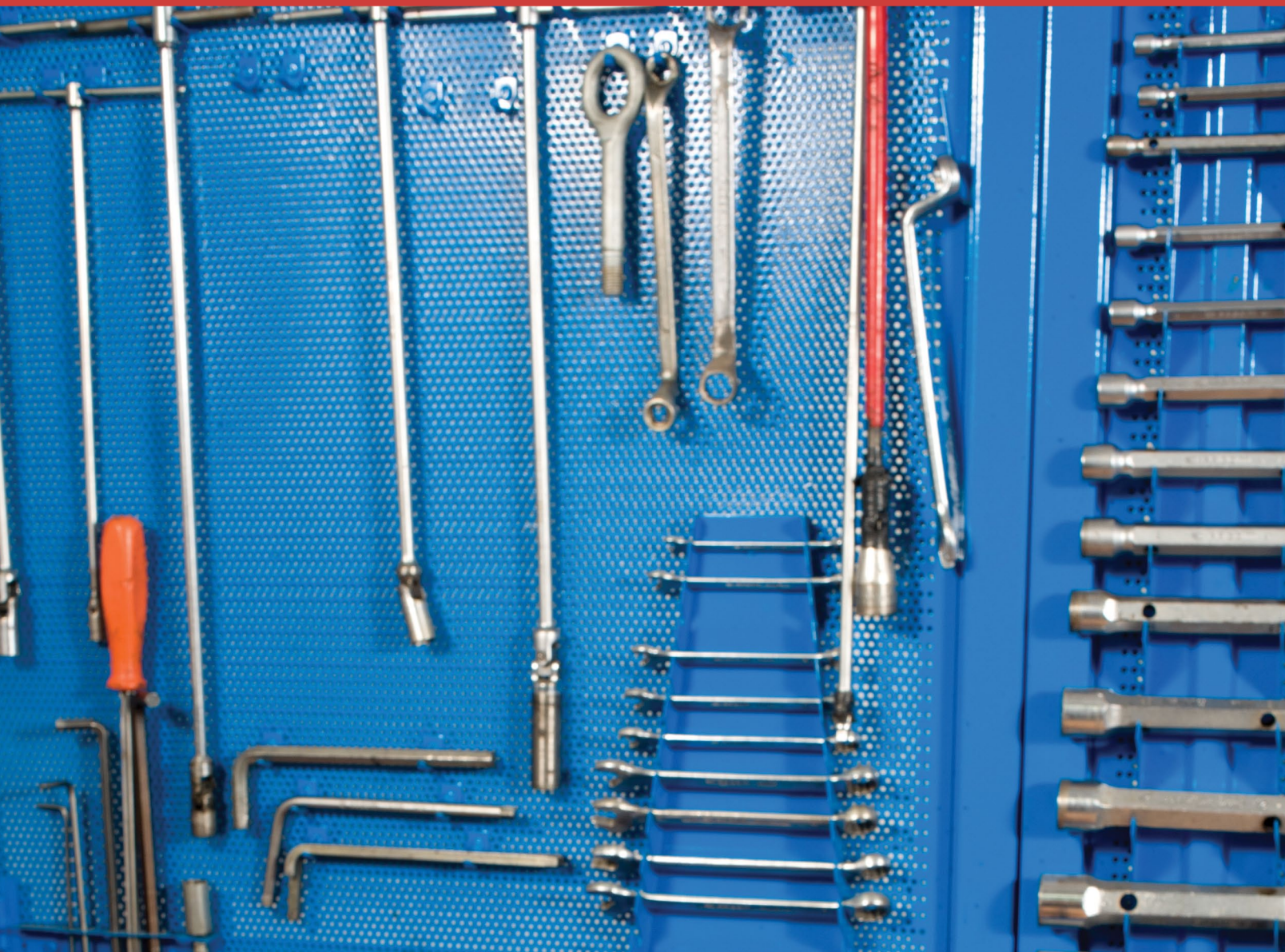


October 2014

# MARKING INDUSTRY

*magazine*



**5S Good Housekeeping:  
What it means for marking and identification**







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# MARKING INDUSTRY

magazine

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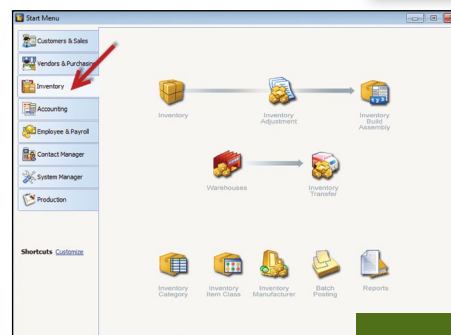
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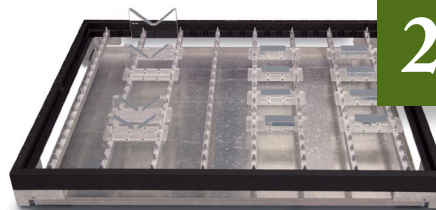
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# Good housekeeping identifies visual accountability

by John Newbold and Laurie Barcaskey

*As a potential marking partner of manufacturing companies, it's important to understand 5S Good Housekeeping practices to identify the most helpful solutions for visual control and asset marking.*

With industry working to be more efficient, due to fewer employees available to complete the work, and using equipment to its fullest potential, manufacturing organizations are seeking to be more intentional about processes that impact the bottom line.

Much of this is driven by 5S Good Housekeeping practices. What does this refer to? A short definition is that 5S, or the five pillars of the visual workplace, is a systematic process of workplace organization. A method developed by the Japanese, it works in relationship with lean manufacturing so that organizations can **Sort**, **Set in order**, **Shine** (clean), **Standardize** and **Sustain** the process to complete the work in the most efficient manner for just-in-time deliveries.

Some manufacturing professionals simply don't understand the value of the process or don't see the relevance of the 5S principles. When asked about the components of 5S, these

## 5S Good Housekeeping

<b>Sort</b>	Remove all items from the workplace that are not needed for current production.
<b>Set-in-Order</b>	Arrange needed items so that they are easy to find and put away. Items used often are placed closer to the employee.
<b>Shine</b>	Make sure everything is clean, functioning and ready to go.
<b>Standardize</b>	This is the method you use to maintain the first three S steps.
<b>Sustain</b>	Make a habit of properly maintaining correct procedures.



*Scoring answers helps identify trends.*



folks might comment, “That’s just a system of keeping things organized and clean, right?” as if it’s some sort of crazy idea about messy toolboxes. Others might react with, “Why make a big program out of cleaning up?”

Yet there are focused companies that, once organized, are quick to agree that they witness the benefits of efficiency, experience fewer work-related injuries and have better communication and attitudes among workers.

Most importantly, they benefit from cost savings.

Successful manufacturers are always seeking ways for continuous improvement that will allow them to provide quality products in a timely manner for the

least amount of money. 5S helps drive this through lean manufacturing principles. These organizations take the time to evaluate, collaborate, implement and monitor to make adaptations for the best results. The intent of 5S is to have only what you need available in the workplace, a designated place for everything, a standard way of doing things and the discipline to maintain it.

For the operator, the components of 5S create a superior working environment. It gives the operator an opportunity to provide creative input regarding how the workplace should be organized and laid out and how standard work should be completed. Operators will be able to find things easier every time. The workplace will be cleaner and safer. Jobs will be simpler and more satisfying with many obstacles and frustrations removed.

The first “S” (Sort) requires you to distinguish between what is needed and not needed. Then it requires you to discard what is not needed, which is known as “red-tagging.” A team goes through all items (tools, equipment, material, etc.), and each member asks the question: “Do I need this to do my job on a regular basis?” Items that are used very infrequently or never used should be red-tagged. After determining what is actually needed, all documentation is updated to reflect the necessary parts.

The second “S” (Set in Order) requires you to organize things so that they are simple to use and label them so that anyone can find, use and return them to the correct place easily. Where it is practical, visual controls should be used in this activity, such as labeling, signage and a communication device within the work environment that tells you at a glance how work should be done. The requirements for setting in order include:

- Equipment and tool organization: Simple, organized storage with visual confirmation (with just a glance, you know exactly where a tool goes, if it is missing or the tool location is empty.)
- Tools and equipment used most frequently are arranged closest to the employee.
- Workstations have a place for each tool, when possible, with no toolboxes or drawers that interfere with visibility or require unneeded motion to open and close.
- Taping: Tape the floor to indicate areas of operations, parts, walkways, discrepant material and hazards.
- Work instructions: Make sure these are current and located at the workstation.



*Co-workers in 5S work cell*

Kasia Bialasiewicz/Bigstock.com



- Signboard strategy:  
Indicate cell, product lines and workstations.  
Indicate production goals and status.  
Post area information boards with key status indicators (inventory, training, calibration, etc.).
- Ergonomics: Follow ergonomic guidelines in work/tool design.

The third “S” (Shine) involves bringing the workspace back to proper order by the end of each day. It requires periodic cleanup (at least once daily), responsible person(s) identified for cleanup, establishment of cleanup/restocking methods (tools, checklists, etc.) and periodic supervisor inspection.

The fourth “S” (Standardize) is the method by which you maintain the first three “S” steps. Organization, orderliness and cleanliness are maintained and made habitual by instituting 3S duties into regular work routines. The methods need to be standardized and required company-wide.

The fifth “S” (Sustain) allows the organization to sustain its 5S program by requiring:

- an executive 5S champion to ensure that 5S becomes part of the culture
- periodic walk-through inspections/audits with posted results
- 5S performance measurement of workgroups

Implementation of this final “S” is the point where most companies fall back into their old ways of doing things. Very often, 5S is thought of as an activity, rather than as an element of company culture. Companies implement 5S for several months only to find themselves back in their previous state. To make 5S work, it is critical that performance be measured and that top management remain committed.

While the initial thought of digging into the entire process may be an overwhelmingly tedious idea for an organization, the benefits of clearing the old, unused equipment of the past provide renewed energy for organizing and improving the future of the total organization. It requires honest assessment of what it takes to be efficient and strong discipline to maintain 5S. In today’s hectic work environments, finding the time to collaborate on this topic is the first challenge. Next comes the budgeting and implementation to make it happen. With dedicated, knowledgeable vendor partners, the task of organizing, identifying and inspecting the process becomes easier. Through creative dialogue with your team, you can find flexible ways to complete the task and encourage continued practice of 5S Good Housekeeping. M

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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*Laurie Barcaskey of Leading Marks is an authorized manufacturer’s representative with 30 years of experience and shop floor knowledge of solutions for industrial identification, part traceability and pipe testing. Laurie is the third generation of one of the marking industry’s most innovative and enduring family legacies, tracing back to 1889. Contact Laurie at [Laurie@leadingmarks.com](mailto:Laurie@leadingmarks.com); Leading Marks, 736 W. Ingomar Road, #707, Ingomar, PA 15127; 412-366-4733; [www.leadingmarks.com](http://www.leadingmarks.com).*



*Visually organized work bench*

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# Stamp Shop Manager™

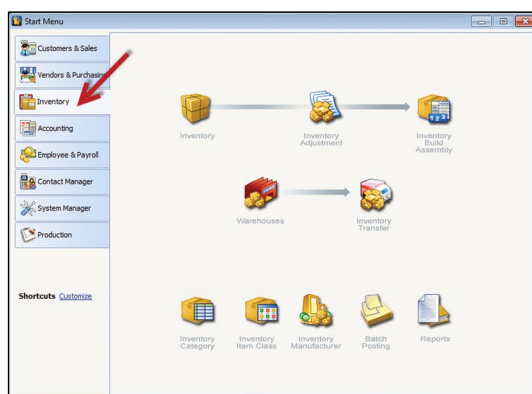
## STAMP SHOP MANAGER™: Step by Step

# How to manage inventory

by Becky Skelley

*This month, we'll dive into managing your inventory in Stamp Shop Manager.™ As any stamp shop owner knows, managing inventory is critical to your success in delivering products efficiently and on time. It is also a large undertaking that can be time-consuming and sometimes cumbersome.*

*Stamp Shop Manager™ takes away the pain of managing inventory and does the work for you. Let's explore each button of the Inventory tab within the Start Menu and go step-by-step through the inventory cycle.*



Picture 1: Start Menu with Inventory tab

### Inventory tab

Start the program by double-clicking the Stamp Shop Manager™ desktop icon or single-clicking the pinned icon on your task bar. Then sign in to your company with your User Name and Password. In the *Start Menu*, click the *Inventory* tab to see a selection of buttons related to inventory (see Picture 1):

**Inventory:** Click the *Inventory* button to see the Find Inventory window (see Picture 2). Here you can view your entire existing inventory or perform quick searches. From



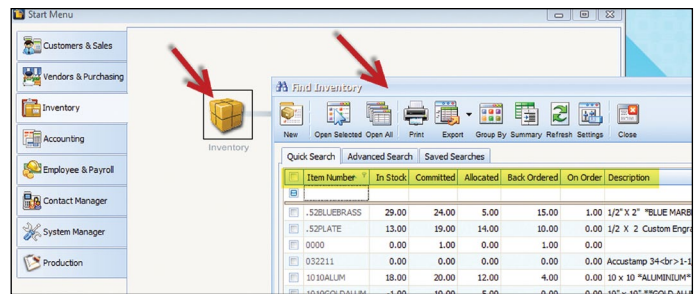
this window, you can determine which products are *In Stock*, *Committed*, *Allocated*, *Back Ordered* and *On Order*, as well as read a brief *Description* of the item.

**Inventory Adjustment:** Selecting this option will take you to the *Find Inventory Adjustments* window, where you can locate existing inventory adjustments or create new ones (see Picture 3). Inventory adjustments become necessary when the on-hand units in Manager™ don't match the physical on-hand units. This can happen when an item is damaged or disappears from a shelf. You can view the *Adjustment ID*, *Date*, *Notes* and *Posted* status of each item's existing inventory adjustment or click *New* to create a new inventory adjustment. As with all other inventory windows, you can perform *Quick Searches* and *Advanced Searches* and view your *Saved Searches*.

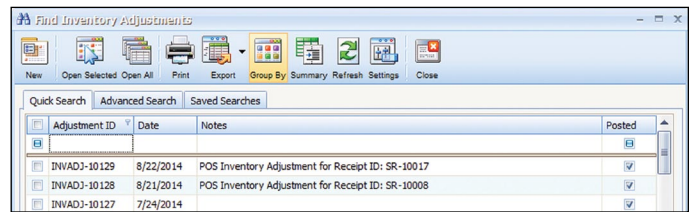
**Inventory Build Assembly:** This button will direct you to the *Find Inventory Build Assembly Items* window (see Picture 4). Here you can learn about the status of each previous inventory assembly or create new builds of assemblies. An "inventory assembly" is an inventory item which is made up of other inventory items. Perhaps you stock self-inking stamp mounts with no pads and also various color pads. When you sell a unit to a customer, Manager™ must account for each component. For example, when you sell your inventory item number P20-RD (a Printer 20 with red ink), you need to pull an item number 030556 for the mount and an item number 065314 for the red pad. An inventory assembly allows you to work with one simple SKU, P20-RD, while Manager™ keeps track of the components.

**Warehouses:** A warehouse is a location at which you keep stock. When you click on the *Warehouses* button, you'll be able to find, edit or add warehouses. In the center portion, you'll see each existing warehouse and its *Warehouse ID*, *Description*, *Address*, *City*, *State*, *ZIP Code* and *Phone*. If you have two facilities, Manager™ easily knows the inventory on hand at each facility. To add a new warehouse, click the *New* button located at the top of the window (see Picture 5). Then the *Warehouses* window will pop up, where you can fill in and save the *General* information.

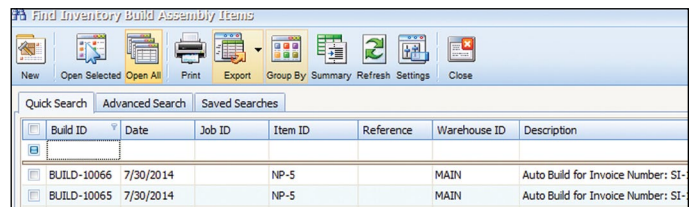
**Inventory Transfer:** If you would like to transfer inventory from one of your production facilities to another, click this button. Simply choose the inventory item to be transferred



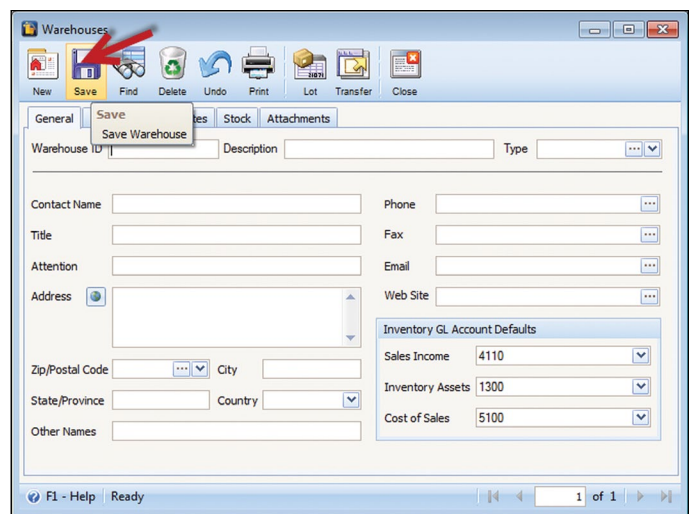
**Picture 2:** Inventory button within the Start Menu; Find Inventory window with highlighted Inventory search columns



**Picture 3:** Find Inventory Adjustment window

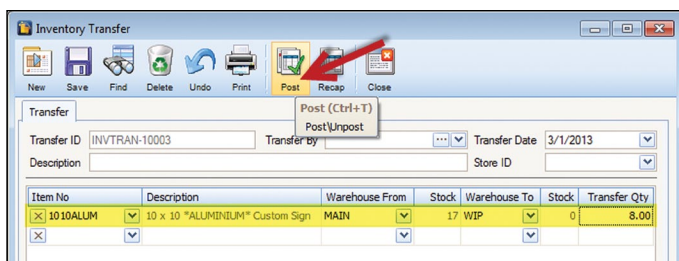


**Picture 4:** Find Inventory Build Assembly Items window

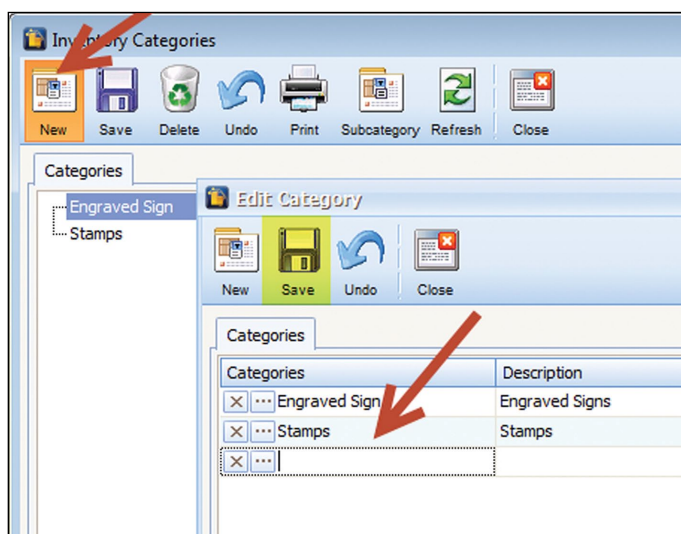


**Picture 5:** Warehouses window

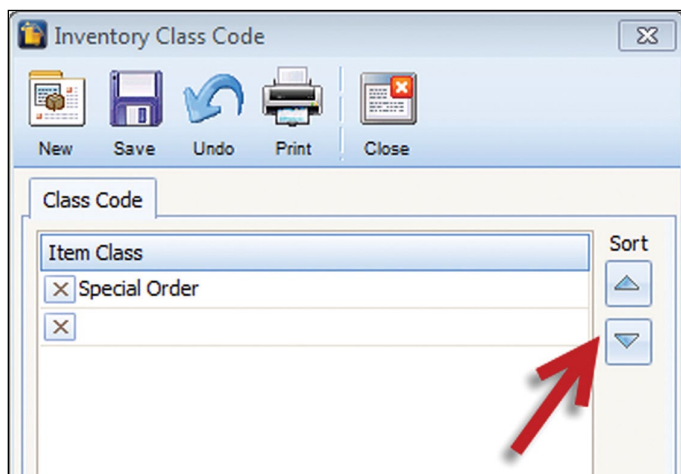
## STAMP SHOP MANAGER™: Step by Step



**Picture 6:** Inventory Transfer window with Post button; example of transfer of eight aluminum custom signs from one warehouse to another



**Picture 7:** Inventory Categories window with Edit Category window



**Picture 8:** Inventory Class Code window with up/down arrows

from within the *Item No.* column (see Picture 6). Then, from the drop-down menu *Warehouse From*, choose the production facility (warehouse) where the item is currently located. Next, in the *Warehouse To* drop-down menu, select the production facility to which you would like to transfer the inventory item. Finally, enter the quantity you wish to move in the *Transfer Qty* column. To update the inventory quantities at each production facility, click the *Post* button.

**Inventory Category:** This button takes you to the *Inventory Categories* window (see Picture 7), where you can see all categories of inventory that currently exist within your company. Click the *New* button, and the *Edit Category* window will pop up. You'll be able to edit or add new categories; be sure to *Save* when you are finished. One of the benefits of using this feature is that you can offer different product discounts based on category; for example, you could give dealers 30% off on signs, 50% off on self-inkers and 40% off on pre-inked stamps. If you assign the various products to their respective categories, it becomes very simple to apply the predetermined discounts to each dealer.

**Inventory Item Class:** Click the *Inventory Item Class* button to view the *Inventory Class Code* window, where you can see the name for each *Item Class* (see Picture 8). You may add or delete new classes or change the order in which they appear. To do so, use the up/down arrow buttons to the right and click *Save* when you are finished. Item classes are a useful tool to further categorize products for reporting purposes.

**Inventory Manufacturer:** Here you'll find the *Inventory Manufacturers* window, where you can add information about them. After filling out each field, click the *Save* button at the top of the window. To add another manufacturer, click the *New* button. For tracking and reporting purposes, *Inventory Manufacturer* can also be selected for an inventory item.

**Batch Posting:** Click the *Batch Posting* button, and you'll see the window where you can batch post items related to the transaction type. Using the drop-down menu, choose which *Transaction Type* you would like to post



by (see Picture 9). Next, within the *Post Criteria* section, select your posting method: *All Inventory Adjustments*, *By Transaction Date* or *By Adjustment ID*. As with most professional accounting packages, all transactions within Stamp Shop Manager™ must be posted to “finalize” them. The batch posting screens provide a fast and easy way to post all un-posted transactions of a particular transaction type.

**Reports:** By clicking this button while under the *Inventory* tab, you’ll be taken directly to inventory-specific reports within the *Report Manager™* window. It’s a time-saving feature, especially because Stamp Shop Manager™ contains over 500 reports to help manage your business and to keep you informed. In a future article, we’ll talk about creating custom reports.

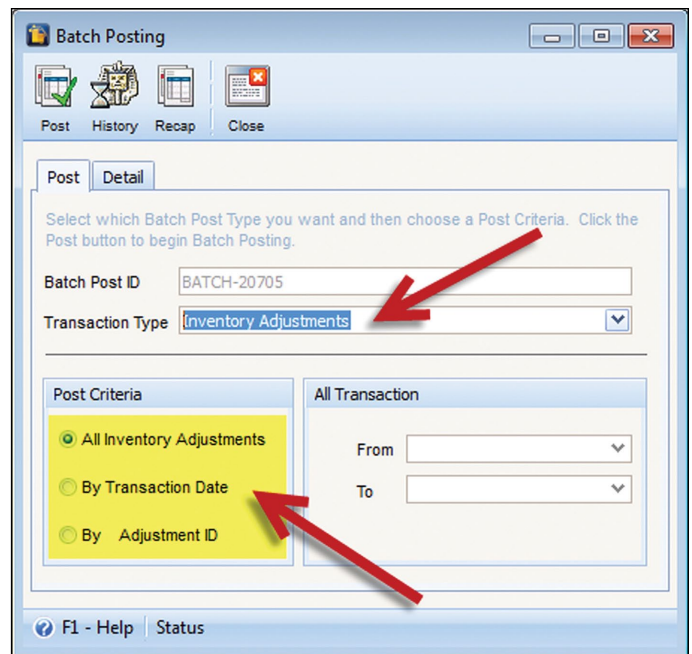
That sums up all of the features of the *Inventory* tab within the *Start Menu*. Now let’s walk through the inventory management cycle, which keeps inventory flowing in from vendors and out to customers. Follow the steps below to learn how to order inventory from your vendor, receive inventory, update your quantities and pay your vendor.

## Managing Inventory Cycle: Steps to Follow

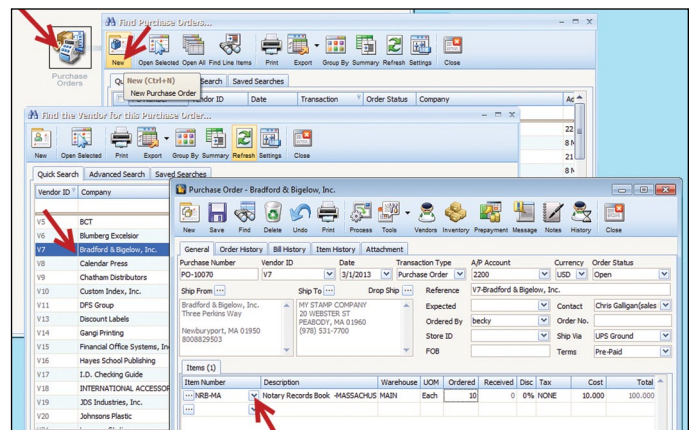
### Step 1: Ordering

Click the *Purchase Orders* button, and the *Find Purchase Orders* window will pop up (see Picture 10). Click *New* to open a new *Purchase Order* (to save time, you can also click the F7 key on your keyboard). Then you will see the window, *Find the Vendor for This Purchase Order*. Within this window, double click on the vendor from which you will be purchasing. Your new purchase order will appear with the vendor information automatically entered. You can add each item number and the desired order quantity, just as you would when creating a new customer order. Once you have added all the items, click *Print* to print or email the purchase order.

**HELPFUL TIP:** If you’d like to save time and only view the inventory items available from a particular vendor, you can set this up in the *Company Preferences* window (System link at the top of Manager™ > *Company Preferences*). Refer

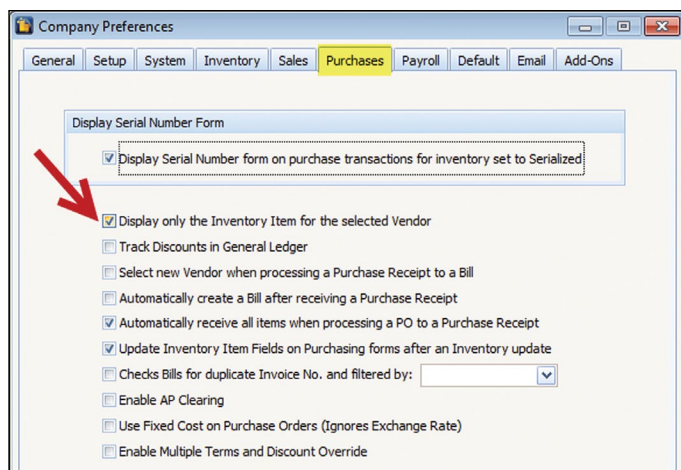


**Picture 9:** Batch Posting window; highlighted Transaction Type area and Post Criteria area

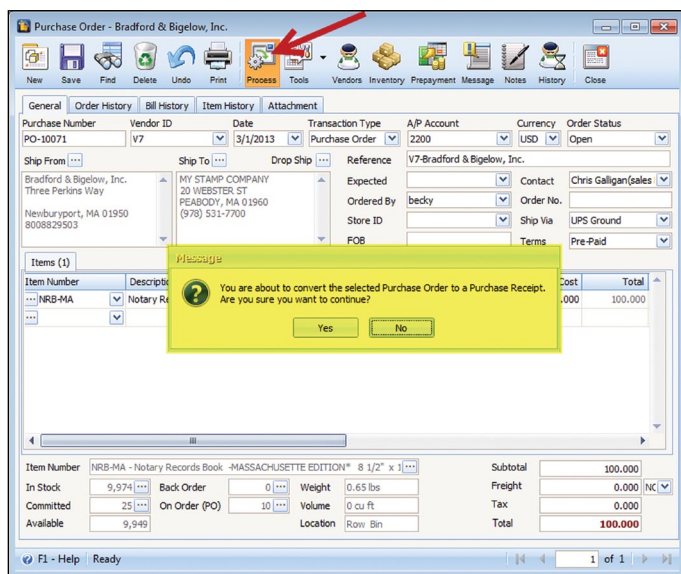


**Picture 10:** Purchase Orders button, Find Purchase Orders window with New button, Find Vendor window and New Purchase Order window with completed vendor information

## STAMP SHOP MANAGER™: Step by Step



**Picture 11:** Company Preferences window, Purchases tab and Display only the Inventory Item for the selected vendor checkbox



**Picture 12:** Original Purchase Order with Process button and message window highlighted

to Picture 11. Click on the *Purchases* tab and select *Display only the Inventory Item for the selected Vendor*. By taking this step, you will also save memory and find it much easier to order vendor-specific items.

### Step 2: Receiving

Once your items have been delivered to you, open up the original purchase order and click on the *Process* button at the top of the window (see Picture 12). This action will convert the *Purchase Order* into a *Purchase Receipt*, and you'll be asked to confirm this step by selecting "Yes." You will then see the *Purchase Receipt*, and you can enter the quantities of each received inventory item. Finally, click on the *Receive* button at the top, and the inventory stock on hand in Manager™ will be updated.

### Step 3: Receive Bill

Once you receive the bill from your vendor, open the purchase receipt by clicking the *Purchase Receipt* button under the *Vendors & Purchasing* tab within the *Start Menu*. You can also press the F6 key on your keyboard. Select the desired *Purchase Receipt*. Next, click the *Process* button to convert the *Purchase Receipt* into a *Bill*. Select "Yes" when you are prompted to confirm the creation of a bill (see Picture 13). The newly created *Bill* will appear. Enter the Vendor's invoice number in the *Invoice Number* field and the freight amount from the *Vendor's Invoice*, if applicable, to the *Bill*. To update freight, type the dollar amount into the *Freight* field, located at the bottom right (see Picture 13). Before continuing, confirm that the total amount on the *Bill* equals the total amount on the *Vendor's Invoice* and then click *Post*. Once posted, the *Bill* is now ready to be paid.

### Step 4: Pay the Bill

To complete the process of managing your inventory, click the *Pay Bills* button on the *Start Menu*, under the *Vendors & Purchasing* tab. Within the *Pay* column, check the box next to the bill you would like to pay (see Picture 14). Once you do so, the *Payment* column will automatically update with the full bill amount. Next click the *Print* button at the top of the window. You will see the check to be printed, as well as a wide range of check types. Choose your check type and click *Print*. Once your check has printed, the cycle is complete.



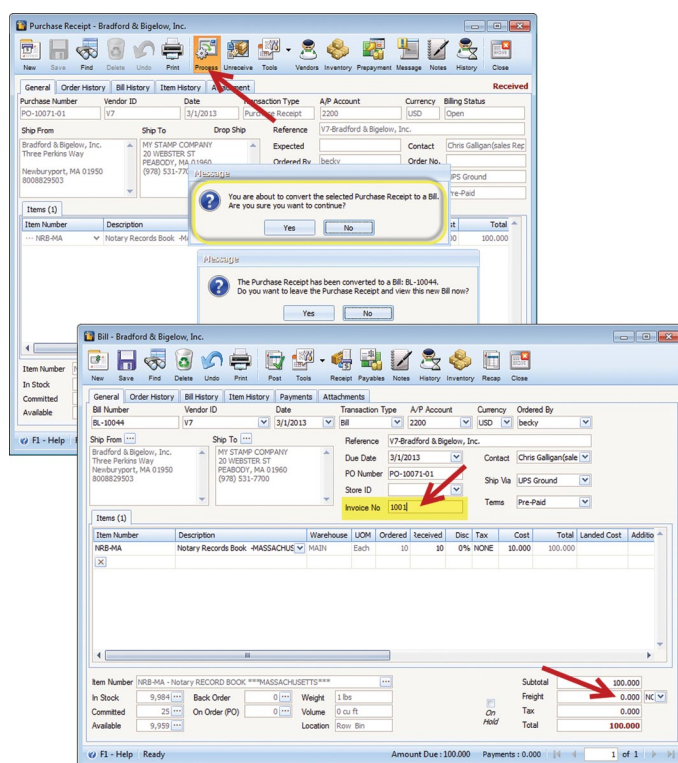
In the next installment, we'll walk you through the setup of inventory items and the various inventory types Manager™ offers. Stay tuned! *Mm*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Becky Skelley 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. Skelley is a graduate of Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts with a Bachelor of

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Picture 13: Process of converting the Purchase Receipt into a Bill

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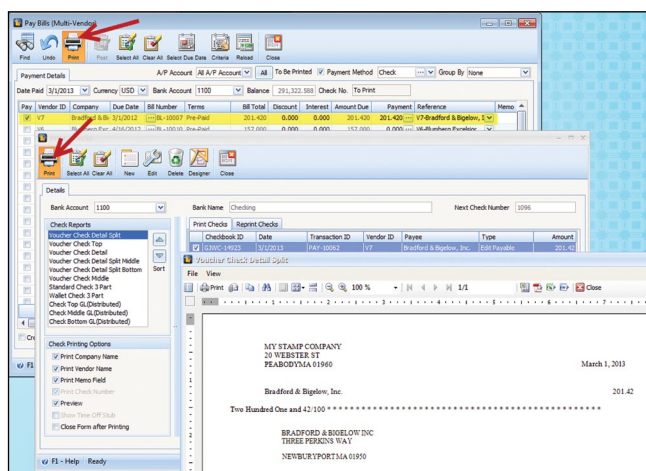
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Picture 14: Process of paying the bill

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## Perfecting your text

by Foster D. Coburn III

---

*This month, learn how to fine-tune text in your designs so that the characters and spacing are just right.*

**Figure 1:** The Property Bar in CorelDRAW® X6 with options for changing text attributes



CorelDRAW® is a great tool for creating, modifying and positioning vector graphics. One of the most common types of vector graphics is a piece of text. Thanks to the many available fonts, you simply type a few characters on your keyboard, and the shapes will magically appear in CorelDRAW®.

In this article, we'll go through the entire process of getting text into your designs and the adjustments you can make to that text so it is just right. While the task is simple enough, there are a wide variety of adjustments you can make. Even experienced users may not be aware of all that can be done.

### Artistic text versus Paragraph text

In CorelDRAW®, there are two different kinds of text. Artistic text is designed

for short blocks of text, and Paragraph text is for text that flows to multiple lines, columns and pages. For rubber stamps, I see very few uses for Paragraph text, and so we'll focus on Artistic text here. While Paragraph text may not be used often on rubber stamps, it could be very useful if you design a brochure or other marketing materials for your business.

**Tip:** Should you wish to convert text between Artistic and Paragraph text, simply press **Ctrl + F8** on your keyboard. Keep in mind that there are some attributes that may not convert perfectly.

### Creating text

Both types of text are created with the same CorelDRAW® tool, the Text tool, which is represented by the icon on the right. A quick way to select the tool is



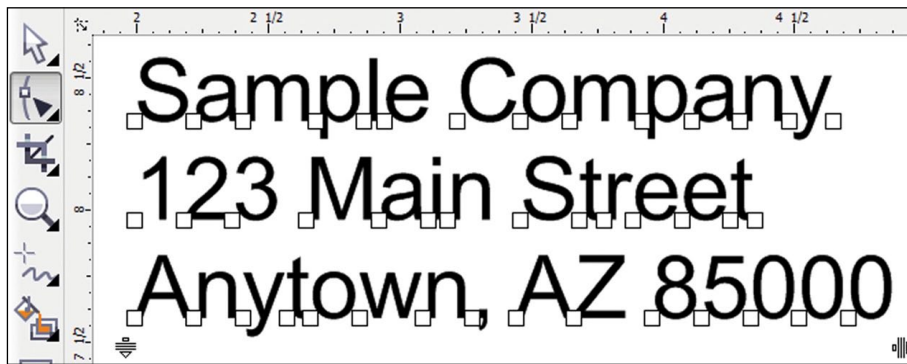
the **F8** key on your keyboard. If you click with the Text tool on your drawing page, you'll be creating Artistic text. Clicking and dragging with the tool will create a bounding box for Paragraph text.

Text will be created using the defaults you've set for text. For most users, this will be Arial, though you can change the default. In an upcoming article, I'll discuss the process of changing defaults for text and much more. Once the text has been created, select it with the Pick tool, and you can change the font, size and other attributes on the Property Bar, as shown in Figure 1.

Many users pay little attention to a font choice and simply stick with the defaults. You should consider readability, height/width of characters, ink usage and just plain good looks. While the default Arial font is very well designed,



Figure 2: A block of text with the Shape tool selected allows for interactive editing of spacing.



it is also woefully overused. Consider some alternative fonts that just might be a better choice!

## Adjusting character and line spacing

With most any task in CorelDRAW, there are a number of different methods for completing the task. This is definitely true of character and line spacing. My preferred method is typically to change numeric settings for absolute control. Yet the most powerful method is to make these changes interactively using the Shape tool.

Figure 2 shows text representing an address block using the default Arial font. Character and line spacing are also set to the defaults of 100%. Therefore, this block of text is very representative of what most users will

get when typing a few lines of Artistic text. Make note that after creating this text, the Shape tool is selected in the toolbox, as this is where the power lies.

First, there are global changes you can make to the spacing of the block using the “fishbones” icon at the lower left and right of the text block. Click and drag up/down on the left “fishbones” icon to change the line spacing. Obviously, this option is only useful when there are at least two lines of text.

Next, the “fishbones” icon at the lower right controls the character spacing of the entire block of text. Drag it left/right to increase or decrease the character spacing. This is a perfect way to adjust text so that it fits into an exact width, while also knowing how it looks.

Now comes the fun part where you can adjust any character individually.

You’ll notice a node below each character just to the left. When the node is selected, it is solid black. You can click on an individual node to select it and **Ctrl + click** to add additional nodes to the selection. Another option would be to drag a box around nodes with the Shape tool to marquee select nodes.

Once you have the nodes for the desired characters selected, you can drag them wherever you like. This allows you to move them above or below the baseline or simply fine-tune character spacing. Holding **Ctrl** will keep the characters on the baseline so you can move them left and right.

Not only can you move the selected characters wherever you like, you can also change the attributes of the selected characters. Want a different font? No problem. Need some characters larger or smaller? Change them. Some of the other changes you could make include *italic*, *underline*, *bold* and different colors. Suffice it to say, the possibilities are nearly endless.

## OpenType options

With CorelDRAW X6, Corel added a number of options for taking advantage of the special OpenType features contained in some fonts. Keep in mind that only some fonts have these features and a very small percentage have more than a few of the features.

For our sample block of text, I have switched the font to Adobe Garamond because I know it has several OpenType options. The block is shown in Figure 3 with the entire third line of text selected with the Text tool. It is important to select with the Text tool in order to get access to OpenType options.

When you have text selected and OpenType options are available, you’ll see a downward pointing arrow in the middle of the text block. Click on that arrow and a drop-down will appear,

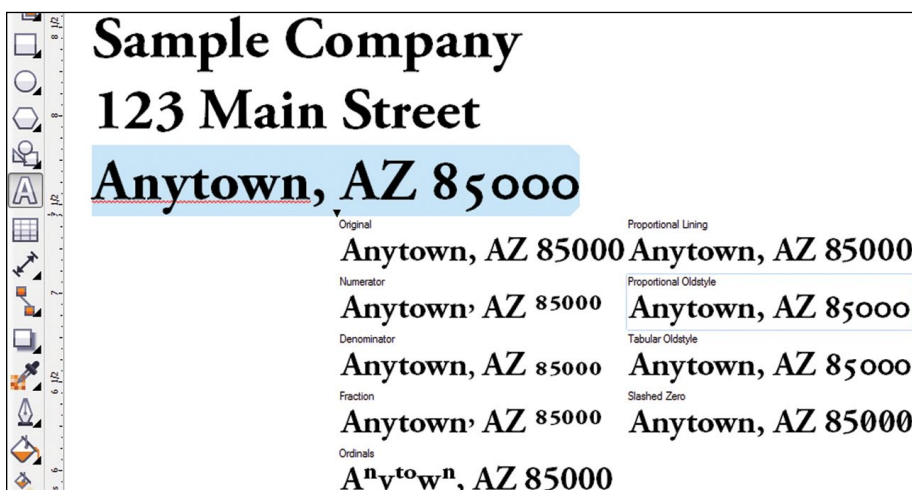


Figure 3: OpenType options available for a line of Adobe Garamond text

showing the various options. In this example, there are a total of nine options displayed. Hover over any of the options, and you'll see a preview of that option on the selected text. You may decide that one of these options is a better choice or that the original is still the best choice. This feature just makes it easier to look at the available options.

For users who want even more control over OpenType features, look to the Character section of the Text Properties or Object Properties Docker, shown in Figure 4.

Hover over each of the small icons to get a pop-up telling you what that icon controls. Some of the icons are grayed out because the currently selected

font doesn't have that feature. The best advice I can give you is to take the time to experiment with different options. If you are frustrated that not every option is available, I have yet to find a single font that had every option. Even in the sample shown, less than half are available, and that is normal for fonts that have OpenType features.

## In closing

Now that you've seen a number of options related to text, it is your turn to experiment with what you've learned. Some of the features shown will allow you to complete projects in less time, while others can improve the quality of the text in your designs. Mmm

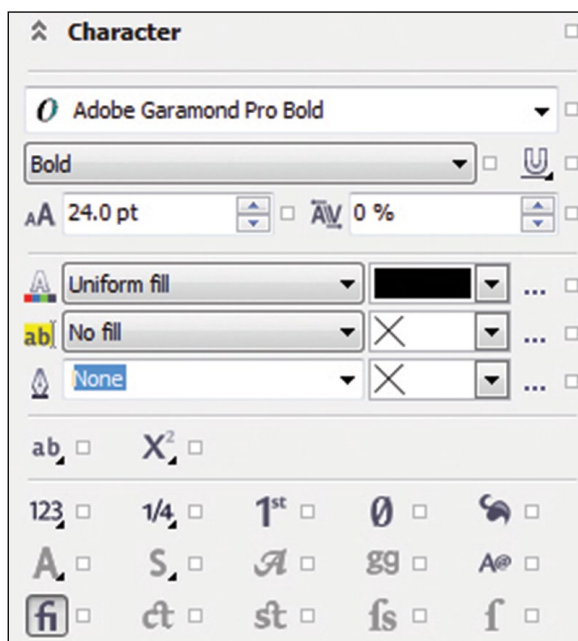


Figure 4: Character settings include many attributes, with OpenType options shown at the bottom.



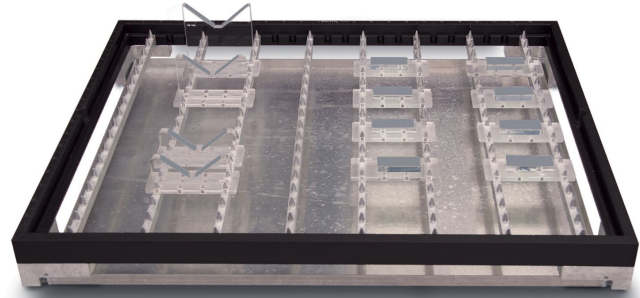
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Foster D. Coburn III  
is the author of  
13 books on  
CorelDRAW®,

including the latest, CorelDRAW® X6 Unleashed. He also writes the free Graphics Unleashed Blog and provides fonts, artwork and add-ons of interest to designers through the Graphics Unleashed website at [www.unleash.com](http://www.unleash.com). Connect with Graphics Unleashed on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/graphicsunleashed](http://www.facebook.com/graphicsunleashed) and follow Foster on Twitter @fostercoburn. Email your project questions to [foster@unleash.com](mailto:foster@unleash.com).



# Expanding your fabrication services and product offerings with Rack Star™



*With a few parts and nine simple, easy-to-execute steps,  
secure and fabricate any object in your laser.*

Everyone loves a hot, rich cup of coffee, right? Doesn't it seem even better when served in a custom-lasered coffee mug your shop produced?

In recent years, the laser has become the preferred, reliable method for detailed marking and fabrication in the signage, awards and recognition industries. Lasering dimensional objects, including custom gifts and promotional items in particular, remains a wildly popular trend in the industry today—and demand remains high. From holidays, birthdays and special occasions to year-round marketing events and trade shows, lasered gifts and promotional products provide ample profit-making potential all year round.

Despite the clean, crisp lasering results laser equipment users can achieve on dimensional objects, inherent difficulties can slow down the set-up and fabrication process. Let's face it, we have all tried using coffee beans, LEGOs, Play-Doh and Silly Putty to level a dimensional object so it will stay in place...and this is just for one object! You may ask yourself, "There has

to be an easier way to laser mark multiple parts quickly!"

Great news. There is an easier solution to this common lasering dilemma for expert and novice laser equipment users alike that eliminates any guesswork. (Plus, you won't have to steal your kids' Play-Doh anymore!) Rowmark's new Rack Star™ laser cutting table system and accessory products are specially designed to save time in leveling and securing multiple dimensional objects of all shapes and sizes for lasering, helping you achieve maximum efficiency. It's one simple solution for any lasering project, from small jobs to mass production.

## How does the Rack Star™ work?

Rowmark's Rack Star™ is a simple, easy-to-install modular laser cutting table system that sits on your laser bed during fabrication. Rather than trying to secure odd-shaped parts directly on the laser bed to keep them from rolling or moving out of place, using the Rack Star™ unit will allow you to elevate

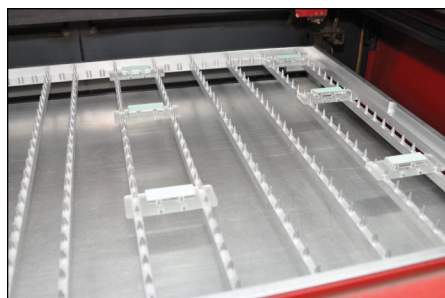
objects slightly off the laser bed and hold them in place with repositionable fixtures, which tailor to any unique shape. Laser equipment users now have a versatile solution to accurately, consistently and quickly secure, level and laser mark dimensional objects—without all the hassle.

Rack Star™ features a variety of key components that, when used together, can be tailored to meet the user's specific needs.

## What makes up a Rack Star™ system?

**Rack Star™ model unit:** The system is available in nine frame sizes (from 12 inches x 18 inches to 24 inches x 48 inches) to sit on the bed of any laser. This durable aluminum frame provides the base support for the system and serves as the guide for where objects will need to be placed within an allotted area. (Each model unit comes with a collection of cone-shaped rails, v-blocks and risers for getting started.)

**Rack Star™ cone-shaped rails:** These aluminum rails, featuring a line of



*Rack Star™ risers*

cone-shaped “pins” to secure the Rack Star “jig” fixtures, v-blocks and risers (see below), sit in grooves at one-inch centers within the system frame. Any number of rails can be used for a job and repositioned in different slots based on the job.

#### **Rack Star™ v-blocks and risers:**

Repositionable fixtures that sit securely on the aluminum pins and hold objects of varying sizes in place while the laser is operating. V-blocks and risers are designed for more general use and accommodate a wide variety of object shapes and sizes.

**Rack Star™ “jig” fixtures:** Just like the v-blocks and risers, the “jig” fixtures sit securely on the aluminum pins and hold objects of varying sizes in place while the laser is operating. What makes the “jig” fixtures different is that they offer a more *custom* solution for securing specific, popularly requested dimensional objects. Rowmark’s “jig” collection includes custom fixtures for writing utensils, lapel pins, coffee mugs, glassware, pocket knives, key chains and identification tags.

#### **Rack Star™ and “jig” fixture templates:**

These design files are used in your laser’s



*Rack Star™ v-blocks*

job control software and serve as a quick guide for pin rail placement and system alignment on the laser bed. They help prevent the need to manually approximate where the laser will need to mark the dimensional object, showing a general “safe area” where the artwork should be placed. It’s much easier to achieve vertical/horizontal alignment without all the guesswork.

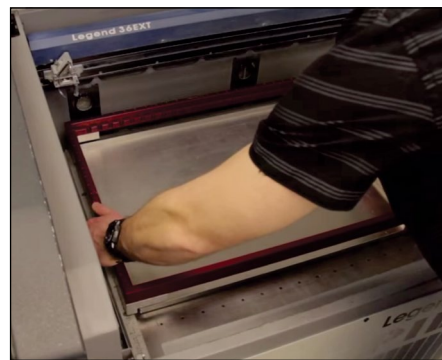
Using the Rack Star™ “jig” fixtures and accessories, you can quickly expand your fabrication services and product offering to appeal to a broader customer base. Examples include baseball bats, mitts, helmets, footballs, medals, plaques, three-dimensional awards, wine glasses, shot glasses, beer steins, coffee mugs, pencils, pens, paper weights...and just about anything else your customers request!

### **How do I fabricate a job on my laser using Rack Star™?**

Let’s take a closer look at using the Rack Star™ “jig” fixtures and templates for quick coffee mug engraving, as an example. Follow these nine simple steps to set up and fabricate your job.

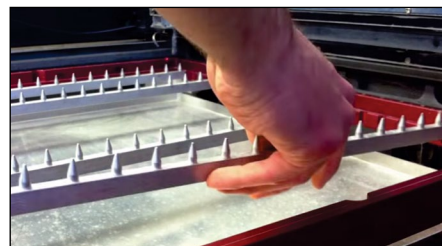
(**Note:** For optimal clarification, these steps and corresponding photos will generally refer to the production of one object using Rack Star™. Multiple jig fixtures, risers and v-blocks can be used to fabricate multiple objects at one time, for larger or mass production jobs.)

1. Place the Rack Star™ system “frame” into the uppermost left corner of your laser bed. In this example, we will be using the standard 18 inch x 24 inch Rack Star™ size (see Picture 1).

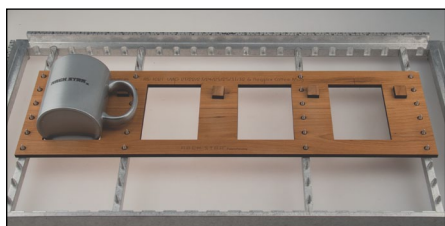


*Picture 1*

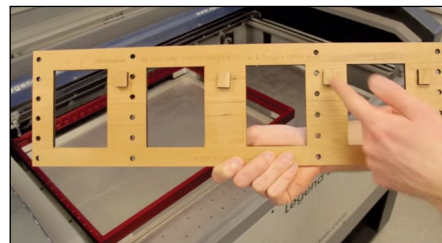
2. Lay the Rack Star™ aluminum pin rails in the frame slots so that they will align with the holes in the “jig” fixture you will be using for the job. In this case, we are using the coffee mug “jig” fixture (see Pictures 2a and 2b.)



*Picture 2a*



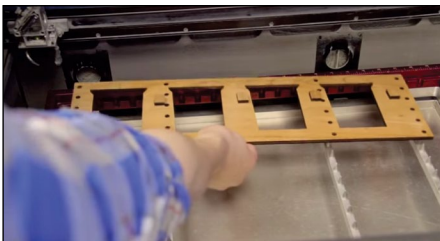
*Mug “jig” fixture*



*Picture 2b*



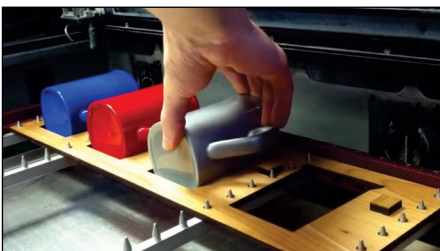
3. Place the mug “jig” fixture on top of the pins, and then lay your object to be lasered on the “jig” fixture. (Don’t see the “jig” fixture you need for your object on [rackstarlasersystem.com](http://rackstarlasersystem.com)? You can alternatively use v-blocks or risers to secure your object or request a custom “jig” fixture from Rowmark.) The “jig” fixture can be placed anywhere on the Rack Star™ pin rails, but it may be easiest to start by laying it in the upper left corner of the unit for quick and easy set-up (see Pictures 3a, 3b and 3c).



Picture 3a



Picture 3b



Picture 3c

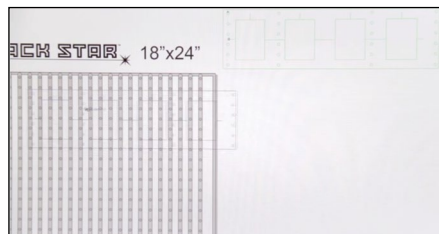
4. Now it’s time to go to your laser’s job control software to adjust the settings and prepare the job for fabrication. Open the 18 inch x 24 inch Rack Star™ design template or the template corresponding to your Rack Star™

size (see Picture 4). (If you have not yet downloaded or saved the template to your computer, Rowmark’s Rack Star™ templates are available for free download under the “Media and Downloads” tab on [rackstarlasersystem.com](http://rackstarlasersystem.com).)

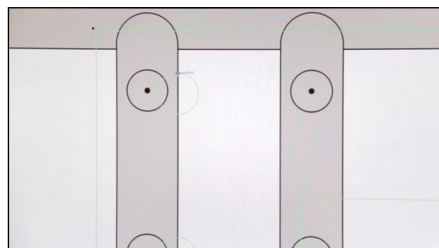


Picture 4

5. Open the mug “jig” fixture design template or the one corresponding with the “jig” fixture you will be using. Copy and paste the mug “jig” fixture template into the Rack Star™ template and align them on top of each other, using the holes for the pins already present in the template as a guide (see Pictures 5a and 5b).



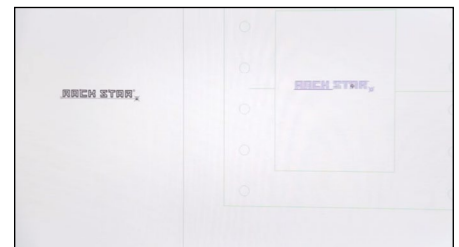
Picture 5a



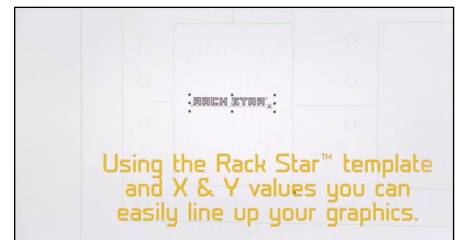
Picture 5b

6. Using the 18 inch x 24 inch Rack Star™ template, coffee mug “jig” fixture template and physical coffee

mug “jig” fixture, you can quickly and easily laser graphics on your coffee mugs the same way every time. (Can’t you just smell that coffee already?) Copy and paste your graphic design file(s) onto the art board with the two template files. To determine the design’s placement in the software, go to your laser and pinpoint the X/Y coordinates where you would like the design to appear on the object, using the Rack Star™ horizontal/vertical rulers and your laser’s red dot pointer as guides. Now, go back to your computer, find these X/Y coordinates on the Rack Star™ template and place your graphic at this location (see Pictures 6a and 6b).



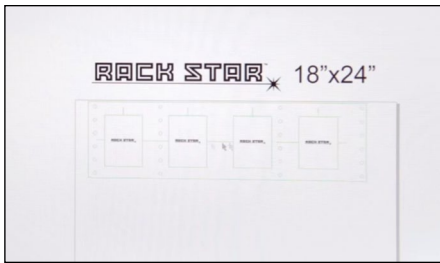
Picture 6a



Picture 6b

7. Plan to laser multiple objects at once? Now that you have your original graphic in place, you can easily copy, paste and re-center it multiple times across the “jig” fixture template for an exact duplication (see Picture 7 on the next page). Be sure to check the coordinates of the objects in the laser software to ensure consistency and accuracy. (**Note:** the Rack Star™ pin rails are set at one-inch centers [one

inch apart] for quick and easy set-up.)



Picture 7

Rowmark recommends using manual focus for optimal results.



Picture 8a

8. Once your design file(s) have been placed correctly, hide or delete both the Rack Star™ template and “jig” fixture template from the art board before sending your job to the laser. The graphic design or text should now be the only thing visible on the art board.

9. Send the job to the laser (see Pictures 8a and 8b). **Important note:** When using the Rack Star™ in your laser,



Picture 8b

### Where can I learn more about Rack Star™?

To view or make a purchase from Rowmark's complete Rack Star™

product offering, including all nine frame size packages, “jig” fixtures and additional accessories, visit [rackstarlasersystem.com](http://rackstarlasersystem.com). Interactive YouTube videos about the Rack Star™ are also available under the “Media and Downloads” tab.

If you don't see the “jig” fixture that you need to accommodate your unique project, email [info@rackstarlasersystem.com](mailto:info@rackstarlasersystem.com) and request your very own custom jig fixture.

See, it really is that easy! The Rack Star™ was developed to make your job easier and increase your productivity. So now you can relax a little and use those coffee beans for what they were intended for—a hot and steamy cup of coffee in your custom-lasered mug. Enjoy! Mm

*Article provided by Rowmark staff.*

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# A special Holmes Stamp & Sign “Thank You” from the U.S. Postal Service

It's not every day that our company gets compared to the super famous Spiderman! We admit, we have managed to do some pretty incredible things within our line of work with our unrivaled and intricate designs, as well as our superhuman turnaround time—but we've never been compared to an actual superhero! But that is just what happened on September 10 when two representatives of the U.S. Postal Service dropped by our manufacturing plant to personally thank our Stamp Department Manager Matt Williams for his continued service and dedication to the quality and excellence of his work over the past 37 years. In addition to a letter of appreciation, Matt was presented with a commemorative set of Spiderman stamps.

For over 20 years, Holmes Stamp & Sign has worked hand-in-hand with the U.S. Postal Service in their attempt to provide their customers with the highest level and quality of customer service that they can manage. For years, we have worked together to create high-quality special event rubber stamps that are made specifically for a given occasion and then never used again. The cards, letters and postcards that display these rubber stamp designs then become

rare collectibles. We have managed to maintain our relationship with them over the past few decades, first by phone, then by fax and now by email. It's amazing when one realizes all the different ways technology has evolved over the past 20 years alone! But as the technology has evolved, so have we.

There is no denying that our company has seen a tremendous amount of growth over the past few decades. What began as a small stamp and sign shop has evolved into a multifaceted manufacturing machine that is actively competing in our national stamp, sign and name tag industry. Just in the last 10 years alone, our factory has expanded in an effort to better accommodate the new and emerging laser engraving technology as it becomes available, as well as the host of new employees who now call Holmes Stamp & Sign their work home. While words cannot properly contain our pride in our treasured and esteemed Matt Williams, nothing can compare to the amount of pride we feel on an everyday basis while we are cranking out order after order of high-quality, highly durable products that we know will last our customers many years to come.

So what is the key to our success? How have we managed to retain big-name customers like the U.S. Postal Service for over 20 years? We guarantee outstanding customer service

*Matt Williams*



to all of our customers big or small! Over the years, we've learned that while supplying our customers with high-quality products time and time again is great, it's our willingness and ability to go above and beyond to make sure our customers receive the best consumer experience possible. Last minute cancellations and adjustments are only a few of the things we are capable of handling when it comes to our active orders.

Throughout his career here at Holmes Stamp & Sign, Matt Williams has risen through our ranks to become the manager of the stamp department as a result of his unique skill set, outstanding customer service abilities and his dedication to the excellence of both the designs, as well as the finished products, that leave our manufacturing plant on a daily basis. For this, we wish to give a heartfelt and meaningful thank you to Matt and look forward to continuing our close relationship with the U.S. Postal Service. Here's to another 20 years! *M*



*Matt Williams with Robin Lang and Butch Yancey of the U.S. Postal Service*

*Article provided by Holmes Stamp & Sign staff. Holmes Stamp & Sign, 2021 St. Augustine Rd. East, Jacksonville, FL 32207; 904-396-2291; Fax: 904-396-2336; Web: [www.holmesstamp.com](http://www.holmesstamp.com).*

## Recognition Systems, Inc. announces first marking industry products

### *New, cost-effective line of polymer patties and laser engraving plates*

Recognition Systems, Inc. (RSI), a prominent global distributor and converter of graphic arts materials, announces



the availability of a new line of pre-packaged Liquid Polymer and Laser Engraving Plates designed for the marking industry.

The new Liquid Polymer is one of the most efficient methods of producing high-quality stamp dies for self-inking, traditional mount and craft stamps. The pre-packaged liquid polymer is placed over the negative and exposed, with no need for damming material. It is available in various sizes, including A4, A5, A6 and A7.

RSI's line of plates for Laser Engraving is designed to achieve high definition of characters with a speed that is 40 percent faster than common rubber plates in the market. They emit no smell or smoke and are absolutely ecological. Available sizes include A4 (10 sheets/pack) and A5 (20 sheets/pack).

To complement the new marking products, RSI is offering a compact and chemical-free Computer-to-Film system, called Apollo®, which is designed to image negative film.

Recognition Systems' New York headquarters houses state-of-the-art converting, warehousing and fulfillment facilities. In addition to the 54,000 square-foot New York facility, customers are supported by regional distribution centers in Fullerton, California; Ball Ground, Georgia; and Ossett, England.

*For more information on the new product offerings and/or samples, please email Jim Nizer at [jimn@dotworks.com](mailto:jimn@dotworks.com) or call 516-462-0724; Website: [www.dotworks.com](http://www.dotworks.com).*

## Johnson Plastics names Mike Johnson President



Johnson Plastics is pleased to announce that Mike Johnson has been named company president.

Mike previously held the title of Chief Operating Officer for the Minnesota-based company. Founder and former president Tom Johnson will remain active and involved as Chairman of the Board, focusing on long-range planning and strategic direction for the company.

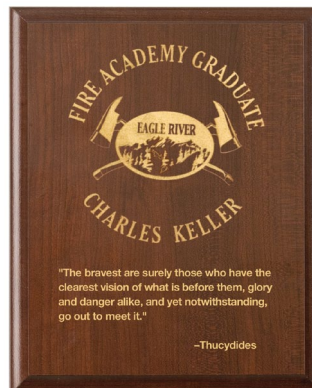
When announcing the promotion, Tom stated, "Mike has essentially been running the day-to-day operations at Johnson Plastics for the last few years and has clearly proven he is capable of leading the company. He has been involved in every aspect of the company during his 20-plus years, and we are fortunate to have his leadership."

His most recent project has been leading the expansion into the Northeast, with the newest JP branch scheduled to open in October 2014 in Albany, New York.

"I am proud to carry on the Johnson Plastics tradition that started over 40 years ago and remain committed to our core values of exceptional service, high quality/high value product selection and exceeding customer expectations. I am thrilled to be surrounded by an experienced and talented team of people who are passionate about serving our customers and growing the company," says Mike Johnson.

Johnson Plastics is a leading distributor of materials and supplies for the engraving and sublimation industries, with nine strategically-located offices throughout the United States.

*For more information, please visit [www.johnsonplastics.com](http://www.johnsonplastics.com).*



## DURACOAT™ Plaques from JDS

JDS Industries, Inc. introduces the new DURACOAT™ Plaques. These durable plaques are the answer to a question that award dealers



have been asking for years: "Can I laser engrave on a pressed wood board?" The new DURACOAT™ Plaques answer that question with a resounding "YES!" The finish is a durable paper, rather than foil, and holds crisp edges when laser engraved. The plaques do not even need to be masked when lasered. A wax paste color-fill product can be applied with a finger or brush and the excess wiped off for an impressive completed plaque. The DURACOAT™ plaques are available in three finishes: cherry, walnut and black, and they are packaged for shipping with Styrofoam corners for added shipping protection. These great new plaques are stocked in all 14 of JDS's nationwide warehouses.

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

## Johnson Plastics to open branch office in Albany, New York

Johnson Plastics announces the opening of its new Northeast branch office, effective October 1, 2014. The new office is located at 1 Selina Drive, Albany, New York.

This new distribution warehouse will improve delivery times by enabling Johnson Plastics to provide next day UPS delivery to all of New York State as well as most of the Northeast. Local customers will also be able to pick up orders at the new facility.

"We believe the Northeast section of the country has been underserved when it comes to the distribution of engraving and sublimation supplies. With our new branch, we look forward to better serving our existing customers, as well as attracting new customers with the Johnson Plastics Advantage—friendly and knowledgeable customer service, quality products and technical support professionals," says Mike Johnson, President of Johnson Plastics.

Johnson Plastics is a leading distributor of materials and supplies for the engraving and sublimation industries. With the addition of the New York branch office, the company now has a total of nine strategically located offices throughout the United States.

*For more information, please visit [www.johnsonplastics.com](http://www.johnsonplastics.com).*



## Millennium Marking Company/Shiny USA introduces Maxlight X39

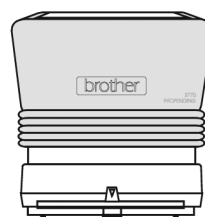
Millennium Marking Company/Shiny USA is introducing the Maxlight X39 as a replacement for the XL2-800 pre-ink stamp mount. The X39 features the following:

- A slide-in die box
- The same foam size as the XL2-800
- A two-layer cartridge that enables "easy push" impressions
- A dual spring and extra-large handle to ensure even impressions
- An individual box is available with stock or customized sleeve.

*For more information, please contact your MMC/Shiny USA sales representative at 800-453-5362, email sales@millmarking.com or view a video on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/millenniummarking](http://www.facebook.com/millenniummarking). Mm*

## Equipment Headquarters

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- Liquid Photopolymer Machines
- Sheet Photopolymer Machines
- Photopolymer Washout Units
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# INDUSTRY INDICATOR

by David Hachmeister

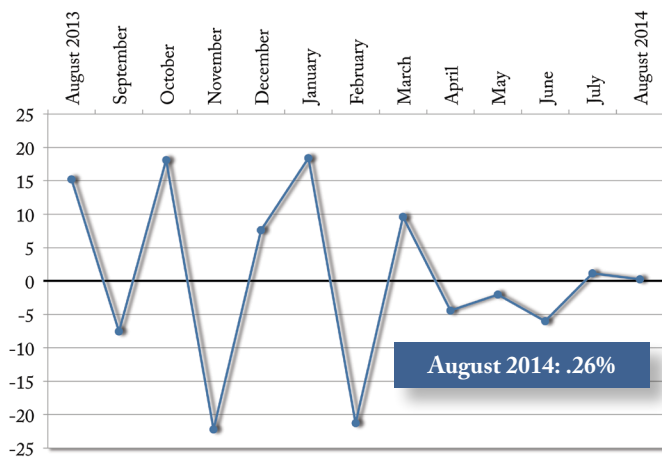
## Down and up

Last month, we said the opposite. We are running out of headlines for good news/bad news! Stamps actually rose just a small fraction from July to August, increasing .26%. They fell against the like-month, August 2013, by a painful

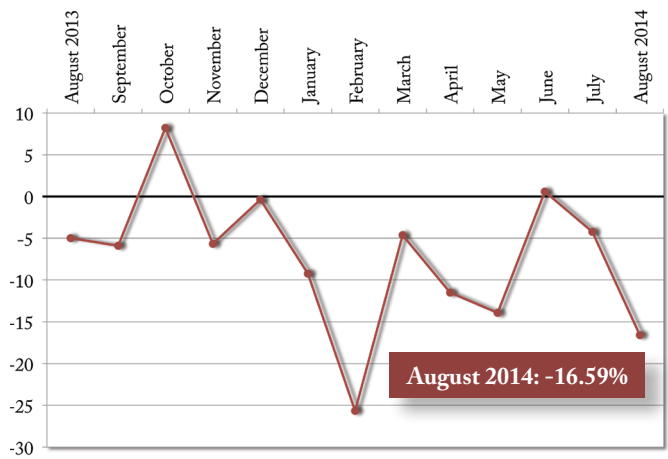
16.59%. However, leaving out our biggest company, all the others rose once again—this time by 3.65%. Other products enjoyed a nice 11.03% rise, reversing the trend from last month. *M*

## Stamps only

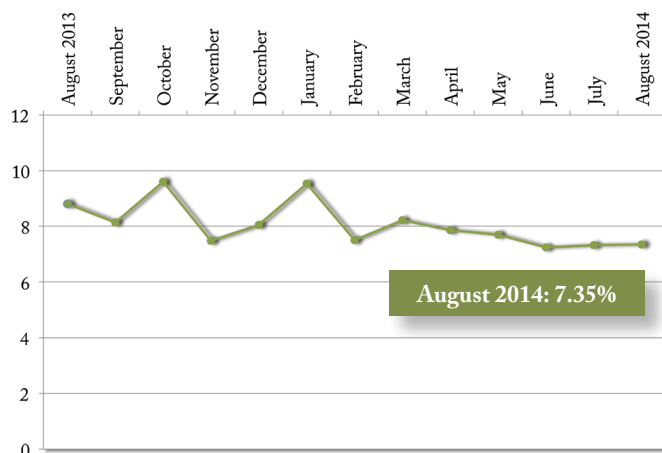
Monthly Sales—Gain/Loss Percentage



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

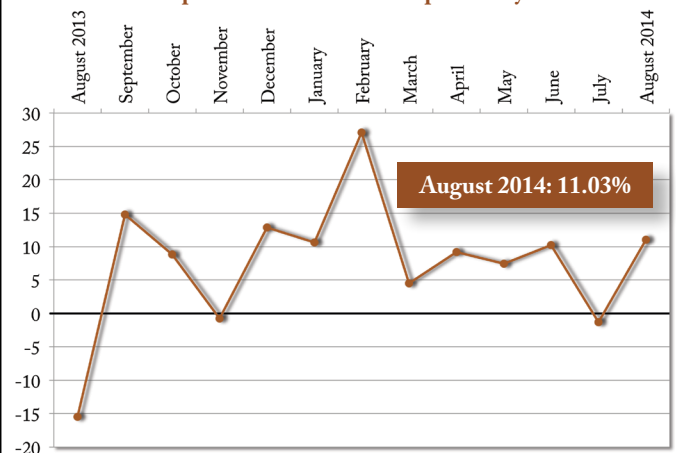


Percent of Annual Sales by Month (illustrating seasonality)



## Other products

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



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# INDUSTRY IMPRESSIONS

by David Hachmeister

## Life lessons

Having been around as long as we have, we have come to a better understanding about many things. Most of them have pointed directly to the fact that no matter how much we think we know, the amount we don't know seems to be growing faster. As we are fond of saying about people of our vintage, "If life hasn't humbled you, you haven't been paying attention." We have, however, developed some core beliefs that have served us well.

We believe whoever contacts anyone at our company should get the best of what we have at that time. For business reasons alone, there is good reasoning behind this.

A story from an insurance agent's past will illustrate this vividly: Decades ago, after a few years in the insurance business, a young agent came across a very difficult-to-please man who wanted to buy a small life policy. He was a middle manager at an electronics company. The agent visited him a half-dozen times before finally completing the sale. For the time spent, he made just about minimum wage. Being young and idealistic, he had given the man the best service he could. He only knew one way to play: hard and fair. It turned out that the man's father was not only the very wealthy owner

of the company, but he also needed life insurance. He had many health issues. The agent was able to get him \$50,000 of coverage, albeit at a stiff premium. No one else had hustled enough to find this man any other coverage.

When he passed away just a short time later, the son contacted the agent again about life insurance for his mother to pay estate taxes. Big taxes. According to the agent's General Agent, it was the largest life insurance premium paid to this major life insurer in the state's history. In today's dollars, it was a premium of more than \$250,000 a year with a 45% commission!

The point is that as a business person, you owe everyone your best effort. Your consistent best effort will yield tremendous rewards. By avoiding cynicism and the need for a quick reward or cutting corners, you can go back, without embarrassment or fear of rancor, to anybody with whom you have done business. Your reputation will precede you.

Leaving a trail of integrity will serve you well, whatever your business might be. Like so many things in life, paying the price up front yields much greater opportunity and far fewer negatives than needing to look for the next chump. Mlm



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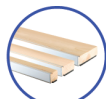
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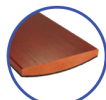
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