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Embroidery's Voice & Vision
December 2013



+ Ask an Expert: Revamp Your 2014 Marketing Plan



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Black / Natural

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Design: Melissa Lascala
Photography: Mark Pricskett
By Vantage Apparel (*asi/93390*), this 58,085-stitch design includes two layers of twill appliqué. The "75" is a split fill with a herringbone pattern, and the bottom bar is split satin stitches.

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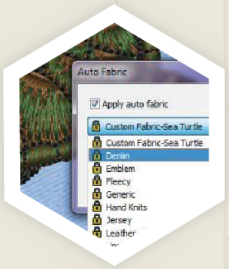
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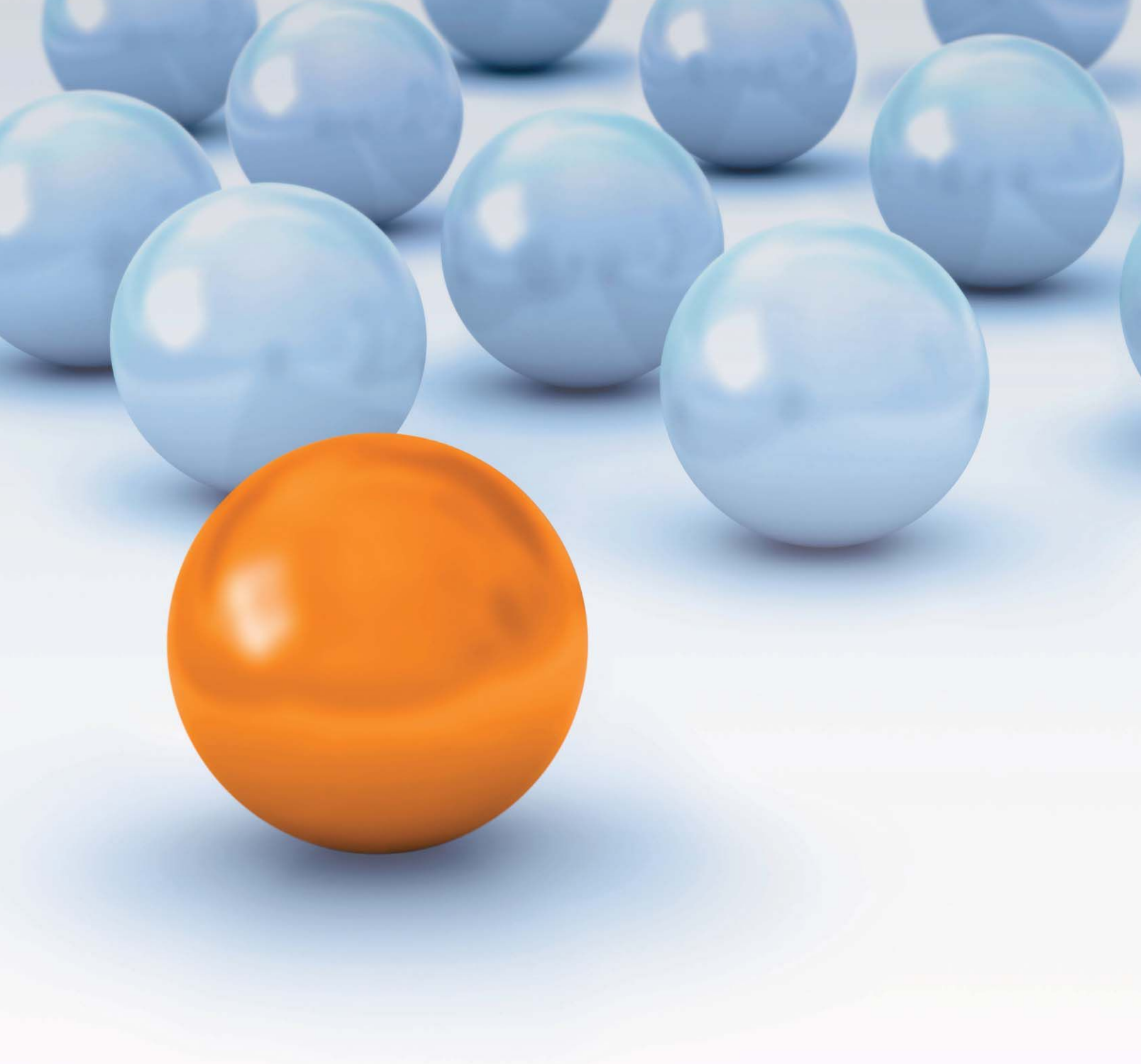
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In this issue's "Ask an Expert," **KRISTINE SHREVE**, director of marketing for EnMart and Ensign Emblem, offers top tips on how to take a hard look at results from your 2013 marketing plan – and how to revamp your efforts for next year. For one, try a marketing method you haven't tried before. "In 2014, keep an eye out for new ways or venues in which you can market your business," she writes. "Trying something new doesn't have to be difficult or expensive, and it could lead to new customers, which is always a good thing."

In this month's "Strategy" section of our "News" department, we learn how Sparkle Plenty Designs (*asi/88442*), a Philadelphia-based company, which specializes in rhinestone and crystal decoration, provides blinged-out apparel for military wives. "We've done shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies and jackets," says **ANDREW SEQUEIRA,** co-owner of the company. "Counting re-orders, we've done about 20 orders overall. "It's a way for them to show pride and unity," Sequeira says. "It's very meaningful."





In this month's "Problem Solved" section of our "Interact" department, a reader asks *Stitches*' Editorial Advisory Board if she should consider adding an e-commerce element to her information-only website. "Though custom decorating sites are more and more popular, they aren't where the largest share of orders is coming from for brick-and-mortar decorators," says **ERICH CAMPBELL,** e-commerce manager and digitizer at Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing. "That being said, we've had great success with targeted, focused e-commerce solutions. Think individual company stores, team spirit stores, and uniform programs with online order components."

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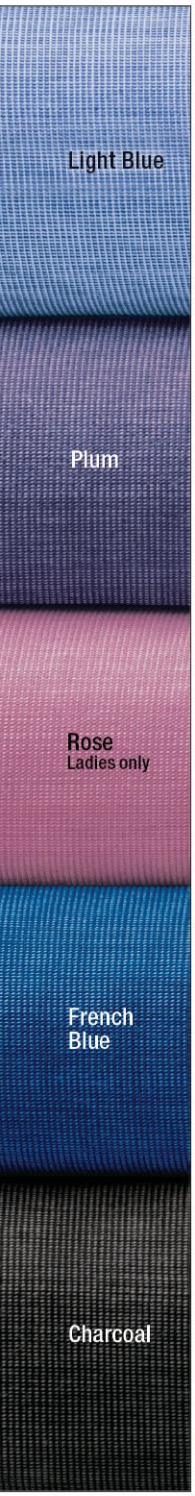
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Power Up Online



This special issue reveals our fourth-annual Power 75 list of industry heavyweights who've effected growth and change in 2013 – and who we see influencing the direction the industry takes in 2014. They weigh in on lots of issues facing decorators and suppliers in the decorated-apparel industry, projecting lots of opportunities for savvy shops to grow.

First off, the Power 75 collectively reports that the industry, despite the economic turbulence over the last few years, is moving in the right direction. "The industry appears to be more stable than it has been in the last 18 to 24 months," says Jennifer Cox, co-founder of National Network of Embroidery Professionals *(asi/187622)*. Echoing this, Martin Kristiaman, CEO of DecoNetwork Pty. Ltd., says, "It's pleasing to watch 'green shoots' in a wide range of decorating businesses who… are growing successfully online. We expect an accelerated spread of this positive growth in 2014."

Cyberspace is where the Power 75 sees the most opportunity – and the biggest challenge – for decorators and suppliers alike in the coming year. The many areas for decorators to navigate their businesses online include: using social media effectively to market their companies, products and services; setting up an easy-to-use, mobile-enabled commerce site for the first time; using online decorating business models that will allow clients to mass-personalize apparel and other goods; employing powerful customer-facing service tools in the cloud; and competing against low-low-price online vendors.

End-buyers have moved online and want personalized goods at the speed of now, so to capture and keep their business, that's where you need to be. "Our buyers are dependent on the Internet," says Lee Caroselli Barnes, owner of Balboa Threadworks Embroidery Design. "The more information they have, the more they'll buy. Our business is personalization. Letting the customer mix mediums and be creative gets to the heart of it all." Likewise, suppliers also need to keep upping the ante with how they interact with and service decorator customers online.

For more expert insights, check out our fourth-annual Power75 list of the industry's heavyweights in our cover story, "The Power 75" starting on page 34. Enjoy the issue!

Nicole M. Rollender



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INTERACT

Compiled by Sara Lavenduski and Samantha Phillips

ONLINE EXCLUSIVES



Get Your Stitch Report

Stitches Staff Writer Christopher Ruvo discusses tips for developing strong marketing and social media strategies in 2014 in the latest edition of "The Stitch Report." Visit *Stitches.com* to watch.



Podcast:

A Talk With Ted

Stitches Staff Writer Christopher Ruvo chats with Ted Stahl, executive chairman and founder, of Groupe STAHL, who ranked in at number one on this year's Power 75, about opportunities for apparel decorators in 2014. Visit *Stitches.com* to listen.



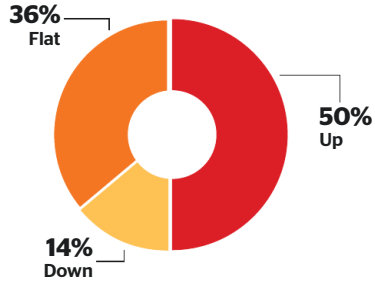
Top Trends for 2014

Technology, fashion styles and world events shape the trends for the year ahead. Visit *Stitches.com* to learn more about these top trends.

INDUSTRY POLL

On *Stitches.com*, we recently asked:

Do you think your sales this holiday season will be up, down or flat?



BLOG EXCERPT

DecQuorum

Do You Have a Disaster Plan?

Scan this code to read the entire blog entry by Kristine Shreve, director of marketing at EnMart.



I'm sure by now everyone is aware of the flooding disaster in Colorado. Anyone who has lived in Boulder for any length of time will tell you that significant flooding just does not happen there. They will also tell you that most residents of Colorado probably don't have flood insurance. After all, when you live in a place that's dealing with a water deficit most of the time, who would believe it would ever be needed?

Unexpected events like this are exactly what make a disaster plan so important. The time to figure out what to do and how to do it is before a disaster hits, not after your shop is in ruins and your business is out of commission for weeks. Luckily, a disaster plan isn't that hard to put together and, once it's done, you can feel secure knowing you've planned for the worst and are prepared if it happens.

SOCIAL FEEDS

Facebook.com/stitchesmag

Facebook Fans React

We posted:

How do you motivate your employees to do their best every day, and love to come to work?

YOU ANSWERED

LEE ROMANO SEQUEIRA

We treat them to happy hours.

ERICH CAMPBELL

We have monthly company breakfasts, wherein we report on the good things going on at Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing, discuss what's working and what isn't, give kudos to the people who are doing great work, and do a little light socializing. It's simple, but we all get involved. It's also one of the times we get together to cross-pollinate ideas between our departments.

VARSITY SPORTS APPAREL

Don't micromanage and trust them to do the job you hired them to do. No one wants their boss or manager to hover.

We posted:

Like embroidery? Are you a history buff? Are you a bit of an Anglophile or just plain like Downton Abbey? If so, then learn more about this new film on medieval English embroidery: http://goo.gl/ZZH06A

YOU ANSWERED

ELMER BIEN

Embroidery is in my BLOOD!!

ASI_Stitches

@HOOTSUITE

Museums might be full of old art, but their social media teams are full of new ideas: *http://ow.ly/pro1t*

@PRIMELINE

What Does Your Facebook Profile Really Say About You? *http://fb.me/1ObtNGWW5*

@VERNONCOMPANY

Five things you need to remember for your next promotional item! *http://bit.ly/150mzn6 pic.twitter.com/yRc6BdTppf*

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Good morning – Ricoh SG 7100DN sublimation packages are available from EnMart. *http://store.myenmart.com/proprintr-iii-ricoh-sg7100dn-sublimation-package-p4178.aspx* ... Get yours now!

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The 4 best books for retirement investors *http://on.mktw.net/1c8eUfv* via @SavvyInvestorPM

@CHRISR_ASI

Creation of content – think blogs, videos, articles – is ranked as the single most effective SEO technique (Marketing Sherpa 2013)

@ASICENTRAL

San Fran plastic-bag ban extended to restaurants *http://ow.ly/psBno* #promoproducts #green #eco

@MRTGR

Backlash against Martha Stewart holds lessons for anyone who treats Twitter as a complaint forum: *http://on.mktw.net/1726gYb* via @MarketWatch

@KEVINKNEBL

Good morning! There is no situation which is not full of possibilities. *http://ow.ly/i/3jSop*

Pinterest

Check out the following designs that we pinned on Stitches' *Pinterest page - from the* ***Sequins, Rhinestones & Bling, Oh My!*** *and* ***Appliqué & Multimedia Boards.***

From the Board: Sequins, Rhinestones & Bling, Oh My!



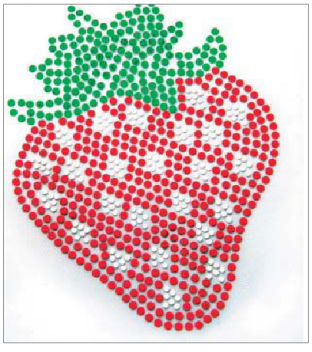
Ladies' tee decorated with rhinestones and embroidery from Black Duck Inc.



T-shirt features design in sparkly chrystalina specialty ink by Apple Imprints Apparel.



Sweatshirt features CAD-CUT Glitter Flake heat-transfer vinyl for added bling from Stahls' ID Direct (*asi/88984*; circle 151 on Free Info Card).



Heat-applied spangles give you the eye-popping look of sequins without fabric holes. Apply this design with the ProSpangle Spangle Transfer Machine from ColDesi Inc. (circle 152 on Free Info Card).

From the Board: Appliqué & Multimedia



Appliqué design for a Brooklyn-based Cigar & Car Club by Fabtex Graphics Inc. & Rebirth Handbags.



Reverse appliqué by Deborah Jones, owner of MyEmbroideryMentor.com.



Hoodie featuring a combination of appliqué and embroidery by A & P Master Images.



Sweatshirt combines distressed appliqué and embroidery by Art Unlimited Sportswear (*asi/36978*; circle 153 on Free Info Card).

Visit Stitches' Pinterest page – and all of our great boards – at Pinterest.com/stitchesmag.

INTERACT
Letters

We received these letters in response to the question: What's been your biggest accomplishment as a business owner in 2013?

Spectacular Bid

Our business continues to grow and referrals have been a large part of that. We were just awarded the contract for fiscal year 2014 for the Temple, TX, Parks and Recreation Department to design and print their shirts. We were recommended to the City of Temple Purchasing Department to submit a bid package and were awarded the contract over several much larger and older companies. Our excellent work and great customer service have really paid off.

James Proctor
Proctor and Rose Custom Screen Printing Plus

Big Achievements

It's been a big year for us. We won the *Stitches* Golden Needle Award for Design of the Year, Technical, Fashion; we won the People's Choice award at the ASI Show in Chicago; we were named a Trendsetter in *Wearables* magazine; we're going to hit $1 million in sales for the second year in a row; and we're in the process of buying our first building and expanding our company.

> **"This year for us has been all about controlling our quality and holding last year's number ."**
>
> **Howard Potter,**
> *A&P Master Images (asi/702505)*

In addition, our customer David Correy, for whom we've been doing work for almost four years, was a top 16 finalist on the "The X Factor." He just signed a deal with Coca-Cola and will be touring worldwide wearing apparel we customized for him. Not only that, but Coke also had David sing a song for them and produced a music video for it in which they show photos of him wearing apparel we customized. He'll also be singing at the 2014 World Cup.

This year for us has been all about controlling our quality and holding last year's number while focusing on buying our building. Once our title search comes back clean, we can sign off on our building loan.

Howard Potter
A&P Master Images (asi/702505)

Happy Anniversary!

This year, our 26th in business, has been remarkable. What started as a thought in 1987, shared by my two daughters as a way to "save Mom" (they were concerned because their dad had recently passed away and they believed I was too lonely), has now grown into a full retail store serving the sororities and fraternities of the Tampa Bay area. There were many bumps along the way – hurdles, really. I knew nothing about running a business and cried for the first five years because I was clueless. But time and patience and God helped me get through it all. Those three components make for success, in my opinion. Also, my advice to anyone wanting to be an entrepreneur is simply to hire employees who are smarter than you. Today, that's a whole lot of people. Don't be discouraged, know your limitations and always listen – and never be afraid to say 'I don't know.' People are only too happy to help when you admit that you need them. And, over these 26 years, I've needed a lot of people!

Phyllis Grae
Greek Unique Inc.

Great Art

I've found my way into two art galleries this past year! This step has really filled my niche market for custom pieces. I do offer a variety of the classics from the Old Masters, but have often put a twist on them, filling the faces with my customer's own profile. It's more time-consuming, but I love the results and the reward is the expression on the customer's face when they view the finished artwork.

Cathy Cattle
Sew B It Custom Embroidery

VOILA!

The Best Piece I Ever Embroidered



This is a blazer I embroidered with Urban Threads stock designs. It's an Old Navy jacket of pinstriped cotton, and the designs are from the Kitchen Engravings and Wonderland collections. To embroider the sleeves, I had to cut them and open them flat. I edited the clovers out of the flowers section on the sleeves and replaced them with teapots. The ruffle and lapel rose are silk, and I embroidered them with the Mad Hatter's hat from the Wonderland collection. The characters are connected with a regular home sewing machine stitch to bring them all together. Now, I use my prized vintage mannequin to display it in my shop.

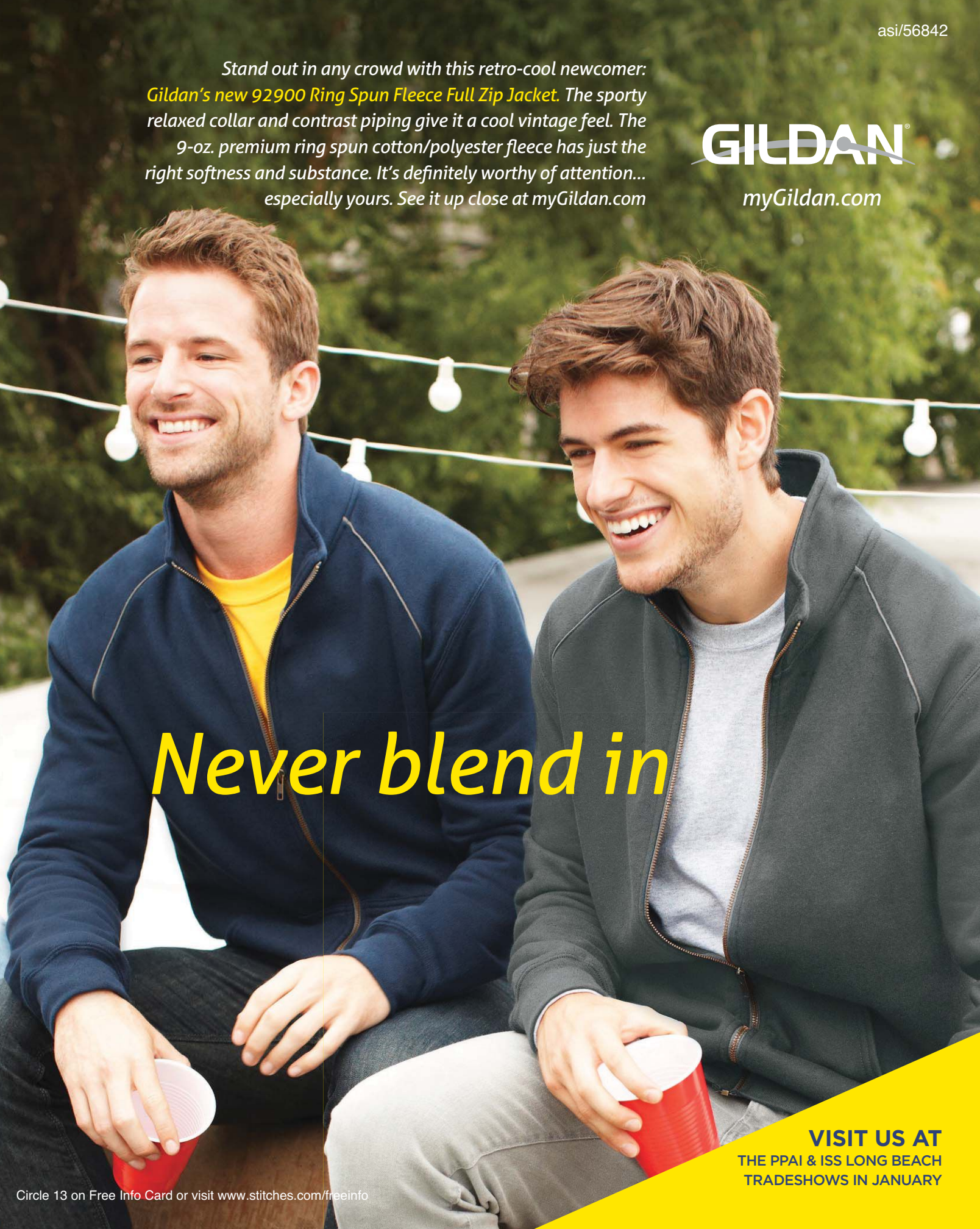
Submitted by Carolyn Cagle, owner of Strikke Knits in Stacy, MN; *strikkeknits@gmail.com*

asi/56842

Stand out in any crowd with this retro-cool newcomer: Gildan's new 92900 Ring Spun Fleece Full Zip Jacket. The sporty relaxed collar and contrast piping give it a cool vintage feel. The 9-oz. premium ring spun cotton/polyester fleece has just the right softness and substance. It's definitely worthy of attention... especially yours. See it up close at myGildan.com

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VISIT US AT
THE PPAI & ISS LONG BEACH
TRADESHOWS IN JANUARY

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INTERACT
Problem Solved

Q I have a simple website for my decorating business, but I feel like I could gain more customers if I added an e-commerce feature. How important is it for me to do that, and how should I get started since I have no experience in this area?



Howard Potter, A&P Master Images *(asi/702505):*

E-commerce is nice to have, but will you sell on there? What designs will you offer there? Which products? I've had an informational site for the past 10 years. We have customers e-mail, call and Facebook us for orders or questions, and we use our site to get our customers hooked with informational videos, testimonials, and more.



Erich Campbell, Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing:

Though custom decorating sites are more and more popular, they aren't where the largest share of orders is coming from for brick-and-mortar decorators. That being said, we've had great success with targeted, focused e-commerce solutions. Think individual company stores, team spirit stores, and uniform programs with online order components. If you can get a niche with adequate volume, be it direct-to-customer sales for a national chain business, or a local, multi-site business with a high enough turnover, or any kind of interest-bound group, using e-commerce tools to make the ordering and fulfillment processes easier is never a bad idea.

If you can set up a framework that works as a general e-commerce solution for your company but allows for these walled-garden environments where you can cater to the look and feel of an individual client's needs, you'll have a powerful tool.

ASI CAN HELP

ASI can help you get started by providing you with a powerful e-commerce website that's stocked with T-shirts, blankets, caps, bags, plush toys and other embroidery-ready items, available as part of its *Stitches* Membership Package. The ESP Company store e-commerce solution is fully customizable, virtual sample-ready and social media compatible. Call (877) 276-0292 for information or visit *www.joinstitches.com/preview* to see a demo of the e-commerce solution.



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asi/56842
VISIT US AT THE PPAI & ISS LONG BEACH TRADESHOWS IN JANUARY
FITS YOUR GAME
Introducing two NEW styles in our Gildan Performance™ line, designed to bring more comfort, mobility and style to your active life. Durable, easy-care 100% polyester knits are cut to fit just right — whatever your game. Now available in 42700 Adult Sleeveless T-shirts in 8 colors, and 44S30 Adult Shorts in 4 great colors.
Wicking action disperses moisture for drier comfort
Aquafx®
Freshcare®
Anti-microbial technology guards the fabric against odors for lasting freshness
For complete Gildan Performance™ product information visit myGildan.com
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PERFORMANCE™
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INTERACT
Phil Stitch Answers



Got a question for Phil?
If you can't find what you're looking for in the 2013 Sourcing Guide, write to: *Stitches*, Attn: Phil Stitch, 4800 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19053. Or fax your question to (215) 953-3107. For the quickest response, e-mail *askphil@asicentral.com*. For RN inquiries, visit *www.stitches.com* for the RN Database link.

P.S. If you join ASI with the brand-new *Stitches* Membership Package, you'll be able to immediately source imprintable products from every ASI supplier member with ASI's ESP Buyer's Guide. Plus, increase sales with your own e-commerce website full of T-shirts, blankets, caps, bags, plush toys and other embroidery-ready items. Call (877) 276-0292 or visit w*ww.joinstitches.com* to get started!

I've been looking for bright, neon fanny packs for a long time. I need blanks, but all I can seem to find are patterned or printed ones. Please help! – *Johanna*
Neon fanny packs are hard to come by in this industry! Luckily, I found blank fanny packs that come in a wide variety of bright neon colors at Sysmon Intl. Ent. Corp. *(asi/90465)*; (800) 222-6698; *www.sysmon-intl.com*; product 1703. Choose from safety orange, lime green or poppin' pink.

Could you advise me where I can purchase black adult conductor hats for a train event? I can only find paper hats, but I need higher-quality cloth hats that will last through frequent launderings. – *Leslie*
Fabric authentic rail road engineer's caps are available at Adcap *(asi/31260)*; (800) 868-7111; *www.adcapitol.com*; product NC450. They aren't available in black, but you might be able to work with the company. Aside from that, I've only found paper conductor hats. Consider other train-related promotional items like branded train whistles or imprinted model trains.

Where can we find pink fingertip golf towels with grommets in a larger size? I'd prefer 16" x 26", and we need them in pink with added grommets. – *Barb and Eric*
Pink fingertip golf towels with grommets are available from Southern Plus *(asi/88367)*; (800) 241-7107; *www.southernplus.com*; product 9106CQ. Pink golf towels in larger sizes such as 16" x 26" can also be found at Terry Town *(asi/90913)*; (800) 742-9793; *www.terrytown.com;* product GV120TR-C-E.

Can you help me find stretchy headbands? I've seen a lot of them at retail and they're always made of Lycra. If not, do you know of a place I can buy the material and sew them myself? – *Pam*
Sports Solutions Inc. *(asi/88876);* (800) 257-4075; *www.nosweatspecialties.com* sells 2" stretch fashion headbands (product 50-500) that are extremely absorbent. They come in nine colors, both brights and pastels, and are made of a blend of cotton, Lycra and polyester.



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new balance

asi/56842

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By Christopher Ruvo

ASI, PPAI Partner on Education

Industry organizations ASI and PPAI have jointly launched an education program to help industry professionals demonstrate the power of imprinted apparel and hard goods promotional products to buyers. Called PPAI & ASI ADvocate, the education initiative enables hundreds of thousands of industry professionals to receive free training in making effective presentations to advertisers, marketers and students on the positive impact and cost-effectiveness of ad specialty items.

The PPAI & ASI ADvocate program is open to any promotional products industry member. To participate, industry professionals must attend PPAI & ASI ADvocate training sessions offered by PPAI and ASI and sign a letter of agreement relating to established guidelines, ethical standards and professionalism. Visit *www.asicentral.com/education* for more information.

IRS Crackdown

Concerned about underreporting of income, the Internal Revenue Service is cracking down on small businesses.

Since autumn 2012, the IRS has sent letters to more than 20,000 small businesses notifying them about possible underreporting of revenue. Tax officials are focusing attention on businesses they believe get an "unusually high portion" of reported sales through credit card transactions, a determination made by comparing a business's credit card and cash receipts with industry averages. Suspecting that such companies are failing to report cash sales, the IRS letters instruct businesses to review their records and respond with a written explanation.

Reaction among decorators about how the IRS initiative may impact the industry has been mixed. "Some unscrupulous people could get cremated by it," says Howard Potter, owner of Yorkville, NY-based A&P Master Images (*asi/702505*).

Vapor Apparel Launches Made-in-the-USA Program

Demand for Made-in-the-USA products is growing; Vapor Apparel (*asi/93396*) recently debuted a new service to meet the need. Through "Cut & Sew," the supplier, which specializes in apparel for sublimation printing, offers fully customized clothing that's produced domestically in styles for anglers, action sports, cycling, martial arts, hunting, motocross and general team sports.

In order to make a cut-and-sew garment, a digital design is printed on a roll of fabric. This design is cut into individual pieces, and then sewn together. The end result is a garment with a customized design covering every inch of fabric. "We created our cut-and-sew program for screen printers and design houses, so decorators with a good art department will love it," says Vapor President Jackson Burnett. "They can offer cut-and-sew dye sublimation decorating at competitive margins to their customers without the capital investment."

BITO, TSI Buy Proel

BITO has partnered with a high-tech Japanese company to buy Italy-based Proel s.r.l., which makes laser-cutters for the embroidery industry. The newly purchased company is called Proel TSI.

BITO, the long-time exclusive U.S. distributor of Proel products, and partner Tohoku Seiki Industries (TSI) announced the purchase in late summer. As part of the ownership change, production of Proel equipment is being moved from Italy to TSI's state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in Yamagata, Japan. Software development, customer service and support will be moved to a new facility in Italy.

Keitaro Harada will serve as the new company president, while Ed Balady, president of BITO USA, will serve as vice president of Proel TSI. He'll be responsible for sales and marketing in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and North and South America. Sandro Piccoli will be the managing director of operations in Italy.

Event Calendar

Jan. 4-7, Oaks, PA
Philadelphia Gift Show
(678) 285-3976;
www.philadelphiagiftshow.com

Jan. 5-7, Orlando, FL
ASI Show
(800) 546-3300;
www.asishow.com

Jan. 14-15, New York City, NY
Indigo Show
(646) 351-1942;
www.indigo-salon.com

Jan. 17-19, Long Beach, CA
ISS Shows
(508) 743-0532;
www.issshows.com

Jan. 18-21, Seattle, WA
Seattle Gift Show
(678) 285-3976;
www.seattlegiftshow.com

Jan. 20-24, Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; Sacramento, CA; San Francisco, CA; San Jose, CA
***Advantages* Roadshow**
(800) 546-3300; *www.advantagesroadshow.com*

Jan. 25-27, Orlando, FL
Orlando Gift Show
(678) 285-3976;
www.orlandogiftshow.com

Jan. 26-30, Toronto, ON
Toronto Gift Show
(800) 611-6100; *www.torontogiftshow.org*

Jan. 27-31, Van Nuys, CA; Ontario, CA; Orange County, CA; San Diego, CA; Phoenix, AZ
***Advantages* Roadshow**
(800) 546-3300; *www.advantagesroadshow.com*

Laotian Stitchery

The spirits of Nithakhong Somsanith's ancestors move in his fingers every time he embroiderers. Somsanith, a descendant of the last viceroy of Laos, is keeping alive a cultural art form in danger of dying out: Laotian gold-and-silver thread embroidery. Beyond being inspired to revive the near-extinct stitching tradition he learned from his grandmother as a child, Somsanith is moved to create the beautiful needlework pieces because they are a way of remembering and preserving his family's legacy.

Born in 1959, Somsanith sought political asylum in France in the 1980s after fleeing Laos amid deteriorating conditions under the Pathet Lao, a communist nationalist group. In gold and silver-thread embroidery, he found a way of coping with the pain of undesired expatriation.

Somsanith, who earned a Ph.D. in psychology in France, has since



returned to Laos, where he devotes his time predominantly to his art and educational programs for the community with the mission to preserve, promote and transmit the cultural and artistic heritage of Laos. A masterful stitcher, Somsanith's works have been featured in prestigious galleries around the world, including the Primo Marella Gallery in Milan, Italy.

Quaker Tapestry Stokes Irish Interest

An embroidered tapestry about Quaker history and societal contributions drew crowds to an Irish museum recently. Twenty of the 77 panels from the famous Quaker Tapestry were on display at the Mountmellick Museum in Ireland, including two panels that depicted topics of special interest to locals: Quaker relief efforts during Ireland's Great Famine and the work of the Quaker community on the Northern Ireland peace process.

Completed in 1996, the tapestry's permanent home is at the Meeting House Exhibition Centre and Café in Kendal, Cumbria in England. Attractive and culturally-relevant, the tapestry features a narrative crewel-type embroidery on specially woven wool cloth. The tapestry was worked on by more than 4,000 men, women and children in 15 countries. It depicts Quaker events and insights related to everything from the industrial revolution and the abolition of slavery, to social reform, ecology and developments in science and medicine. Says the Centre: "It's a celebration of the significant contribution these quiet, non-conformists have made to the modern world."

70% **Percentage of people who used a coupon or discount from a marketing e-mail in the prior week.**

Source: 2012 Blue Kangaroo Study

Litany of Loreto

A collection of 12 rare embroideries illustrating a medieval Catholic litany were recently displayed by the Royal School of Needlework in London, England.

The striking stitchwork depicts the Litany of Loreto, a form of prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary used in church services and processions. While the origins of the embroideries are unknown, they demonstrate a Pre-Raphaelite influence and appear to date from the early 20th Century. It's believed the embroidered works were donated to the Royal School of Needlework in the early 1990s by a convent in East Sussex, U.K.

The Litany of Loreto embroideries were the center piece of a larger exhibition on ecclesiastical embroidery – For Worship and Glory – that was held at Hampton Court Palace in southwest London during the fall.

The actual Litany of Loreto dates from the Middle Ages. Loreto, which is in Italy, has been a shrine to Mary since the late 13th century, according to the *www.CatholicHerald.co.uk*. The version of the litany recognized by Pope Sixtus V in 1587 gives 48 titles for the Virgin Mary. Twelve of these are depicted in the embroideries.

MARKETING

Teed-Up For Success

When a client came to Fabtex Graphics Inc. for help with an important golf networking event, the Phoenix-based shop hit a hole in one. Backed by a robust budget, the customer – a heavy equipment company – wanted unique imprinted apparel and accessories it could give to executive clients and prospects attending a golf tournament it was hosting. The idea was to have the products serve as memorable marketing pieces, keeping the equipment company top of mind with tournament attendees long after they'd left the greens. "They didn't really know what they wanted," says Fabtex President Steve Schlesinger. "We had to get creative."

For starters, Fabtex sourced a leather duffle bag onto which it put etched suede patches that said "Kohler Annual Golf Classic" – the name the client used to brand the event. Into the bag, Fabtex packed a host of high-end goodies, including custom leather golf club covers that the shop cut-and-sewed from scratch. Other impressive products included Nike and OGIO polos, which featured logos of the client and companies participating in the tournament, some of which were placed on sleeves and the yoke of the shirts. An Adidas windbreaker, sleeves of golf balls, a golf umbrella, microfiber towels and Nike headwear were among the other logoed giveaways in the duffle bag. Each package – about 20 were put together – cost $2,000. For the topper, Fabtex designed and created a trophy to be given to the tournament winner.

In the end, the client was ecstatic, knowing the gifts would make the perfect impression with powerful decision makers. "It was a huge deal for them to impress these people with something unique and high-end," Schlesinger says.

By developing one-of-a-kind offerings that help clients market themselves effectively, Schlesinger says shops in turn market themselves well, winning the trust of the clients and earning referrals, which leads to more business. "The effort comes back to you."

SHOP MAKEOVER

Supercharged Software

While Rob Dubow's contract decorating shop was already successful, the ambitious entrepreneur saw potential to take the business to the next level. To get Dubow Textile (*asi/700107*) there, however, he knew he needed to maximize operational efficiency. Dubow's solution was to develop a proprietary in-house business management software system specifically for the Saint Cloud, MN-based shop. "Over the years, we had needs for processes that our old system couldn't accommodate," Dubow says. "The only way to get better was to build something ourselves."

Launched in 2009, the proprietary system provides a complete suite of solutions, handling everything from quoting and production to shipping, accounting and invoicing. Orders can be efficiently scheduled, tracked, analyzed and broken down, leading to pinpoint accuracy. Not only does the system help with retention, it empowers Dubow to assiduously evaluate financials on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.

WEB

New Media Maven

Carolyn Cagle's embrace of new media technologies has been a boon for her stitching business.

The owner of Stacy, MN-based Strikke Knits creates personalized embroidered wearables, with a particular emphasis on items like mittens, sashes, scarves and knitted caps. To show what she can do, Cagle routinely promotes her products through a variety of online channels, including Facebook, Etsy, Flickr and Pinterest.

Doing so has directly led to many sales. For instance, women looking for something special for bridal parties routinely discover – and buy – the sassy sashes Cagle creates and features in her Etsy store. Typically, Cagle personalizes the sashes to suit the client's taste. "I did one recently where they wanted it to say, 'Future Mrs. Johnson,' " she says.

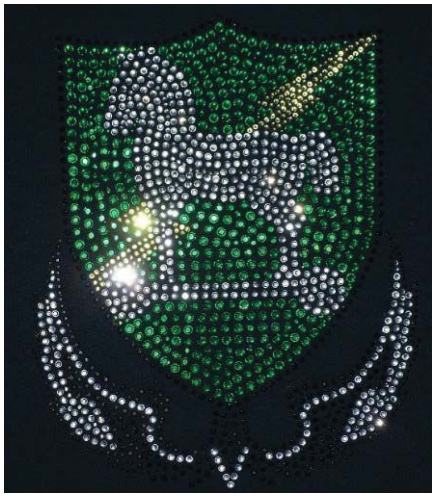
After Cagle creates such products, she posts images of them on her Facebook page, Pinterest account and in Flickr groups. Posts attract prospects and draw feedback from clients, something that can lead to more sales or at least help Cagle better understand her target audience's tastes. "It exposes people to my work," she says. "It gets people to think of me and my company and what I can do for them."

With Facebook, Cagle tailors her posts to the time of year. In late summer and early fall, for instance, she begins promoting posts that feature her custom mittens, which are hot sellers in the lead-up to winter. "I rotate with the seasons and plan ahead," she says.

For embroiderers, Cagle says it's important to experiment with different online communication mediums to find which will work best for a particular shop. "It's not instantaneous," Cagle says, "but if you learn how to use these tools they can really improve your exposure and connection to customers."

SALES

Military Bling



At first impression, rhinestone-logoed apparel does not seem to be the ideal product for military clients. But it is, in fact, a lucrative niche. Sparkle Plenty Designs (*asi/88442*) is capitalizing on it.

The Philadelphia-based company, which specializes in rhinestone and crystal decoration, has provided rhinestoned apparel for military wives whose husbands serve in the same battalions. The decorated clothes typically consist of different military crests created in rhinestones. "We've done shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies and jackets," says Andrew Sequeira, co-owner of Sparkle Plenty.

In a fortunate twist, Sparkle Plenty didn't have to court this market; rather, the buyers sought out the bling shop. It began about three years ago when military wives who wanted something special to wear on the day their husbands deployed overseas found Sparkle Plenty through a Google search. An order was soon placed. So pleased were the women in the product that they recommended Sparkle Plenty to other military wives. "It's a way for them to show pride and unity," Sequeira says. "It's very meaningful."

Clients have also sold the shirts to raise money for events. "One time they were having a ball for their husbands' return and they sold the shirts to help pay for the venue and other expenses," says Sequeira, who notes Sparkle Plenty does the work for the women at a reduced price out of respect for the military connection.



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SWIM WITH THE SHARKS:

Barbara Corcoran and Kevin O'Leary Keynote





ASI Orlando • Tuesday, January 7 • 8:30 a.m.-9:45 a.m.

Co-sponsored by BIC Graphic USA, *asi/40480;* Hanes/Champion, *asi/59528* and Showdown Displays, *asi/87188*

Learn insider tactics on how to become a business tycoon from two of today's most successful entrepreneurs – Barbara Corcoran and Kevin O'Leary – during ASI's "Swim with the Sharks: Secrets to Million-Dollar Sales" on January 7 at ASI Orlando.

Corcoran and O'Leary will share sure-fire strategies for:

- **Developing a hard-hitting plan to boost sales and accelerate profits**
- **Creating a thriving, fun workplace that breeds innovation and a winning team**
- **Motivating yourself and those around you to achieve greatness**

PLUS, watch as the industry's top suppliers compete for $5,000 to help them launch a cool, new product that will take the advertising specialty world by storm. Corcoran and O'Leary – with help from the audience – will judge live pitches from innovative suppliers and will award one lucky supplier the funds to launch a new product.

Register for ASI Orlando, January 5-7, 2014 at the Orange County Convention Center, at www.asishow.com.

From quality time with the industry's most sought-after suppliers and wearables companies to amazing networking and brand-new ASI Education, ASI Orlando is the place to kick off the start of the new sales year.

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ASI SHOW™ ORLANDO
JANUARY 5-7, 2014

Decorating Solutions

Five Steps

By Tonia Kimbrough

Create a Tumble Sublimated Appliqué

Deliver the popular heraldry look with bling in a precut sublimated appliqué design called "Tumble" by Dalco Athletic. It includes a scroll-laced crest studded with clear rhinestones for a fun fashion look that's ideal for a wide range of women's sports and spirit wear applications. You can customize this decoration to fit your customer's needs.

1

PROVIDE ONE OR TWO INITIALS to represent your client's school or team name.

2

CHOOSE A FOREGROUND COLOR, AND THEN A BACKGROUND COLOR. The initials can be the same color as the foreground or they can be a contrasting color.

3

SELECT A WORD such as "Football," "Softball," "Cheer" or "Dance" to be set in sparkling clear rhinestones.

4

ORDER WITH A PERMANENT-BOND, HEAT-SEAL ADHESIVE OR WITH A FREE EASYSTITCH SEW FILE that will automatically sew the appliqué down.

5

APPLY the 100% polyester twill appliqués to sweat shirts, T-shirts or jackets. The finished decoration features the long-lasting, bold colors achievable with the sublimation process.



Dalco Athletic; circle 154 on Free Info Card or call (800) 288-3252.
For a free copy of the Fabric Dye Sublimation catalog, visit *www.dalcoathletic.com*.

WHAT IS SUBLIMATION?

It's a dye-transfer, or chemical, process that allows you to print full-color, photo-quality messages, graphics and photographs on a variety of items, primarily performance apparel, mouse pads, mugs, T-shirts, caps and trophy medals. When you heat sublimation inks to 400°F, they turn into a gas and form a permanent bond to 100% polyester fabrics or hard goods that have a polymer coating. The image will never crack, peel or wash away from the substrate, producing a premium-quality imprint.

Source: *www.sawgrassink.com*

DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Decorating & Fabric Trends

Holiday Enhancements For Seasonal Apparel



IMPRINTABLES WAREHOUSE (*ASI/58475*; CIRCLE 156 ON FREE INFO CARD) OR CALL (800) 347-0068 TO LEARN MORE.

'Tis the season to add a touch of jolly to holiday apparel programs. Industry materials suppliers provide an abundance of options. Preprinted holiday designs from Imprintables Warehouse (*asi/58475*) do the trick. New this season is a trendy green and red zebra print, which nods to the popularity of animal print at retail. Other options include red/green polka dots, holiday lights, candy cane stripes, reindeer, snowmen and holiday gifts. The vinyl cutter material makes it easy for you to digitally create and cut a design for heat-applied graphics.

If you need inspiration, look no further than Great Dane Graphics. Its pre-separated, full-color stock art collection includes a variety of new holiday designs in time for Christmas and New Year's Eve. The art is designed to work with a wide range of imprinting processes including screen printing, direct-to-garment, sublimation, embroidery, rhinestones and heat-applied graphics. You can resize or change the colors of the stock designs to suit your customer's needs. Plus, in this busy season, customizing stock art vs. creating original art from scratch saves time and money.

Another way to enhance a seasonal design is with metallic accents. Experts at Madeira USA recommend the use of its 50 weight, FS #50 smooth metallic embroidery thread. Its pure silver coating bestows a classical richness to holiday embroidery. "With FS #50, the easiest to stitch out, it can often simply be substituted for a rayon or polyester 40 weight embroidery thread, with no change of needle, tension or speed," says Alice Wolf, marketing director for Madeira USA. "Adding even just a touch of metallic to a design can really make it pop, especially around the holidays. It also can ensure that you, and your customer, will stand out from the crowd, while raising your price point by about 20% when added to a stock design or logo. You'll find you can get by with less thread when using the heavier metallics for fill areas, but you'll want to lengthen your stitches as well."



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All-Over Print Dress

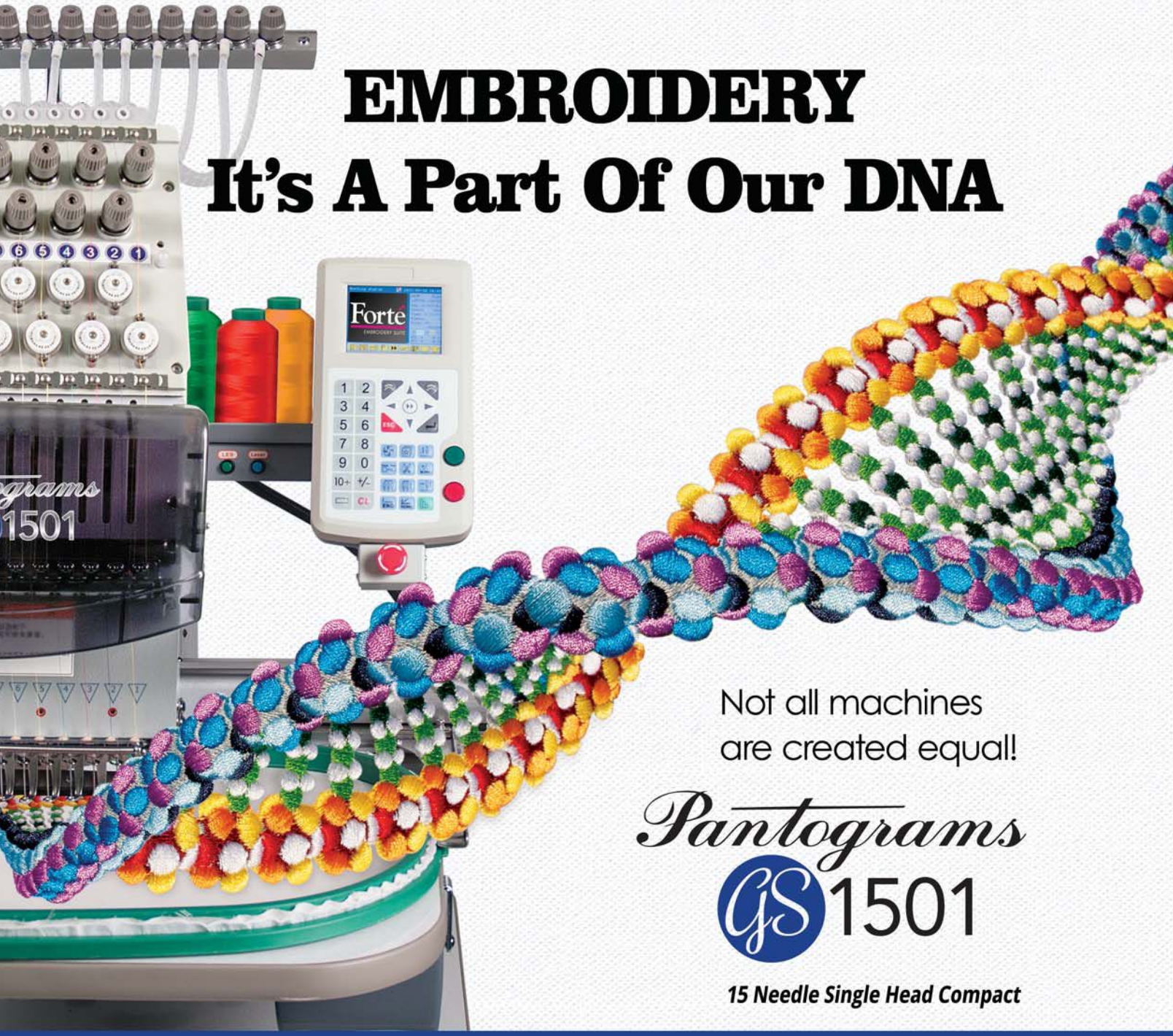
Popular retailer Nordstrom recently named "The '80s Glam Dress" one of its five savvy style obsessions, highlighting a curve-hugging all-over graphic print dress by Wayf. Named the Body-Con Midi Dress, an abstract animal print covers the garment seam to seam, top to bottom.

Jump on this trend with sublimation. Choose the Fashion Fit Women's V-Dress made from 4.1 ounce spun polyester to produce a soft hand and vibrant color. Engineered specifically for successful sublimation, this garment allows you to achieve the same sort of bright, all-over pattern that Nordstrom's pick features. The V-Dress offers a fashionable curve-friendly cut and V-neck with PUREtech wicking technology. Review a complete line of sublimation-ready garments at *www.vaporapparel.com*.



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DECORATING SOL

Decorating & Fabric Trends



STAHLS' ID DIRECT (*ASI/88984*; CIRCLE 151 ON FREE INFO CARD) OR E-MAIL *INFO@STAHLS.COM* TO LEARN MORE.

Multilayer Looks Made Easy

Teams now have more options to create uniforms that are fashionable yet lightweight. Stahls' ID Direct (*asi/88984*) offers three new pre-spaced number fonts – Varsity Gap Outline, Pro Gap Outline and Team US Gap Outline. These new fonts are an up-and-coming trend in decorating team uniforms because they allow for a multilayered look.

The Gap Outline style features a primary number and an outline of that primary number cut from the same color of heat-transfer material. The gap between the number and the outline allows the garment to show through, creating a two-color look. Gap Outline numbers come pre-aligned on a clear carrier and are ready for heat application onto a jersey. Apply numbers in just one step per color. Gap Outline numbers save time and reduce layout error.

You can even create multicolor looks without the heavier weight of a standard layered number. Just swap the inside number of one pre-aligned Gap Outline with the inside number of one in another color, resulting in a three-color look – two heat-transfer material colors and the color of the garment showing through the gap. Gap Outline numbers also match the exact size of Stahls' precut numbers, allowing decorators to swap outlines with precut numbers for a mixed-media effect.

All three new fonts are available in 4-, 6-, 8- and 10-inch numbers in 20 colors of Thermo-FILM and 11 colors of Thermo-GRIP. For more information, visit *www.stahlsid.com/heat-transfer-numbers*.

UTIONS

Machine & Software Updates



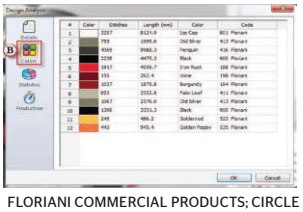
ROLAND DGA CORP.; CIRCLE 157 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 542-2307.

Diversify Your Printing Options

Roland DGA Corp. has introduced the VersaUV LEF-20, a new addition to its line of bench-top UV flatbed printers. At 20 inches wide, the LEF-20 combines award-winning print technology with a new, faster LED curing system and exclusive ink-saving features for outstanding print quality and ease of use. Designed to customize a vast array of products, in addition to printing on some textiles, the LEF-20 prints directly on 3-D items like pens, golf balls, iPhone and iPad covers and even guitar bodies.

Because this system generates minimal heat, the LEF-20 can print directly onto PET, ABS, polycarbonate, TPU, wood, leathers and other soft materials. Twenty automatic presets are available, allowing users to instantly choose the proper settings for their most popular applications.

Floriani Total Control Adds New Tool



FLORIANI COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS; CIRCLE 159 ON FREE INFO CARD OR VISIT *WWW.FLORIANICOMMERCIAL.COM.*

Design Analysis has been added to Floriani's full-featured digitizing program in its latest update. Version 6.15 of Floriani Total Control Commercial gives you more control over the digitizing process.

The Design Analysis feature enables you to estimate how long the design will take to sew out once you time your machine during a trim and color change. It also includes a production section to modify settings for multiple machines. Four easy-to-follow tabs can be modified:

1. **Details** allows you to quickly check dimensions of a design as well as the stitch information, which includes total stitch count, number of colors and number of trims.
2. **Colors** displays the colors listed in order by color number, color image, stitch count of that color, amount of thread used, name and color code name.
3. **Statistics** shows a pie chart of each stitch length in the design.
4. **Production** has the estimated sew-out time based on the applied settings.

Floriani Total Control will work with any make or model embroidery machine. It's designed to work on a PC, but can be modified to work on a Mac. For a demo version, visit *www.florianicommercial.com*.



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DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Personalized Labeling Simplified

Add an identification label system to your service and help clients such as camps, hospitals, resorts, schools and nursing homes keep individuals' apparel from getting mixed up or lost during laundering. The Stahls' Hotronix Clothing Label ID system makes it easy to print and apply personalized heat-transfer and pressure-sensitive labels to apparel and non-apparel.

Single or multiline names can be made as well as barcodes. Once labels are applied, apparel is easily sorted by the name or by scanning the barcode. Labels are guaranteed for 300 industrial washings. The system includes instructions, Names Made label printer, cartridges, power cord, a Hotronix Low Rider heat press, and optional platens for effortless decoration. Only a two-by-three-foot footprint is needed for all the equipment. To view a how-to video, visit *www.clothingidlabel.com*.



HOTRONIX; CIRCLE 158 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 727-8520.

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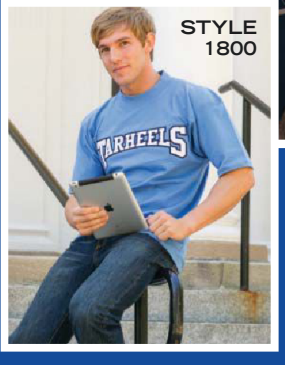


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Product Pick



It's quality combined with competitive pricing that make GEM-brand, pre-wound bobbins a popular choice for customers of Rapos Co. Ltd. Based in Thailand, Rapos has made a name for itself overseas as the go-to supplier for a complete collection of embroidery supplies. Its GEM brand of yarns, threads, bobbins, adhesives, films, linings and needles are readily available in stock at reasonable price points.

"We've been in this industry for more than 27 years," says Rapos spokesperson Yash Agarwal. "Today, we're a leader in supplying a complete range of embroidery accessories with around 60% market share in Thailand and extensive exports overseas." Now Rapos is dedicating efforts and resources to bringing the same quality products to decorators in the West. To learn more, visit *www.rapos.com*.

Quick Tips

1. **Stop pulling out your hair trying to screen print on 100% polyester team uniforms.** Transfer Express (*asi/91804*) simplifies decoration with its new Champ Pro Elasti Prints screen-printed number transfers. Featuring a full athletic block typeface, these transfers are specifically designed for heat applying to polyester at a lower temperature to avoid scorching the fabric. Visit *www.TransferExpress.com*.



HOTRONIX; CIRCLE 158 ON FREE INFO CARD.

2. **Keep heat-transfer products and blanks within reach during the application process.** The new Hotronix Heat Press Caddie Shelves easily attach to the pedestal of the Hotronix Heat Press Caddie or Air Fusion. Two trays make up the Caddie Shelves, which can be rotated in either a landscape or portrait position, offering the heat-press user convenience and flexibility. For more information, visit *www.hotronix.com*.



TRANSFER EXPRESS (*ASI/91804*; CIRCLE 161 ON FREE INFO CARD).



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POWER 75 2013

Stitches reveals its fourth-annual list of the most powerful people and companies in the industry today. Ranked from 1 to 75, everyone on this list is influencing the direction the decorating industry will take in 2014 and beyond.

BY NICOLE ROLLENDER, CHRISTOPHER RUVO, CHUCK ZAK, CARA CHERRY AND SHANE DALE

The decorated-apparel industry continues to evolve rapidly –

especially as technology changes and improves the way decorators design, imprint, and market and sell online. From a diverse pool – equipment and software manufacturers, educators, decorators and digitizers and more – come the many individuals on the 2013 Power 75 who represent companies and organizations who are influencing the direction the industry will take in 2014 and beyond.

Welcome to the fourth-annual *Stitches* Power List, our ranking of 75 industry heavyweights, those with the most influence now – and into next year – over how companies operate and profit in the decorating marketplace.

Each person and company on this list is making an impact on how everyone in the industry operates – and setting a go-to-market course for the industry as it heads into 2014. Turn the page to learn who the most powerful people in the industry are, and their plans for the future. Plus, we surveyed our Power List members to gauge their outlooks on 2014, find out what their biggest challenges are and see where the best business opportunities lie. Check out their responses on page 56.



1 *The Heat-Printing Guru* TED STAHL

It would seem innovation is built into the Stahl family DNA. Compelled by a spark of ingenuity and driven by hard work, the late A.C. Stahl invented heat-applied printing in 1932. Today, his grandson Ted Stahl leads GroupeSTAHL, a global organization of about 20 companies that routinely remake the apparel-decorating landscape by manufacturing and selling cutting-edge heat-printing materials, machines and services.

"The ability to produce* HIGH-QUALITY, SMALL-QUANTITY, CUSTOM ITEMS *with full-color logos will be key for businesses in 2014."

TED STAHL, GROUPESTAHL

Because of Stahl's continual innovation and pervasive influence on the fast-growing market for heat-printed graphics, the founder and executive chairman of GroupeSTAHL rose from number three on last year's Power 75 to the top spot. While the accolade is a welcomed achievement, what continues to excite and inspire Stahl the most is the opportunity to deliver products that will make the more than 75,000 customers his organization serves more successful. "The ability to produce high-quality,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

1



The Heat-Printing Guru

TED STAHL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

small-quantity, custom items with full-color logos will be key for businesses in 2014," he says. "Heat printing makes this possible. With more and more heat-printing options, businesses have more opportunities to profit."

GroupeSTAHL has played a defining role in creating those options. In recent years, the company has introduced a host of new products, equipment and software. Innovations include everything from the Hotronix Air Fusion heat press and the Hotronix Heat Press Caddie, to the Any Word Any Way Custom Lettering Designer. In 2013, GroupeSTAHL achieved record-breaking sales for Hotronix heat presses and materials from its company Transfer Express (*asi/91804*). "Since increased demand for materials and heat presses are signs of healthy growth in the custom apparel and promotional products industries, this is exciting for everyone," Stahl says.

Noting that GroupeSTAHL broadened its film manufacturing capabilities in 2013, Stahl says more expansion is in store for 2014. "In addition to opening a new lab and product development facility," he says, "we plan to double our manufacturing capabilities for adhesives, pressure-sensitive films, thermo-plastic urethanes, digital and specialty film heat-transfer materials." Other plans include adding a European ink technologies company with a global reach and forming a partnership with Epson to market the new SureColor direct-to-garment printer technology in North America. After more than three years of development, Epson's direct-to-garment printer features the latest advancements in performance imaging.

All the forward-pushing momentum is emblematic of how Stahl has operated through his career. Always eager to create the next great product, Stahl holds about 50 patents/patents-pending for equipment and materials used in custom garment decoration. He coined the term "heat printing," and his company was the first to take the concept of cutting graphics for jerseys on-demand mainstream with the introduction of its CAD-CUT technology. His organization has also been at the forefront of industry education, teaching customers through workshops, webinars and websites. "The greatest part of the business is being able to speak with customers and to help them grow their businesses," Stahl says. – *Christopher Ruvo*

1 **TED STAHL**
Executive Chairman and Founder
GroupeSTAHL
2012 RANK: 3

Stahl presides over a worldwide family of companies that serve approximately 75,000 customers. The largest manufacturer of heat presses in the world, GroupeSTAHL also makes CAD-CUT materials for international distribution, among other heat-printing related offerings. During the busy season, it's not unusual for GroupeSTAHL companies to ship 2,500 packages in a single day. In addition to serving screen printers, embroiderers and large manufacturers, GroupeSTAHL also supplies customization for the NFL, NHL and NBA. Under Stahl's astute direction in 2013, GroupeSTAHL experienced record-breaking sales for its Hotronix heat presses and custom transfers from Transfer Express *(asi/91804)*. Having introduced a bevy of new products in recent years, GroupeSTAHL plans continued advancement through product innovation, acquisition, strategic partnerships and expansion of manufacturing capabilities. "We're always looking for ways to serve our customers better and faster," Stahl says.

2 **MARTY LOTT**
Founder and CEO
SanMar *(asi/84863)*
2012 RANK: 2

SanMar *(asi/84863)* started in 1971 as one of Lott's college projects. Under his trailblazing leadership, the supplier of blank wholesale apparel has grown into an estimated $450 million powerhouse. Even with such runaway success, SanMar remains a family business in which quality product and exceptional service for every customer is paramount. "From our online marketing tools with step-by-step videos for first-time users, to our webinars teaching the latest and greatest tips and tricks, to our customer care center employees, we offer our customers the tools they need to further their business," Lott says. This year, the supplier launched its 2014 Apparel, Bags & Caps catalog, complete with more than 270 new products, including 64 new tall styles. "With everything from wovens to polos, T-shirts to tanks, beanies to bags and everything else in between, the new SanMar styles can outfit everyone," Lott says.

3 **PAUL GALLAGHER**
CEO
KRIS JANOWSKI
President
Hirsch International
(asi/14982)
2012 RANK: 1

Led by Gallagher and Janowski, Hirsch is the exclusive U.S. distributor of Tajima embroidery machines, Pulse embroidery software, MHM screen-printing equipment, Adelco textile dryers and Seit textile lasers. The number one-provider of embroidery machines in the country, Hirsch has 27,000 customers and more than 500,000 embroidery heads operating in the U.S. Recently, Hirsch opened the North Carolina-based Solution Studio for training and demonstrations. It also debuted a sales/demo center for MHM and Kornit equipment in California. New products Hirsch has brought to market include a laser bridge capable of embellishing printed caps and Kornit's Avalanche 1000 for mass production. Hirsch has also remained strong in its core business of selling Tajima machines, being named the top Tajima distributor worldwide in 2012.

4 **MIKE HOFFMAN**
President
Gildan Activewear SRL
2012 RANK: 4

Already one of the world's largest apparel and hosiery manufacturers, Gildan built on its industry-leading

THE *methodology*

THIS YEAR'S POWER 75 IS MADE UP OF the heads of the top machine, software, thread and apparel suppliers and other industry vendors; decorators and digitizers; industry educators and heads of trade associations; others outside the industry who we felt were important; and, of course, newcomers and Power 75 veterans. On the following pages, you'll find the rankings from 1 to 75; rankings are partially based on a survey *Stitches* conducts, which asks the industry, the Power 75 members themselves, and the *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board to rate whether each person on last year's list has gained or lost influence over the past 12 months. All of these efforts brought the list to the 75 people you see here.

status by increasing revenue in 2012 by 13% to $1.95 billion. Led by Hoffman, the Montreal-headquartered company's printwear division introduced many new apparel items in 2013. These include the Gildan cross-dyed fleece, a performance activewear product line called Gildan Performance Tees, and four combed ring-spun fashion fleece styles from the Gildan-owned Anvil *(asi/36350)* brand. Additionally, Gildan released 12 performance styles from New Balance to decorators and distributors in the U.S. and Canada. Ranked number one in the T-shirt category in the 2013 *Identity Marketing* reader's choice awards, Gildan appeared for the fifth straight year on *Maclean's* magazine's Top 50 list of socially responsible corporations.

5 HITOSHI TAJIMA

Chairman
Tajima Industries Ltd.
2012 Rank: 6

Founded in 1944, Tajima Industries has developed more than 3,000 embroidery machine models and sold the sought-after products in over 100 countries. Those countries include, of course, the U.S., where Tajima remains the top-selling machine brand. These days, Hitoshi Tajima runs a company that's propelled by the same spirit of ingenuity that enabled the Tajima group to develop a multi-head embroidery machine back in 1964. The Japan-based corporation's new offerings include the TWMX-C Series, which stitches on wearables that need a bigger sewing field, such as varsity jackets.

6 GÉRARD MÉTRAILLER

Senior Director and Product Manager, Graphics
Corel Corp.
2012 RANK: 5

Since introducing CorelDRAW in 1989, Corel has created a stream of award-winning products, including graphics, painting, photo, video and office software. The Ottawa-headquartered company's standout offerings include CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, a comprehensive solution for creating vector artwork for embroidery, appliqué, rhinestone, screen-printing, direct-to-garment printing and multi-decoration designs. Under Métrailler's leadership, the latest version of Graphics Suite – X6 – was introduced last year. Focused on educating its more than 100 million global customers, Corel offers free monthly webinars on CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, in addition to sharing tips and tutorials through its community website and social media channels. By enhancing proven popular products and releasing mobile apps, 3-D technology, and solutions for new platforms, Corel aims to keep its users ahead of the tech curve.

7 NORMAN HULLINGER

CEO
Broder Bros. Co.
(asi/42090)
2012 RANK: 10

Hullinger became the CEO of the largest supplier by revenue in the advertising specialty in December 2012. The next month, the company with 2012 sales of $524 million announced the acquisition of apparel supplier Imprints Wholesale *(asi/62486)*. Also this year, Broder revealed that it was adding 37 peak-performance styles from the Russell Athletic brand to its product line. Beyond overseeing such significant dealings, Hullinger, formerly Broder's chief operating officer, has focused the company on providing top-shelf customer service and fine-tuning its product line. Looking ahead, further acquisitions could be forthcoming. "We're very enthusiastic about the industry and our ability to help our customers be successful," Hullinger says.

8 DEAN F. SHULMAN

Senior Vice President Home Appliance & Industrial Products Divisions,
Brother International Corp.
2012 RANK: 7

Over the last three years, Brother has sold more than 1.6 million embroidery and sewing machines in the U.S. Worldwide, the equipment provider's sales of PE-DESIGN embroidery digitizing software have topped 200,000. Numbers like that are impressive and set to rise under the direction of Shulman, who has spearheaded the reinvention of Brother's sewing and embroidery business over the last eight years. One of his essential contributions has been to key in on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



7 *The Hard-Working CEO* NORMAN HULLINGER

Norman Hullinger speaks with a candidness not always found among chief executive officers. The CEO of Broder Bros. Co. (*asi/42090*) admits the Trevose, PA-based supplier hasn't always been consistent. But since taking over as interim CEO in August 2012 and CEO in December the same year, consistency on fair pricing, great product and outstanding customer service have become the cornerstones of his time in charge. "We may have suffered from a guardrail-to-guardrail approach in the past," he says. "Now, we're staying in the middle of the lane, right where customers expect us to be."

> ***"We're excited about* BUCKLING OURSELVES TOGETHER WITH GREAT PARTNERS *that fit our business model."***
>
> NORMAN HULLINGER, BRODER BROS. (*ASI/42090*)

Apparently the tactic is working. Broder finished 2012 as the ad specialty industry's largest supplier – apparel or otherwise – with revenue of $524.1 million, an 8.4% hike over the prior year. When the calendar flipped to January, Broder began 2013 by acquiring apparel supplier Imprints Wholesale (*asi/62486*) for $29 million.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

7



The Hard-Working CEO
NORMAN HULLINGER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Moving forward, Broder expects to make more acquisitions. "We don't plan to buy decorators or acquire distributors," Hullinger notes, "but we're excited about buckling ourselves together with great partners that fit our business model."

Of course, Hullinger is focused on organic sales growth, too, which Broder experienced throughout 2013. The hard-working CEO expects the trend to continue into the new year. "We're aimed at achieving steady growth," he says, noting that dynamic new apparel offerings combined with top-notch service and proven popular products should carry Broder further into the black.

For Hullinger, leading Broder to such success is a personal mission, given his roots at the company. After serving in executive capacities for retailers and Yahoo!, he joined Broder in 2003 as vice president of operations. Two years later he became senior vice president of operations, a post he excelled in for four years. In 2009, he rose to executive vice president and chief operating officer, overseeing all distribution and call-center operations, as well as information technology and purchasing and inventory management.

While clearly a master of operations, Hullinger had the acuity upon becoming CEO to build a management team that complements and enhances his skill set. He points to President Dan Pantano, Chief Marketing Officer David Clifton, Vice President of Operations Gary Frost, and Andrea Engel, vice president of portfolio and supplier management, as key executive hires. "We've got the proper confluence of traditional industry understanding and exciting new talent that thinks outside the box," he says. – *CR*

ON THE *Record*

... ON HOW TO HELP DECORATORS GROW



"I'd love to sit down with a small business economist who has a grasp of the U.S. economy, and discuss what independent business owners can do to actively grow their businesses. What would the impact be if they were to add equipment, add a staff person, add a retail location – and what would the risks be? And then, we'd formulate a plan that business owners could implement, based on what their goals were for growth."

Jennifer Cox, National Network of Embroidery Professionals (asi/187622)

9

BILL WILSON
Chief Technical Officer and Co-Founder
Wilcom International Pty.

GREG ROSS
President
Wilcom America

2012 RANK: 8

Founded in 1979, Wilcom provides industry-leading software solutions for embroidery, digital garment printing, screen printing, laser cutting, rhinestones and more. True tech pioneers, Wilson and Ross recently led Wilcom in launching a Web app, TrueSizer Web, a free program that allows anyone to view and edit embroidery designs on mobile devices. In June, Wilcom debuted Wilcom Elements e3, a CorelDRAW-integrated software product range that delivers a revamped user interface and smoother workflow between graphic and embroidery files. Additionally, Wilcom offers its more than 300,000 license holders education in the form of in-person workshops, live online courses, pre-recorded classes and print materials.

10

SHIRLEY CLARK
President
Madeira USA Ltd.

2012 RANK: 9

Formerly a national sales manager at Madeira USA, Clark was promoted to president this year when former President Hajo Voeller (who ranked number nine on the 2012 Power 75 list) took a new position managing global operations for the German-headquartered corporation. Founded in 1919 in Freiburg, Germany, Madeira produces the industry's largest collection of specialty threads. Approximately one-third of the market chooses Madeira over other brands of embroidery thread and supplies. In recent years, Madeira has added locations in Alabama and Florida, fast-growing hobby and crafts market, which has led to Brother introducing products like ScanNCut, the world's first hobby cutting machine with a built-in 300 dpi scanner. Brother's diverse product line is filled out by offerings like the cutting-edge GraffiTee Series of digital garment printers, which were introduced last year. Whether through new products or key partnerships (like the one that saw Brother machines featured on *Project Runway*), Shulman has Brother committed to expansion and innovation.

11

TAS TSONIS AND BRIAN GOLDBERG
Co-CEOS
Pulse Microsystems Ltd.

2012 RANK: 11

Lately things have been busy for Tsonis, Goldberg and the rest of the team at Pulse, a premier creator of software technology for the apparel-decoration industry. Led by the co-CEOs, the company recently introduced Sidekick, a tablet-based software that works with Tajima embroidery machines. It also launched Tajima DG/ML by Pulse version 14, the newest iteration of the company's flagship software. Not content to stop there, Pulse dramatically extended the reach of its Stitchport Toolkit and Automation technology this year, signing major deals with leading companies in Asia, Europe and South America. Such improvements come as Pulse maintains its status as the dominant software solutions provider for machine manufacturers such as Tajima, Kornit and Brother.

12

CRAIG MERTENS
President and CEO
Digital Art Solutions
(asi/14970)

2012 RANK: 13

With a client base of 75,000, Mertens' company has been busy creating new tools and software. Its Smart Designer Creative Assistant is add-on software for CorelDRAW, and its StoneCut rhinestone multi-decoration software can be used with both CorelDRAW and Adobe Illustrator. Its Bling Jersey Kit is a complete sales and marketing tool for selling and producing rhinestone jerseys, its Master Vector Clipart Collection includes production-ready vector clipart, and its Master Vector Templates Collection is a 12-disc series of interactive design templates and clipart. enhancing its ability to next-day ship by UPS Ground. Focused on helping clients succeed, Madeira frequently produces embroidery education webinars, videos and printable instruction sheets. Going forward, Clark plans to use the knowledge she's gained from front-line interaction with embroidery customers to offer products and support services that will help shops grow.

13 SCOTT SOMERVILLE

General Manager
Hanes Branded Printwear
(asi/59528)
2012 RANK: 12

In December 2012, Somerville took over Hanes Branded Printwear *(asi/59528)*, the division of $4.6 billion HanesBrands Inc. that sells Hanes and Champion brand wearables to the decorated-apparel industry. The top-selling apparel brand in terms of units sold, Hanes products are in eight out of 10 households. Hanes also leads on corporate stewardship, having earned an Energy Star Sustained Excellence Award from the EPA. In 2014, Hanes will introduce new products that include the Champion Vapor Collection – the apparel-maker's fastest drying tee ever – and the Hanes X-Temp Collection, performance apparel that adapts to temperature, environment and activity.

14 MIKE RHODES

President and CEO
Bodek and Rhodes
(asi/40788)
2012 RANK: 14

Rhodes is happy to share this stat: From 2008 to 2012, revenue at Bodek and Rhodes increased 47%, rising to $210 million last year. To keep the momentum going, the fourth-largest apparel supplier in the industry recently introduced the Next Level line, and added A4 *(asi/30121)* and New Balance to its athletic-wear offerings. Additionally, the supplier launched a mobile application of its main website and created a mobile site offering for clients that functions as a customers' own mobile site. Through such measures, Bodek aims to build on the success that has garnered it many accolades since its founding in 1939, including ASI Family Business of the Year as well as dozens of service awards.

15 GEORGE WESTPHAL

Co-Founder and CEO
Dakota Collectibles
2012 RANK: 15

An unwavering commitment to customer service and a strong drive to offer customers speedy product delivery were the principals on which Dakota Collectibles was founded. Westphal, with support from his twin brother Jerry, has lead the company forward to become the world's largest supplier of stock embroidery. With thousands of unique and licensed designs available online, the company continues to release new collections regularly. Since bling has become "the thing," Dakota now offers rhinestone transfer designs and custom designs.

16 DOV CHARNEY

CEO
American Apparel
(asi/35297)
2012 RANK: 16

Since starting American Apparel in his college dorm room, Charney has grown the provider of fashion-forward basics into a famous brand that's popular in both the retail and wholesale worlds. Known for its sexy and, at times, controversial marketing campaigns as much as its Made-in-LA vertically integrated apparel manufacturing, American Apparel ranked 10th on *Stitches'* 2013 list of Top 25 Apparel Suppliers. Last year, the clothier increased wholesale revenue 7.3% to $96.8 million, a number that includes sales to apparel decorators. Powered by revenue gains in the first two quarters of 2013, American Apparel was on track to experience an annual sales rise in its wholesale division again.

17 JEFF ADAMS AND PAUL ROHR

Principals
S&S Activewear ***(asi/84358)***
2012 RANK: 19

After purchasing this national apparel wholesaler in 2010, Adams and Rohr spearheaded 17.4% growth in just a couple of years, with revenue rising from $130 million in 2010 to $152.6 million in 2012. Ranked 5th on *Stitches'* 2013 list of Top 25 Apparel Suppliers, S&S Activewear carries more than 70 apparel brands, with fashion-forward lines like Alternative Apparel *(asi/34850)* as part of its repertoire. Keen to deliver the new and now, S&S continually offers fresh styles, with trendy fleeces from Bella + Canvas and the MV Sport *(asi/68318)* Varsity Sweatshirt Jacket among the recent debuts.



10 *The Thread Master* SHIRLEY CLARK

Looking in the local newspaper one day, Shirley Clark saw an ad that Madeira USA – based in her town of Laconia, NH – was hiring. Ready for a career change from the telecommunications industry, Clark decided to apply. She was soon installed as national sales manager. Three years later in 2013, the savvy sales and marketing ace took over as president of Madeira USA. "I'm so fortunate to have found this industry," she says. "I love working with a tangible product, and I'm continually impressed by the talent and abilities of our customers to wear so many hats."

"I'm continually* IMPRESSED BY THE TALENT AND ABILITIES *of our customers to wear so many hats."

SHIRLEY CLARK, MADEIRA USA

Clark got to know many stitchers first-hand during her travels as a national accounts manager. After taking over as president, she didn't stop pounding the pavement. In fact, she visited about 25 shops during her first year at the helm. Such a hands-on approach is pivotal, she says, to understanding clients' needs and leading Madeira in the right direction. "If we listen to our customers, we'll continue to innovate and help them be more successful," Clark says.

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10



The Thread Master
SHIRLEY CLARK

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As one of the largest embroidery thread and supplies providers in the industry, Madeira USA – a division of Germany-headquartered Madeira – has some exciting things in store for the new year, Clark says. They include launching a new, user-friendly website, adding more colors to the polyneon line and debuting new products. "We also want to do a better job of making our clients more aware of the services we offer to help them, like the trend-spotting page on our website," says Clark, who took over the presidency from Hajo Voeller. Voeller returned to Germany to support Madeira's worldwide presence, managing global operations.

Having a broad view of the stitching industry, Clark believes one of the biggest challenges facing embroiderers is the economy. Still, she thinks there's ample opportunity for savvy decorators willing to work hard and smart. "It's important to be aware of trends, to be more creative than the competition," Clark says. "By improving what you can do through education and diversifying your core offerings, you can set yourself apart."

Madeira, which has experienced annual sales gains in all the but the recession years, plans to play a pivotal role in helping shops get to that next level by offering cutting-edge products that empower embroiderers to reach their maximum potential. "Our success," Clark says, "is based on the success of our customers." – *CR*



ON THE *Record* ... ON HOW TO KEEP DECORATOR CLIENTS HAPPY

"We focus on the customer and believe the rest will take care of itself. We'll continue to use technology to communicate new styling and decorating ideas to customers – and to better understand their needs. Lately, we've been seeing strong bookings and a move to even higher-priced styles and designs."

Josh Peyser, MV Sport/Weatherproof (asi/68318)

18 RICK D. MEDLIN

President and CEO

Fruit of the Loom

(asi/84257)

2012 RANK: 17

At Fruit of the Loom, Medlin leads one of the world's largest manufacturers of underwear, intimate apparel, casual wear, sportswear for the decorated-apparel market and athletic wear. Through the Jerzees Activewear sub-brand, Fruit of the Loom recently released more styles and colors for the NuBlend Fleece collection, including a quarter-zip with a cadet collar. Additionally, the apparel powerhouse offers the performance-focused Jerzees Sport Collection and Fruit of the Loom HD Fabric, which gives T-shirts higher stitch density, allowing for smoother, more evocative prints. With a focus on sustainability as well, Fruit of the Loom's distribution center in South Carolina won a 2013 Smart Business Recycling Program Award.

19 MIKE ANGEL

Vice President of Sales and Marketing

Melco

2012 RANK: 18

Founded in 1972, enterprise sales and support is a new focus for Melco, whose clients include Disney, NIKEiD, New Balance and Melissa & Doug. The company's newest products include the XTS Professional Embroidery Machine, along with its LiveDesigner Fusion Enterprise automation and e-commerce solutions, a key component of its new partnership with UPS. A leader in classroom, remote and online decorated-apparel software training via Melco University, Angel notes that Melco recently released Source One, an online training resource that includes multimedia content.

20 JIMMY LAMB

Manager of Education and Communications

Sawgrass Technologies

2012 RANK: 20

A leading industry educator and silver-penned writer who has won awards for his insightful apparel decorating articles, Lamb has more than 20 years of experience in the product embellishment business. This decorating guru is well known for his seminars and talks at industry events and trade shows in the U.S. and beyond. His knowledge is much more than academic: Lamb has owned and operated a successful production facility, started a retail franchise operation and provided production solutions to a variety of *Fortune 500* corporations. At Sawgrass, which provides digital-printing solutions, Lamb has led the way in creating videos, webinars, seminars and workshops that educate decorators on embellishment technology and sound practices.

21 TETSUJI YAMAUE

President

BOB STONE

Vice President of Sales

Barudan America Inc.

2012 RANK: 23

With more than 14,000 customers in the U.S., top-notch customer service is Barudan's bread and butter. Along with computerized embroidery equipment, embroidery software, parts, service and training, Barudan provided on-site training for nearly 400 customers in the past year. Founded in 1959, Barudan won back-to-back awards from *Stitches* for best customer service in 2007 and 2008, which has contributed toward Barudan's increase in annual sales during each of the last three years, according to Yamaue and Stone.

22 RAZGO LEE

President and CEO

Otto International

(asi/75350)

2012 RANK: 21

With 2012 revenue of $27 million and distribution centers in California, Texas and Georgia, Otto provides quality headwear to more than 30,000 customers. Still, Otto is about more than caps. Under Lee's leadership, the supplier has introduced apparel that includes new styles of T-shirts, fleece, and even aprons. Lee and his team have also launched a platform on the Otto website that enables customers to get instant real-time quotes for embroidery, digital printing and heat-transfer options for domestic and overseas orders.

23 IRA NEAMAN
President
Vantage Apparel *(asi/93390)*
2012 RANK: 22

Led by industry veteran Neaman, Vantage delivers high-quality garments in a variety of product categories, such as polo shirts, wovens, T-shirts, sweaters, fleece, outerwear and headwear. From proprietary labels Vantage, Vansport and Velocity to top-tier retail brands Polo Ralph Lauren, Greg Norman Collection, adidas and Izod, Vantage provides customers with an extensive range of apparel from which to choose. Winner of numerous industry awards, Vantage boasts a massive in-house embroidery operation. Committed to meeting all decoration demands, Vantage added screen printing, digital printing, laser etching, laser appliqué and heat transfers to its embellishment mix in recent years. A $53 million company that ranked 18th on *Stitches'* Top 25 Apparel Suppliers list this year, Vantage also provides custom manufacturing and private label services.

24 SUSAN RITCHIE, ARCH RITCHIE & JENNIFER COX
Co-Founders
National Network of Embroidery Professionals (NNEP) *(asi/187622)*
2012 RANK: 27

Cox has been nominated for a 2013 Small Business Influencer Award by Small Business Trends and Small Biz Technology for her work at NNEP, a membership-based firm that provides marketing strategies, technical advice and preferred vendor discounts to nearly 1,000 U.S.-based decorated apparel companies. The Small Business Influencer 2013 Awards honor companies, organizations, vendors, apps, and people who have made a significant impact on the North American small business market.

25 DOUG HAYES
CEO and President
GARRY HURVITZ
Founder and Owner
Ash City USA *(asi/37127)*
2012 RANK: 24

Led by long-time owner Hurvitz and first-year CEO Hayes, Ash City had a busy 2013. The apparel supplier introduced two new lines: North End Sport Blue – think city sophistication with performance features – and Core365, a value-driven collection that offers functional styling. Such advancements build on Ash City's forward momentum of recent years, which includes opening a state-of-the-art distribution and decoration facility in Kansas and expanding its Ontario headquarters into a 272,000-square-foot facility with in-house embroidery. With 2012 revenue of $142 million, Ash City ranked 6th on *Stitches'* 2013 Top 25 Apparel Suppliers list.

26 DANIEL TSAI
President and CEO
JENNIFER TSAI
Vice President of Operations
Tri-Mountain *(asi/92125)*
2012 RANK: 28

Tri-Mountain has continued the trend of annual growth that has seen the company become the 21st largest supplier of apparel and hard goods by revenue ($71 million) in the advertising specialty industry. Providing wearables for businesses, team sports, and safety/workwear environments, Tri-Mountain's top offerings include the fashion-forward Lilac Bloom line, a collection exclusively for women that earned its designer, Jennifer, a *Wearables* magazine trendsetter award. This year, Tri-Mountain introduced apparel with temperature control (TempUp and TempDown), its Peak Performers value line, and an oilfield camouflage design. The supplier also debuted a 2014 catalog that includes new styles across five product lines.

27 ANNA WINTOUR
Editor-in-Chief
Vogue
2012 RANK: 25

A legendary fashion icon known for spotting new styles and discovering talented young designers, Wintour has served as the editor-in-chief of *Vogue* since 1988. In 2013, she was also named artistic director for Condé Nast publications. Her influence isn't limited just to the pages of *Vogue*; she has driven fashion trends for decades and inspired the use of

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16 *The Hustler*
DOV CHARNEY

Perhaps no executive in the imprinted-apparel industry has as high a profile as Dov Charney, CEO of American Apparel (*asi/35297*). A shrewd and intensely driven businessman, a creative and controversial marketer, an outspoken advocate of everything from immigration reform to corporate social responsibility, Charney is a part of the pop culture landscape. "I think I was born a hustler," Charney, who has proudly referred to himself as a bootlegger and troublemaker, once told *The New York Times*. "I like the hustle."

> ***"I like selling a product that PEOPLE LOVE."***
>
> DOV CHARNEY, AMERICAN APPAREL *(ASI/35297)*

And hustle he has, building the T-shirt company he started in his college dorm room into a household name brand that's popular at retail and wholesale for its fashionable basics. Along the way, Charney has won awards like Entrepreneur of the Year from Ernst & Young, ASI's Person of the Year, appeared on *Stitches* Power 75 and *Counselor* magazine's Power 50, and been named one of the 100 Most Powerful People of Southern California by *The Los Angeles Times*. "I like selling a product that people love," Charney says.

Love of the threads that American Apparel manufacturers and

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16



The Hustler

DOV CHARNEY

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distributes from its downtown Los Angeles headquarters appears to be spreading. In 2012, the company's wholesale revenue, which includes sales to apparel decorators, rose 7.3% to $96.8 million. Under Charney's leadership in 2013, wholesale revenue increased 2% in the first quarter and 16% in the second quarter. "We're pleased with the continued strong sales performance," Charney says.

A couple of years ago, the outlook at American Apparel was decidedly darker. The vertical manufacturer of Made-in-the-USA wearables reported losses in 2010 and 2011. Still, powered by the restless, indomitable spirit that motivates the best entrepreneurs, Charney threw himself into turning things around. American Apparel secured critical financing and some fresh faces were brought on board. By the end of 2012, the supplier turned a profit of about $1 million. "Significant sales growth, operating expense control and the acceleration of leverage of our fixed costs allowed us to increase EBITDA performance in 2012 to $36.6 million from $14.5 million in the prior year," Charney says.

Despite a net loss in the second quarter of 2013 that occurred due to costs associated with a new distribution center and other upgrades that will improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness, Charney remains buoyant that American Apparel is well-positioned for profit and sales growth. "Customer demand of our offering remains strong," he says. – *CR*

ON THE *Record*

... ON WHAT SUPPLIERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIRING



"Hiring top talent or creating top talent via education is really the same thing. Either way, a competent staff is a must. So, purchasing from an incompetent supplier costs a lot more money than people think. Everything is becoming more fast paced so not having to watch your back all the time and having confidence in your supplier is becoming more and more important."

Chris Waldick, JCW Software LLC

embroidery, appliqué and sequins everywhere from haute-couture designs worn on the runway to retail fashions in stores around the world. Wintour will appear as a judge on *The Fashion Fund*, premiering this month, which documents the process of finding the CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund winner.

28 EDWARD STATON

President

Staton Corporate and Casual *(asi/89380)*

2012 RANK: 26

This Texan sportswear supplier boasts an extensive roster of brands, from Sierra Pacific, Mega Cap and Anvil, to Dickies, Proline and Willow Pointe. Founded 32 years ago, Staton provides for approximately 16,000 customers from three warehouses. To better serve customers, Staton's company provides free generic versions of its catalog in print and online. With revenue of $118 million in 2012, Staton's sales earned the supplier the 7th spot on *Stitches'* 2013 Top 25 Apparel Suppliers list.

29 JOSH PEYSER

President

MV Sport/Weatherproof *(asi/68318)*

2012 RANK: 39

Under Peyser's leadership, MV Sport/Weatherproof is on track to increase revenue by 15% this year. A supplier of sweatshirts, T-shirts, outerwear, blankets and accessories, the company also offers extensive in-house decoration, including screen printing, appliqué and an embroidery operation of 250 heads, which incorporates 72 heads with laser etching functionalities. Impressively, MV Sport/Weatherproof made its facility solar-powered, with 5,000 photovoltaic cells generating 95% of electricity needs. In 2013, the supplier introduced 30 new styles, including tees and sweatshirts. It also improved its website, and at press time, online ordering was scheduled to be offered by year's end.

30 MARTIN KRISTIAMAN

CEO

DecoNetwork Pty Ltd.

2012 RANK: 29

Kristiaman is the innovator and leader who spearheads the success of DecoNetwork, a comprehensive e-commerce and business-management solution for the apparel-decoration industry to deliver mass personalization. A fully hosted "cloud" solution, DecoNetwork releases new software features approximately every two months. Recent upgrades include integrating industry catalogs from leading apparel suppliers; allowing customers to easily import their own photos and designs from Facebook and Instagram; and BusinessHub, a quote and order-management system. In the past year, DecoNetwork has trained about 1,000 customers as part of its efforts to educate clients. Founded in 2006, the company's revenue was on track to double in 2013.

31 SCOTT COLMAN

President and CEO

LINDA SHAHVARAN

General Manager

ColDesi Inc.

2012 RANK: 31

Serving more than 10,000 customers, ColDesi Inc., under Colman and Shahvaran's leadership, is a premier provider of SWF embroidery machines, DTG direct-to-garment digital printers, CAMS automated rhinestone-setting equipment, and ProSpangle automated transfer equipment. Led by Coleman and Shahvaran, ColDesi has introduced new products recently that include Hotfix Era for Stencils, the ProSpangle Transfer machine, and the M4 commercial direct-to-garment printer. Focused on helping customers get the most out of their apparel-decorating equipment, ColDesi offers free live online training and free classes at its Florida and New Jersey locations.

32 DICK WARD
CEO and Owner
River's End Trading Co.
(asi/82588)
2012 RANK: 32

For more than 30 years, River's End Trading Co. has served as a leading supplier of apparel and accessories to the imprinted-apparel industry. A one-stop shop, River's End offers in-house decorating services, too. This year, River's End moved into the branded retail market with a new line, River's End Branded Apparel. Under Ward's direction, the *Stitches* Top 25 Apparel supplier has lately introduced 12 new Columbia styles, built on the success of the RE Sport Line, and created a decoration solution that makes it easier to embroider on pockets.

33 MARK WASSON
President and CEO
Gunold USA
2012 RANK: 30

A wholesale embroidery supply and education shop, Wasson says Gunold USA has placed a massive emphasis on embroidery training since 2010 with its Learn N' Touch education program, along with more than 50 best-technique training videos that have been added to *www.gunold.com* since 2012. In July, Gunold introduced its SnapFonts embroidery lettering software that Wasson calls perhaps the easiest lettering software on the market, with additional SnapFonts software coming in the fall. Gunold's greatest recent sales growth has come from small- and medium-sized businesses.

34 RICK MOUTY
CEO
ProFill Holdings
(asi/300152)
2012 RANK: 33

Since taking over more than a decade ago, Mouty has expanded this apparel supplier's product offerings, added embroidery and screen-printing services, and launched a strategic unit devoted to corporate promotional and uniform programs. Operating through subsidiaries like WearMagic *(asi/95765)* and TSC Apparel *(asi/90518)*, ProFill serves more than 20,000 active customers. In 2012, ProFill's sales soared to $96.4 million. That tally from the provider of blanks and turnkey apparel packages was good enough to land ProFill in the upper half of both *Stitches*' 2013 Top 25 Apparel Suppliers list and *Counselor* magazine's Top 40 Suppliers (apparel and hard goods).

35 GENE FEIL
President and Founder
Dalco Athletic
2012 RANK: 34

Feil is the president and founder of Dalco Athletic, a multimillion-dollar athletic lettering enterprise. The business that started in a garage now operates out of a 30,500-square-foot facility and employs a staff of 35. A pioneer in the industry, Feil has inspired and developed hundreds of new products and technologies since founding the company in 1969. This past year, Dalco added Shockwave Thermo Image digital transfers, Full-Color Dye Sublimation Twill Appliqué and three new types of appliqué material to its product lineup.

36 ED LEVY
Director of Software Technologies
Hirsch International
(asi/14982)
2012 RANK: 47

Levy leads Hirsch's software division with a strong concentration in automating production processes that encompass virtually every apparel-decorating process. A 24-year industry veteran, he has owned his own digitizing businesses since 1991 and founded an independent professional software users group for embroiderers. He routinely writes informative articles for leading-industry publications and is a well-known speaker at all major domestic tradeshows and events as far away as Barcelona. This year, Levy's biggest achievement has once again been helping large customers to implement custom programs for production automation, collectively saving them millions of dollars. Levy, who has established himself as an innovator and educator in the decorated-apparel industry, continues to make an impact on decorators of all sizes.



25 *One Experienced Rookie* DOUG HAYES

When Doug Hayes took over as CEO and president of Ash City (*asi/37127*) in January, he didn't just have to learn a new company – he had to learn a new industry. The high-powered executive has leapt the rookie year hurdles with aplomb, not only absorbing the intricacies of the corporate and promotional apparel business but also spearheading changes at Ash City that position the wearables supplier – ranked 6th on *Stitches*' Top 25 Apparel Suppliers list – for greater growth. "It's an interesting industry and I've enjoyed the challenges," Hayes says.

> ***"It's my intention to bring INNOVATIVE PERSPECTIVES and business approaches to Ash City."***
>
> DOUG HAYES, ASH CITY *(ASI/37127)*

Before joining Richmond Hill, Ontario-based Ash City, Hayes served as president of Crocs Inc.'s Americas division for three years. In that role, he was responsible for all operations for North

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25



One Experienced Rookie

DOUG HAYES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43

and South America, including Crocs' wholesale and direct-to-consumer channels. Vastly experienced, Hayes has also served as president of Callaway Golf Canada, adidas-Salomon Canada Limited and Forzani Group Ltd., the latter being a major Canadian sporting goods retailer. Through this career path, Hayes has learned things that have prepared him to lead Ash City, which had 2012 North American revenue of $142 million. "Leadership and vision are transferable," he says.

During his first year in charge, Hayes focused on enhancing various aspects of Ash City, a process that included better aligning the sales and marketing teams. "Marketing is now much more focused on revenue-generating activities," he says. Under Hayes' leadership, Ash City created service teams specifically for key accounts and re-engineered its in-house decorating operation, which includes high-volume embroidery capabilities. Such improvements are a key advantage in helping the Canadian supplier accomplish one of its top objectives – U.S. expansion.

As if that hadn't kept Hayes busy enough, he also focused on ensuring company objectives are well-defined, an initiative helped along by "town hall" meetings for employees. "It's my intention to bring innovative perspectives and business approaches to Ash City," he says. In 2013, that innovation included the introduction of two new lines: North End Sport Blue, a city-inspired collection that blends downtown style with cutting-edge performance features, and Core365, a value-driven line that offers functional styling.

With Hayes having such a successful first year, Ash City is headed in the right direction, says Founder and Owner Garry Hurvitz, who stepped away from the CEO/president role to bring in Hayes. "Over the next five years," Hurvitz says, "Ash City will continue leading the pack." – *CR*



ON THE *Record* ... ON HOW SUPPLIERS CAN STAY COMPETITIVE

"With the increasing adoption of consumer-facing technology, it's imperative for industry suppliers to collaborate with leading technology providers and create seamless supply chain flow. This will allow up-to-date product presentation and inventory availability to the consumer."

Martin Kristiaman, DecoNetwork Pty. Ltd.

37 PHIL RUBIN
CEO
ERIC J. RUBIN
President
Blue Generation *(asi/40653)*
2012 RANK: 37

The Rubins run a family business that tallied 2012 revenue of $57 million, landing Blue Generation at number 22 on *Counselor* magazine's list of the industry's Top 40 Suppliers. Renowned for its extensive color selection and size availability in men's, ladies' and youth, Blue Generation introduced new products recently that include snag-resistant moisture-wicking polos, stain-release poly/cotton poplin shirts, and cotton fleece hoodie pullovers. The supplier has also updated its website and business-management software system. The fresh offerings are all part of Blue Generation's effort to provide customers with excellent products and service – a tradition that started nearly 70 years ago when the company was founded.

38 RAY TITUS
CEO
EmbroidMe *(asi/384000)*
2012 RANK: 36

The world's largest franchise focused on decorated apparel, promotional products and personalized gifts, EmbroidMe has more than 300 stores in 12 countries, including the U.S., Canada and Australia. EmbroidMe's 2012 North American revenue rose 2.7% annually to $84.9 million. Guided by Titus' emphasis on quality and consistency, EmbroidMe is launching a new training portal to ensure new franchisees and others in the organization receive ongoing education. Serving more than 400,000 customers, EmbroidMe's many accolades include ranking 97th on Franchise Direct's 2013 list of Top 100 Global Franchises.

39 OWEN DUNNE
Director, Embroidery and Distributor Sales Division, Robison-Anton Embroidery Thread
American & Efird Inc.
2012 RANK: 38

American & Efird is a leading manufacturer of embroidery threads, sewing threads and sewing textiles; a producer of products for embroidery houses of all sizes; and a producer of Schiffli and craft products. The 122-year-old company's newest offering is its signature 60-weight embroidery thread for detailed lettering. According to Dunne, expanding its "global footprint" is a top company priority, as American & Efird already has locations in five continents. It has seen an increase in revenue each year since 2010, and is on target for a 4% to 5% revenue bump in 2013.

40 FRANK PROKATOR
Owner and Founder
The Embroidery Network and Steel Town Graphics
NEW

The Embroidery Network is an online resource that includes hundreds of technical articles, free and fee-based videos, webinars, newsletters, designs and training resources. In early 2012, Prokator founded it as a way to share knowledge and to make it easier for industry newcomers to understand the embroidery techniques and components. Over a year later, he has more than 5,500 subscribers who receive his monthly newsletters, and he has provided training for hundreds of customers. Earlier this year, Prokator launched Steel Town Graphics, which offers a range of apparel decorating services.

41 GREG NATHANSON
President and CEO
CHASE ROH, PH.D.
Co-Founder
AnaJet Inc. *(asi/16000)*
2012 RANK: 40

AnaJet designs, builds and sells digital direct-to-garment printers, inks, accessories and lifetime training – in fact, the company has trained nearly 1,000 customers at its headquarters in the past year. In April, under Nathanson and Roh's leadership, AnaJet launched its mPower i-series direct-to-garment printer, which includes improved ink delivery and print quality compared to its original mPower offering. AnaJet has also introduced version 2.6 of its AnaRIP software, designed for the mPower series, which includes custom ICC profiles that are integral to high-fidelity digital color.

42 JOYCE JAGGER

Owner
The Embroidery Coach
2012 RANK: 42

Since founding her company in 2000, Jagger has helped thousands of embroiderers grow their businesses. Whether she's turning a struggling business into a profit center or providing newcomers with the information they need to know to open their own business, she has the answers to even the most complex embroidery questions. Twice a month, Jagger offers free webinars via AsktheEmbroideryCoach.com, during which she tackles various how-to issues. Early next year, she'll also be launching a mentorship program that will allow her to work one-on-one with students over the course of 12 months. She'll guide them on how to select the right machine, choosing appropriate software, building websites and developing pricing strategies.

43 RYAN MOOR

Founder and CEO
Ryonet Corp. *(asi/528500)*
2012 RANK: 43

It all started with a punk rock T-shirt for a garage band; since then, Ryonet Corp. has grown into a $25 million a year firm. Ryonet distributes screen-printing supplies and equipment to the apparel-decorating industry. In 2012, it acquired the Riley Hopkins Co., updated the design of this industry staple, and released the new Riley Hopkins Press powered by Ryonet to rave reviews. Ryonet is also the exclusive distributor of the S. Roque Automated line of presses and the only company to offer certified CorelDRAW training classes. Moor bases the success of his company on his employees – many of whom have been with him since the start. Together, they thrive in a culture that supports growth and learning and that strives to "be the best at being better."

44 GARY SCHULTZ
RICK CESERE

President and CEO
Executive Vice President
Edwards Garment Co.
(asi/51752)
2012 RANK: 44

Edwards Garment Co. specializes in uniform and corporate apparel programs, along with in-house embroidery and product customization services. Cesere says Edwards Garment recently purchased three new embroidery machines and has introduced many new styles this fall, including non-iron dress shorts, men's ¼-zip sweaters, and women's open cardigans and short-sleeve shirts. In January, it launched a completely redesigned website that allows customers to place orders with live inventory, check order status, track shipments and create custom flyers. Last year, Edwards Garment recorded sales of $57 million, and has seen 35% sales growth since 2009.

45 KENT HAFFNER

Director of Retail Customization
LIDS Sports Group
NEW

LIDS Sports Group, operating within Hat World Inc., is a U.S.-based retailer that specializes in headwear for professional and collegiate sports teams. LIDS stores make up more than 1,100 mall, airport, street and factory outlets nationwide, and offer custom embroidery capability in 745 of its retail locations. Haffner's team is responsible for training employees on the technical aspects of customization, proper use of equipment and running a customization business within a specialty retail concept. LIDS' newest venture, Custom Zone on the Road, is a mobile customization opportunity that will allow LIDS to provide custom embroidery on jerseys and headwear at a variety of special events.



42 *The Ageless Educator* JOYCE JAGGER

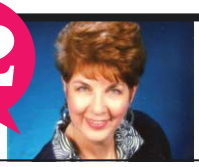
Joyce Jagger is a testament to the saying that age is a state of mind. Energetic and bursting with enthusiasm for the embroidery industry, the 74-years-young apparel-decorating consultant whisks through a schedule that would leave people half her age gasping. One week Jagger – known as "The Embroidery Coach" – jets from her upstate New York home to Savannah for a three-day training session with a client. The next week she crosses the skies to San Antonio for another consultation. And while she occasionally has to share airplane seats with the inconsiderate or sprint through crowded terminals to catch her flights, all the hustle and bustle is welcomed. It's the embodiment of her vibrancy – a reminder that she's doing what she loves, which is helping make decorators across America more successful. "I tried retirement for three weeks," Jagger says with a clipped Yankee laugh. "That was never going to work."

> ***"I TRIED RETIREMENT for three weeks. That was never going to work."***
>
> JOYCE JAGGER, THE EMBROIDERY COACH

Since launching her consultancy about a decade ago, Jagger has trained thousands of clients either in person or through her multimedia channels, which include an information-packed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46

42 The Ageless Educator JOYCE JAGGER



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website *(www.theembroiderycoach.com)*, hundreds of how-to videos, and webinars in which she answers tricky decorating questions. More than 3,000 people subscribe to her e-mail list, and her practical, advice-filled writing about embroidery are featured widely in industry magazines and on blogs. Her work is what has helped build her bottom line: Business was up about 25%, year-over-year, through most of 2013. "I just want to keep helping people," she says. "That's what fires me up."

Jagger discovered her passion for teaching embroidery only after she'd sold the shop she owned for 20 years and retired. Restless, she decided to attend an embroidery seminar to "see what was going on in the industry." The connection she made with the instructor led to a sales job with an equipment distributor. For a couple years, Jagger traveled around selling embroidery machines. She enjoyed the work, but noticed a consistent troubling theme: Many decorators simply didn't know how to run their shops in a way that would maximize efficiency and profitability.

Before long, the idea of equipping embroiderers with such know-how filled Jagger with excitement, and she struck out on her own to spread the knowledge. With plans to expand her services to include a long-term mentorship program, Jagger still feels like she's just getting started. "I'll never retire," she says. "I love this too much." – *CR*



ON THE Record ... ON WHY DECORATION QUALITY IS PARAMOUNT

"The total package of the garment and product presentation is the most important aspect to selling to the end-user. It comes down to how the embellishment 'pops', not whether it was screen printed or embroidered."

Scott M. Ritter, SMR Software Inc. and Decorated Apparel Expo (DAX)

46 RICHARD HIRSCH

Managing Director

Amann USA

2012 RANK: 41

With a client base of 5,000, Amann USA is a full one-stop shop for embroidery supplies with its flagship brand Isacord. Amann USA is nearing the release of its Serafil Super Fine Embroidery Thread, which Hirsch says will take polyester embroidery thread to a whole new level, as it'll be a vital tool for embroidering small letters in extremely fine detail. Amann USA was created in 1998, 144 years after the original Amann Group was founded.

47 JAMES BUCK

President

MESA Distributors Inc.

NEW

Buck started his career in the decorating industry as a manager of a contract embroidery firm, and later as a sales representative for embroidery machines, before forming MESA Distributors in 1992. MESA offers a full line of embroidery machines, direct-to-garment printers, rhinestone machines and heat presses. Having sold approximately 20,000 machines and digitizing software, Buck estimates that his company has more than 9,000 customers in the U.S. alone. MESA offers training for all of the equipment it sells and most recently, the company began offering online training with a live trainer across all of its equipment lines.

48 JACKSON BURNETT

President

CHRISTOPHER BERNAT

Chief Revenue Officer

Vapor Apparel *(asi/93396)*

2012 RANK: 48

Offering high-quality, sustainable apparel and print services, as well as the award-winning Vapor brand of sublimation-certified performance apparel, has helped Vapor Apparel to achieve double-digit sales growth since its founding in 2004. Often seen at industry trade shows, this successful duo trains hundreds of people each year on ways to maximize their profits in sublimation utilizing a quality transfer process. This past year, Vapor launched a new Fashion Fit line of T-shirts and dresses, and a line of fully customizable cut-and-sew apparel featuring all-over printing that's completely made in the USA.

49 JOHN P. COLMAN

CEO and President

Pantograms Manufacturing Inc.

2012 RANK: 45

Founded in 1967, this top equipment supplier has helped more than 10,000 embroiderers succeed. In 2012, the company, led by Colman, introduced the Pantograms GS1501, a commercial-grade, 15-needle single-head machine that's light enough to lift and set up anywhere, including retail kiosks, flea markets and sporting events. What's more, the GS1501 is built so that it can be grouped into a networkable modular embroidery system, creating a multi-head operation that overcomes some of the drawbacks of multi-head machines. In addition to providing top quality embroidery machines, Pantograms also offers heat presses and heat-transfer products like Digital HeatFX. Pantograms software solutions include FortePD, an advanced digitizing package.

50 SCOTT M. RITTER

President

SMR Software Inc. and Decorated Apparel Expo (DAX)

2012 RANK: 46

In the early 1990s, while running a successful screen-printing business, Ritter saw a need for software that would help embroiderers and screen printers develop pricing structures, create quotes, and keep track of orders, artwork, and pricing all in-house. Ritter founded SMR and developed Pricelist Pro, which has gone on to become the industry's leading quoting system – it can be found in more than 4,000 shops. He has written articles on pricing for a number of industry publications, and is a regular

speaker on the trade show circuit. Ritter is also president and founder of the Decorated Apparel Expo, which is considered the Midwest's must-attend trade show for decorators and is now in its 18th year.

51 SCOTT FRESENER

Director
T-Biz Network International LLC
NEW

Fresener has been in the screen-printing industry for more than 30 years, and is co-author of the T-shirt industry's "bible" *How to Print T-Shirts for Fun and Profit.* He founded the U.S. Screen Printing Institute with his wife Pat, and from 1979 to 2009 they trained more than 11,000 students on the business of screen printing. He has received numerous awards and accolades including the highly coveted Parmele Award for outstanding lifetime achievement from SGIA. Fresener launched T-Biz Network in 2009, and he's the developer and distributer for T-SEPS 3.0, a color-separation software. The site offers free webinars and is loaded with industry links, technical articles, hundreds of videos, Fresener's blog and an online forum.

52 JENS PETERSSON

CEO
Cutter & Buck *(asi/47965)*
2012 RANK: 49

Cutter & Buck specializes in golf and fashion retail apparel for men and women, along with its Clique collection of affordable basics. Cutter & Buck has 265 embroidery heads at its distribution center in Renton, WA, and its heat-seal process is quickly rising in popularity. Under Petersson's leadership, the supplier features one major launch per year in both its Cutter & Buck brand and its Clique collection in the corporate category, as well as the collegiate and pro sports category. Cutter & Buck has seen a small increase in revenue from 2012 to 2013.

53 NIAMH O'CONNOR

Art Director/ Evil Genius
UrbanThreads.com
2012 RANK: 51

As the leading supplier of alternative machine embroidery designs in the industry, O'Conner and the team at UrbanThreads.com bring its unique styles and on-trend designs to a broad audience of modern-day crafters and seasoned stitchers. Their award-winning designs have been featured in numerous magazines, as well as Sophie Long's book *Mastering the Art of Embroidery.* In addition to introducing hundreds of new designs this past year, O'Connor and her team launched a look book; this online design library is laid out like a magazine and contains interactive links to products and tutorials. Thanks to social media, UrbanThreads.com's cool designs have been pinned thousands of times on Pinterest, shared on Facebook and tweeted and retweeted on Twitter.

54 PAUL ASHWORTH

President and CEO
BERNINA of America
2012 RANK: 62

Last year, BERNINA introduced its DesignWorks Software Suite for use with select BERNINA embroidery machines to cut custom shapes and create custom crystal appliqués. Also this year, under Ashworth's leadership, it introduced a new line of embroidery machines: the 880, 560, 350 SE and Bernette Chicago. Since opening in April 2013, 76 customers have attended classes at the BERNINA Creative Center in Aurora, IL, and BERNINA's new WeAllSew app for iPhone provides an online community for all sewers and crafters; an Android version of the app is in development.



45 *Pioneering In-Store Customization* KENT HAFFNER

When LIDS Sports Group began adding in-store customization options in 2002, everything changed for the then seven-year-old business.

LIDS acquired a small headwear and sportswear retailer that embroidered, "and we began introducing embroidery to LIDS branded stores," says Kent Haffner, LIDS' director of embroidery operations. "In 2004, this was added to a few locations I oversaw in the Chicago market. This was my first experience with customization."

> ***"We've pioneered* RETAIL CUSTOMIZATION *– in the mall, airport or on the street."***
>
> KENT HAFFNER, LIDS SPORTS GROUP

Since then, LIDS, part of a publically-traded company called Genesco Inc. that enjoyed approximately $2.3 billion in sales last year, has turned the customization market on its head.

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45



Pioneering In-Store Customization

KENT HAFFNER

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"We've pioneered retail customization – in the mall, airport or on the street," Haffner says. "Our stores are specialty retail stores that offer customization."

LIDS' retail stores offer officially licensed and branded headwear, along with other specialty fashion items for collegiate and professional sports teams. The company now has 745 North American retail locations that offer custom embroidery of sports apparel, including jerseys. "This system allows us to make custom licensed team jerseys on demand in select retail locations," Haffner says.

Additionally, LIDS has begun a concept called the Custom Zone, where it offers both embroidery and custom jerseys, with additional customization options. "The Custom Zone, at the start, was a rebranding effort we rolled out last year, a byproduct of our offering multiple customization options in one location," Haffner says. "We were no longer offering just custom embroidery, and needed to represent that to the marketplace. So, the Custom Zone is the area within our stores in which we provide any one or a combination of custom embroidery, tackle twill, custom jerseys, custom key chains, custom balls or custom bats." Last year, LIDS operated the Custom Zone within the NFL Shop at the Super Bowl in New Orleans.

Keen to stay ahead of the curve, LIDS just launched Custom Zone on the Road, a retail entertainment concept that will provide clients with opportunities for customization – custom embroidery, jerseys, balls, patches, key chains, magnets and plates – on location at a variety of special events. Of LIDS' growing list of customization options, Haffner says: "Customer response has been very encouraging, and the response from the store personnel has been awesome." – *Shane Dale*

ON THE Record ... ON HOW DECORATORS CAN STAY COMPETITIVE



"We have niches that we're looking to move into and current areas in which we'll be increasing our penetration. We want to increase our base while delivering better, more efficient and easily accessed services."

Erich Campbell, Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing

55 MICHAEL ROBERTSON

President

Specialty Graphic Imaging Association (SGIA)

2012 RANK: 52

SGIA represents more than 3,000 companies and 15,000 imaging professionals. As CEO, Robertson is a strong supporter of new technologies that enable the industry to grow, and he is dedicated to helping members make sound business decisions and find new ways to position themselves. Under his leadership, SGIA has emerged as the leading association for wide-format digital imaging and special imaging applications. The *SGIA Journal* and SGIA.org website both contain a wealth of knowledge geared toward the graphic and sign, decorated-apparel, and industrial application markets. Its flagship event, the SGIA Expo, is ranked as one of the top 100 trade shows in the U.S.

56 LEE CAROSELLI BARNES

Owner

Balboa Threadworks Embroidery Design

2012 RANK: 54

A crackerjack digitizer with a wealth of punching awards to prove it, Caroselli Barnes' company specializes in creating and selling beautifully realistic stock embroidery designs. This member of the *Stitches* magazine Hall of Fame is also an educator, teaching people about digitizing through videos, webinars, trade show seminars and three-day live classes, which will occur in five different locations across the country in 2014. Founded in 1987 as Balboa Threadworks Inc., the company known as Balboa Threadworks Embroidery Design since 2009 serves a client base of 50,000. The name may have changed slightly, but the success hasn't: Annual revenue increased each of the last two years.

57 JAY FRINK

President

JOHN HAYS

Executive Vice President and General Manager

Heritage Sportswear *(asi/60582)* and Virginia T's *(asi/93917)*

2012 RANK: 50

In 2012, Heritage Sportswear and Virginia T's joined forces to create a more responsive, efficient business. Sourcing from 63 mills, the merged suppliers provide 1,305 styles of blank apparel and accessories to more than 30,000 decorators and distributors. Annually, new styles, colors and sizes aimed at meeting industry demand are released in a catalog/buyer's guide. Additionally, new products are debuted throughout the year. Ranked 8th this year on the *Stitches* Top 25 Apparel Supplier list, Heritage and Virginia T's have made customer-friendly website improvements, enhanced buyer education efforts and improved product availability, all while increasing the efficiency of their warehouse space.

58 CHRIS WALDICK

Founder and President

JCW Software LLC

2012 RANK: 53

In 2002, Waldick developed FastManager software, which makes it easier for embroiderers and screen printers to run their shops in a professional manner by providing them with the resources they need to create invoices, process payments, schedule production and simplify the quote process to less than five minutes. The company's extensive demo and support offerings have helped to increase revenue for 2012 by almost 10%, and it plans to release FastManager version 5 in April 2014. With the recent release of the new Basic Version, a subscription-based license is only $15 a month – at just 50 cents a day, that's a business solution more affordable than a cup of coffee according to Waldick, who services more than 2,600 customers.

59 JAY MALANGA
President
MARK VENIT
Marketing Director
ShopWorks
2012 RANK: 56

On track for 20% year-over-year growth, ShopWorks is a software manufacturer with deep roots in the apparel-decorating industry. Malanga developed the propriety product that would grow into ShopWorks' main offering – the business-management software solution for decorators called OnSite – while running a decorating shop. ShopWorks recently released the latest version of OnSite 7.7, which includes a number of excellent upgrades. Serving over 6,000 users, ShopWorks delivers a host of training resources to customers, including online videos and in-person training. Continuing to innovate with Web-based services like ProofStuff.com, ShopWorks is steered toward continued success.

60 AKIRA IKEDA
Chairman
MASAAKI FUJITA
President
Mimaki USA
2012 RANK: 55

Through its innovative inkjet and cutting machines and software, Nagano, Japan-based Mimaki helps customers create rich images on signs, industrial products and, of course, apparel and textiles. Conducting about 70% of its business outside Japan, Mimaki has a strong foothold in the U.S. and Europe. It has also established subsidiaries in fast-growing emerging countries such as China, India, Brazil and Indonesia. For the textile market, Mimaki recently released the Tx500-1800DS, a sublimation printer with improved print speed on polyester fabrics and reduced running cost. This year, Mimaki released two durable cutting plotters with the CG-SRIII Series.

61 KEN TACONY
CEO
Tacony Corp.
STEVEN JEFFERY
President
Baby Lock USA
2012 RANK: 57

Tacony Sewing and Baby Lock USA offer a full lineup of sewing, embroidery, quilting, sergers, long-arm quilting and specialty machines and embroidery software. It also delivers parts, notions, accessories and software for most sewing brands. Its newest offerings include its Baby Lock Sashiko machine, as well as digital laser guide beams for sewing and embroidery. The company introduced five new sewing and embroidery machines last year; in 2014, it will introduce the Baby Lock Ovation, a top-of-the-line serger that will be the culmination of a three-year project. It acquired Koala Sewing Studios about four years ago.

62 DANIEL FUCCI
U.S. Director
Sierra Technology Group
2012 RANK: 58

Sierra Technology Group has been developing software and equipment for the apparel-decorating industry for 25 years. Considered one of the top digitizing instructors in the industry, Fucci has served as U.S. director for the Argentina-based company for 14 years. Sierra's newest innovation, Design Era, is a complete standalone software package that integrates embroidery, rhinestones, sequins and spangles into one easy-to-use design application. Sierra offers a full menu of online learning options including live one-on-one training in addition to email and tech support.

63 GABRIELLE ROHDE-ROYCE
Vice President, Marketing and Merchandising
Sportco Inc. *(asi/88792)*
NEW

A new addition to the Power List,

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59 *From Satellites to Software* JAY MALANGA

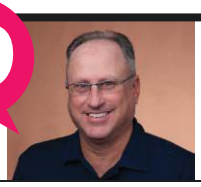
Before he got involved in the decorated-apparel industry, mechanical engineer Jay Malanga designed satellites at an aerospace company. It's that penchant for technical design that helped Malanga develop a business-management software solution for his former screen-printing/embroidery shop. And it's that solution that has blossomed into OnSite, a leading business-management solution designed specifically for decorators.

> ***"Our product helps a business owner REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF LABOR it takes to run the operations of their business."***
>
> JAY MALANGA, SHOPWORKS

Onsite is offered by ShopWorks, a company founded in 1998 for which Malanga is the primary software developer. He says his company's newest offering, OnSite 7.7, is a major upgrade, with features that include touchscreen interfaces for the production floor, along with enhancements to its POS (Point of Sale) module.

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From Satellites to Software

JAY MALANGA

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Improvements to online customer proofing have also been made. "These are designed specifically for computers with touchscreens and allow production-floor employees to enter real-time data on when they're working on jobs, when jobs are complete and updating jobs are produced – essentially, making order processing and manufacturing more productive," Malanga says.

Also available now is online software via ProofStuff.com, a service that delivers and manages customer approvals and art proofs. It's just another way that ShopWorks offers efficiency to the 675 individual companies and over 6,000 users that it services.

Focused on educating customers, ShopWorks has over 100 hours of online videos and training resources, as well live remote training using screen shares. The company also offers live training at customers' shops, along with more than 10 training events yearly at its Florida-based training facility.

All of these offerings allow ShopWorks to train over 2,500 customers per year. "We help our customers make an informed decision as to the best training method for their company depending on their budget, personnel and how they learn best," Malanga says. "Every customer is a little different in this regard, and most end up using multiple training methods."

The ability to enhance their customers' bottom line through software – and thoroughly educate them on the use of that software – are key reasons that ShopWorks is enjoying 20% year-over-year growth. "Our product helps a business owner reduce the amount of labor it takes to run the operations of their business," Malanga says. "They can take advantage of this by either reducing their labor force, or by growing sales with no or little growth in labor. Either way, they're able to increase their profitability." – *SD*



ON THE *Record* ... ON WHY SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IS ESSENTIAL

"As more decorators learn how to use social media to present their companies and their products, they'll discover what a visual medium it is. This will bring more decorators to social media once they realize they can present samples and products to tons of people with just one post."

Kristine Shreve, EnMart/Ensign Emblem

Rohde-Royce founded the Gabrielle Rohde Royce, GabiSport and Rohde Royce for Men labels of Rohde Royce Inc. Rohde joined Sportco in 2011, when Sportco acquired all three brands. Sportco (which was 59 last year and represented by Eric Withaar, who left the company to be a consultant) manufactures and decorates apparel for corporate and team wear. The supplier offers various decorating options including screen printing, embroidery and laser-bridge technology. Acquiring Rohde Royce enabled Sportco to provide both blank apparel and fully embellished products. This past year, Sportco added rhinestone and screen-printed transfer decorating options and launched fashionable new styles and colors in ladies' apparel.

64 RANDY CARR

President and CEO

World Emblem International *(asi/98264)*

2012 RANK: 69

Headquartered in Florida with 10 operations worldwide, World Emblem is a leader when it comes to custom-embroidered, sublimated or screen-printed emblems. The company uses automated equipment, which coordinates each step of the production process. More than 95% of World Emblem's customers order online, so Carr and his team have also invested heavily in an advanced ordering system that allows them to handle everything from design to ordering to checking sales history to invoicing. Two years ago, Carr successfully launched the U.S. division of Name Badges International, which creates digitally printed, domed tags. Sales from this division are expected to more than double in comparison to 2012.

65 DEBORAH JONES

Owner

My Embroidery Mentor

2012 RANK: 63

This past year, Jones has trained more than 1,000 embroiderers on a variety of methods and techniques to create high-quality, professional embroidery designs. As a second-generation embroiderer, she shares her knowledge and experience through MyEmbroideryMentor.com, which provides videos and tutorials for decorating apparel and accessories. She speaks at many industry events throughout the county, and she writes the "Ask the Expert" column for *Designs in Machine Embroidery* and is also a contributor to *Stitches* magazine. This year, Jones trekked down under to Australia where she trained more than 200 embroiderers.

66 FRANK MA

CEO and President

RiCOMA International Corp.

2012 RANK: 70

Widely distributed in more than 60 countries, and with sales last year over $10 million, RiCOMA is considered one of the leading companies in the production, sales and service of embroidery machines and software. RiCOMA is headquartered in the U.S. and owns its own manufacturing base in China. As president, Ma led the RiCOMA team to develop and introduce the first all-in-one embroidery machine, which features built-in digitizing software and online support. This past year, the company launched a new website that includes free weekly digitizing software classes, and a service and support center staffed by factory-certified technicians.

67 ERICH CAMPBELL

Digitizer and E-Commerce Manager

Black Duck Inc.

2012 RANK: 64

Black Duck is one of the Southwest's largest apparel decorators with an unrivaled art department, screen-printing capabilities, embroidery machines and an e-commerce department headed up by Campbell. As the e-commerce manager, he has designed and maintained websites that handle everything from ordering to purchasing to fulfillment. However, it's his creative talent and continued innovations that have caught the attention of the decorating community. As an award-winning

digitizer, his designs have appeared on various magazine covers, and he is a frequent contributor to several industry publications, including co-writing *Stitches*' "Ask an Expert" column and writing Stitches.com's "On Links and Needles" blog. In addition, Campbell maintains a strong social media presence.

68 MITCHELL FERSTEN

President
Fersten Worldwide
(asi/53974)
2012 RANK: 61

Fersten heads up an apparel supplier with one of the strongest in-house decorating operations around. Of late, Fersten Worldwide began using heat transfers to augment a decoration program that already included embroidery, laser etching, embossing, woven labels, appliqué, screen printing, pewter emblems and more. In June, Fersten debuted a program offering free UPS Ground shipping for orders in excess of $500. Carriers of the FILA GOLF and Fersten Worldwide brands, the supplier has already come to market with a host of new apparel, outerwear and headwear styles for 2014.

69 JESSE, CHARLIE, AND MARGIE MACK

Co-Owners
Midwest Products Inc.
2012 RANK: 66

After running a successful embroidery business for several years, the Mack family began developing and creating solutions for the embroidery accessories market in 1998. It started with the HoopMaster, a product created in-house to make hooping easier, faster, and more consistent. They now have patents on more than 10 different products, and they've sold more than 35,000 Mighty Hoops, their newest product, in 55 different countries. According to Jesse, "When our customers approach us with garments that they are having trouble hooping, we try to create something that will help them. Our family is very familiar with the daily struggles embroiderers face, and we're proud to have the capabilities to create custom solutions to meet our customers' needs."

70 GAYLE ZRELIAK

President
KRISTINE SHREVE
Director of Marketing
EnMart and Ensign Emblem
2012 RANK: 65

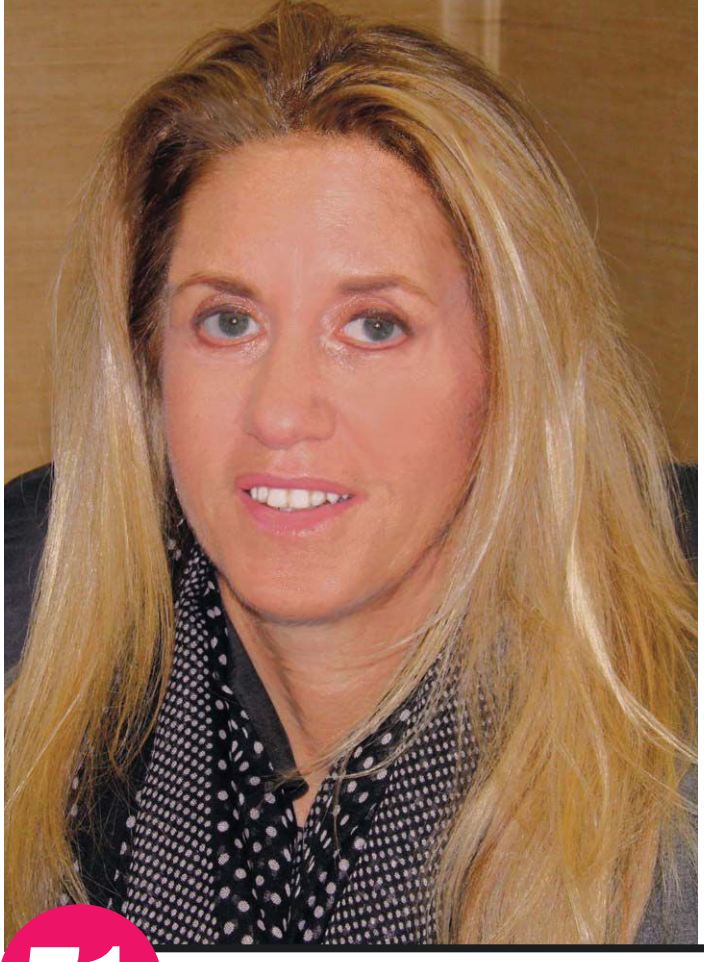
EnMart, a subsidiary of Ensign Emblem founded by 35-year industry veteran Zreliak, started selling embroidery and sublimation supplies to commercial decorators in 2006. At that time, the company didn't have a large online presence in the U.S., but through Shreve, it has built up a large following on Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest, and on its two must-read blogs, "SubliStuff" and "Embroidery Talk." Shreve's efforts to educate the decorating community on social media and marketing through the "Ask an Expert" column, which she co-writes for *Stitches* magazine, recently earned her a gold award from the American Society of Business Publication Editors. Based on the success of EnMart's Q-104 water-soluble topping, the company plans to launch a new water-soluble adhesive backing this year.

71 RANDI BLUMENTHAL-JOSEPH

President
Penn Emblem Co.
(asi/77120)
NEW

Penn Emblem is a third-generation, family-owned business that has been creating identification products for uniforms in a variety of markets including safety and security, hospitality, healthcare and the sporting goods industry for 65 years. Using the latest technologies, Penn Emblem manufactures custom embroidered, screen-printed, sublimated, and woven patches and appliqués. Blumenthal-Joseph is the granddaughter

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71 *Building the Family Business*
RANDI BLUMENTHAL-JOSEPH

At age 13, Randi Blumenthal-Joseph began her career at the business her grandfather founded in 1947. "I started my career at Penn Emblem Co. (*asi/77120*) doing clerical work after school and on Saturdays, working with my dad to write the orders or to help with overflow work," she says. "I knew then that work would become a passion for me."

> ***"The key is to be in front of your customers during good times and bad, LISTENING TO HIS OR HER NEEDS, working on cost-saving measures and bringing new products and services."***
>
> RANDI BLUMENTHAL-JOSEPH, PENN EMBLEM CO. *(ASI/77120)*

Indeed it has. Now the head of the family company, Blumenthal-Joseph devotes her energy to making Penn Emblem – a provider of emblems, textile transfers and more – as successful as it can be. Part

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Building the Family Business

RANDI BLUMENTHAL-JOSEPH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

of that involves making sure the company's offerings are always on point. "For example, we saw a need for a smaller, less billboard-like emblem with a mini-stitched border," Blumenthal-Joseph says. "In response, we developed PennEdge, a process that uses a unique, color-matched mini border to meld the emblem's low-profile edge into the base garment."

Under Blumenthal-Joseph's guidance, Penn Emblem has also been proactive as industries shifted overseas. "We had to create new products and diversify into markets that would grow with us," she says. "For example, flame-resistant emblems became a new, viable market for our customer base."

To stay ahead of the competition, Blumenthal-Joseph says it's pivotal to keep the goals of your customers at the heart of what you do. "The key," she says, "is to be in front of your customers during good times and bad, listening to his or her needs, working on cost-saving measures and bringing out new products and services."

Beyond her busy work routine, Blumenthal-Joseph is actively involved with her community. Along with being a former Board of Trustees member with the Jewish Federation and the associate chair of the Jewish Federation's Young Leadership Council, she currently serves on the Ronald McDonald House board. "Many years ago, a group of friends asked if I wanted to participate in cooking, serving and cleaning up for the families who spend all day at children's hospital with their sick child," she says. "Once you start going, it's hard not to embrace what a small act of kindness can do for others."

In her personal life, Blumenthal-Joseph is encouraging her children to choose their own career paths. Still, she admits she'd love to see them join Penn Emblem. She says: "I hope my children will carry on the tradition so that Penn Emblem can become a fourth-generation, family-owned business." – *SD*

ON THE *Record*

... ON WHY YOU SHOULD BE CHECKING OUT YOUTUBE



"YouTube is a great place for entertainment, but I appreciate it more as a resource to learn something about anything."

Rick Mouty, ProFill Holdings (asi/300152)

72



Stitcher to the Stars

RICCARDO TISCI

For some, Riccardo Tisci may be known best as the guy who got Kanye West to wear a kilt. For everyone else, Tisci is the designer who, at the age of 30, was selected in 2005 to revitalize the moribund house of Givenchy. Though critics were at first ambivalent toward the then-unproven designer and his initial efforts, he has since established himself as an unquestionably elite couturier with a style that is his alone.

Among Tisci's signature touches is his dramatic use of embroidery. Perhaps the most stunning examples of this are his two recent collaborations with a pair of top-shelf divas from the world of pop music. Taking advantage of the global stage that is the Super Bowl, in 2012, Tisci designed a series of outfits for Madonna's halftime performance. This collection featured some superhuman feats of embroidery, including an impossibly regal cape that was hand-embroidered with a dizzying array of gold metal pieces, crystals and sequins. Tisci's oft-mentioned "gothic" predilections were on full display once Madonna changed out of her cape and into a floor-length black silk coat with embroidered black sequins.

Equally impressive is the collection Tisci assembled for the 2013 tour of R&B vocalist Rihanna. Here, the designer's irreverent take on haute couture included a sumptuous knee-length parka laden with some of the "heavy hardware embroidery" that Givenchy calls a "signature code" of the visionary designer. Adorned with engraved gold bullets, Swarovski crystals and metal studs, the parka captures the "classical point of view with a punk-rock sensibility" that Madonna credits Tisci with mastering.

These examples of bold embroidery are symbols of the fluidity that typifies Tisci's work, whether it's between high and low culture or between female and male sensibilities. Elements such as the gold bullets add aggressive masculinity to his women's wear, while also creating a gritty street-sensibility to otherwise almost inaccessible high fashion.

A man devoted to family, friends and spirituality, Tisci's inspirations are laid bare in the intensity of his designs. "I believe in emotion and love and celebration," he told *W* magazine. – *Chuck Zak*

of founder Frank Blumenthal. She held various leadership positions within the company before being named president in 2010. Two years ago, Penn Emblem was classified as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), certifying that it is 51% owned and headed up by a woman.

72 RICCARDO TISCI

Creative Director
Givenchy
NEW

Chosen in 2005 as the new creative director for Givenchy, Tisci quickly gave the floundering label a new lease on life. The Italian designer initially caught the attention of the fashion world after premiering his first collection at Milan Fashion Week in 2004; he was offered his current position soon after. Givenchy has since rediscovered great success through Tisci's unique, embroidery-rich style that combines a gothic seriousness with a playfulness evident in his signature ornamentations. For pop stars like Madonna, Tisci has designed numerous looks in which embroidered embellishments are an essential ingredient.

73 VASILIS THOMAIDIS

President and CEO
Compucon
2012 RANK: 67

Thomaidis founded Compucon in 1987, and what started as a software company serving the industrial embroidery sector has grown into a world leader in developing specialized applications for the telecommunications, medical, and communication markets. Compucon's EOS embroidery software and its Stitch & Sew program for beginning embroiderers is available in over 60 countries worldwide. Based in Greece, Compucon has expanded with additional sales offices in Japan and the U.S.

74 JIM THIBODEAU
General Manager
DIRK SMITH
Vice President
ZSK USA Inc.
NEW

Thibodeau and Smith of ZSK USA Inc. joined this year's Power 75 for their efforts in introducing ZSK's innovative embroidery machines to the U.S. market. Headquartered in Germany, ZSK has been in business for over 100 years. A leader in developing technologically advanced machines, software and accessories, ZSK holds the exclusive license for Braille embroidery on clothing that utilizes the company's software modules. Since opening a new showroom and office north of Chicago earlier this year, it's seen a renewed interest in its custom embroidering efforts, which has resulted in increased sales revenue.

75 CHARLIE FACINI

CEO
Freehand Graphics Inc.
NEW

Since Facini founded Freehand Graphics 30 years ago, the company has enjoyed strong growth and has come to be known as one of the top providers of products and software for the screen-printing industry. He has led the development of four of the industry's best-known pre-press products – AccuRIP Software, the All Black Ink System, Spot Process Separation Studio Software and the Ditto Inkjet Film Feeder. With more than 50,000 users, Freehand has products in just about every country around the world. Its website contains a virtual knowledge base of information and includes downloads, user guides, videos and Web links. Facini has also written a number of articles for industry publications and speaks at trade shows on a regular basis.

NICOLE ROLLENDER is editor; **CHRISTOPHER RUVO** and **CHUCK ZAK** are staff writers; and **CARA CHERRY** and **SHANE DALE** are contributing writers to *Stitches*. Contact: *nrollender@asicentral.com* and *cruvo@asicentral.com*.

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the POWER POLL

Power 75 members give their views on everything from **industry trends** to **travel** to **technology.**

COMPILED BY KAREN AKERS, JOAN CHAYKIN AND NICOLE ROLLENDER

WHAT'S YOUR OUTLOOK FOR THE INDUSTRY IN 2014?

91% POSITIVE

9% UNCERTAIN

"The industry appears to be

MORE STABLE THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST 18 TO 24 MONTHS.

Many of the businesses that were fairly new either figured things out and are going strong, or are no longer in the game. Either way, it has been good for the industry."

Jennifer Cox, National Network Of Embroidery Professionals (NNEP) (asi/187622)

"With real estate rebounding, we've already seen increases in orders. I can't help but feel like this is the harbinger of a rising tide, albeit slow."

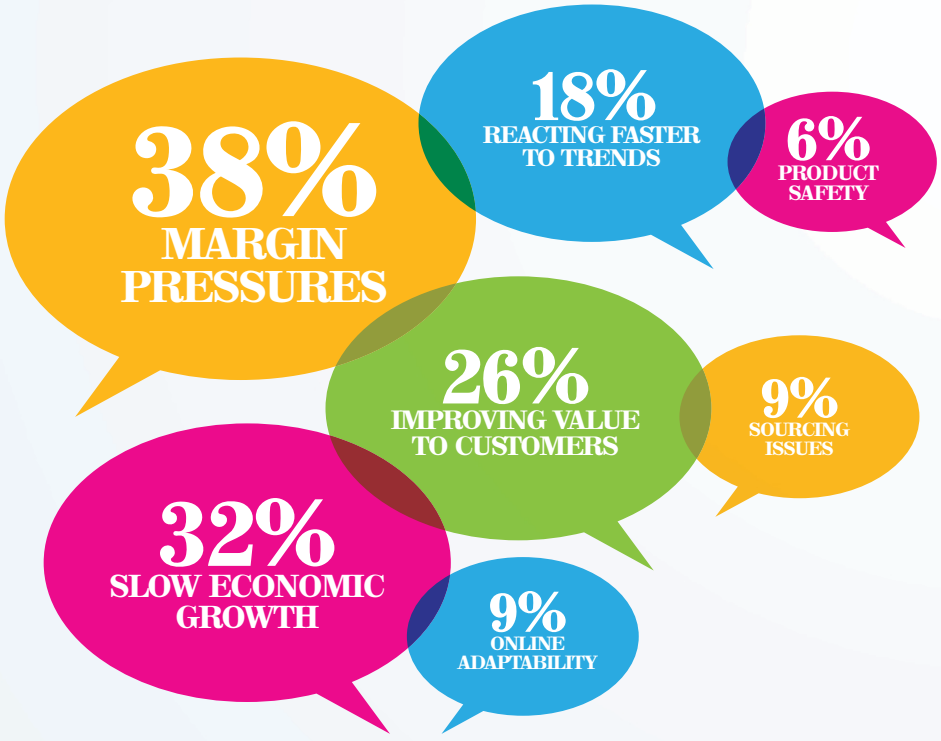
Erich Campbell, Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing

"It's pleasing to watch 'green shoots' in a wide range of decorating businesses who carve niche markets and are growing successfully in online business.

WE EXPECT AN ACCELERATED SPREAD OF THIS POSITIVE GROWTH IN 2014."

Martin Kristiaman, DecoNetwork Pty. Ltd.

What will be decorators' biggest challenge going forward?



"I'm seeing a return of the big companies to key trade shows because of the buyers."

Lee Caroselli Barnes, Balboa Threadworks Embroidery Design

What's your number-one goal for your company in 2014?





"Sourcing issues. Anyone with a connection to the Internet can research and source a garment. We have to become consultants as well as decorators; we must be the problem-solvers and the sources of knowledge and experience."

Erich Campbell, Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing

"We're seeing strong bookings and a move to even higher-priced styles and designs."

Josh Peyser, MV Sport/ Weatherproof (asi/68318)

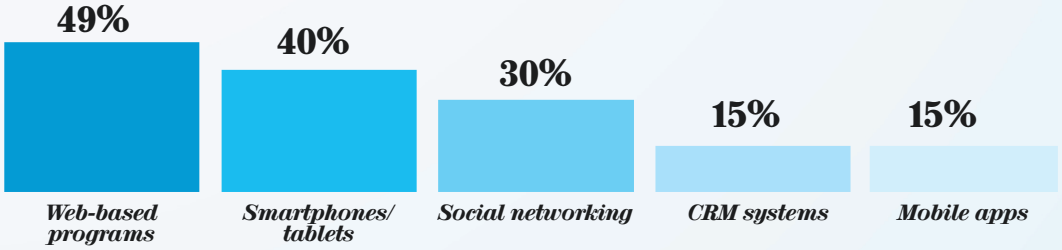
"I believe all the other challenges can be answered by *improving the value of the products* we produce."

Lee Caroselli Barnes, Balboa Threadworks Embroidery Design

In the decorated-apparel industry, *how will social media's use as an effective marketing tool change* in 2014?



Which technology will be most important to businesses in the decorated-apparel market in 2014?



"ONE OF THE BIGGEST KILLERS OF DECORATING BUSINESSES TODAY IS THE ATTEMPT TO GARNER NATIONAL CLIENTS THROUGH THE WEB.

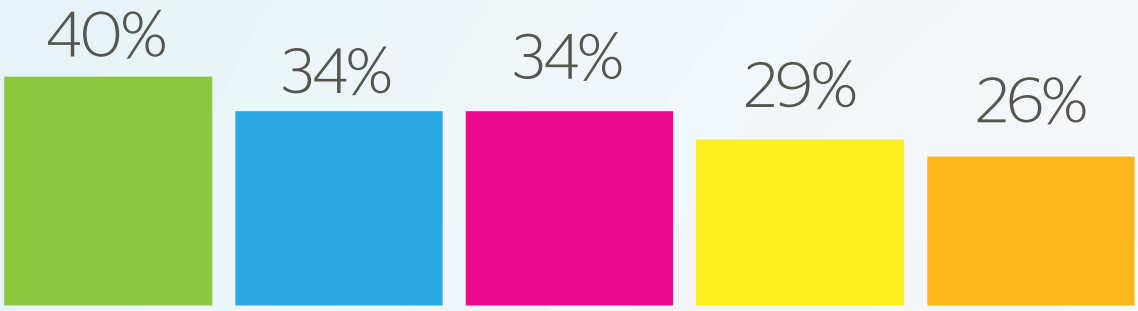
If you offer a line of your own designs on-line and they're really good, you can succeed in this, but most decorators try to gather a national audience offering to perform whatever work the client is looking for (embroidery to order). When you offer to sell a commodity on the Web (and that's what embroidery to order becomes in that arena) then people shop the lowest price and all companies seem alike. I have yet to meet a company that survived long with the strategy of always being the lowest bid outside China."

Scott M. Ritter, SMR Software Inc. and Decorated Apparel Expo (DAX)

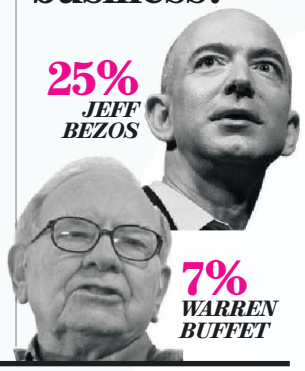
"The biggest challenge for most decorators is online adaptability because it's a constantly evolving arena. Many are afraid of the unknown."

Martin Kristiaman, DecoNetwork Pty. Ltd.

What do you think will make industry suppliers more successful in 2014?



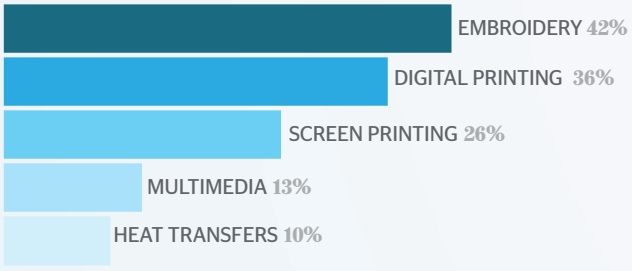
What business or thought leader would you love to have a ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSION with on how to improve your business?



"Hiring top talent or creating a top talent via education is really the same thing. Either way, competent staff is a must. Purchasing from an incompetent supplier costs a lot more money than people think."

Chris Waldick, JCW Software LLC

Which decoration method will be most popular with end-buyers in 2014?

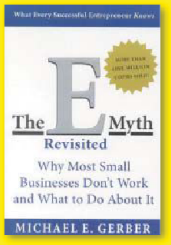


What's your favorite non-industry website?



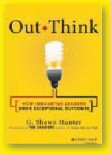
POWER 75's Book List

Nearly everyone on the Power 75 is reading a different book. Here are their **recommendations for powerful business-building books** that you should have open on your desk right now.



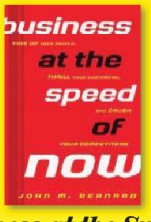
The E-myth Revisted
by Michael Gerber

RECOMMENDED BY: JAY MALANGA, SHOPWORKS



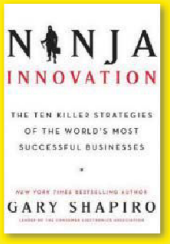
Out Think: How Innovative Leaders Drive Exceptional Outcomes
by G. Shawn Hunter

RECOMMENDED BY: RICK MOUTY, PROFILL HOLDINGS *(ASI/300152)*



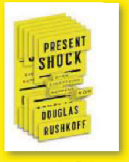
Business at the Speed of Now
by John Bernard

RECOMMENDED BY: JENS PETERSSON, CUTTER & BUCK *(ASI/47965)*



Ninja Innovation
by Gary Shapiro

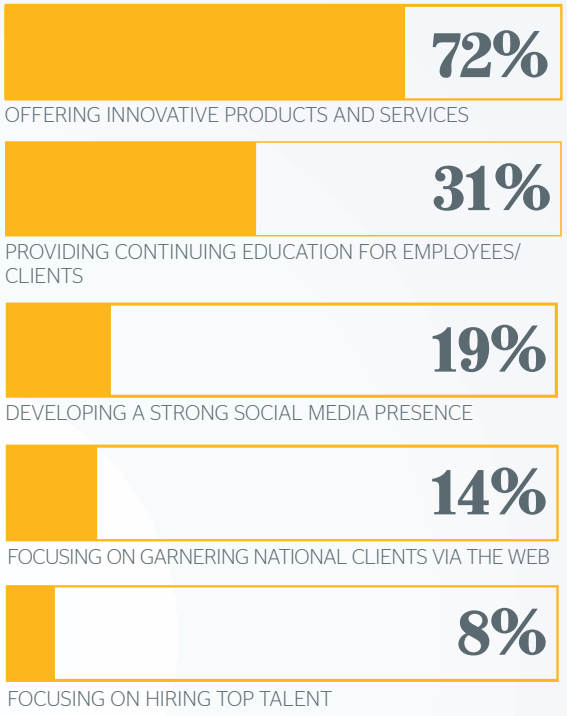
RECOMMENDED BY: RICK CESERE, EDWARDS GARMENT CO. *(ASI/51752)*



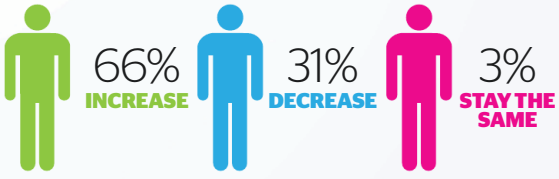
Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now
by Douglas Rushkoff

RECOMMENDED BY: TAS TSONIS, PULSE MICROSYSTEMS LTD.

What do you think will make decorating firms most successful in 2014?



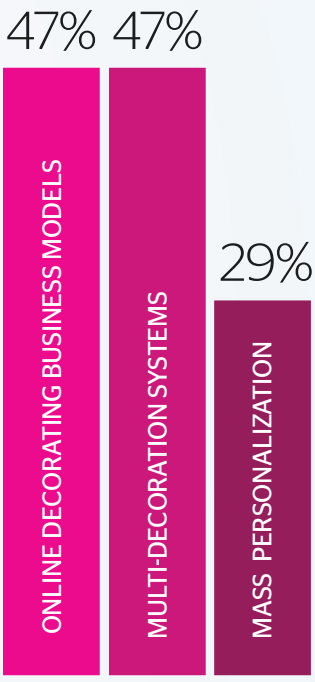
Do you plan to increase, decrease or keep your employee head count the same next year?

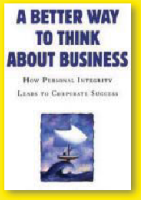


"Because social media marketing has become commonplace, use of it will continue to increase, but I think its *effectiveness is on the decline* already."

Scott M. Ritter, SMR Software Inc. and Decorated Apparel Expo (DAX)

WHICH TREND DO YOU THINK DECORATORS WILL CAPITALIZE ON IN 2014?

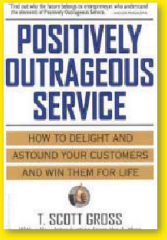




A Better Way to Think About Business: How Personal Integrity Leads to Corporate Success

by Robert Solomon

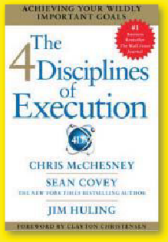
RECOMMENDED BY: CHRIS WALDICK, JCW SOFTWARE LLC



Positively Outrageous Service

by T. Scott Gross

RECOMMENDED BY: JENNIFER COX, NNEP *(ASI/187622)*



Four Disciplines of Execution

by Chris McChesney, Sean Covey and Jim Huling

RECOMMENDED BY: RAY TITUS, EMBROIDME *(ASI/384000)*

FINISH THIS SENTENCE ...

In five years, social media will be ...

"... growing to new heights with consumers and retailers." *Steven Jeffery, Baby Lock USA and Tacony Corp.*

"... the old technology." *Brian Goldberg, Pulse Microsystems Ltd.*

"... our main sales tool." *Lee Caroselli Barnes, Balboa Threadworks Embroidery Design*

"... an everyday way of life for the overwhelming majority of consumers, much the way we would have answered this same question for smart phones if asked five years ago." *Rick Mouty, ProFill Holdings (asi/300152)*

"... essential in reaching the youngest segment of our buyers." *Mike Rhodes, Bodek and Rhodes (asi/40788)*

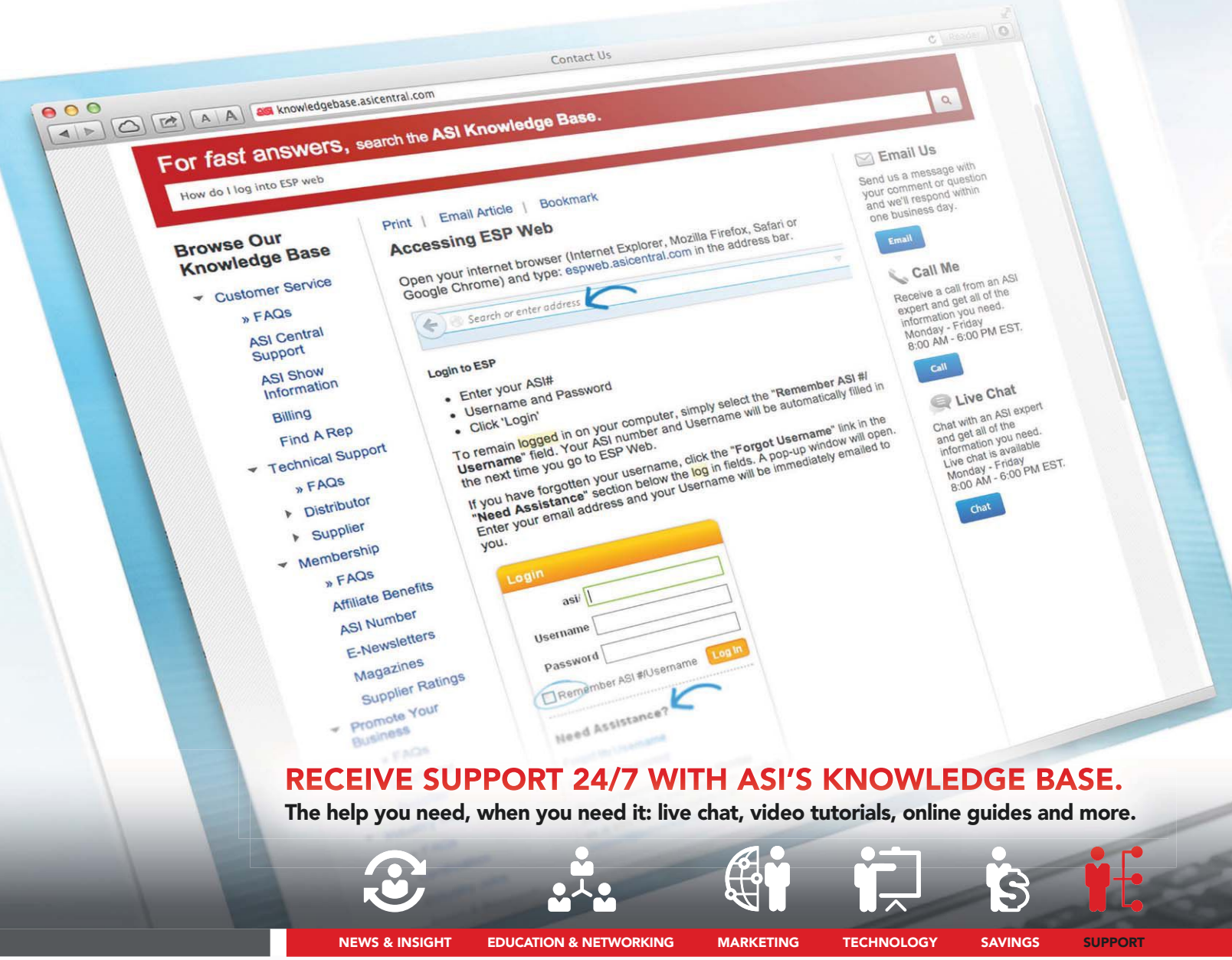
"... redefined to help businesses of all sizes have a seamless opportunity to target specific business entities and market segments." *Ed Levy, Digitize4u Inc./EmbForum; and Hirsch International (asi/14982)*

"... an intrinsic part of our everyday conversations and interactions, both personally and professionally. It will be hard to have an interaction with customers without it." *Jennifer Cox, NNEP (asi/187622)*

"... used less by many business segments as they realize it doesn't always drive sales." *Richard Hirsch, Amann USA*

"... better, more interactive and more visual. From a consumer perspective, this will increasingly become a preferred platform that helps them make a buying decision. From a business perspective, ignoring social media will be fatal!" *Martin Kristiaman, DecoNetwork Pty. Ltd.*

"... as ubiquitous as running water. Hopefully, five years will see both clean water and social media available to everyone worldwide." *Erich Campbell, Black Duck Embroidery and Screen Printing*



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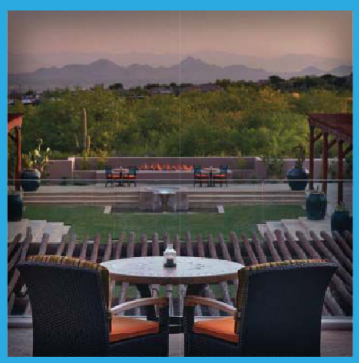
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Coming Next Issue

What's coming up in January *Stitches*

by Nicole Rollender



The Productivity Issue

● Welcome to a very special January issue to kick off 2014. You'll learn super strategies for streamlining your order management, setting up your shop for optimum workflow, creating the best client designs with the fewest stitches, and more. Plus, experts will weigh in on how to make any size shop ramp up efficiency overnight.



Vendor Super Support

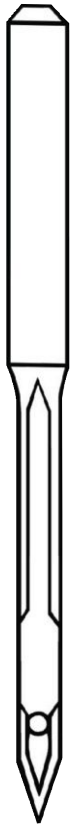
● Lots of top machine and software vendors offer decorators live and online workshops for general decorating and digitizing techniques, as well as specific product training to help decorators choose the right equipment to meet their business goals. Learn how these companies can grow your business if you just ask.



Plus …

- *Success strategies for 2014*
- *New thread, badges and emblems*

needle watch



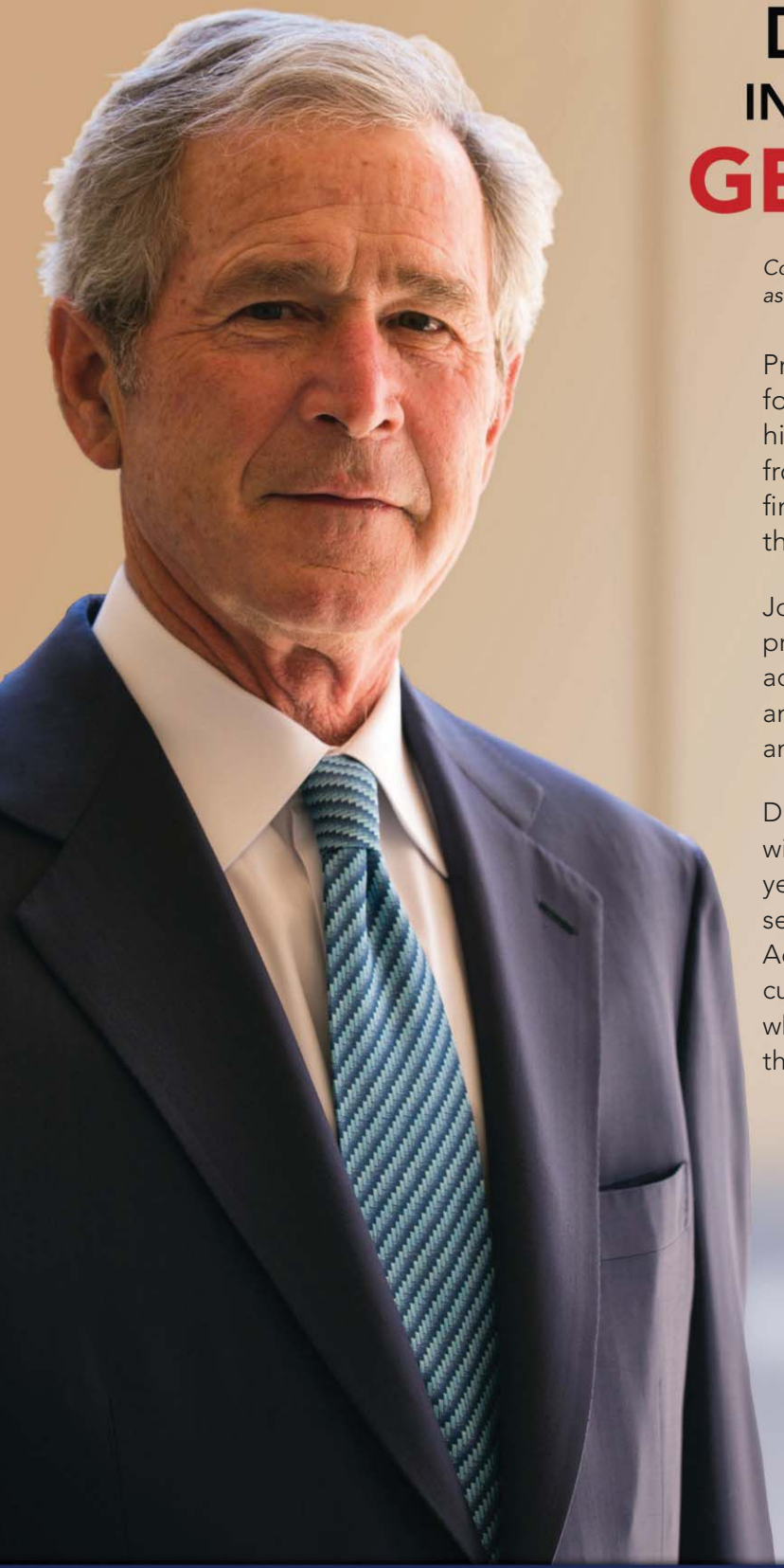
Needle Patrol

Our friend Slick (an embroidery machine needle) has hidden himself somewhere in this issue. He might be in an editorial photo, graphic or text – he's not in an advertisement. If you find the needle, send us a note that says, "I found the December needle on page XX," along with your name, company, address and phone number (or e-mail address) so we can contact you if you're the winner. Mail or fax it to us at ***Stitches*, Attn: Needle Patrol,** 4800 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19053; fax: (215) 953-3107. Also, tell us a little about your business. No phone calls please; you must respond in writing. Hurry! Responses for the December needle are due by December 31, 2013. From the correct responses, we'll randomly select one winner who'll receive a $100 gift certificate, courtesy of Madeira USA, Laconia, NH. Please submit only one entry per drawing. We'll announce the winner in the February issue.

Slick's On Trend

In the September/October issue, Slick hid on page 60 in the "Best in Show" fashion trends section, right next to a black "painted" shirt with a V-neck and dolman sleeves from In Your Face Apparel (*asi/62494*). **Betty Finney** of **Ishpeming, MI-based ABC Embroidery** was chosen at random from a grand total of 40 responses. As this issue's winner, Betty will receive Madeira USA's gift certificate. Keep your eyes peeled for the industry's favorite game of hide and seek!

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DECISION POINTS:
INSIGHTS FROM PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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ASK AN EXPERT

By Kristine Shreve

LOOKING FORWARD
In the next issue, you'll learn how to manage your production workflow. See you next year!

Q I want to revamp my marketing plan for 2014. This year, I definitely reached new prospects and grew my customer base as a result of my marketing efforts, but I want to step it up a notch. Any suggestions?

When it comes to marketing and social media, December is a great time to reexamine your goals and determine how the strategies you've employed over the past year have worked for your company. Hopefully you've been tracking the results of your marketing efforts. This will help you see what worked and what didn't, as well as give you some insight into what your plan should be for 2014.

Since I don't have access to your specific marketing data and statistics, I can't make specific recommendations, but I do have a list of general dos and don'ts that you should find helpful.

1. Do work on increasing your social media community. Although many people will tell you just the opposite, social media isn't about selling or about getting noticed. What social media is about is developing a community of interested people who share ideas, learn from each other, and yes, buy from each other. In 2014, don't focus on getting a million fans or friends; rather, focus on increasing engagement with your existing friends and fans, whatever the number.

2. Don't capitalize on tragedy or current events to make a sale. Yes, social media is about being current and you want to be aware of what's happening in the world and comment on those happenings when appropriate. Sending prayers or good wishes or publicizing ways to help those dealing with a natural disaster or a tragedy is a responsible and effective use of social media. Trying to use a tragedy or natural disaster to sell your products or services is not.

3. Do try a marketing method you haven't tried before. If you're always using the same marketing methods, online or off, you're most likely always talking to the same people and you may be missing part of your target market entirely. In 2014, keep an eye out for new ways or venues in which you can market your business. Trying something new doesn't have to be difficult or expensive, and it could lead to new customers, which is always a good thing.

4. Don't put marketing on the bottom of your to do list. When you own your own business, particularly if you're a one-person shop, it's easy to let things like marketing slide to the bottom of the priority list. The thing to remember is that business won't come to your shop if you're not actively marketing to your potential customer base. Make sure you spend some time on marketing every day, even if it's just wearing your work when you're out running errands.

5. Do remember the simplest forms of marketing and use them. Sometimes the simplest way is the best way. To market your business simply, remember to wear or use your work in public at every possible opportunity. Make sure to ask your current customers for referrals or testimonials. If you have a brick-and-mortar storefront, make sure it's clean and inviting. If you sell online, make sure your site is well organized, proofread and functional.

"To market your business simply, remember to wear or use your work in public at every possible opportunity."

6. Don't rely on the experts; test and verify for yourself. This last bit of advice is ironic in a column titled "Ask an Expert," but I think it's valid when it comes to marketing. You'll find experts out there who'll tell you that you should do this and the best time to post on this social media platform is that, and if you aren't going viral you're missing out. The problem with these sorts of advice is that they'll be true for some businesses, but not for all or, if they're true for all, they're so generic they're really not helpful. The only way to know what marketing methods are going to work for you and your business is to try them, and then examine the results you receive.

KRISTINE SHREVE is director of marketing for EnMart and Ensign Emblem, and regularly writes about embroidery, sublimation, decoration, social media and business. Besides her DecQuorum blog on *Stitches.com*, she also writes for the EmbroideryTalk Blog at *http://blog.myenmart.com* and the SubliStuff blog at *www.sublistuff.com*. Contact: *kristine.shreve@myenmart.com*.

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