have experienced catastrophic data losses. They are never pleasant, and they always come at the most inopportune times. Sometimes, they have been the result of hardware failures or at other times, errant software, including viruses. Having our data backed up has been well worth the time and energy necessary to do it.

Now with the availability of cloud-based backup, the task has been greatly simplified. We can back up an image of our computer operating system, in case it needs to be restored. We can also back up critical customer files and their associated jobs.

An advantage of using cloud-based storage for customers' files is that it makes those files available on multiple devices. For example, Corel permits you to install CorelDRAW on up to three computers under one license. This means that I can work on the file at the office on my desktop, at home on my laptop and perhaps even make changes at the customer's office, using my laptop or Windows-based tablet. The only restriction that Corel places on a multiple device installation is that you only use CorelDRAW on one device at a time.

Presentations

Have you ever needed to make a formal presentation to a customer? We have, many times. Creating presentations and storing them on the cloud can work to enhance a physical sales call. In some instances, it can augment a telephone sales call because we can easily refer to the presentation online.

Competition

Remaining competitive in the marketplace requires that we do our homework. From researching the needs of our customers and prospects to shopping the competition, it is essential that we keep current. All of this information is available on the cloud. In addition, to remain competitive and grow our business, we need to keep our skills current. Cloud-based educational programs can help. Articles, newsletters, videos and online webinars can all assist in this task.

Conclusion

These are some of the opportunities available via cloud computing. Essentially, distributed computing, or cloud computing, is here now and will continue to expand and grow. It will have a significant impact on our personal lives and how we do business. It's our job to stay current and make the most of it. **M**m

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John McDaniel, along with his wife Judy, are owners of CorelDRAW® Help, Inc. For information on training services and video lessons available, visit www.CorelDRAWhelp.com. You may contact them via email at mail@CorelDRAWhelp.com.

How to change settings in your website—Part 7

by Amanda Katon

This month, we will complete our exploration of the Settings *Tab with a review of importing, exporting, error log settings, current app settings, fraud checks and operational mode settings.*
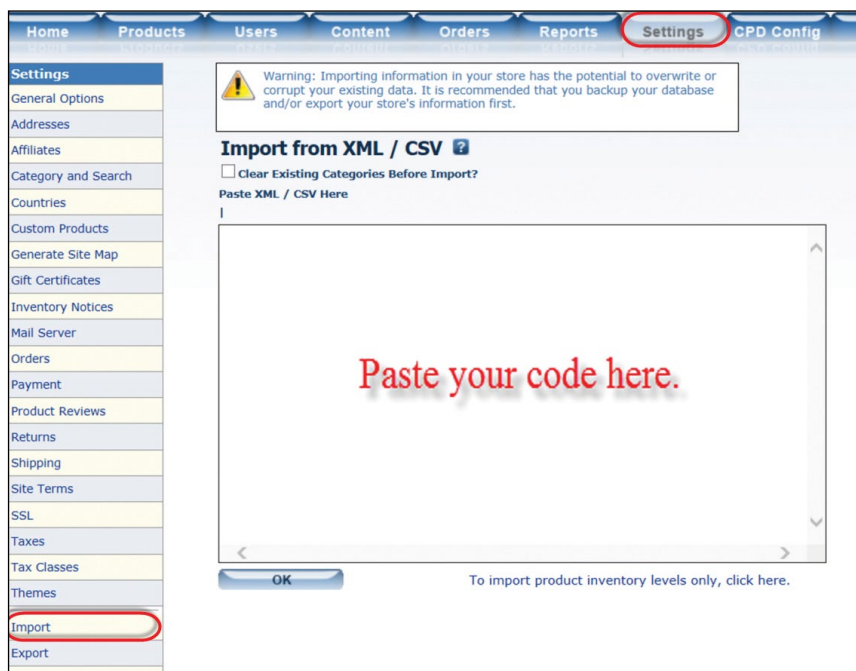
Picture 1: Import *settings screen*

All of these settings are available within every Stamp Shop Web website, giving you more control over what your site offers to customers and how your site operates. When adjusting these settings, it's important that you understand how they work and how they will affect your content and website's functionality. Let's shed some light on these settings so that you'll know how to use them to their fullest potential.

Import

To begin, first sign in to the admin area of your Stamp Shop Web site and click the *Settings* Tab. Next, select the *Import* link. You will then see an empty box where you can paste in your code (see Picture 1). Within the *Import* link, you

have the option to import all your products or categories or to import only inventory levels. This setting is used just for updating your inventory, if you have inventory tracking turned on. The code you would paste in to import is derived from what is initially exported and edited.

Clear Existing Categories Before Import?: Select this option if you would like to remove current categories before you begin to import new categories.

Paste XML/CSV Here: Paste the file within the text box and then click the OK button at the bottom.

Please note: To import, you must use either XML or CSV format. We recommend using CSV. First export all your products/categories using it, and then edit the file and import that file in CSV format. To edit and work with CSV files, you must have the proper tools on your computer.

Let's take a more detailed look at these tools and processes and learn how to export products, categories and users.

Export

Below the *Import* link, you'll see the *Export* link. Click on it to view the settings for exporting out categories, products or users from your website (see Picture 2). Exporting this information is very helpful when adjusting related elements, such as prices, names, descriptions, user email lists and more.

To export data from your website into a workable format, first check the box next to your selection: categories, products or users. Then you will choose to receive the exported information in either a CSV file or an XML file (we recommend CSV). Finally, set your delimiter to a pipe— "|". You can also use a comma delimiter, but we recommend the pipe, which we've found

Picture 2: Export *settings screen*

Picture 3: Code generated from website and pasted into a plain text editor

to be the easiest. We will use it in our example here.

Once you have made all of these choices, click the *OK* button. All of the information will subsequently appear in the box below the *OK* button.

Editing the Exported Information

To edit the information generated, start by copying all of the code in the box

below the *OK* button. Now you will use some tools available on most computers to work with the data obtained.

Open a plain text editor (specifically, *Notepad* on a PC and *TextEdit* on a Mac), and paste the code into a new document within that editor (see Picture 3). If you want to begin working with the file here, you can do so, or you can convert some elements of this file into a workable file format in Microsoft

STAMP SHOP WEB™: *Step by Step*

Picture 4: Error Logs *settings screen*

Picture 5: Current Apps Settings *settings screen*
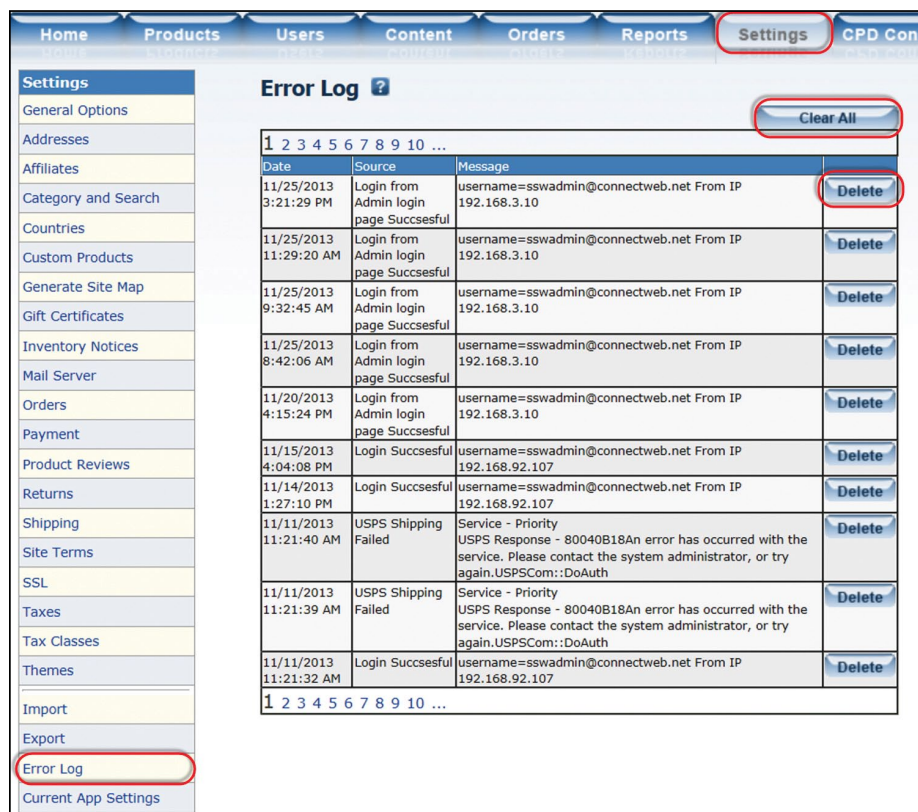
Excel. However, there may be a few additional steps in order to manipulate the file in Microsoft Excel. Contact Technical Support if you need assistance.

Error Logs

On the far left in the *Settings* Tab list, click on the *Error Logs* link, and you'll see a complete display of your site's actions, with the most recent on top (see Picture 4). Basically, you can think of this list of actions as a diagnostics report of system events. These items can only be deleted or cleared if they are over 45 days old; otherwise, they cannot be deleted.

Clear All button: If you would like to remove *all* information stored in your error log that is over 45 days old, click this button.

Delete button: Select this to delete *individual* error log entries over 45 days old.

Current App Settings

Just below *Error Logs* on the *Settings* Tab, you'll notice the link for *Current App Settings* (see Picture 5). Once inside, you'll find application settings related to the diagnostics of your site. These diagnostics show you the configuration settings that are in place on your site. They cannot be changed; it is a "read only" settings area primarily used for in-house support purposes.

Fraud Check

Moving down the *Settings* Tab, let's look at *Fraud Checks* (see Picture 6). Once you've selected it, you'll see the settings to prevent any fraudulent activity on your site. In this section, you can enter specific email addresses, IP addresses or domains that will be blocked from viewing your website or purchasing from it. As an example, you could use these

settings to stop hackers or even your competitors from gaining access to your website. Here's a breakdown of what will happen on your site when you enter information in these fields:

Banned Emails: When you add a specific email address here, that individual will not be permitted to check out on your site.

Banned IP Addresses: When you specify a particular IP address in this field, the store will appear closed to any visitor with that IP address.

Banned Domain Names: Any visitors with email addresses from these domains will not be allowed to check out on your site.

To add an email, IP address or domain to a *Fraud Checks* list, type it in the appropriate column and click the *New* button. To remove an email, IP address or domain, click on it (it will be highlighted in blue) and then use the *Delete* button below that particular list.

If someone with a banned email address or domain attempted to gain access to your site, he or she would be able to view it. However, any order placed by that person would be marked as a "troubled" order. If someone with a banned IP address tried to gain access to your site, his or her browser would display the "Store Closed" page.

Operational Mode

The final settings option is the *Operational Mode* link, where you'll find the available operational settings for your site (see Picture 7). These options change the way your site functions; they allow Stamp Shop Web to work with various punch-out systems and deliver additional functional options. If you are unsure about how to set these, please do not change them. Changing them to the wrong modes will cause your site to not function properly.

Picture 6: Fraud Checks *screen*

Picture 7: Operational Mode *settings screen*

STAMP SHOP WEB™: *Step by Step*

Checkout Mode: Choose the type of checkout mode for your store. "Normal Checkout" is the default, simply stating that the site is not operated as a punch-out system. The remaining options are various types of punch-out systems that work with Stamp Shop Web.

Punchout Production Shared Secret: This refers to special code provided by your punch-out buyer for production punch-out communications.

Punchout Test Shared Secret: Special code provided by your punch-out buyer for test punch-out communications.

MDS Punchout ID: Special code provided by Millennium Digital Services (MDS) to punch-out using the MDS punch-out system with your site.

MDS Return Page: This indicates the page to display after the MDS items are added to the cart. The default is set to "cart.aspx" which will take customers back to view their shopping carts.

Automatically send MDS release on paid order during checkout only: This option will automatically release all paid orders through the punch-out to MDS for processing. In order to use it, you must be set up with a credit card processor on your website. You may not use this option if you are set to "Offline/Manual Credit Card Processor."

Dual Language Support: By checking this box, you will allow Stamp Shop Web to be viewed in two languages of your choice. You will need to modify all of your product descriptions and names to include text in the second language. The description text in the primary (default) language will appear first, followed by a tilde (~) and then the same description in the second language.

Default Language Name: Enter the default language here, if *Dual Language Support* was checked (for example, "English").

Second Language Name: Type in the alternate language if *Dual Language Support* will be used (for example, "French").

Display Cart Page on Add: When you select this option, the customer will be taken directly to the shopping cart each time a product is added to it.

Show Login Security Code: If you want your customer to enter a security code when creating a new account on your site, check this box to display the code.

Use Email Address vs. Username for login account: When this box is selected, customers will log in to their accounts on your site with an email address, instead of a username. If you prefer usernames for login, uncheck the box.

After a long journey through the *Settings* Tab, you now have a much greater understanding of what Stamp Shop Web can offer. It brings you complete control of your online store, helping make each and every site unique, and allows for a custom operating entity for your business. If you have any questions regarding your website, feel free to contact Technical Support at 800/556-9932 or **support@cwebtechnologies.com**.

Stay tuned for next month's installment, as we begin to explore how Stamp Shop Manager was designed to automate your marking business with your website! M*lm*

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Bothering with branding

by Patricia LaCroix

The thought of branding (or re-branding) your business may seem daunting. But if you want to stand apart from your competition, you'll need to invest in your company's identity.

The idea of branding (and re-branding) can conjure up a number of negative thoughts for a business owner. Branding takes research. Branding requires creativity and the brainstorming of new ideas. Branding uses valuable time that could be spent manufacturing product, serving customers and running the business. Branding could mean hiring outside marketing consultants, graphic designers and copywriters. Worst of all, branding takes money—money to hire these people, to create new logos and designs, to produce new advertising and to buy new packaging, letterhead and business cards.

Besides all that, everyone in the industry knows who your company is and what it does anyway.

So why even bother?

On the surface, all of these thoughts are valid. But there are equally valid reasons why it's worthwhile to invest the time and money to create (or in many cases, "recreate") a brand for your business.

What is "branding"? And what does it mean to a business?

According to Danielle Eisenach, President of marketing consultation firm Red Devil & Associates, the American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers."

In more concise terms, branding is the *identity* of your business. It communicates who and what your business is. It's the way your business will be perceived by your customers. Branding is not only about how your business looks, it's about how your business *feels*.

You might have thought of branding as simply a company's logo. And while it's true that a logo can be part of the process of branding, it is not the whole picture.

Instead, branding is achieved by every means that is used to communicate, and frankly, everything communicates. A logo is a visual way of communicating your branding. So are the colors you select for your advertisements and other

ALL YOU NEED

DATERS
QUALITY
SIX YEAR BAND

STAMPLE

marketing materials. The copy in your advertisement is a written means of branding. Any social media postings combine both visual and written communication.

And yet, there's so much more to consider when developing a brand. The suit your salesperson chose to wear when he met that customer last week communicates a message about your business. The building that houses your company says something about its identity to those who drive past it (let alone enter). The way in which your customer service staff member interacts on the phone and how he or she treats a client will influence how that individual feels about your business.

Every and any decision you make in your business ultimately communicates a message to your clients—and your clients, consciously or not, see it, hear it, feel it and form an opinion about your business based on that message. It will affect those customers in one of two important ways: Either they will be drawn in or they will be driven away.

The color green in the Starbucks logo elicits feelings of both calmness and hunger from its audience.

Selling an identity

As business coach Tony Robbins puts it: "People don't buy products; they buy identity."

"I believe that branding is not about getting your target market to choose you over the competition; it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem," says Eisenach.

To demonstrate how skillfully a business can create a unique identity through branding, look at a company with a successful brand and an extremely loyal following: Starbucks. Ask a Starbucks customer what he or she feels when thinking about the company, and you'll hear words such as "warm," "comforting," "accommodating" and "consistent."

That's exactly what the marketing executives at Starbucks want their customers to think and feel. And that's because branding is not an accident. Branding is deliberate.

Perhaps it would be better to say, "Good branding is deliberate," because

the question is not whether your business is branded. Like it or not, every company on the face of the earth is branded, because every business has its own identity. But is this identity by default? Or was it created purposefully, with great thought and meaningful intent?

Such intent means research. There are the "big picture" questions to be answered: Who is your customer? Who will see and hear your message? And how will this message be delivered? Equally, there are the specific details that must be addressed. Consider the all-important mark of your brand, your logo: What will your logo look like in color? In black and white? On the outside of an envelope? Shrunk down on a business card? Enlarged on a billboard over the expressway? On the side of your building? On the home page of your website?

So the question is never "Why bother?" Instead, ask yourself: "What do I need to do to ensure that my company's branding reflects the identity that I *want* my company to have?" That identity would include the attributes that will persuade others to act accordingly and buy your products and services, so that your branding brings your business the success you desire.

Building a successful brand

How do you create an identity for your business? It starts with asking a series of questions to get to the root of what you want your identity to be and to whom you wish to communicate your message.

First, think about how you want to be perceived:

- What feelings do you want to invoke in others?
- What words would describe how you want others to perceive your company?

Now, look at how your company is being perceived, as in:

- What feelings do customers have right now, as things stand?
- What words would describe how they currently perceive your business?

To understand the true feelings of people within your industry, you might want to go as far as taking the time for market research and customer surveys, so that you get an unbiased opinion and more realistic answers to these questions. Once you know what you want your company's identity to be, and what it currently is, you can take concrete steps to change how your company is viewed.

The essentials of a good brand

Eisenach outlines the elements she believes a brand must include:

- A **"story."** Know what you and your company do, for whom it's done, and most importantly, why it's done.
- A clear and concise **"elevator pitch"** that puts that story into words.
- **Consistency.** Whatever you choose as your identity, and however you choose to convey it (whether it be by marketing, advertising or social media), don't break character.
- **A team that believes in your brand** and represents it well.

Don't fear outside help

"When looking to establish a new brand or to re-brand, a company should enlist the help of a reputable marketing or graphic design firm that specializes in branding," says Eisenach. "These companies will work with clients to uncover what they envision for their brand and then bring that vision to life."

Danielle Eisenach,
President of Red Devil & Associates

"But we can't afford to brand!"

by Patricia LaCroix

To those who say, "We can't afford to brand," Danielle Eisenach, President of the marketing consultation firm Red Devil & Associates, counters, "You can't afford not to!"

"Without an identity," she says, "you are lost in the sea of your competitors. Branding doesn't have to be expensive, but the parts that cost are worth every penny."

To start, Eisenach suggests: "Have a solid, professional logo. This is your foundation. Spend money here! Then build from there—use it in social media, on promotional items and in marketing pieces."

When having a logo designed, Eisenach explains that you can keep hourly costs down by "helping your designer out. Have samples of images you like that you feel represent you. Note specifically what you like, and communicate that to your designer."

Then remain consistent. "Once you have your logo and brand standards—as in colors, fonts and images—use them consistently across all media platforms."

Overall, "Just do what you can when you can," she says, "and continue to build from there." M*m*

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"Additionally, a reputable firm will develop brand standards to be used by the client consistently. Brand standards include font, logo, imaging and even language used. It gives a client a professional and polished presence that allows their clients to relate and identify with the company," she explains.

The branding of YOU

Keep in mind that branding is not only about your company; it's also about you.

Notes Eisenach, "Branding refers to your company brand and your personal brand. It is the combination of tangible and intangible characteristics that make a brand unique."

You can personally promote your company's brand by carrying the concept into your everyday professional situations. You can be your brand!

For example, when attending trade shows and business events, sport a

namebadge (perhaps a product that your own company creates) that shows off your brand as well as your company's production capabilities. You and your employees can wear polo shirts designed with the company's logo and colors, and do so not only at the more-obvious business functions, but in casual, daily life as well. Beyond raising awareness of your own identity, these personal items might just spark a question that leads to business.

Furthermore, it's important to remember that your marking industry company most likely produces and sells many items—printed, visual products—that are specifically designed to help brand companies. Are you using your own products to create your own identity? Make sure you are seizing the opportunity to demonstrate the usefulness of your products in your own branding efforts. Wear your brand and promote your product!

A great example of such personal branding is Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics. As you may already know, Mary Kay chose pink as the color of her company. Pink evokes feelings of being feminine and pretty—exactly how a cosmetics company wants its customers to feel. Virtually everything in Mary Kay's life was pink, including the interior decoration of her Dallas home.

Did you know, however, that her favorite color was actually blue? Yet, she still surrounded herself in pink, even in her personal life, because she was branding not only her company, but also herself.

Beyond being immersed in pink, Mary Kay always made sure that she was perfectly coiffed, made-up (in only Mary Kay cosmetics, of course), and wearing feminine attire (skirts and dresses, rather than more manly
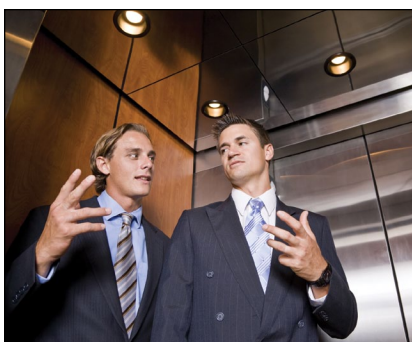
"So what does your company do?"

Here's how several professionals in the marking industry approach the "elevator pitch":

"We manufacture and market high speed customized printing systems." I defy any ink jet printer to print your name and address on an envelope faster than the blinding thump of a stamp.

Bob Schram, Sterling Marking Products Inc., London, Ontario, Canada

I believe the word "custom" resonates a lot with customers. If you say to people, "I make stamps," they first think of postage stamps. By incorporating "custom" in the conversation, all of a sudden they realize you are more than a supplier. Some phrases I like:

- *I make (manufacture) custom impressions one product at a time.*
- *I sell personal branding through custom products.*
- *I create custom identity products.*
- *I handle all of your custom branding needs.*
- *I provide custom identity products from the front door to the back door.*
- *We are your "one stop shop" for all of your corporate branding needs (or… for your corporate identity needs).*
- *We provide corporate branding from the sign out front to the business card in your pocket nationwide.*

John Byers III, Chemence Inc., Alpharetta, Georgia

Whenever I introduce myself in a group or to an individual, I struggle with something catchy to say to get their attention. When you say to someone, "I make custom rubber stamps, signs, namebadges, labels, tags, embossers, etc.," somewhere along that long list of items, we seem to lose our audience. At an IMIA Ladies of Marking luncheon, we discussed some phrases to introduce ourselves and our businesses:

- *I make an impression on the world.*
- *I show people the way.*
- *I make a mark on the world.*
- *Communication at a glance.*
- *I am a provider of graphic solutions.*
- *I manufacture personalized products for all of your life events.*
- *I help people get their messages out.*

Another idea we discussed was to tell people that "I am a manufacturer" because this sounds so much better than "I make."

Traci Szwedko, Winmark Stamp & Sign, Salt Lake City, Utah

An example of the creative and thoughtful branding that can be viewed online, courtesy of Richie Stewart, co-owner of Boston-based design studio Commoner, Inc. (www.commonerinc.com).

Find branding inspiration online!

When it's difficult for you to pinpoint exactly how you want your company identity to look, you may find inspiration on one of these websites. Perhaps a particular color or clever packaging concept will spark an idea that you can share with your graphic designer for creative direction.

http://webneel.com/creative-branding-design-inspiration

https://www.pinterest.com/envelopespot/branding-ideas-for-small-businesses/

http://www.designyourway.net/blog/inspiration/identity-and-branding/letterhead-and-logo-design-inspiration-60-cool-examples/

http://blog.spoongraphics.co.uk/articles/50-inspirational-branding-identity-design-projects

https://www.pinterest.com/moveopinterest/visual-identity-inspiration/

http://speckyboy.com/2013/04/24/inspirational-examples-of-branding/

perceived pants) to consistently convey that image of ultra-femininity and pulled-together polish that she knew her ideal customers would want to emulate. To this day, most of the sales directors in the company insist on the same image from their sales force.

If you are the "face" of your business—personally meeting clients, interacting professionally within your community and speaking to potential customers—you are undoubtedly part of the branding of your business. What are you personally doing to promote the image that you want your customers to see?

A well-spent investment

Does branding take work, time and money? Assuredly. But it affects and permeates everything you do and create, while it drives and maintains customers for your services and products.

Remember that what you are doing with your branding is for the long run. In a recent interview with Oprah Winfrey, it was Starbucks' CEO Howard Shultz who said, "Short-term success is not going to build long-term value for anyone."

Making the effort to "bother to brand" by integrating your branding efforts into everything you do for your business can create consistency and build that long-term value that will pay off in perpetual success. M|m

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Making money with CorelDRAW®

Screen printing—The equipment and resources

by Judy and John McDaniel, contributing writers

We've explored the products and artwork requirements involved in screen printing. Now, let's take a look at the equipment you'll need to get started and where to find it.

Equipment for screen printing can be as simple as a single-station, single-screen unit. Single station units are available for well under $1,000. In fact, you can purchase single station systems, which contain some of the other equipment you need, for under $1,000. From there, they go up in size and complexity to fully automated multi-station units that can cost well over $100,000.

Before you order a system, assuming that you don't already have one, you need to determine the kinds of products you intend to create. How many colors do you need? The number of colors will determine the number of color stations you will need in a press. What sizes of images do you intend to print? That will determine screen sizes, platen sizes and film printer capacity.

How long will your production runs be? In other words, what do you anticipate your typical order size will be? How big do you think your largest order will be? Aside from your budget, answers to these questions will help you determine whether you want an automated system.

Do you intend to create screens in-house? Most screen-print companies create their own screens. However, if you are just getting started, perhaps you'll want to have screens made by an outside source. If you decide to create screens in-house, then you will need a printer suitable for printing film, an exposure unit and a washout system.

In short, as with any system you intend to purchase, let your needs dictate your equipment choices. Create a list of these specific needs, and then go shopping. Here is a short list of equipment you may need to get started in screen printing:

To create screens in-house

- A suitable printer (For this application, an inkjet printer will suffice.)
- A UV exposure unit
- A washout system

For printing

- A screen-print machine with stations—the number of stations on the machine will depend upon the number of colors you intend to print.
- A flash cure unit—this type of unit is designed to dry ink quickly,

which is especially handy for multi-colored applications.

- A dryer—this is useful to ensure the prints are completely dry prior to packaging.

Screen-printing resources

Here are some companies that can help you explore screen printing further:

Ikonics Imaging

4832 Grand Avenue
Duluth MN 55807
218/628-2002; 800/643-1037;
Fax: 218/628-2064
http://ikonicsimaging.com/wp/store/products/category/art-supplies/

Ikonics Imaging manufactures a line of film and vellum materials that can be used for both sandblast and screen print film positives, including AccuBlack™, a waterproof inkjet film and AccuArt™3, waterproof inkjet media for the production of photopositives and photonegatives. For more information, please visit their website.

We have used their film products for creating both screen-print screens and sandblast resist materials. Prior to the company's introduction of their inkjet films, we used a dedicated film printer, which was initially much more expensive to purchase. In addition, the materials for the dedicated film printer are more expensive than the inkjet materials available from Ikonics.

RhinoTech

2955 Lone Oak Circle, Suite 2
Eagan, MN 55121
651/686-5027; Toll Free: 888/717-4466;
Fax: 651/686-9745
http://www.rhinotechinc.com/

RhinoTech is a full service manufacturer and supplier of screen printing equipment and supplies. For more information, please visit their website.

PRINTA Systems

1359 Commerce Way
Idaho Falls, ID 83401
800/601-6240; Fax: 208/522-3525
http://www.printa.com

PRINTA manufactures and supplies equipment for screen printing, pad printing and sublimation. They also provide hands-on classes for their equipment.

We purchased and used two systems from PRINTA for our business. The first was a manual single-color pad printing system, and the second was a complete manual screen-printing system. Both systems have worked well for us. The screen-print equipment package we chose was a compact unit that included an exposure unit and dryer, which we found adequate for our needs.

Search the Internet

For more recommendations, and possibly ones in your area, performing an Internet search will provide a number of other potential sources.

Last, but not least… training

Our final recommendation is to find hands-on training. If you have never screen-printed, try it out before you make an investment in the equipment. Some companies offer training for their equipment only after you've purchased it. That said, if you can try it without purchasing the equipment, you'll find out whether it's a process you will want to bring in-house.

One final thought

In recent years, the introduction of direct-to-product printing, specifically direct-to-garment printing, has made an impact on screen printing. The advantage of direct-to-garment printing is reduced set-up time and expense. However, for medium to long runs, screen printing cannot be beat. Screen printing is the most inexpensive method of product printing for multi-piece runs, requiring one to a few colors.

Conclusion

As we pointed out in Part 1, screen printing is alive and well in the 21st century. With any new process that is new to you, research the market in your area, try before you buy and consider the alternatives. Remember, for the most part, our customers don't care how we create the products they require. They care about quality, service and cost. MIm

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.

C.H. Hanson acquires Palmgren Steel Products

Longtime hand tool company eager to meet the needs of industrial manufacturer's customers

Hand tool manufacturer C.H. Hanson has purchased Chicago's Palmgren Steel Products, completing an acquisition that C.H. Hanson leaders say will pay big dividends for customers.

"Palmgren has always been a trusted brand name in the industrial marketplace, but the business had struggled recently with deliveries, stock-outs and an undefined strategy to help its customers grow," says C.H. Hanson President Phil Hanson. "Customers now will enjoy better service, better selection and better deliveries as we apply the Hanson standards that have guided us for generations to the Palmgren product line."

Those products include industry-leading drill press vises, general purpose vises, drill presses, bench grinders and more. The acquisition—which features a 147-year-old company buying one that's 94 years old—was completed Oct. 23. C.H. Hanson moved Palmgren's manufacturing and warehousing to its Naperville facility the next week and began shipping Palmgren products Nov. 4.

"Industrial distributors want to do business with fewer suppliers," Hanson says. "This helps us meet that need while expanding our product offerings. We're proud to have the opportunity to burnish the Palmgren brand, grow its base, infuse innovation into its product line and bring outstanding performance back to its core value proposition, all in the name of serving customers better than ever before."

Also effective Nov. 4, Ernie Torkilsen has been named C.H. Hanson's director of sales for Palmgren products. He comes from the Colovos Co., where he ran Palmgren sales for six years. Walter Szotek, who began his career at Palmgren Steel Products, has been named V.P. of Manufacturing—Palmgren. Torkilsen and Szotek have more than 65 years of combined experience in the design and manufacturing of workholding tools and equipment.

"I've seen the strength of the Palmgren brand firsthand in today's marketplace," Torkilsen says. "Palmgren is a proud family name that represents Chicago-style hard work, and I'm thrilled to be overseeing sales of these exceptional products for C.H. Hanson."

"Growth through acquisitions—like Palmgren's—has been our plan since we completed our executive team with the hiring of Mike Fralic as vice president of sales in September," Phil Hanson says. "Mike's skills in planning and building sales structures and teams are a key part in our future growth initiatives."

For more information, please contact Customer Service at sales@CHHanson.com or call 800/827-3398. For information about C.H. Hanson, visit www.chhanson.com.

Roanoke Stamp & Seal acquires Trotec Laserati DT

Roanoke Stamp & Seal announces that it has acquired a second Trotec Laserati Laser, the new high-volume, cutting-edge Trotec Laserati DT. The DT utilizes a 200-watt dual laser system and rotating drum to cut rubber stamp dies. The DT is designed with one mission in mind—producing high quality rubber dies rapidly. This is the only laser of its kind east of the Rockies and is currently operational at its facility in Roanoke, Virginia.

In implementing the Laserati DT for production, Roanoke Stamp has also developed a "Die Partnership Program" to fulfill the rubber die needs of stamp manufacturers. The main objectives of this program are to increase customers' profits by reducing expenses and to meet their manufacturing demands. Key aspects of the "Die Program" are same day shipping, no freight expense and a significant cost reduction, especially over photopolymer.

The company's investment in the Laserati DT, as well as other hardware and software acquisitions in 2013, are examples of its core objective to remain a leader in the marking industry. Staying current with the industry's technology and innovations allows Roanoke to offer its customers the best products with a value-added price point. Roanoke Stamp & Seal remains committed to upholding the

standard that its customers have come to rely on for almost a century.

With two Laseratis at its facilities in Virginia, the Roanoke team is ready to service all stamp and die needs, no matter the size!

For a more comprehensive explanation of the "Die Program" or the complete product line, please contact Donald Corron or the sales team at Roanoke Stamp & Seal, 25 Madison Ave., Roanoke, VA 24016; 800/542-7454 or visit www.RoanokeStamp.com.

Consolidated Marking re-aligns sales regions

To better serve its growing customer base, Consolidated Marking has re-aligned sales regions for the Eastern and Central United States. Effective January 1, 2014, Mike Mauro, VP of Sales, will handle all East Coast customer relations. George Murphy takes over responsibility for the Central

Region from current Marketing Manager Keith Betti. Tony Pezze's West Coast territory remains unchanged.

For a complete state-by-state listing, please contact Consolidated Marking at 800/323-0253 or customerservice@consolidatedmarking.com.

Johnson Plastics Adds Rowmark's FusionGrafix™

Johnson Plastics announces the addition of the revolutionary new FusionGrafix™ engraving material from Rowmark. This exciting designer-inspired plastic is custom-made to order. It allows engravers to create their own distinct designs by combining UV-stable graphic patterns over a durable acrylic core in

30 popular colors that give engravers over 200 new options to offer their customers.

The new product has a number of architectural, industrial and environmental applications, including corporate branding/board room signage and point-of-purchase displays. Well-suited for interior and exterior use, the two-ply sheet is 1/16-inch thick and has a semi-gloss finish. For a limited time, a "sample product fan" is available to help engravers and their customers visualize pattern and color combinations.

All orders are custom-made and will ship within five business days of ordering.

For more information or to place an order, go to www.johnsonplastics.com or call 800/869-7800.

Johnson Plastics offers Rowmark's Hardwood Collection

Johnson Plastics is pleased to offer the new Hardwood Collection from Rowmark. This exciting new line of all natural, quality-constructed laserable wood substrates opens new profit opportunities for laser engravers.

The Hardwood Collection is the perfect option for all kinds of laserable applications from wedding invitations and book covers to architectural models and personalized gifts. Use it for ornaments, key fobs, coasters, boxes, album covers, picture frames and signs. Made of five high-quality single-ply hardwood layers laminated at right angles for strength, stiffness and dimensional stability, the composite material can be lasered on both sides.

The Hardwood Collection comes in four popular wood choices: Cherry, Maple, Red Oak and Walnut, and in 1/8 inch and 1/4 inch thick sheets to fit 12 inch x 24 inch and 18 inch x 24 inch laser bed sizes.

Find them at www.johnsonplastics.com or call 800/869-7800 for more information.

uTypia announces its newest B2B product, Business Next

Trodat's uTypia division announces its newest product for the B2B Market—Business Next. This new site solution is a full overhaul of our flagship product, uTypia Business. Boasting a brand new site design, a fully customizable home page as well as many other new features, we're excited to get this out into the market. The streamlined ordering process of this new B2B solution can be the answer you're looking for in targeting those Fortune 1000 companies. Be sure to stop and see us at the IMIA show in Booth #635!

For more information about uTypia, contact Jennifer Niziolek at 11-732-529-8522 or visit our website at www.utypia.com.

New laserable pens with styluses from JDS

JDS Industries, Inc. introduces its newest line of laserable pens for 2014. This new pen style includes five colors in anodized aluminum: black, red, blue, green and burgundy, all of which have a shiny, smooth finish and laser to an even white. There is also a bamboo pen available in the new style. The new pens are 5 inches long and 3/8 inches wide and have a metal pocket clip. The features include a twist tip for hiding and revealing the pen nib, as well as a stylus on the top of the pen. All of these pens are stocked in all 14 of JDS's nationwide warehouses.

For more information or to get samples for your showroom, call JDS at 800/843-8853; Fax: 605/339-1467; Email: sales@jdsindustries.com; Web: www.jdsindustries.com.

Connectweb to send a new face to 2014 NBM/IMIA trade show
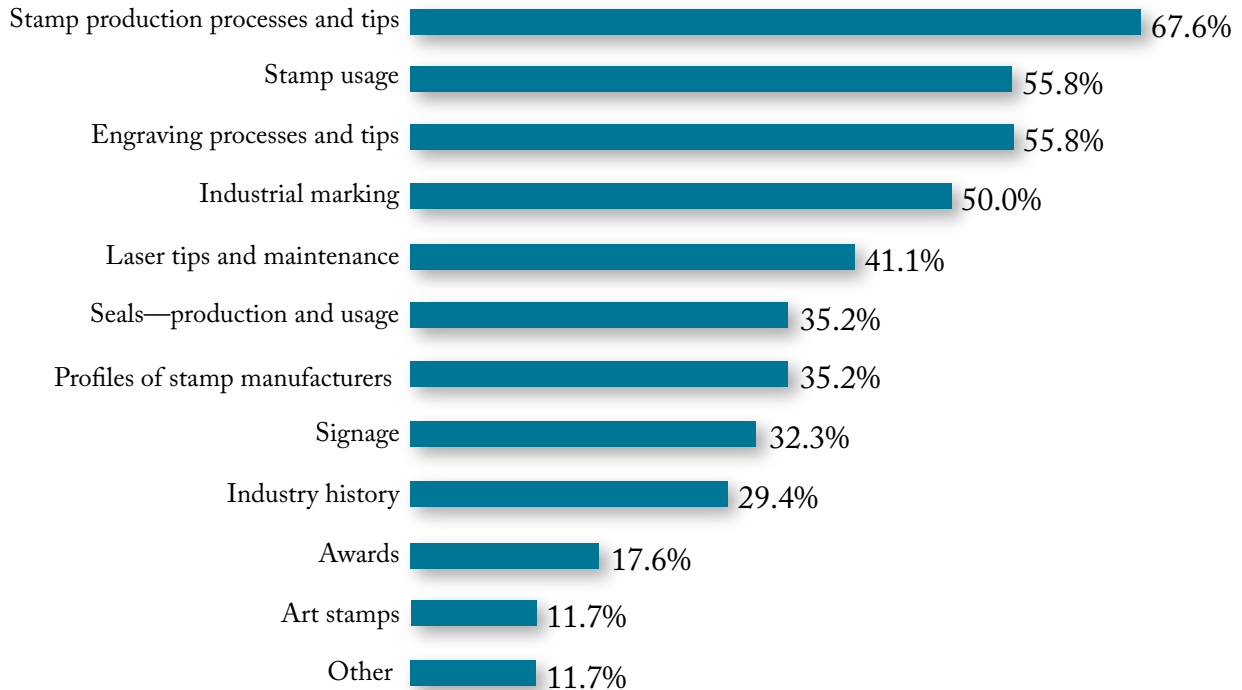
For years, Connectweb Technologies, Inc. has sent two familiar faces to the IMIA trade shows—the founders of the company, Michael and Paul Beaulieu. 2014 is not only a new year for the company but a new start in trade show presence: Amanda Katon will be joining Mike in Los Angeles for the 2014 NBM/IMIA trade show. Stop in to meet Amanda at the Cost Effective Automation Seminar on Friday, January 10, at 2:15 p.m. or at the Stamp Shop Web/Stamp Shop Manager's User Group Meeting on Saturday, January 11, at 10:00 a.m. Just another reason to join Connectweb and many other companies in LA.

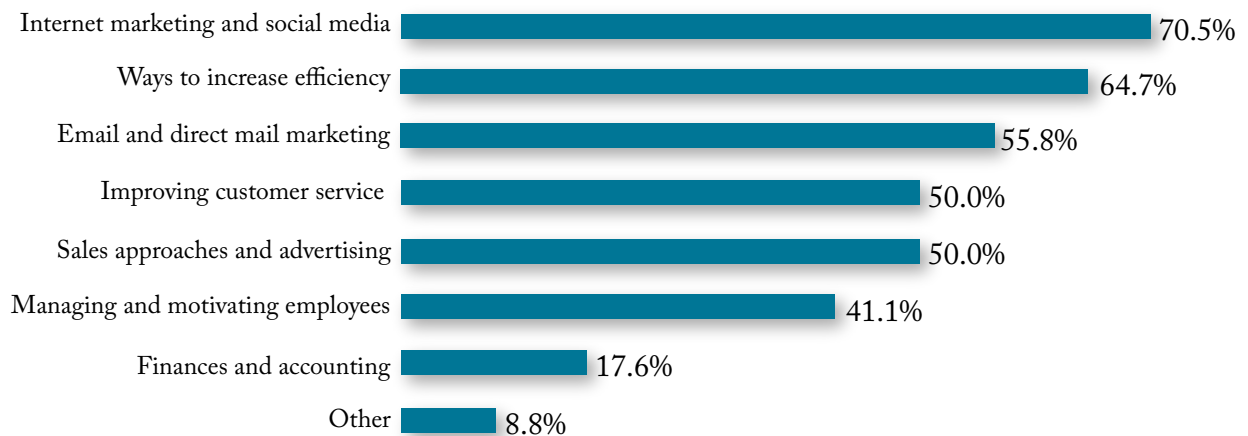*For more information, contact Connectweb at 800/556-9932; Web: www.cwebtechnologies.com.*

"And the survey says…"

Recently, we conducted a survey to learn more about what you'd like to see in the magazine. Here's how you responded:

Industry-specific topics you'd like to see covered

Topic	Percentage
Stamp production processes and tips	67.6%
Stamp usage	55.8%
Engraving processes and tips	55.8%
Industrial marking	50.0%
Laser tips and maintenance	41.1%
Seals—production and usage	35.2%
Profiles of stamp manufacturers	35.2%
Signage	32.3%
Industry history	29.4%
Awards	17.6%
Art stamps	11.7%
Other	11.7%

General business topics you'd like to see covered

Topic	Percentage
Internet marketing and social media	70.5%
Ways to increase efficiency	64.7%
Email and direct mail marketing	55.8%
Improving customer service	50.0%
Sales approaches and advertising	50.0%
Managing and motivating employees	41.1%
Finances and accounting	17.6%
Other	8.8%

Thank you for providing your valuable input! If you have additional ideas that you'd like to share, please send them to **editor@markingdevices.com**.
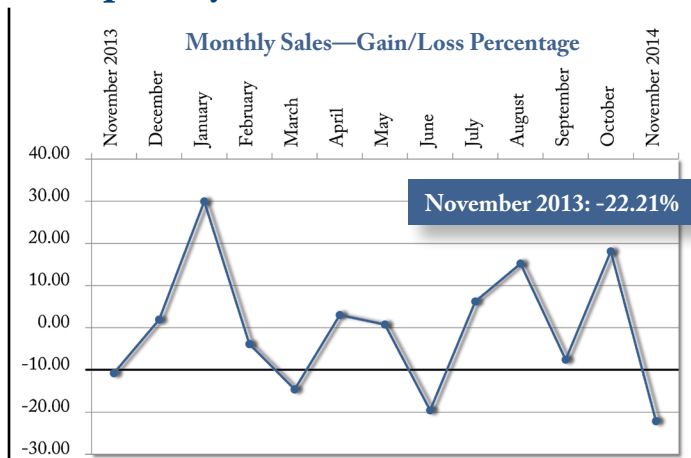
INDUSTRY INDICATOR

by David Hachmeister

Keeping a good perspective

That seemingly catastrophic drop-off from October to November was not nearly as bad as it might first appear. Stamps fell 22.21 percent from their October levels. However, when compared with the previous November, they fell just 5.66 percent. Not go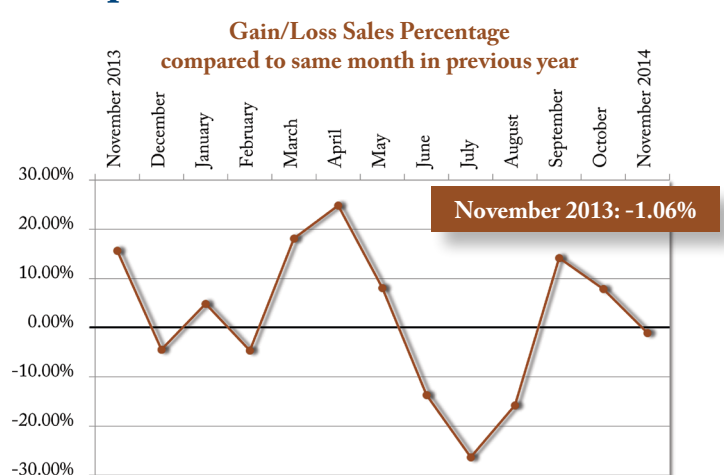od, but not horrible. Recent data for past Octobers indicates that it appears to have been a pretty good month for stamps (January remains the strongest month).

Other Products were also off from October, but they fell by just 1.06 percent. Both stamps and other products have been up six of the last 12 months. Let's see how the year ends in next month's Indicator. M|*m*

Stamps only
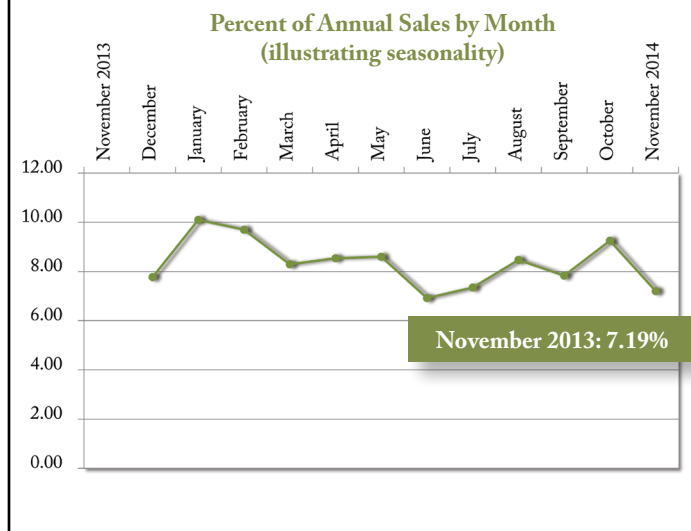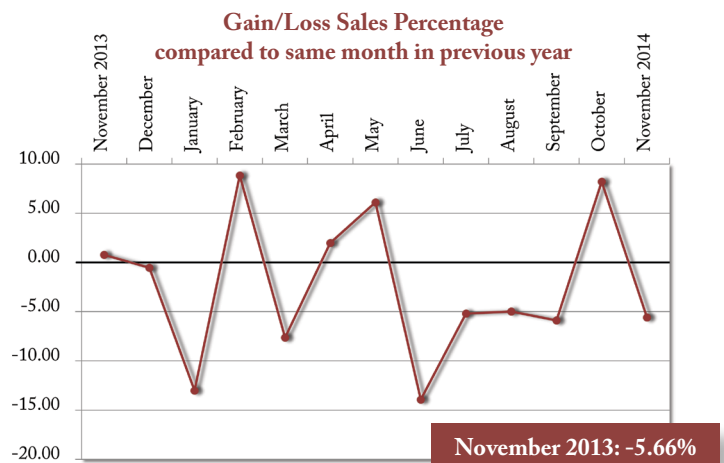
Monthly Sales—Gain/Loss Percentage

November 2013: -22.21%

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

November 2013: -5.66%

**Percent of Annual Sales by Month
(illustrating seasonality)**

November 2013: 7.19%

Other products

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

November 2013: -1.06%

by David Hachmeister

Happy New Year!

We greet the New Year with the promise of many new ways to stay in touch. Now you can find us on Facebook, hear from us through Constant Contact, read our digital editions or use our website (**www.markingdevices.com**) to get the latest news or to catch up on an article or two you may have missed. We still even answer the phone! With so many subjects on our minds, we thought we would detail a few here:

This may come as a shock to some of you, but in our recent editorial survey, when we asked you what you want to read about in the magazine, you said rubber stamp production processes! Stamp usage, engraving, laser maintenance and industrial marking were also highly mentioned. We have taken note. In the broader category of general business topics, you said that ways to increase efficiency and the topic of Internet marketing were of the greatest interest. Feel free to pass along any ideas to our Managing Editor, Anne Shadis (**Anne@markingdevices.com**).

We were also pleased to see that the overwhelming majority of you think we do a pretty good job. Almost without exception, you expressed satisfaction with the job we do. We will continue to work hard to earn your ongoing support.

One way to make the magazine better is to participate in the Industry Indicator.

This time of year is a great time to join the Industry Indicator! Just give us your sales figures for stamps and other products once a month (we send gentle reminders) and we do the rest, completely confidentially. These numbers are ones that you should have easily available. If you are reading this while walking around at the LA trade show, please let us know that you would like to help.

It is also an ideal time to enter our Manufacturer of the Year contest. All we need are your total sales from 2012 and 2013. We do the rest and keep all information confidential. The company with the largest sales increase among similarly sized companies is the winner. There are three winners each year! It is a great marketing tool to be a nationwide winner of your industry's annual contest. People like to do business with successful companies.

Finally, as a reminder, we are conducting an industry survey via phone in the spring. Please take the time to work with our folks on the phone. It should take no more than 10–12 minutes and will be very valuable to the industry. All data will be kept confidential. By completing the survey, you will be eligible to win a great prize.

We have lots of thoughts and lots of opportunities for the New Year. With your help, we look forward to making it a great one! **MI**m

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For Trade Service ad rates and deadlines, please contact David Hachmeister at **david@markingdevices.com**.

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