

S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

Embroidery's Voice & Vision

FEBRUARY 2011

The Big **Machine** Issue

New single-heads,
multi-heads,
garment printers
& more

PLUS:
Our exclusive
equipment survey

Behind Bars
*Go inside a prison
embroidery shop*

**Ethnic
Embroidery**
*Afghani
& Lakota
stitchery*

Look at Me
*A contract shop
builds huge buzz*

Push Me, Pull You
*Master punching
compensation*

Suit Up
*Check out our sultry
swimwear shoot*

† Ask an Expert: Get Started With Sublimation



Hanes®

**Making the
world a more
comfortable
place**

GoTagless®

Consumers Prefer Hanes® Tagless® 16 to 1*

Go Tagless with Hanes. Consumers overwhelmingly prefer Hanes without tags to competitors with tags. Say goodbye to scratchy neck labels and make the world a more comfortable place – ask for Hanes!

www.haneslocator.com 800-685-7557 ASI 59528

*Source: Proprietary study conducted by C&R Research, January 2010

© 2011 Hanesbrands Inc. All rights reserved.

Circle 28 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo

Blue Generation[®]

Men's BG-9922
Ladies BG-6922

New Classic Twill Jackets in 11 colors

Poly/Cotton blended lightweight twill unlined jacket • Teflon[®] Stain Release • Men's S-6XL, Ladies S-4XL

2011 Catalog Tel 1-888-336-4687 Fax 1-888-744-7887



Teflon is a Reg.™
of DuPont

www.BlueGeneration.com 24/7 online ordering

User Friendly Shop Cart • Inventory Availability • Order/Shipping Confirmations • UPS Tracking • Specials • Online Catalog

2 day Nationwide Delivery at UPS Ground Rates

Jackets available February 2011



Circle 10 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo

NEW STYLES

MORE & NEW COMPANION STYLES



64400L



64400

Our 4.5oz Softstyle Collection now features Men's and Ladies' Long Sleeve T-Shirts (64400 and 64400L) plus the all-new 3800L Ultra Cotton® Classic Fit Ladies' Ring Spun Piqué Polo.

NEW SHADES

COLORFUL INSPIRATION 8 NEW SHADES



Four great collegiate colors and four super hot heathers bring our palette to a cool 70 colors!

NEW CHOICES

FAMILY SOCKS AND SO MUCH MORE



5400B



New 5400B Youth Long Sleeve T-Shirt, Fleece Stadium Blanket and Athletic Socks for all!



3800/3800L



GILDA NEW 2011

COVER STORY



30 The Big Machine Issue Growth Spurt

Ready to invest in your business this year? We cover the newest single-heads, multi-heads, digital printers, screen-printing equipment, heat presses and more - with real user reviews. Plus, we share the results of our exclusive equipment survey.

BY SHANE DALE AND ERICA YOUNG
RESEARCH BY LARRY BASINAF

FEATURES

46 Jailhouse Embroidery Shops Behind Bars

Many U.S. prison systems allow inmates to work in in-house embroidery shops that service external clients. Is this a brilliant rehab move or just a way to undercut competitors? It depends who you ask.

BY DANIEL WALSH

51 Swimwear Behind the Seams

Decorated swimwear is a top-selling niche apparel item. Here we offer case studies of how creative embroiderers pitch, decorate and sell this sexy (and functional) wearable.

BY ERICA YOUNG

56 Mentor for a Month Getting Noticed

A contract-shop owner wants to create lots of business buzz to get the right customers coming through her brick-and-mortar and cyber doors.

BY SHANE DALE



Endless Personalization Possibilities!



*The Fastest, Easiest Way
to Personalize*



Request a FREE Catalog at
StahlsID.com/catalog

Stahls' ID Direct Products Make Garment Decorating Easy and Profitable.

Whether you're designing corporate apparel, decorating teamwear or customizing T-shirts, Stahls' ID Direct has everything you need to get the job done.

- CAD-PRINTZ™ Digital Transfers
- Custom CAD-CUT® Logos
- Pre-positioned Letters and Numbers
- Hotronix® Heat Presses
- And much more!

STAHL'S *ID direct*™

StahlsID.com • 800.4.STAHL5

a GroupeSTAHL company



We're Tweeting

Stitches has entered the "Twitter-verse"! Follow our "Tweets" at www.twitter.com/ASL_Stitches to be one of the first to learn about Stitches surveys, videos, contests, webinars and more!

COLUMNS

27 Punching Sense

Push-and-Pull Control
By Bonnie Landsberger



64 Ask an Expert

By Kristine Shreve

FIRST THINGS FIRST

8 Contributors

12 From the Editor's Desk

14 Think Tank

15 Ask Phil

18 Look Book

20 Coming Next Issue

29 Stitches University



BACK OF THE BOOK

60 B-to-B Classifieds

63 Advertiser Index

About the Cover

Photography: Andrew Milne
Design: Jim Lang

Model: Valeska Castillo

On model, teal tankini from Lori Coulter Made-to-Order Swimwear (circle 152 on Free Info Card)

Hair and makeup: Kristin Brown

Embroidery and rhinestone logo work: Jane Swanzy, Swan Threads LLC

Shot on location at Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort & Club, Aventura, FL

Stitches ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT.
By using eco-friendly paper, Stitches magazine has saved the valuable resources below per year.

TREES	ENERGY	WATER	GREENHOUSE GASES	SOLID WASTE
148	102mL BTU	53.847 gallons	16,426 lbs of CO ₂	8,910 pounds

Environmental impact estimate were made using the Environmental Defense Calculator. For more information visit www.papercalculator.org

*Please recycle this magazine.

Embroidery Shops Behind Bars



For our feature, "Behind Bars," *Stitches* Contributing Writer Daniel Walsh visited Montana State Prison, where inmates can work in the embroidery and screen-printing shop and produce work for clients outside the prison. Go to *Stitches.com* to watch the video.

Self-Promo Power

Want to know how you can get a lot of bang for your self-promotional buck?



Check out our online-exclusive article, "Self-Promotion for the Little Guy (or Gal)," about how smart decorators use unique promo items to create business buzz.

Can't Get Enough of Stitches University?

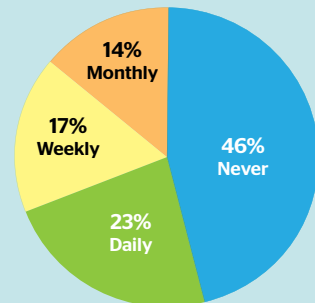
Curious about how decorators are mixing decorating techniques to create really unique multimedia styles? Go to *Stitches.com* to read a "Stitches University" online-exclusive article about what's new in the world of mixed media. Plus, find out what apparel you should decorate and what markets you should be pitching to.

Your Bottom Line

In a recent poll on ASICentral.com, we asked industry companies: **How often do you cold call?**

More than half of you (54%) cold call on a daily, weekly or monthly basis – this is a great way to mine for new clients to add to your base.

Get educated: Turn to page 56 to read this issue's "Mentor for a Month" feature, "Getting Noticed," for some cold-calling tips, plus other creative ways to drum up new business.





COTTON FRUIT INC.
(877) 986-9357

ASI # 46756



**CROWN
JEWEL**

Introducing:
Luxurious Bath Towels
By Crown Jewel,
100 % Giza Egyptian Loops.



BEACH TOWELS • BATH TOWELS • BATH ROBES
GOLF TOWELS • HOTEL TOWELS & SHEETS
BEDDING SUPPLIES • HAND TOWELS
RALLY TOWELS • WASHCLOTHS
CUSTOM EMBROIDERY & SILKSCREEN

contributors



Have you ever digitized a design, but then your sample sew-out is showing something totally different (and not pretty)? In this issue's "Punching Sense," **BONNIE LANDSBERGER**, owner of Cannon Falls, MN-based Moonlight Design, helps you master push and pull compensation, which can really affect the quality of a design. "Due to the 'push-and-pull factor' stitches rarely sew exactly as the design appears on screen," she writes. "That means digitizers must develop an eye for placement, with some knowledge of how each stitch will react to compensate for what will likely occur in the sew-out." Plus, you can download the shamrock art that Landsberger uses as her example at *Stitches.com* so you can practice digitizing it yourself, following the instructions in this column.



In this issue's "Stitches University," **ED LEVY**, owner of Montoursville, PA-based Digitize4U, offers solid advice on how to purchase the right heat press for your shop. Besides writing about the pros and cons of six popular press styles, Levy shares four surprising features you should look for: "Nonstick coating," he writes. "That means you can literally wipe off the press while it's still warm. When you've put a transfer on upside down, this feature is handy to have."



In this month's "Ask an Expert" column, **KRISTINE SHREVE**, director of marketing for EnMart and Ensign Emblem, offers a sublimation primer about what six key components you need to set up a sublimation operation. "Think about what the largest item you'll ever want to print is, and that's the maximum print size the printer you choose will need to create," she writes. "... The cost of a sublimation printer can range from under a \$100 for a minimum-use printer to \$1,000 or more for a production-level printer."

Interested in becoming a *Stitches* contributor? Please send an e-mail to nrollender@asicentral.com and let us know what's on your mind.

Where to Find Us

THE MAGAZINE



SUBSCRIPTIONS: For a new subscription or change of address, please contact our circulation director by phone at (847) 763-8202; toll free, (877) 631-1027; fax, (847) 763-1890; online, www.stitches.com/subscribe; mail, *Stitches* Subscription Services, P.O. Box 2197, Skokie, IL 60076.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to us:

Mail: *Stitches*, Letters to the Editor, 4800 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19053
E-mail: nrollender@asicentral.com, subject line: *Stitches*, Letters to the Editor
Fax: (215) 953-3107, attn: *Stitches*, Letters to the Editor

Please include your name, job title, company and an e-mail address or phone number where we can reach you.



ONLINE

Find recent articles, videos, podcasts and more at *Stitches.com*. The *Stitches Embroidery Business Insights* e-newsletter drops every other Thursday, and the *Stitches Small Business* e-newsletter drops the third Tuesday of every month. For subscription information, visit *Stitches.com*.



WEBINARS

Be on the lookout for upcoming *Stitches* webinars. We'll post a schedule on *Stitches.com/UpcomingWebinars* and announce them in our e-newsletters.

***Stitches* celebrates its 24th year in 2011.**

S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

Embroidery's Voice & Vision

Publisher

Richard Fairfield, rfairfield@asicentral.com

Editor In Chief

Melinda Ligos, mligos@asicentral.com

Editor

Nicole Rollender, nrollender@asicentral.com

Managing Editors

Joe Haley, jhaley@asicentral.com

Joan Chaykin, jchaykin@asicentral.com

Senior Staff Writer

Dave Vagnoni, dvagnoni@asicentral.com

Copy Editor

Kerry Boderman, kboderman@asicentral.com

Editorial Intern

Andraya Vantrease, avantrease@asicentral.com

Editorial Assistant

Carole Seymour, cseymour@asicentral.com

Contributing Writers

Shane Dale, Bonnie Landsberger, Deborah Jones, Ed Levy, Annie Rehill, Kristine Shreve, Daniel Walsh and Erica Young

Creative Director

Jim Lang

Sr. Editorial Designers

Hillary Haught, Pierre Schnog

Editorial Designer

Monica Fisher

Editorial Photographer

Mark Pricskett

Chief Operating Officer

Vince Bucolo

Executive Director of Production

Haitham Barakat

Executive Director of Audience Development & Analysis

Debra Brill



POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *STITCHES*, P.O. Box 2197, Skokie, IL 60076

two ways to get
XXXL
PROFIT
POTENTIAL

**24 & 36-MONTH
NO-INTEREST
FINANCING!***

AS LOW AS \$699 A MONTH**

Brother® makes it easy to start or expand your garment decorating business. We have the plan you need to get the machine you want. This incredible No-Interest Financing offer ends soon. So call today. Because big profit opportunities are there for the printing.



**GT-541 24-MONTH
NO-INTEREST FINANCING
just \$699/month****



**GT-782 36-MONTH
NO-INTEREST FINANCING
just \$1499/month*****

brother
at your side

For more information

1-877-504-8415

www.brother-usa.com/GarmentPrinters

*Actual results may vary. **Terms and Conditions: GT-541 Leasing Program - This lease offer is valid until March 31, 2011. This offer is valid only on the lease of a new Brother® GT-541 Garment Printer leased directly from Brother International Corporation ("Brother"). The term of the lease shall be two years. Monthly payments equal to 1/24 of the initial promo price (the purchase price divided equally by the number of months in the finance period) are required until the full promo price is paid in full. \$699 per month based on purchase price of \$16,776. No finance charge will be assessed if (1) the promo price balance is paid in full within 24 months, and (2) all minimum monthly payments are paid when due. Otherwise, the lease may be terminated and/or penalties and interest will be applied. Standard terms apply to non-promotional purchases and optional charges. All potential lessees must successfully complete a full credit review and be approved by Brother. Brother reserves the right to withhold approval in its sole discretion. Furthermore, lessee shall sign an Equipment Lease Agreement which sets forth the terms and conditions of the lease in more detail. Brother reserves the right to discontinue this offer and leasing program at any time. Available through participating dealers. A \$350.00 document fee and \$300.00 freight fee will apply. *** Valid on purchase of a GT-782 ("promo purchase") when you lease or finance through GE Capital. This offer is valid until March 31, 2011. On promo purchase balance, monthly payments equal to 1/36 of initial promo purchase balance amount [the promo purchase divided equally by the number of months in the promotional period] are required until expiration or termination of promotion, but no Finance Charges will be assessed on the promo purchase if (1) promo purchase balance paid in full in 36 months, (2) all minimum monthly payments on account paid when due, and (3) account balance does not exceed credit limit. Otherwise, promo may be terminated and penalties and interest will be applied. Standard terms apply to non-promotional purchases and optional charges. Promotional purchases on existing accounts may not receive full benefit of promo terms, including reduced APR if applicable, if account is subject to delinquency pricing. Subject to credit approval by GE Capital in its sole discretion. Available through participating dealers.

Join the *Stitches* Social Site

Join the 1,800 *Stitches* readers who are networking daily on the *Stitches* magazine Social Site (www.stitchesmagsocialsite.com). Nominated for a Jesse H. Neal Award for "Best Use of Social Media," the *Stitches* Social Site is an active community of *Stitches* readers and other decorators who post photos of their work, blog entries and videos. Most importantly, members network with each other in live chats and in our many groups and forums, on topics from digitizing to mobile embroidery to sourcing products. What are you waiting for? Join us online today!



Get Educated

Classes Available Online

Working toward your BASI or MASI, but can't get out of the office? Then get on over to the ASI Education's Online Learning Center, where you will find a ton of courses that will help you in a number of disciplines, including:

Avoid First-Year Pitfalls

In this course, you'll learn about 12 of the most common rookie mistakes distributors make.

Wearables Crash Course

In this course, you'll learn about the top five best-selling wearable categories, along with decorating and selling tips.

Business-Building Strategies: Inside *Counselor's* SOI 2010

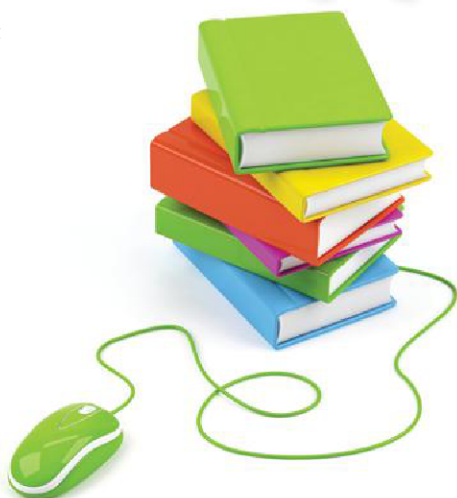
Receive a summary of the top sales, marketing and operations strategies included in *Counselor's* 2010 State of the Industry issue.

Improve Revenues and Margins With Green Products

Companies across a variety of industries are buying green ad specialty items and apparel. But, to succeed in this niche, you need to be well-versed in green terminology, know what products to sell and how to pitch them to the right buyers.

Sell More Made-in-the-USA Products

How can you tell if a product is really U.S.-made? What are the hottest



For more information about this new certification program, visit www.asicentral.com/education.

markets to target? A panel of experts discusses how red-white-and-blue products can get you the green.

Cold-Calling Clinic: Get More Appointments Now

Cold calling gives many sales reps the shivers. Nobody likes it, but in sales, it goes with the territory. In this course, we'll show you how to warm up your cold calls and use cold calling as an important tool to take your selling skills to the next.

If you haven't already done so, you can sign up and begin work toward your BASI and MASI at www.asicentral.com/education.

S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

Embroidery's Voice & Vision

Advertising Specialty Institute

Chairman

Norman Cohn

Vice Chairman

Matthew Cohn

President & CEO

Timothy M. Andrews

Senior Vice President/Sales

Christine Lovell, MAS

Vice President/Sales

Ron Ball, MAS

Associate Publisher

Ed Koehler

Account Executives

Vince Deisroth, Jeannine Garrison, Cindi Mann, Barry Melito, Phyllis Mutnick, Jim Padilla, CAS, Suzanne Rozick, Mary Sells

Stitches Editorial Advisory Board

Jim Auclair, Owner

FixYourStitch Embroidery Machine Repair

Erich Campbell, Digitizer/E-commerce Manager
Black Duck Inc.

Samanta Cortes, Owner
Fashion Design Concepts Inc.

Ginny Fineberg, Owner and President
Sandpiper Embroidery

Geri Finio, Embroidery Artist
Studio187.net

Jay Fishman, Owner
Wicked Stitch of the East

Steve Freeman, Owner
Qdigitizing.com

Joanna Grant, Director of Sales
Affinity Express

Wendy Gray, Director of Creative Services
Vantage Apparel

Colleen Hartigan, Vice President of Sales
Madeira USA Ltd.

Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach
TheEmbroideryTrainingResourceCenter.com

Anna Johnson, Owner
Super Embroidery & Screen Printing Inc.

Deborah Jones, Owner
MyEmbroideryMentor.com

Jimmy Lamb, Manager of Communication
Sawgrass Technologies

Bonnie Landsberger, Owner and Digitizer
Moonlight Design

Fred Lebow, Director of Non-Wovens
Cotswold Industries

Ed Levy, President
Digitize4u Inc.

Howard Potter, CEO
A&P Master Images

Michael Savoia, Owner
Villa Savoia Inc.

Lee Romano Sequeria, Co-owner
Sparkle-Plenty.com

Andrew Shuman, General Manager
Rockland Embroidery Inc.

Don and Marty Stover, Co-owners
SEW YOUUnique Custom Embroidery Inc.

Jane Swanzy, Owner
Swan Marketing LLC

Marie Zeffer, Owner
Sew Much Thread

Dana Zizzo, Vice President of Sales
Pro Towels Etc.

Gayle Zrelliak, Founder and President
EnMart

Embroidered Emblems & Appliques



Visit our booth at any
ASI
Virtual Trade Show

www.WorldEmblem.com
1-800-766-0448

- No Minimum Quantity
- Industrial Wash Capable
- Production: 5-10 Business Days
- No Charge for Heat Seal Backing
- Flame Resistant Emblems Available
- Set-Up Charges Credited Upon Ordering



ASI 98264 • SAGE 68133 • PPAI 287527 • UPIC: WORLP003 • Distributor Central • CSC Network • Universal/Unilink

Circle 57 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo



Can thread really save one's soul? I say, yes. *Stitches* visited Montana Women's Prison's embroidery and screen-printing operation staffed by women who happen to be convicted felons. Prison decorating shops let inmates work in calmer environments away from general-population chaos, building skills for jobs outside the prison walls.

In her before-life, Emily James worked at Billings, MT-based Sutton's Sportswear, a contract decorator (it has since closed). In 2009, she was convicted of mitigated deliberate homicide for fatally stabbing her boyfriend during a fight. "For someone who's going to be here a long time, you need something like this," she says of the prison's decorating shop, which produces good-quality work that's sold or donated on a limited basis to schools, nonprofits and state agencies.

Thirty-seven states (not including Montana) use the federal Prison Industry Enhancement Program (PIE), which lets them partner with private decorating companies that employ inmates as contract decorators. PIE programs require that inmate employees be paid prevailing wages, can't displace workers on the outside and must voluntarily work in the prison shop. Here's where the issue gets sticky. Critics say private decorating companies profit from cheap labor – plus, this is unfair competition for private decorators not participating in the program.

Inmates can be rehabbed by thread; studies show teaching inmates job skills lowers recidivism. A PIE-program prison can take 80% of an inmate's paycheck for victim restitution, room and board costs, and other PIE-related expenses. Not a problem for me: Inmates need rehabilitation, not to rake in the dough. And, if the private decorator is really paying prevailing wage, it's not cheap labor.

Ira Neaman, president of Vantage Apparel (*asi/93390*), wants transparency about where these private decorating companies subcontract to: "It puts the industry in a difficult place. Does the apparel distributor know? Does the end-user know? Does the brand that hired the decorator know?" I agree 100%: There should be transparency when a private decorator subcontracts work to inmates.

In any system, there are abuses. And, there will be private decorators who don't participate in PIE, but then excoriate companies that do. I believe prison shops – when they're run correctly and ethically – benefit inmates, and the whole industry. Practicing embroidery and other forms of decoration can rehab inmates, increase the decorator population and contribute to an industry that most decorators want to stay U.S.-based. ■



Nicole Rollender
nrollender@asicentral.com

We Asked You ...

What type of equipment or machine purchase are you most likely to make in 2011 (if your budget allows) to help you grow your business?

Janet Bernasconi, Janet's Creative Pillows, West Palm Beach, FL; *janetspillows@yahoo.com* or *www.janetscreativepillows.com*:



"I'm thinking of purchasing a new sewing machine that can also do embroidery: Singer Sewing Co.'s Futura CE-150 CL electronic embroidery and sewing machine. I really enjoy Singer machines, and this one in particular comes with beautiful designs I'd like to create on my accent pillows. This investment will help my business tremendously, since I have many clients who constantly ask me to embroider names on decorative pillows."



Brent Bolm, Eagle Activewear, Warrenton, MO; *eagleact@centurytel.net*:

"Eagle Activewear purchased a wide-format heat press that we will take delivery of soon. The custom-built, 40-inch-by-48-inch heat press will allow us to produce several new products, including a custom tackle-twill substitute program. Being able to offer two- and three-color team numbers at a fraction of the cost and weight of twill will increase our margins, while delivering a superior product to end-users. Plus, we hope to ignite sales with pressure-sensitive appliqué in any color, camouflage and zebra prints, and photography-based and/or repeating logo fabric."

Peg Bowles, Initial Impressions Custom Embroidery, Boulder, CO; *peg@initial-impressions.net* or *www.initial-impressions.net*:



"I plan to purchase a Melco EP4 embroidery machine, if I can. I'd be able to embroider on tubular items (baby onesies, for example) and items where I'd like to do larger embroidery, since it has a bigger embroidery field than my current machines do."



Judy Furdyn, Prism Embroidery, Rochester, NY; *judy@prismemb.com*:

"If the funds become available, I'd purchase a six-head embroidery machine. We only have a four-head for large orders. With the way my business is growing, it's just about time for another machine."

Joan Wamsley, TailorJoan and FinePoint Embroidery, New London, NH; *joan@tailorjoan.com*:



"I'd like to buy a clamp system to embroider on more and different products. Then, I'd add a printer/cutter to the other side of my business to expand my decorating capabilities."



Next Level apparel

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL
SOFTER FABRICS. GREAT FIT. PRICED RIGHT.

Bodek and Rhodes

EXCLUSIVE NATIONAL WHOLESALER

Pennsylvania | California | Florida | Massachusetts | Michigan
800-523-2721 | www.BodekandRhodes.com

asi/40788

Circle 22 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo



What's your advice for embroiderers who want to add additional decorating techniques to their shops in 2011? What's the first step they should take?



Samanta Cortes, Fashion Design Concepts Inc.

Clean and organize your existing inventory and designs and revamp them with new colors and stitch techniques for the season to come. This is a quick and cost efficient way to create new looks to present to your clients – without purchasing new designs, software or equipment right off the bat.



Steve Freeman, QDigitizing.com (asi/700501)

Make sure you're into that potential decorating technique for the long haul. The worst thing you can do is to chase a fad for a quick buck. Learn all you can about a new process before you commit to taking the plunge. Make sure the imprinting option you're considering adding to your operation is economically viable – and that you can afford the learning and marketing curve required to really make the new equipment a profitable part of your business.



Howard Potter, A & P Master Images

If you're looking to add some decorating techniques to your shop this year, I'd look at a few things first. Identify what your existing clients are buying already from you. Whatever you choose to expand in your business, you want to make sure that your

“Long story short, my business is the only one in our area that now offers true custom designs with tackle twill. End result: a larger client base and we're still expanding.”

Howard Potter, A & P Master Images

existing clients will buy the new imprinting option as well from you. This group is the easiest to sell new services to, since they already know your shop's quality and service levels. Also, research and find out what decorating services aren't being offered in your area and attempt to fill that gap.

Here's a quick example from our shop: I wanted to expand our embroidery services into tackle twill. Everywhere I looked in my area, all we saw offered design-wise was brush script with a tail under it. Joyce Jagger, our shop's mentor and owner of EmbroideryTipsandMore.com, introduced us to Stahls', which manufactures the Ioline 300 cutter – and we purchased it. Long story short, my business is the only one in our area that now offers true custom designs with tackle twill. End result: a larger client base and we're still expanding.

For a new service – and if you're one of the few shops in your area offering it or producing a certain type of product – the odds are that you can charge what

you want within reason. Final result: little or no competition. Of course, customers can always go to the Internet, but in my shop's experience, most clients want to talk to their decorator face to face and expect a quicker turnaround time than they can get on the Web.



Jane Swanzy, Swan Threads

Learn as much as you can about a new decorating process before adding it to your shop. From what I read on different forums, people seem to think that many of decorating processes that they don't yet offer, such as screen printing or rhinestones, are “plug and play,” but that's far from reality. Ask yourself this question (and seriously consider the answer): Do you really have the time to learn a new process or is it better to contract out for this type of work, since you can still service your clients? ■

Send your question for the *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board to nroller@asicentral.com.



Got a question for Phil?

If you can't find what you're looking for in the Embroiderers Sourcing Guide, write to: Stitches, Attn: Phil Stitch, 4800 Street Rd., Trevoise, 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. Although I try my best, I can't always answer every request, so please continue your search on your own. Remember, if you contact the companies I mention, tell them you heard about them here!

Dear Phil,

I've been in the business for 18 years - and this is a first for me! Can you give me a source for youth performance-fabric polos and youth soft-shell jackets? I'm really desperate to avoid buying retail from L.L. Bean and Nike. - *Abbie*

It's always nice to hear from a fellow long-time stitcher! I found a few sources for your needs. For the performance polos, try Staton Corporate and Casual (*asi/89380*); (800) 950-6611; www.statononline.com; product 4600B. This youth short-sleeve shirt is made of 5.6-oz., 50/50 stain-release jersey and is available in five colors. Also, check out Bodek and Rhodes (*asi/40788*); (800) 523-2721; www.bodekandrhodes.com; product 437Y. This is a seamless, stain-resistant 50/50 youth polo with pearlized buttons; it comes in 10 colors. For the jacket, you only need to make one stop: Ash City USA (*asi/37127*); (866) 274-2489; www.ashcity.com. This supplier offers a youth colorblocked soft-shell jacket (product 68009), and an insulated soft-shell jacket with detachable hood (68010). Both jackets are made of 96% polyester/4% spandex bonded with 100% polyester anti-pill fleece.



Dear Phil,

In our community we have three young military wives who attend every public ceremony held for soldiers killed in the war. They wear old, worn-out T-shirts with a short message on them. I am so proud of them that I offered to give them brand-new T-shirts, designed just the way they want. The only problem is, I can't find a vendor for wholesale digital camo T-shirts, preferably in a fitted or female cut. Can you please help? - *Roger*

You know, it's women like them - and men like you - who make me proud to be an American. I'm glad I found a source for digital camo tees: 72 Express (*asi/86555*); (800) 981-8671; www.72expressinc.com; product 3665. This ladies' fine jersey tee, made from 4-oz., 100% combed ringspun cotton jersey, has a topstitched ribbed collar, taped neck, and double-needle sleeve and bottom hem. It's available in six camo options.

Hi Phil!

I need sized (not one-size-fits-all) nightshirts. I've had many referrals, but they always result in zero. Can you help, wise one? - *Debbie*

You're in luck, you young whippersnapper! Check out Akwa (*asi/33280*); (888) 289-2592; www.akwa.com. This supplier carries ladies' nightshirts (product 280-BJY) in sizes S-XL in nine colors. The soft shirts are 70% bamboo/30% cotton, antimicrobial, breathable, moisture-wicking and thermal-regulating. Now if your client is an outdoorswoman, she'll love product 604721 from Weber's Camo Leather/Wilderness Dreams (*asi/73777*); (320) 762-2816; www.webersleather.com. This 100% polyester henley nightshirt comes in Mossy Oak Real Tree camouflage and has a V-neck, three-button placket. It's available in sizes S-XXL.



Hi, Phil.

Can you tell me what supplier carries Ping golf shirts? - *Debra*

When I started searching for you, I scored a "hole in one" right away! You can get wholesale Ping brand golf shirts from LogoSport (*asi/67865*); (800) 662-5622; www.logosport.com. This supplier carries a nice variety of Ping, including a men's polo with inset contrast mesh vents on the front and back shoulder (product AP-F1543), a striped baby pique men's polo (AP-S1439) and a ladies' polo with a subtle vertical texture (AP-S1444).



Hello Phil,

We're looking for a wholesale outlet that sells Greek sorority clothing and accessories. - *Katrina*

I was friends with quite a few sorority girls in my day, so I'm happy to help fulfill this request! For clothing, try Boxer Rebellion (*asi/41322*); (800) 914-7774; www.boxerrebellion.com. This supplier offers enough variety to fill a sorority house, including fitted tees (product T-15ACD-Cust), tank tops (T85B) and shorts (J66W). When it comes to accessories, you have lots of options. For an engravable silver or gold bracelet (product INSBBN), check out EMT Easy (*asi/52263*); (800) 289-2911; www.emteasy.com. And Keychains, Magnets & More (*asi/64626*); (800) 819-1818; www.kmmusa.com; lives up to its name, offering Greek-lettered zipper pulls (product PBS-ZP), coasters (SGR-C), magnets (APA-01-F-RM) and a lot more!

The Most Advanced & User Friendly Direct To Garment Printer In The Industry

DTG
DIGITAL

THE
VIPER



- Patented New WIMS (White Ink Management System) for reliable white ink prints
- Lowest Ink Cost • 2 Year Warranty
- Bulk Ink System • Ram Air Ink Extraction
- APCP (Active Print Head Collision Protection)
- Process Color Vibrancy

**Exclusive
4-2-1
Pallet System**

Print up to 4 identical
or different designs
at the same time!



The Fastest And Easiest
Way To Create Your Own
Custom Rhinestone Designs.

CAMS
RHINESTONE MACHINES

CAMS 1V-6P
Automatic Rhinestone Setting Machine

- High Speed 6 color automatic
- Rhinestones or rhinestuds up to 6 colors and sizes
- 170 stones per minute to transfer paper
- 15.75 x 15.75 inch design area
- One-touch start function for repeating last job
- Easy to use LCD menu



Learn how we can help your business save time and earn more, call one of our toll-free numbers
for a 15-minute consultation on the best business strategy for you!

MESA
DISTRIBUTORS, INC.

West of the Mississippi

Toll Free 800-456-3727

www.mesadist.com

East of the Mississippi

Toll Free 877-793-3278

www.coldesi.com



Coldesi

Number One In Apparel Decorating Equipment
[The Evolution of SWF East]

Circle 49 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo



Number One In **Apparel Decorating Equipment**
[The Evolution of SWF East]

SWF East Evolves To Serve Your Every Need
Equipment, Supplies, Training, Support
Success Stories: Expand Your Apparel
Decorating Business



Number One In Apparel Decorating Equipment

877.793.3278 www.coldesi.com

The Evolution of SWF East ColDesi: Complete Apparel Decoration Equipment & Service

Ready to get started in embroidery and garment printing? Perhaps you want to expand your apparel decoration services? Whatever your goals are, ColDesi makes them possible with a complete range of apparel decorating equipment, supplies, training and support.

ColDesi (previously known as SWF East) offers an extensive line of direct-to-garment printers, screen-printing equipment, heat presses, automatic rhinestone and embroidery machines/digitizing software. Our company has evolved since 1999 from a single product line of high-quality embroidery equipment to a full-service, customer-centric partner, offering all the tools decorators need to succeed in apparel embellishment.

We even make expansion more accessible for our customers with equipment financing, training, parts supply and ongoing education. In fact, our experienced consultants and technicians consider your satisfaction and achievements the

most important measure of their success. That's the culture behind ColDesi's award-winning service.

Read on to learn how our customers have grown their businesses with ColDesi-backed equipment and expertise. Plus, in the pages ahead, we share news about today's cutting-edge apparel decorating machines.

So whether you're embarking on garment embellishment as a beginner or have an established operation ready to reach new markets, give us a call. We're ready to help your company evolve and expand, just as we have here at ColDesi!

Sincerely,



Scott Colman, President
ColDesi, 877.793.3278
www.coldesi.com



- Embroidery Machines
- Embroidery Software
- Digital Garment Printers
- Rhinestone Machines
- Screen Printing Equipment
- Heat Presses
- Equipment Leasing
- Business Solutions
- Supplies
- Training
- Support



Sew Up More Business With The Right Embroidery Equipment

When it comes to embroidery business, your profitability depends on capacity and efficiency. Not every machine is ideal for your unique needs. ColDesi's full line of quality embroidery equipment gives you options for every stage of growth.

ColDesi makes it easy to apply the latest innovations in premium embroidery machines to your business by offering over 250 models from which to choose. Here's a rundown of machine types and tips for selecting the right equipment for your business:

- **Single-head Machines** take you beyond the home embroidery machine by expanding your ability to do large-field embroidery on items like sweatshirts and beach towels. If you find yourself spending too much time re-hooping or fiddling with alignment, consider a commercial grade single head machine. ColDesi offers four quality models to choose from: Compact 6 Needle, Compact 15 Needle, Standard Single Head and Bridge Single Head. Every model includes standard features considered upgrades on other brands.

- **Multi-head Machines** (two to 15 heads) will enable you to deliver goods faster and cheaper to customers. Designed for ease of use and low maintenance, you can increase your capacity without hiring extra staff. To get the most from your investment, look for models with full-color LCD control panels and automatic oiling systems (premium features offered standard by ColDesi). Plus a Quick Change Cap Driver, a patented exclusive, makes it possible to switch from shirts to caps in under a minute.

- **Dual Function Embroidery Machines**, range from two to six heads, provide the most flexible solutions in the market. They can embroider two separate designs simultaneously or on different types of garments with speed. If you're doing short-run embroidery jobs with a lot of design changes, dual function embroidery machines will make your business more efficient.

- **Specialty Machines** increase your ability to land jobs for larger surface embroidery, chenille work or items such as quilts and pillows. Useful features to simplify special repetition work, mirror image conversion and automatic trimming provide greater flexibility and more opportunity to reach new customers.

Of course, our experts are always available to discuss your unique needs and explain the features of every machine we offer, helping to match you with an appropriate embroidery solution. In addition to new models, our collection of pre-owned machines gives you even more choice.

Leasing and trade-in options also make it easier to find a viable, economic solution. For added convenience, ColDesi offers an array of embroidery accessories and supplies including needles, bobbins, backings, thread, toppings, tools, notions, training/design materials and software.

Just call 877.793.3278 for more information about any of these solutions.

ColDesi offers everything you need to get started including an industry-leading warranty, training, digitizing, editing/lettering software, accessories and selected stock designs.



Increase Profit Potential With Digital Garment Printers

You'll no longer need to turn away customers who want to buy only one or two printed items at a time. With a DTG and a little bit of training, you'll take digital art, run it through the printer, heat press and have a finished product your customers will love!

DTG (Direct to Garment) printers are a profitable complement to your apparel decorating business. These versatile machines make it possible to accept small print runs, create full color samples and expand imprinting to a wide variety of apparel products from T-shirts, sweats, hoodies, art canvases, pillows and more.

The reputable DTG brand of printers offered by ColDesi brings the most advanced technologies in digital printing to your shop. ColDesi's team of digital printing experts will help you choose the right solution for your business from a full line of small flatbed models like the HMI-C to a larger format, versatile unit like the Viper.

The HMI-C, our most popular model, combines all the best characteristics of the earlier models with additional helpful features. User-friendly innovations, such as four colors plus four white ink channels and auto bed adjustment, have enhanced speed and quality. The unit prints with pinpoint head-moving technology to ensure perfect registration. An auto-ink suspension system and four channels of white ink result in extra color vibrancy. Economically print as many as 40 garments per hour at resolutions up to 2880 dpi. The average cost per print is approximately \$0.25 to \$0.50 for light shirts and \$0.75 to \$3.00 for dark shirts.

The Viper allows you to produce up to 60 small-to-midsize prints or 30 large prints per hour with exceptional print accuracy thanks to a conveyor platen system. Customize your job run for maximum efficiency; the Viper can print four smaller prints, two standard size prints or one oversized print at a time, with its unique 4-2-1 platen system.

The DTG Viper uses an all new eight channel Piezo print head with ink repelling coating and constant re-circulation and pressurization ink system. It's capable of

The reputable DTG brand of printers offered by ColDesi brings the most advanced technologies in digital printing to your shop.



SUCCESS STORY

Minds Eye Graphics Wows Customers With Apparel Decorating Options

When Greg Kitson started Minds Eye Graphics in 1980 as a back-room operation in a small town

family shoe store, he couldn't have imagined how his side business would grow. Today apparel decorating is front-and-center, having replaced the shoe business altogether. Operations have grown to provide custom and contract screen printing to decorated apparel professionals around the world.

While the majority of jobs are produced on automatic screen printing presses, Kitson has brought in embroidery and direct to garment printing as well. DTG has been the most recent expansion. "We had been watching direct to garment printing since its serious inception about five years ago," Kitson says. "As the market matured a bit we started to see the potential for it complementing the work we were already doing. I have always believed in the philosophy that the best defense is a good offense and it is better to learn new technologies earlier than later. We waited a while to let the marketplace settle out, and then partnered with a provider we were confident could provide us with good equipment and support for the long run." That partner is ColDesi.

Within just eight months of installing the DTG equipment, Kitson was digitally printing two to three dozen per day, five days a week. "I haven't had to worry about sales from the DTGs not making the loan payment as well as covering other costs – even in the early stages," he says.

Kitson has found ways for DTG to support his screen printing business as well. Now he produces a quick final output of the DTG job for approval as opposed to a mock-up on a computer. "[DTG] can also help you 'close the deal' by letting the client actually see their sample printed," he explains. "The wow factor of direct to garment is high."

Kitson provides consulting and contract production services to the industry. He can be reached at 888.942.9518.

handling eight colors in either dual CMYK or four channels of white plus CMYK. The Viper's one-inch wide, high performance print head has 180 nozzles per channel and has an adjustable pressure manifold coupled with a pressure release damper/filter throughout the entire ink path. Through leading edge technology, the DTG Viper delivers superior prints with outstanding color vibrancy.

Both the DTG HM1-C and DTG Viper offer the patented White Ink Management System (WIMS) to reduce preventative maintenance intervals. The WIMS continually re-circulates white ink, filtering it continually to help eliminate clogging ensuring that white ink is ready to print when you are.

Just as the WIMS revolutionizes white ink management, the DTG PreTreat-R Gen II advances pretreatment by spraying the perfect amount of pre-treat solution in just seven seconds. There's less waste than hand pretreatment and more consistent application resulting in better quality prints. You can pretreat in the same area as your DTG printer; an easy user-interface places all major controls on a single panel. (This pretreat system works well with other brands of DTG-type printers and is a perfect add-on to an existing DTG shop.)

Efficiency is a hallmark of all DTG digital printing equipment. You can drive multiple DTGs from the same computer to increase your productivity. Or the DTG Bullet and DTG Xpress can print multiple shirts with one loading or oversized items such as flags or towels to increase your capacity and opportunities.

For more information, visit the digital garment printer section of www.coldesi.com or call 877.793.3278.

DTG PRE TREAT-R GEN II



DTG HM 1-C



Both the DTG HM1-C and DTG Viper offer a patented White Ink Management System (WIMS) to reduce preventative maintenance intervals and to ensure white ink is ready to print when you are.

12 Reasons To Buy DTG

1. DTG patented WIMS (White Ink Management System) to circulate white ink preventing settling and clogging
2. Over 4,000 machines sold world wide – more than any other brand
3. Guaranteed Trade Up Program making it easy to grow your business
4. Widest range of printers, with four models to fit your specific needs
5. Most versatile platen systems
6. More factory-certified technicians than any other brand
7. Toll-free, dedicated phone support
8. Longest warranty in industry (two years)
9. Multi-print production run feature
10. RIP Software, known to be one of the easiest and most feature-rich in the industry
11. Lowest cost of ownership, from inception cost to operational cost
12. Bulk ink system that eliminates the need for high-priced cartridges



Number One In Apparel Decorating Equipment

877.793.3278 www.coldesi.com

Rhinestones significantly increase the perceived value of your decorated apparel solution, allowing you the option to charge a premium price.

Rhinestone Embellishment Made Easy And Economical

To keep your apparel decorating solutions current and above competitive bidding wars, add specialty touches such as rhinestones or nailheads. Read on to learn about the easy-to-use machines that put these profitable orders in reach.

You've seen rhinestone embellished garments at major retail stores. The popular trend commands high price tags and consumer interest. Now the CAMS Automatic Rhinestone Machine makes it easier and more economical than ever to recreate these popular looks for promotional purposes and local boutiques. You can enhance embroidery designs, screen prints, digital prints and custom transfers or add sparkle to personalization, ultimately increasing the profitability of your sales.

To create your own custom rhinestone solutions for customers, consider the new CAMS iV-2P model. Its compact size makes it ideal for decorators with tight workspaces. This desktop machine occupies only a two foot by two foot space, and features simple operation buttons and a user-friendly LCD graphic menu. It automatically and accurately positions designs according to x-y coordinates and prevents misplacement between stones thanks to high sensitivity sensors.

The CAMS iV-2P allows you to work with two colors or sizes of rhinestones, rhinestuds or nailheads and produces various hotfix motifs automatically. It comes bundled with GemMaster software to make custom designs quickly for rhinestone/nailhead transfers. With just a day of complimentary training from a ColDesi expert, you'll be creating rhinestone designs that set your apparel decorating above the competition.

It's quick too. The CAMS iV-2P places as many as 150 stones per minute directly to a heat transfer material. The large design field is 9.8-inches-by-11.8-inches, allowing for transfers that range in sizes appropriate for a child's shirt or an adult jacket.

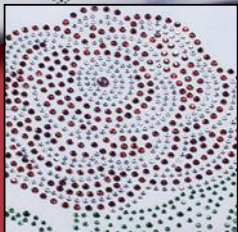
If your plans for rhinestone embellishment are more ambitious, consider an upgrade to the CAMS iV-6P. It has all the same functionality and features, including GemMaster software, as the iV-2P but expands the number of colors and sizes of rhinestones you can apply at a given time to six. Using your design, this workhorse can set as many as 170 stones per minute to transfer paper on its 15.75-inch-by-15.75-inch work area. An optional model with rotating X/Y board allows you to set various shapes and sizes of stones at any angle.

All CAMS Rhinestone machines come equipped with multi-part feeders, automatic x-

y-z tables, absorption error sensors and more. These innovations overcome limitations such as slow production and lack of uniformity attributed to other methods of production.

Rhinestones significantly increase the perceived value of your decorated apparel solution, allowing you to charge a premium price. By adding a CAMS Rhinestone Machine to your business, you can supply schools, spirit squads, dance teams, clubs/sororities, corporations, resorts and many other types of markets with the trend-setting garments currently in demand.

For expert advice on which solution is best for your business, call ColDesi at 877.793.3278.



CAMS
RHINESTONE MACHINES



What's Hot In Heat Press Machines?

Heat press is the only way to take advantage of some apparel decoration trends. Today's best heat press equipment ensures transferred artwork remains looking good and adhering reliably for the long term. Here's the latest innovations that make heat pressing easier and more effective.



Sublimation and rhinestone transfers are trendy decorative techniques that turn customers' heads. These have a common requirement: a heat press machine. There are many heat presses on the market but not all are alike in the results they achieve. Reliably accurate temperature settings and precise timing are key to quality as is consistent pressure across the press. Achieving these ideals has recently been made easier with Drucktech heat press technology.

ColDesi is the exclusive North American supplier of Drucktech heat press equipment. This includes the European brand's high quality manual and pneumatic solutions as well as its innovative line of membrane heat presses, which use a special rubber plate and compressed air to create a unique high pressure for transferring consistently across every area of the table. The rubber plate also equalizes differences in the thickness of material being imprinted. That means seams, fasteners, etc., which change the elevation of a garment are no longer problematic.

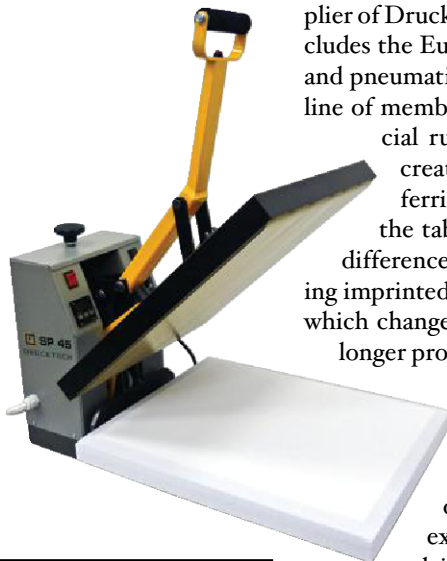
Not only does the inflatable membrane technology improve results, it increases your productivity because less effort is required of the operator. Heat press expert John Colman of ColDesi explains: "With other presses, you have to muscle down the top plate and then push hard at the end because the bottom plate doesn't move. With Drucktech, the bottom plate is an inflatable membrane that fills up after you place the top plate down. This creates an ideal amount of pressure from the bottom up rather than from you forcing the top down."

These presses are easy enough for most anyone to close without struggle. Plus, they improve the quality and durability of the finished transfer because they allow decorators to achieve a customized fit of the garment across the platen despite changes in surface area caused by seams, buttons, collars, etc. "You can heat press a hoodie with a zipper as easily as you can a t-shirt," Colman says. "Customized pressure variation is really a significant benefit of the Drucktech heat press."

Similarly, the Drucktech Cap Press makes imprinting headwear simple. "Traditionally, it has been very hard to properly position a cap, keep the transfer in place and lock down the heat press," Colman says. "Drucktech's membrane technology allows you to place the cap, then as the press closes the membrane inflates and creates the locked position. A special teflon retaining sheet hovers between the top plate and membrane, which holds the transfer still so operators no longer have to risk getting their hands burned."

Another benefit: anyone heat pressing rhinestone transfers will be able to create more intricate designs. Previously, you could not place smaller rhinestones within a certain circumference of a larger rhinestone because the amount of pressure and heat required to set the small stones would damage the larger stones and/or cause their adhesive to seep. The customized fit around the stones created by the inflatable Drucktech membrane eliminates that problem, allowing you to produce stunning rhinestone designs to take advantage of one of today's hottest promotional apparel trends.

To decide which heat press machine will help you take advantage of today's popular decorating trends, call 877.793.3278.



ColDesi is the exclusive North American supplier of Drucktech heat press equipment, with a unique inflatable membrane for easier operation and more consistent pressure.

ColDesi
Number One In Apparel Decorating Equipment

877.793.3278 www.coldesi.com

JMH Graphics Goes All Out And Reaps The Rewards

Before JMH Graphics added direct to garment (DTG) printing and embroidery to its repertoire, owners Jason and Melissa Spiers considered their screen printing business average. "We took in one to two orders a day and our operation was in an 1100 square foot facility," they recall.

Catering to a local university and nearby companies, the Spiers could see the potential for more orders. DTG, for example, would be very helpful for printing samples to sell their screen printing services and for fulfilling small re-orders. Looking to leverage their investment, they created an online store to market the customization of single shirts. The orders rolled in quickly from beyond their previous boundaries.

The Spiers quickly saw a significant return on their investment. "There's no question that adding direct to garment was a turning point for our business," they say. "The addition of new processes



and equipment to an existing business is always what you make of it. To coin an old catch phrase, 'if you sell it, they will come.'"

Embroidery was the next step in becoming a full service decorator. The couple started with a single head machine and graduated to a six head machine within four months. "By being fully vertically integrated with our decoration processes, we are able to cut costs and,

in turn, out-perform and out-sell our competition," they say.

Throughout the entire evolution, the Spiers have been loyal SWF (now known as ColDesi) customers. "We haven't been let down either. The customer service is top notch; you can always count on tech support to get back with you in a timely manner, and the sales team has been most helpful when it came time to decide which machine would best fit what we are trying to do with our company."

Part-time Embroidery Business Gets Boost From Equipment Upgrades

Can you be successful embroidering part time out of your basement? Firefighter/EMT Mike Gibson proves you can. He launched Professional Threads Embroidery in 2007, dedicating just 20 hours per week to his operation. Yet his sales have continually grown over the first three years of business.

The right equipment and expert training made it possible. "I have an SWF two-head, multi-head embroidery machine, two heat presses and one DTG Viper," Gibson says, explaining, "I started with the two-head machine because I wanted to be able to handle more production than with a single head. Once I got started, I was receiving a lot of inquiries about printed t-shirts so I invested in the DTG Viper. I chose the Viper because it is capable

of printing on dark shirts and has a larger print area."

It didn't take Gibson long

to become comfortable with his new technologies. "I was doing orders right after I got my machines and was proficient operating the equipment after



of printing on dark shirts and has a larger print area." It didn't take Gibson long

to become comfortable with his new technologies. "I was doing orders right after I got my machines and was proficient operating the equipment after

ing and support from SWF East [now ColDesi] was very helpful in getting me jump-started."

needs of his firefighter friends and their families, he soon expanded his markets. "My hobby is boating so I also reached out to my boating friends and Yacht club associations," he says. The versatility of his equipment makes it possible to address all their needs. "With the combination of embroidery machine and DTG printer, I can decorate just about anything ... The majority of my products are hats, team apparel, t-shirts and sweatshirts for public service, schools, sport teams and special events."

Gibson now has his eye on a four-head dual-function embroidery machine through the ColDesi's Guaranteed Trade in Program. His goal: "Working multiple jobs at the same time." Clearly that's something Gibson is very good at doing.



Measure UP In 2011.

Take your decorating business to the next level with the *Stitches Roadshow*.
Created to Bring Together Suppliers and Decorators in a Productive Environment!

- Spend one-on-one, quality time with key equipment, software, supply and wearables vendors
- Find new products and services to set you apart from the competition
- Discover new ways to grow your business through advertising specialty products — (each *Stitches Roadshow* is co-located with the ASI Advantages Roadshow)
- Participate in in-depth education from *Stitches University* to take your business to the next level
- Network with other decorators and suppliers to gain new ideas and learn best practices

**All decorators are invited
to attend for FREE!**

Upcoming Roadshows

March 11 • St. Louis, MO

Hilton St. Louis Airport
10330 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, MO 63134
314-426-5500

May 3 • Denver, CO

Crowne Plaza Denver Int'l Airport
15500 East 40th Avenue
Denver, CO 80239
303-371-9494

**Register today at
www.stitchesroadshow.com.**

**S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S
ROADSHOW**



Embroidery of Place

New Mexico's Fiber Traditions

Beatrice Maestas Sandoval became immersed in Spanish colonial art in 1998, while volunteering at New Mexico's living-history museum El Rancho de las Golondrinas, near Santa Fe. She was especially drawn to the traditional embroidery technique called Colcha – large, free-form stitches that create a very vibrant effect. Designs seem to move around on Sandoval's hand-made-fabric backgrounds, reflecting the Southwest's brightness and energy. "There were a few people doing Colcha, but the art was almost lost," she says. Another volunteer taught her the technique, "and now I'm teaching whoever I can."

Today, Sandoval instructs not only at El Rancho, where she's curator

of textiles, but also at the Española Valley Fiber Arts Center, the New Mexico Arts' Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, and elsewhere. She exhibits and sells embroidery as well as rugs and other weavings – fetching increasingly attractive prices. Santa Fe's Spanish Market is one of her regular venues.

"I try to bring it back to the way they were doing it in the 1700s and 1800s," Sandoval says. She explains that Spanish embroiderers would spin their own wool, and then make their own material, called *sabana*, from the churro sheep they brought in the 1600s. At first the animals were used mostly for food, but then the wool started to be used for everything from mattresses and blankets, to the thread for Colcha embroidery, she says.

"I also make my own thread from this wool," Sandoval says. "I dye it using all-natural dyes that I make." Her colors, like those of her predecessors and the geography surrounding her, are rich, earthen colors. To create them she processes flowers, teas and other natural ingredients. "It's a lot of work, but I love it," she says.

Sandoval's designs also reflect nature, as well as the geometrical patterns for which the Southwest is known. Her awards include the grand prize at Santa Fe's 2009 Spanish Market Colcha Embroidery juried exhibition. Her advice to those looking to do regionally connected work? "Learn the traditions," she says. – *Annie Rebill*



Beatrice Maestas Sandoval employs a Colcha embroidery technique – large, free-form stitches – on her hand-made fabric backgrounds.

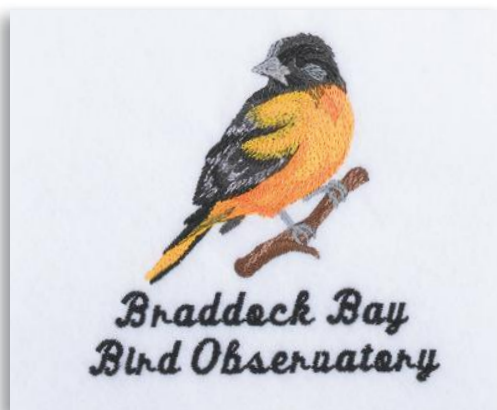


The Birds of Lake Ontario

In upstate New York northwest of Rochester, the internationally known Braddock Bay Observatory is dedicated to research, conservation and education about birds. Banding helps track and study the feathered world, and Braddock operates one of the largest stations in the country, banding 7,000 to 10,000 birds annually.

Located on the south shore of Lake Ontario, it's in a region "well-known for nature stuff," says Pati Robben, owner of Robben's Nest Stitchery. "People come from all over the world to learn about banding of indigenous and migratory species," such as double-breasted cormorants and ruby-throated hummingbirds.

The avian theme connects well with Robben's business in nearby Pittsford: "I do all the embroidery for the people who band," she says. That's no simple matter: "It's very important that the birds look like they do in real life," she says. "It's my job to translate that into embroidery, to make sure we get every single feather right."



Thread and stitch choice is important, to create an accurate depiction of a particular bird.

Marilyn Guenther, a Braddock staffer, appreciates that extra push. "The banding station is open to the public," she says. "We're a nonprofit, so income from the items we sell helps buy the equipment to operate the banding station." Robben's Nest "has been willing to work with a variety of fabrics to provide designs for every season," Guenther says. Robben elaborates: "It's really cold here, so people need knit and fleece. Making sure the designs are going to embroider on that fabric is one of the things we really have to pay attention to."

Robben says the key to her success is her "willingness to go a little bit beyond the norm." Braddock operates on "a tight turnaround, and the orders are pretty involved, with designs of eight to maybe 12 colors. I don't overcharge for that, and I meet their deadlines," she says. "They've been coming back to me for almost two years now, so really accurate record-keeping is extremely important, noting every thread color and placement, so we can replicate the designs more easily." —AR

Alaskan Ice and Moose

Fairbanks, AK-based Santa's Stitches keeps its seven full-time elves extremely busy. Often the work involves hockey, says owner Lisa Boswell. "We have a junior 'A-team' here that I'm affiliated with, and I design all the jerseys, we do all the embroidery and we sell merchandise at games." Her son plays hockey in the youth program, and "I'm also a sponsor and a team mom for that, and so I do a lot of jerseys, the warm-ups, nameplates, anything we can do for the uniforms," she says.

Since Santa often gives sports gear at Christmas, he's probably OK with this business segment. The company was located in North Pole, AK, when Boswell bought it 13 years ago, "but it's very small out there, and I had to move it into town to create the traffic I needed," she says. She no longer

handles North Pole-related merchandise, because potential clients like Santa Claus House and Christmas shops look for volume and low prices, so they started ordering from overseas.



A natural design for an Alaskan stitcher is hockey team logos.

In addition to the hockey-related work, Santa's Stitches produces logos for local businesses, as well as jackets, patches and hats. The adornment could be a stylized moose, polar bear or an Eskimo. One scary image shows a white wolf baring its teeth straight at the viewer, its head framed by the words "ice dogs" and shafts of ice. Another has a Golden Lab sitting proudly with a rifle resting between its front paws and a mallard flying away from it. Behind the creatures, the state of Alaska is silhouetted as a background. The words "last frontier Labradors" border the image in log-like appearance. —AR

Native American Spirit

In South Dakota's Black Hills, the Lakota tribe is native to the region. "We work with local award-winning fine artists," says Tami Tfleger, who with her part-Lakota husband, Lowell, owns Lakota Designs. "Our slogan is, 'We Turn Fine Art into Wearable Art,'" she says. The duo has been at it for 23 years now, located in Rapid City, SD. "As young entrepreneurs, we realized we needed a niche to work within," she says. "We wanted to find a niche that can send a message or improve things or educate people."

The couple thought of an artist they knew, Donald Montileaux. "We said, 'What if we could get Don to allow us to put his art on the shirts?'" Tfleger says. The idea was "to sell it as artwork and to allow the natives to tell their story to people."

They ran their unusual concept by Montileaux and, "He looked at me like, 'Are you kinda crazy?'" Tfleger says. But he let them try it. "We took it to one of the local powwows and it sold out immediately, sweatshirts and roll-up-sleeve T-shirts," she says. After that he was convinced." That initial inspiration still drives the couple today: "We've always loved native art," Tfleger says.

One of Montileaux's paintings, titled Four Stars, shows a horse of almost Japanese-art simplicity charging with its hunter rider, while four stars in the air behind it form an arc around a buffalo in the sky. The colors are earth tones: blues, browns, reds. This piece adorns a white screen-printed T-shirt today, but at first

continued on page 23

Lakota Designs prints and embroiders Native American artists' work on apparel.



Coming Next Issue

What's coming up in March/April 2011 *Stitches*

By Nicole Rollender

You Work Where?

■ Next issue, *Stitches* travels to three very unique embroidery shops – one that's adjoining a tiki bar, one in a television studio and one with a huge gift shop packed with lots of interesting items. Join us as we spend a day with three quirky shop owners and show you how they bring in the green.

Young Guns

■ We went in search of the under-30 up-and-comers in the decorating world – and we found them. Get ready to meet the next-generation of embroidery and digitizing greats.

Top Apparel Trends

■ Wondering what the hottest apparel trends are for 2011? We break it down for you – and include top tips for embellishing these new apparel and accessories items.



Plus ...

- The most unique uses for appliqué
- Five money-making niches for decorated apparel

And much, much more!

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 February 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, and 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 February needle are due by February 28. From the correct responses, we'll randomly select one winner who'll receive a \$100 gift certificate, courtesy of **MADERA** Laconia, NH. Please submit only one entry per drawing. We'll announce the winner in the May issue.

Slick Is Powerful

In the December issue, Slick hid next to Lee Caroselli's embroidered design of Christ by Italian artist Guido Rossi, on page 48 in our "The *Stitches* Power List" section. **Dave Oberlander** of **A&D Custom Embroidery** was chosen at random from a grand total of 33 responses. As this issue's winner, Dave will receive Madeira USA's gift certificate. Keep your eyes peeled for the industry's favorite game of hide and seek!

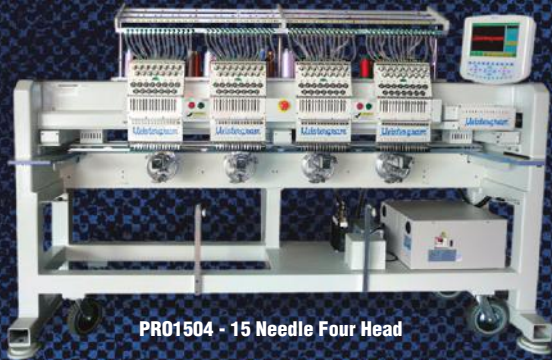
Pantograms

DEVOTED TO HELPING APPAREL DECORATORS ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Follow us on Facebook. 

Pantograms Manufacturing Company Inc.
serving the apparel decorating industry since 1967

FAMOUS FOR ITS EXCELLENCE
IN RELIABILITY AND VALUE.



PR01504 - 15 Needle Four Head

Meistergram®

Proudly owned and operated in the USA. The Meistergram name stands for quality embroidery and monogramming equipment. The pioneer in the industry offers single-head and multi-head (2 to 24 heads) embroidery machines at an exceptional value backed by Pantograms 40+ years of service, support and business training.



Increase your productivity and earning potential with the user-friendly Forté ID or PD digitizing, lettering and editing embroidery software program. Convert your vector designs to stitches using the optional DRAWings converter.



PR01500
15 Needle
Compact
Single
Head

**5 Year
Warranty**

Multi-Head
or Modular
Multi-Head
We Offer Both.
Ask Why.



EXPERT ESP9100 NET

EXPERT ESP9100 NET

As Designed By TOYOTA

NETWORKED MODULAR SYSTEMS,
THE OTHER MULTI-HEAD SOLUTION

EXPERT ESP9100 NET MODULAR MULTI-HEAD offer greater production speed (up to 1200 stitches per minute) and more flexibility than traditional multi-head machines allowing you to embroider different jobs at the same time or mass production of one job, saving your company valuable scheduling resources. Also during machine operation when one embroidery head stops, the others keep going, unlike traditional multi-head systems.

Start with one machine and grow your investment with multiple ESP 9100's networked as a "Modular Multi-Head" system. The most productive, efficient and versatile embroidery system in the market today.



EXPERT ESP9100 NET 2

\$0* DOWN

On EXPERT ESP9100 NET1, NET2, NET4 and NET6-head systems (*based on approved credit)

The DTG Viper was engineered from the ground up to offer higher speed prints with acute accuracy (utilizing precise engineering solutions that are unrivaled in this industry) and most importantly, white ink printing reliability!!

- New Patented "WIMS" White Ink Management System for reliable white ink prints
- DTG Exclusive Pressurized CMYK Ink System
- Lowest ink cost
- Prints up to 50+ garments per hour (less for dark garments with white ink)
- Conveyor Platen drive system for super accurate prints
- Exclusive 2 Year Warranty - Longest warranty in the digital garment printers industry
- Industry Largest Print Area 16" x 29"



Exclusive 4-2-1 Platen System - Print up to 4 identical or different designs at the same time!



Industry Exclusive "WIMS"
White Ink Management System



THE VIPER
Garment Printer

NUMBER ONE IN DIGITAL
GARMENT PRINTERS.

Call today to learn more about building a
profitable apparel decorating business.

Toll-free **1-800-872-1555**

Pantograms

4537 South Dale Mabry Hwy. Tampa, FL 33611

www.pantograms.com

SERVICE,
EQUIPMENT
& SUPPORT

SINCE 1967



Attention Embroiderers & Apparel Decorators: **Do You Have What It Takes to Prosper in 2011?**

Discover New Techniques!

See New Technologies!

Learn New Strategies!

Engage Your Customers!

Hold the phone, pack your bags, and get to...

NNEP 2011 – 15th Anniversary!

**National Conference & Trade Show
and (famous) Garage Sale!**

**An Exclusive Event for
Professional Apparel Decorators**

Don't wait! Go to www.NNEP.net/NNEP-2011
NOW for the Event Brochure!

Your SUCCESS starts HERE!
www.NNEP.net/NNEP-2011/
Go online NOW to Register to Attend!



It's time to
Build Your Business!

NNEP-2011

February 17-19, 2011

**Embassy Suites Hotel
Dublin, Ohio**

800-EMBASSY, group code "NNA"

NNEP.net/NNEP-2011/

Brought to you by NNEP www.NNEP.net • 800.866.7396



Native American Spirit from page 20

the Tflegers used strictly embroidery; Montileaux's shirts had 26,000 to 30,000 stitches in the design. As more artists joined the couple – Jackie Larson Bread, Sandy Swallow, David Dragonfly, Ivan Long, Jim Yellowhawk and Martin Redbear – the wearable-art line developed, “We did of course incorporate screen printing so that we could do T-shirts and more intricate artwork, because thread is a little harder medium to work in than ink,” Tflegler says. “Now we do quite a bit of screen print.”

Lakota Designs' top seller, ever since its debut in 1993, is a turtle-drum design, portraying the shell that protects both the turtle and the person who plays the drum to honor its spirit. “It's really been a message,” Tflegler says. “It's crossed over to not being Native American or Western; it's a message of nature, recycling,

thinking green.” The poem on its back expresses “the philosophy that the Native Americans had: Take care of Mother Earth and Mother Earth will take care of you,” she says.

The couple's products do well in premier gift shops, which have the draw to command higher prices. “Our T-shirts wholesale starting at \$11.50, but our images might have 11 to 14 colors in them,” Tflegler says. Their premier-line vision continues to work, “because we're representing the artists, as well. A nametag goes on every shirt with a picture of the artist and a little bio,” she says. At trade shows, they display the original paintings on their table next to what they recreate on shirts. “We're introducing the culture to people, and we're helping the Lakota have another venue for their artwork,” she says. – AR

STYLE & VALUE





BKT-400
Plaid Twill Bucket
One Size Fits Most



PLD-850
6 Panel, Garmet Washed Cotton Twill
Adjustable Tuck Strap with Slide Closure
Closure Matches Back Panels
Unstructured Low Profile
One Size Fits Most
Pre-curved Visor



WWW.OUTDOORCAP.COM
800.826.6047





▲ Circle 36 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freinfo



Finding New Products To Embroider Doesn't Have To Be A Bear.



Thousands of new products to decorate



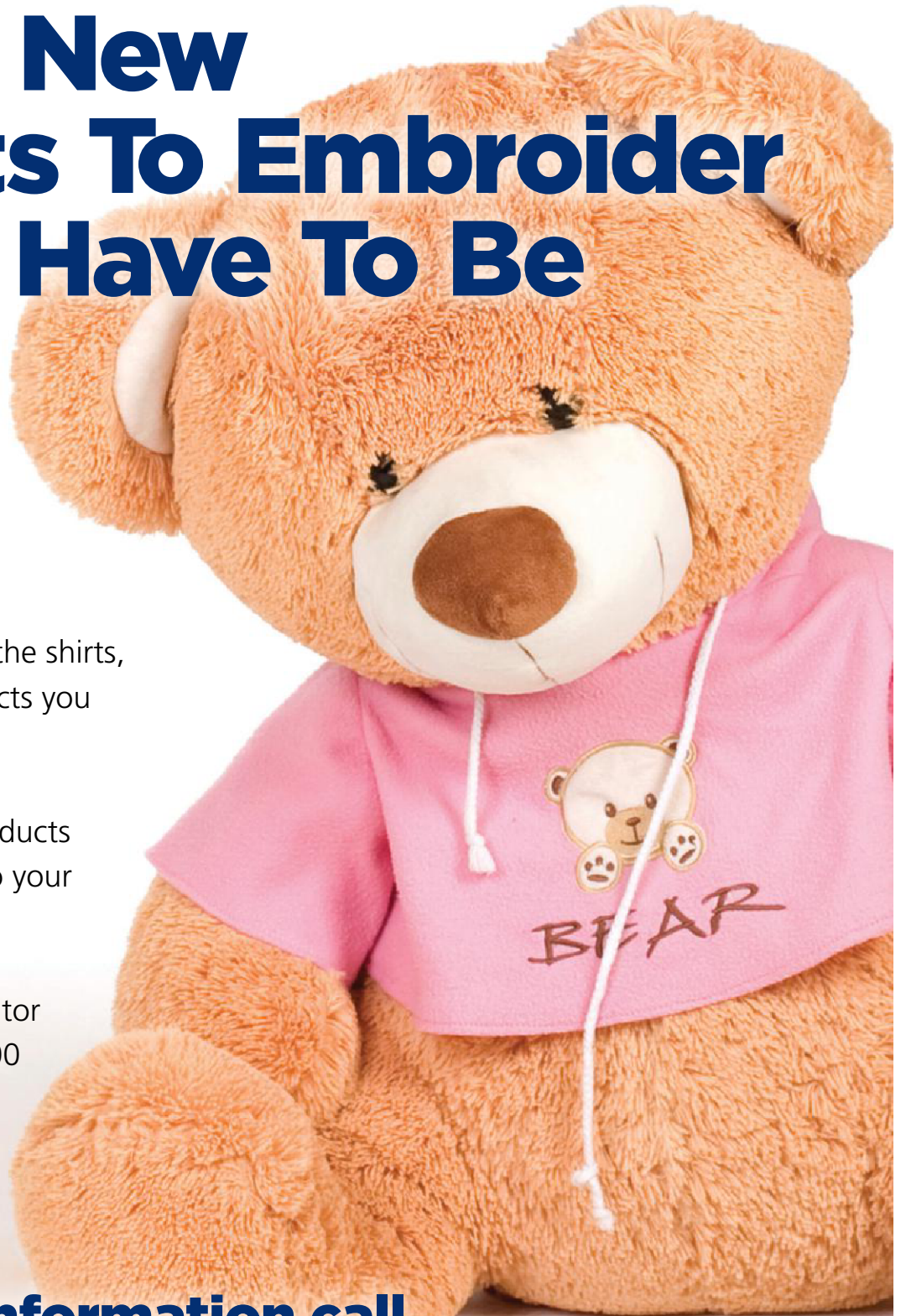
Get better pricing on the shirts, hats, and other products you already embroider



Offer promotional products (mugs, pens, etc ...) to your current customers



Be listed in our decorator database where 30,000 distributors search for embroiderers



For more information call

800.546.1354

NEWS BRIEFS

Ash City (asi/37127) hired Spencer Linwood as national sales manager.

Boxercraft (asi/41325) donated 6,000 new garments to the 10 winners of its "Bring Comfort to Your Community" charity contest. The winners then donated to charities of their choice.

CaféPress (asi/43167) appointed Robert Marino as the company's new president.

Gildan Activewear announced the top 10 charities vying for \$100,000 donation in the "I Support..." campaign: American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Corporation Culturelle Latino-Americaine de L'amitié, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Discovery!, Drew Hildebrand Teen Benefit Fund, Home Boy Industries, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of West TN, Palm Beach County Motorcyclist Toys for Tots and Snowball Express.

Hirsch International offers a new Adelco automatic drawer dryer, designed for curing direct-to-garment printed shirts and can be used for low-volume, screen-printed shirts.

Imprints Wholesale



(asi/62486) named Lori Broadwater outside sales representative for Texas.

Pulse Microsystems Ltd. offers customized software to assist companies in a wide range of specialty applications. Pulse can add capabilities such as mass personalization, automating repetitive tasks and integrating designs with an order-entry system.

SanMar (asi/84863) raised \$2,500 for the Prostate Cancer Foundation and LIVESTRONG, the



Lance Armstrong Foundation through the Movember mustache-growing event.

Sawgrass Technologies offers the SUBLI-Jet-R sublimation ink system for the Ricoh GX e3300N printer to produce vibrant, permanent images.

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2011

Feb. 4-5, New York City
Manhattan Vintage Clothing & Antique Textile Show and Sale
(518) 434-4312; www.manhattanvintage.com

Feb. 5-8, Seattle
Seattle Gift Show
(678) 285-3976; www.seattlegiftshow.com

Feb. 7-11, Van Nuys, Ontario, Newport Beach, San Diego, Phoenix
Advantages Roadshow
(800) 546-3300; www.asishow.com

Feb. 9, Nashville
PPAMS PromoShow
(931) 695-3117; www.ppams.com

Feb. 16-18, Dallas
ASI Show
(800) 546-3300; www.asishow.com

Feb. 17-19, Dublin

The NNEP 15th Anniversary Tradeshow
(800) 866-7396; www.nnep.net

Feb. 20-23, Edmonton, AB
Alberta Gift Show
(800) 611-6100; www.albertagiftshow.com

Feb. 21-25, Cincinnati, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit
Advantages Roadshow
(800) 546-3300; www.asishow.com

Feb. 21-27, Washington, DC
DC Fashion Week
(202) 271-7235; www.dcfashionweek.org

Feb. 24-26, Orlando
ISS Show
(800) 241-9034; www.issshows.com

Feb. 27-Mar. 2, Marlboro
New England Apparel Club Show
(781) 326-9223; www.neacshow.com

New! Numbers for Performance Wear



Elasti Prints®

Stretchable numbers for application on:

- Polyester
- Cotton
- Cotton/Poly blends

CALL FOR FREE SAMPLES!

asi/91804



STAHLS' TRANSFER EXPRESS.
We Print It. You Press It.™

TransferExpress.com
1-800-622-2280

LEARN IT LIVE!

How and why do people really buy? You'll learn how a buyer's psychology drives the entire purchasing process in "Get Inside Your Client's Mind: Powerful Strategies to Engage Buyers" at *The ASI Show Dallas (Wednesday, February 16, 4 p.m.)*. You'll learn what the number-one barrier is in all selling situations and how to overcome it. This exciting session promises to be a real eye-opener, and is packed with practical tips on how to effectively prompt people to buy *your* decorated apparel.

Afghani Embroidery

“When people hear that I’m from Afghanistan, all they think of is war,” says Nafisa Mohammadi, founder of Mending Walls. “I want people to see the beauty and the culture and everything good about it – not just the bad.” That’s why Mohammadi set out to educate U.S. buyers about Afghani culture through its traditional embroidery techniques.

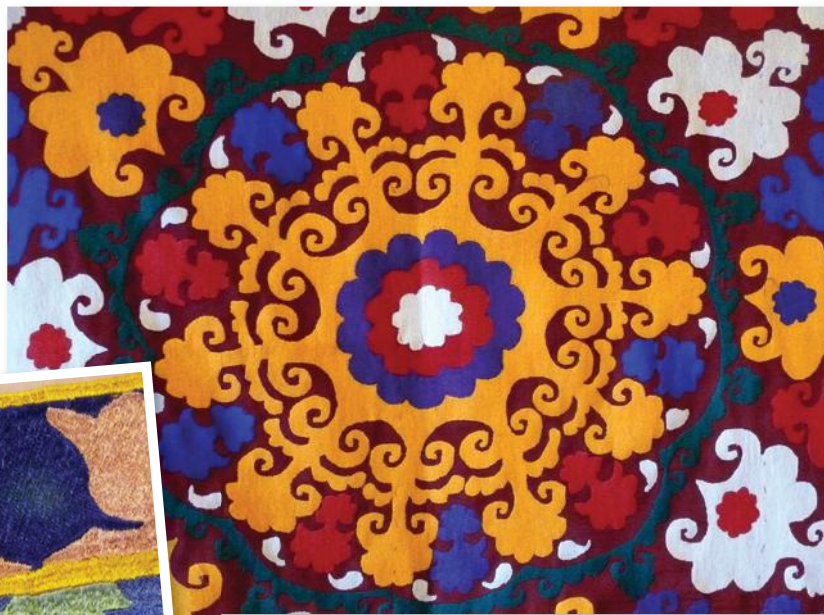
Through Mending Walls, Mohammadi markets and sells Afghani embroidery wall hangings to U.S. customers. “I collaborate with my Afghani embroiderers by creating and sending them designs that they turn into wall hangings,” Mohammadi says. “When someone buys a wall hanging, they’ll also learn who made it, how long it took to embroider and in general about the lives of women in Afghanistan.”

Mohammadi started Mending Walls as a senior project while attending College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, ME. Then, in 2009, she visited Kabul to spend time with native expert embroiderers. “Many Afghani women learn to embroider at a young age,” Mohammadi says. “And when they get older, it’s a way for them to get financial support while they’re in the home taking care of children.”

Afghani embroidery is very distinct and uses two main patterns: flowers and geometrical shapes. Mohammadi says that the use of bright colors sets it apart from other culture’s embroidery, too. “If you look at an Afghan dress and a Pakistani dress, they’re very different,” says Mohammadi, who has also lived in Pakistan and is very familiar with that country’s traditional embroidery. “Pakistani dresses have a lot of beads and gems and are embroidered with silver, gold and other shiny threads. Afghani dresses have more color and geometrical patterns.”

Challenges that Afghani women face with their embroidery businesses include insecurity, a lack of marketing and a weak legal framework within the business sector, Mohammadi says. By marketing these women’s products overseas, she hopes to help them overcome some of the business challenges they face at home. “People today seem more interested in learning about other cultures,” she says. “For me, this business might not have worked 20 years ago.”

Afghani embroidery is very distinct, using floral and geometric themes.



With a population of 35 million in Afghanistan, more than 11 million people over the age of 15 can’t read or write – the majority being female. “My ultimate goal is to educate people outside of Afghanistan about other cultures on the traditions of the Afghani people, and also to bring income and provide opportunities to these women who have such a great talent for embroidery,” she says. “Afghani embroidery is beautiful and very inspiring.

We need to preserve the tradition so it doesn’t disappear.” – AV

An Early Start

Afghani girls learn to embroider at a very young age, producing anything from tablecloths and toys, to clothing and bag decorations. One occasion calls specifically for home décor: “When a woman gets married, she’s supposed to have embroidered everything for the new home, including pillowcases, sheets, curtains, blankets and wall hangings,” says Nafisa Mohammadi, founder of Mending Walls. “The whole trousseau will be used as the husband and wife’s first decorations for their house together, so women work on it for a long time before they’re married.” It’s great practice for women who then go on to offer their embroidery skills as a paid service to others.



By Bonnie Landsberger

Push-and-Pull Control

What happens when your design sews completely different than what you digitized? Part of it might be your push-and-pull settings, which you can learn to perfect.

It's happening again – your design is running amuck. You know you carefully placed your stitches, but your sample sewout is showing something totally different. Thread is poking out where it shouldn't be, and there's a gap where you know you placed stitches. Due to the "push-and-pull factor" stitches rarely sew exactly as the design appears on screen. That means digitizers must develop an eye for placement, with some knowledge of how each stitch will react to compensate for what will likely occur in the sewout.

Push is when the sides of stitches fall beyond punched boundaries. Pull is when stitch penetrations pull the fabric inward and don't cover as far out as intended. For example, if a round ball is punched to sew exactly as it's drawn with a fill stitch at a horizontal angle, it will result in an oval, with sides pulling inward and top and bottom pushing out. Stabilizers help in avoiding some of the problem, but too much

Push is when the sides of stitches fall beyond punched boundaries. Pull is when stitch penetrations pull the fabric inward and don't cover as far out as intended.

stabilization can damage quality. It's always best to punch with push and pull in mind, and then compensate for the possibility in those vulnerable areas. To help understand the issue, let's digitize this four-color design that requires full coverage with a basic fill pattern and a satin-stitch border.

BONNIE LANDSBERGER is owner of Cannon Falls, MN-based Moonlight Design. Contact: moonlightdesign@aol.com.



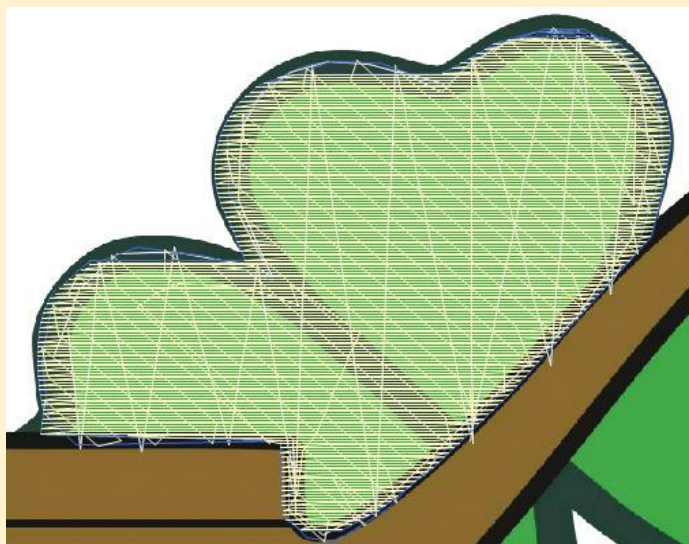
Stitches.com

Punch It Yourself

Download the art for this shamrock design at Stitches.com so you can practice digitizing it yourself, following the instructions in this column. And, e-mail nrollender@asicentral.com with your best punching tips.

STEP 1 Fill the Largest Background Section

I begin with the color that sits behind objects, requiring the most coverage, which will offer the best initial stabilization for the entire area. In this design that section is the shamrock leaves at the left and at the top. I set in a base underlay of line stitches and a section of light-density (3 mm) fill stitch that runs at a different angle to the angle planned for the top fill stitches. The edges of this underlay should lie on or near the center of the drawn border. I've used a horizontal angle (0 degrees) for the top section of fill (0.38 mm density). I'm aware that the stitches at the right and left of the fill section will pull inward, resulting in a gap between this object and the border, so I punch the sides near to the border's outside edge. At the top of each leaf, I keep the object nodes at or below the center of the border. Then, I travel to the right leaf and complete it in the same manner before digitizing the satin stitching of the shamrock's stem.

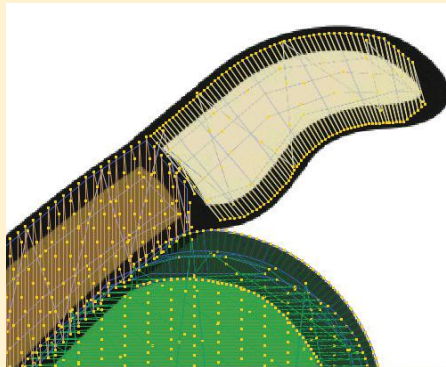


The sides of the horizontal fill should reach close to the outside edge of the border and taper as sewing reaches near the top, where stitches will begin to push.

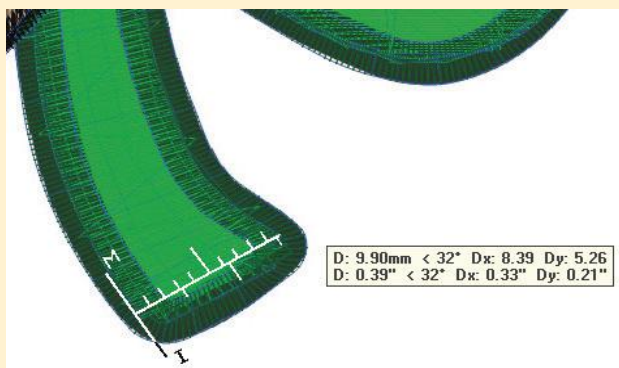
STEP 2 Finish and Check for Errors

I use a vertical angle (90 degrees) for the top fill of the pipe, because this angle creates the illusion that the object is closer to the eye. This effect keeps the entire design from appearing flat, which occurs when using a basic pattern tatami running at the same angle. Compensation for a vertical fill is required to avoid pushing stitches to the left and right and pulling stitches inward at the top and bottom of the object.

Satin stitches pull inward at the side and will push outward at the open ends. The amount of push has much to do with the density, pushing more when the density is thicker. The satin columns of the pipe tip and the stem of the shamrock are somewhat wide (over 5 mm), requiring extra density, so I end the columns near to the inside edge of the border and taper the edge as the element curves towards the end of the pipe tip.



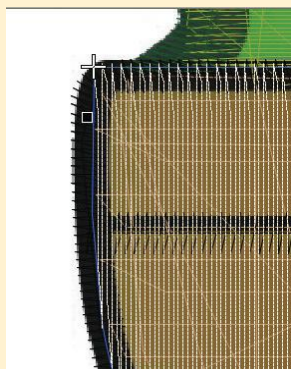
Before I punch the pipe's outline, I turn on the enhanced view to check the placement of stitch penetrations and ensure sufficient margin is given for both push and pull. The blue lines are the punched object lines. After deciding a little more compensation wouldn't hurt in the fill section, I opt for setting the automatic pull compensation at 0.2 mm to eliminate the need to move numerous nodes. The satin stitch of the pipe tip looks fine, so I don't apply any automatic compensation.



I use the ruler tool to check the width of the satin stitch on the shamrock's stem to ensure it's not more than the recommended max of 11 mm. Because the widest part of the column is nearly 10 mm, I keep the edges at the center of the border and add a line of underlay on each side for extra stabilization.

STEP 3 The Proof Is in the Sewout

Even when nodes are placed for appropriate compensation, it's not uncommon for little surprises to occur in the sewout. All factors related to push and pull must be considered, such as the weight of thread for the project and the fabric the design will be sewn on. A thicker thread, such as 30 weight, will pull a bit less but push more than a thinner 40 weight. Vulnerable fabrics similar to knits will require more pull compensation, and those that are quite stable might require more push compensation. Also, elements in the design such as those that sew over the top of stitches can cause an unwanted reaction to the stitches below.



This screenshot (*left*) shows that the nodes of the pipe's vertical angle fill are recessed near the inside edge of the border, but the sample (*right*) reveals a few of those stitches managed to poke beyond the border. This occurred when the stitches sewed for the horizontal black column that divides the top from the bottom of the bowl. As this satin stitch sewed toward the outside of the bowl, it actually pushed at the fill stitches below, moving a few to the outside of the border.



After a bit of editing to move the side of the fill inward, the design is complete.

STITCHES UNIVERSITY

By Ed Levy

your source for your decoration education



Equipment 201

An intermediate-level look at how to choose a heat press to your equipment lineup

Sophomore Heat Presses Are Hot Items

When choosing the size of heat press that's best for your shop, consider what you want to decorate. You can purchase a platen size that's intended to do only labels, all the way up to over-size platens that can heat-press an entire shirt.

Presses range anywhere from about \$300 for an entry-level, light-duty press to \$4,000 for a high-end, semiautomatic unit. As you pay more, you'll get more accurate controls, leading to better products for your customers and happier employees. "A low-quality press is physically harder to operate and will wear out employees faster, whereas a higher-quality one is less demanding," says Ben Robinson, director of operations for Hotronix.

If you're going to be producing high-volume work, that may warrant spending the extra money for a semiautomatic press.

1. Clam-shell press. This is a popular option because it takes the least amount of space. It's also lighter weight and portable. However, the operator's hands do go under the heated platen to load the shirt and then position the transfer.

2. Swing-away press. This type has a heated platen that's moved to the side of the press before and after pressing. "It's the most popular type of press for doing team uniforms," says Dan Seward, manager of Imprintables Warehouse. "However, it requires twice as much space as a clam-shell press because you need room to swing the top to one side."

Also, using a swing-away press is a two-step operation: The user has to unlock and lift the top, and swing it away, whereas a clam-shell just opens

straight up. Also, a swinger provides less pressure than a clam-style press, so it's not recommended for heavy applications such as puff transfers.

3. Draw press. This unique press style, which provides a heat-free work space, has a stationary platen and fits easily into a corner, unlike a swing-away. However, it requires more aisle space, as the drawer comes out. "A somewhat unique feature of the draw press is it has a digital pressure readout that's especially useful in retail environments where inexperienced users can be assured they're using the proper pressure required for the specific job," Robinson says.

4. Mug press. Ideal for add-on sales, this specialty press applies transfers to mugs, often at a high profit margin. On the other hand, the print cycle is fairly long (more than three minutes), and the press' lifespan is shorter than that of other types.

5. Cap press. Customizing caps with transfers or heat-applied embroidery is another way to increase add-on sales and is more cost-effective than screen printing or embroidery. However, because of the huge variety of cap sizes, be sure that your cap press has interchangeable platens. "Using the wrong size cap platen can mean the difference between a properly applied transfer and a wrinkled transfer," Seward says. A quality press comes with platens to handle everything from six-panel caps to low-crown caps.

6. Multipurpose press. This unit comes with a variety of attachments so that it can handle many types of substrates, making it a good choice for decorators who aren't yet sure which market they'll focus on. Specifically, it can do thicker items such as notepads and plates. "One consideration is that every time you change out the platen, you have to wait for the new one to heat up," Robinson says. ■

ED LEVY is the owner of Digitize4u in Montoursville, PA. He's also the director of software products at Hirsch International. Contact: ed@digitize4u.com.

Four Desirable Press Features

1. Automatic open. This feature uses electronic magnetic technology to open the press automatically when an item is done, allowing you to walk away from the unit and do other things - such as loading a second unit - instead of waiting for it to finish. It doesn't require an air compressor.

2. Digital pressure readout. This feature ensures accurate, consistent pressure item after item.

3. Interchangeable platens. By changing out platens, you can use the same heat press to easily do a wide variety of items besides shirts, including tote bags, youth garments, sleeves and more. Many suppliers offer about six standard platens, while some will custom-build a platen to your needs.

4. Nonstick coating. You can literally wipe off the press while it's still warm. When you've put a transfer on upside down, this feature is handy to have.

LEARN IT LIVE!

Want to start using Adobe Illustrator to tweak your clients' art? In "The Fundamentals of Vector Artwork: A Quick Start Guide to Adobe Illustrator" at *The ASI Show Dallas (Wednesday, February 16, 8:30 a.m.)*, you'll learn a whole host of quick tips, including mastering the pen, rotation, reflection and new gradient tools.

The Big Machine Issue Growth Spurt

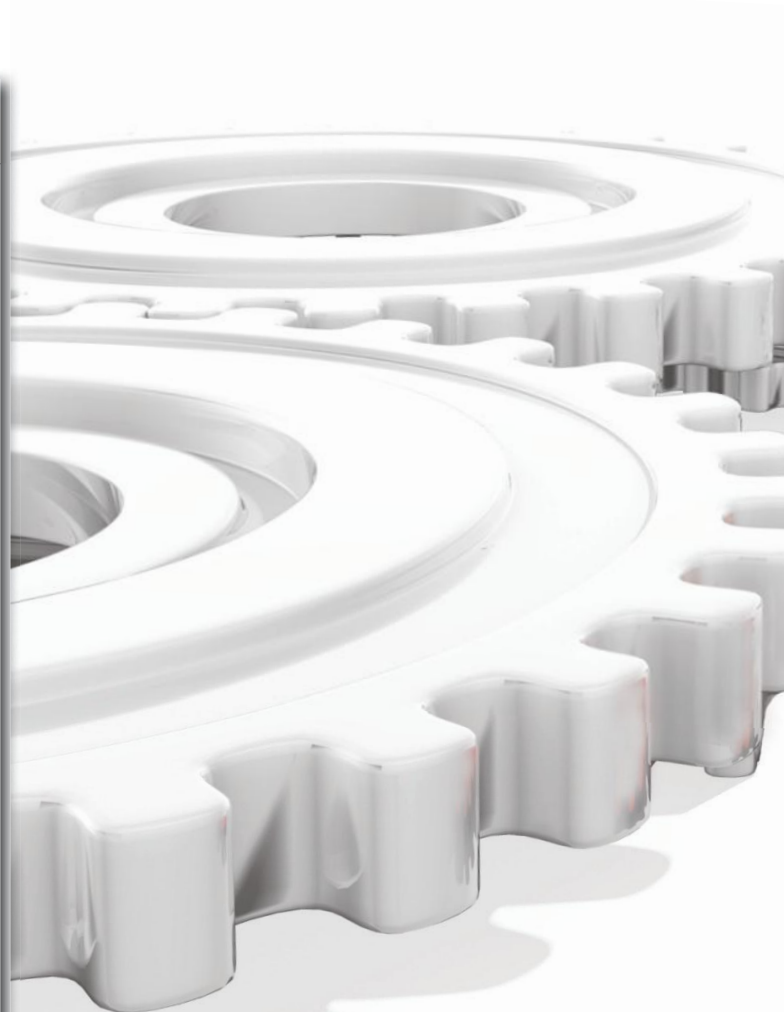
Ready to invest in your business this year? We cover the newest single-heads, multi-heads, garment printers, screen-printing equipment, heat presses and more.

By Shane Dale and Erica Young
Research by Larry Basinait

If you're ready to invest in new decorating equipment to increase your productivity, or you're a new decorator who's taking the plunge with your first machine, now's the time to invest.

It's 2011, and your goal should be to take your business to the next level. In this special section, you'll learn the four key steps to investing in the right equipment to fit your business goals – and the 10 questions you should ask potential vendors. Plus, 14 machine vendors share their newest single-heads, multi-heads, garment and screen printers, heat-transfer equipment and more, with real user reviews.

And, we have the results of our exclusive Decorating Equipment survey: In December, we surveyed home-based, retail and contract decorators to learn what equipment they have – and what they think is worth investing in this year.



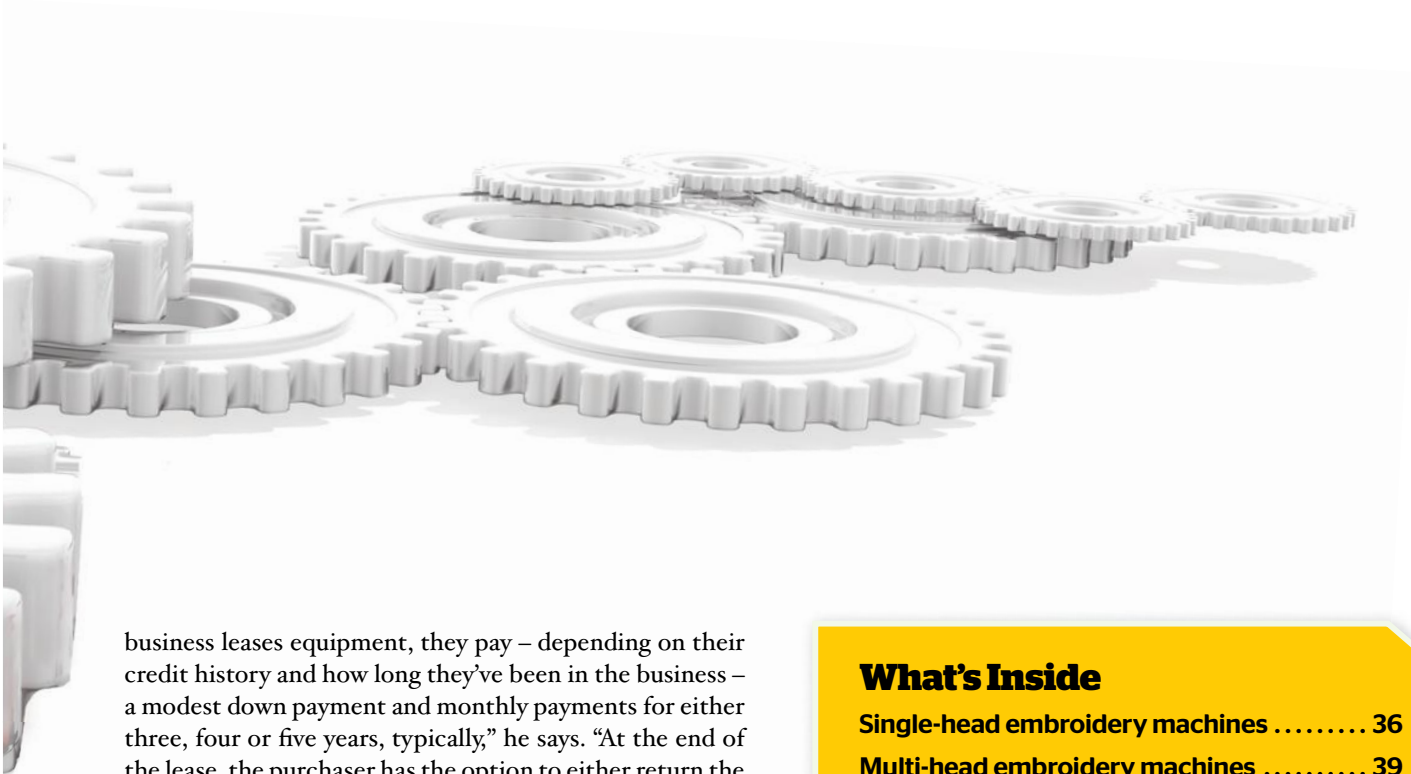
Get Ready to Invest

If you're looking to expand your business, buying a new machine might seem like a no-brainer. But before you start shopping for another embroidery machine, heat press, direct-to-garment printer or other investment piece, make sure you've carefully considered these four steps.

1. DECIDE WHETHER TO BUY OR LEASE

Before you pull the trigger on a new machine purchase – whether it's an additional embroidery machine or equipment for a different kind of embellishment method – you need to decide whether to buy or lease. “If a decorator has the cash flow and can purchase a new machine outright without putting undue stress on their business, I think that's the way to go,” says Bob Stone, vice president of sales for Barudan. “If, for some unforeseen reason, business gets slow, or they lose an account, they don't have a monthly payment for which they're responsible.”

Unfortunately, most small decorating businesses just don't have the cash flow to buy, Stone says. “When a



business leases equipment, they pay – depending on their credit history and how long they’ve been in the business – a modest down payment and monthly payments for either three, four or five years, typically,” he says. “At the end of the lease, the purchaser has the option to either return the equipment to the leasing company and walk away, or buy-out the lease at a predetermined amount agreed upon at the lease’s inception. A 10% buyout is common.”

The advantage of leasing a machine, according to Stone, is it allows the decorator to buy new equipment without a large outlay of cash, which enables the owner to keep most of his or her cash for day-to-day business expenses. “Most leases also offer a tax advantage over a straight purchase,” he says.

Steve Freeman, owner of Qdigitizing.com (*asi/700501*), urges decorators to talk to an accountant before deciding to lease or buy. “It just depends on how you want your cash flow and taxes to pan out, and your accountant can give you the best recommendation for your business situation,” he says.

Freeman does offer a word of caution for decorators who decide to lease a machine: “Just be careful, because some leases fall into the ‘it’s too good to be true’ category, and if it does look too good to be true, it is too good to be true,” he says.

2. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH SPACE

A simple but crucial question to ask yourself before you buy another machine is: Do you have enough room for it? “You have to consider the amount of space surrounding the machine to get a human being to operate it,” Freeman says. “The machine itself might be only 4 feet deep, but you can’t press it up against the wall because you need to get behind and alongside it.”

Freeman recommends an absolute minimum of 2 feet of clearance on the rear and each side of the machine, and a minimum of 4 feet in front of the machine. “What most decorators forget about are the sides and back,” he says.

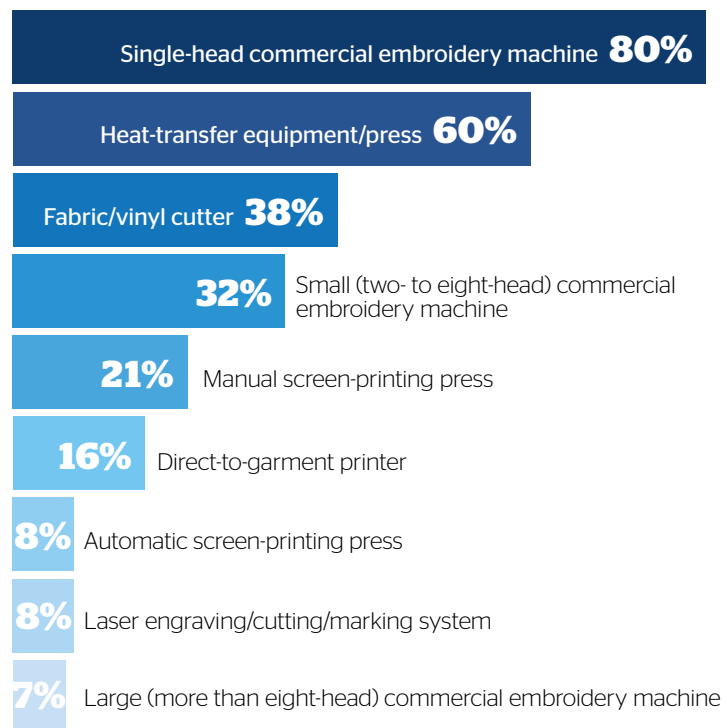
Most single-head embroidery machines will fit into

What’s Inside

Single-head embroidery machines	36
Multi-head embroidery machines	39
Direct-to-garment printers	41
Screen-printing equipment	43
Heat-press/transfer equipment	43
Laser equipment	45

Current State of Decorator Equipment

Here are the top types of equipment that decorators currently own:



QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING

Here are the top 10 questions you should ask machine vendors before you decide to purchase your next piece of decorating equipment:

- 1 How long has the vendor been in the industry, and what's the vendor's reputation?
- 2 What, specifically, does the machine's warranty cover?
- 3 How much is the machine really going to cost me to operate in my shop?
- 4 What type of trade-in value will the machine have five years from now?
- 5 Will the vendor give me the names of some decorators who already bought and use the machine so I can discuss my potential purchase with them?
- 6 What's a reasonable speed at which I can expect to run the machine on a daily basis? "Salespeople tell you the top speed the machine will run, and then embroiderers, especially new ones, will take that as the speed that it will run at all day long," says Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach. "This isn't usually the case."
- 7 If I take good care of this machine, how many years can I expect to be able to keep it in steady production?
- 8 Does the vendor have a technical support staff, and what services do they offer? "Call the vendor's tech support line to see how easy it is to reach support staff members," says Chase Roh, Ph.D., president, CEO and founder of AnaJet Inc. (*asi/16007*).
- 9 How often should I have the machine serviced by a qualified technician?
- 10 Where do I want my business to be in five years, and how will this new machine fit into that plan?

a 3-foot-by-3-foot space, Stone says, while larger, bridge-type machines with extra-large sewing fields will usually fit in a 3-foot-by-4-foot area. "Also, each machine needs its own separate work area for hooping, unhooping, quality control, and refolding and unpackaging," he says. "A table for hooping and unhooping is a must, along with plenty of access to all sides of the table. Also, cabinets for backing, thread and supplies are always a nice touch, though not mandatory."

Of course, decorators must make alternate size considerations for non-embroidery machines, such as direct-to-garment printers and heat presses, says Paul Green, applications manager for AnaJet Inc. (*asi/16001*). "One of the many great things about a direct-to-garment printer is that it takes up a lot less room than the smallest screen-printing setup," he says.

Garment printers require a table that is at least 4 feet by 6 feet, Green says, which will provide decorators with just enough room for their printer and computer. "A solid, level table will be required for the best placement," he says. "A standard outlet is used and should be close to the machine. You also should use a good-quality surge protector for the printer and your computer. Make sure you have enough room to access the back of the machine for power and USB cables. You'll also need to set up a humidifier for the printing area. They don't take up much room and can be set up in a corner."

Standard-size heat-press machines should fit on a 4-foot-by-4-foot table area, according to Green. "It's important to have your heat press set up far enough from the printer that the heat won't affect the printer's environment," he says. "A standard wall socket will work for your press, but you should have it plugged in to its own socket."

If you're finding it difficult to visualize the amount of space you'll need for a second machine, Erich Campbell, digitizer

Single-Heads Rule

80%

of decorating shops include an average of two single-head embroidery machines.

and e-commerce manager for Black Duck Inc. (*asi/140730*) in Albuquerque, NM, recommends creating a paper template and cutouts for your hypothetical machine as well as your current machine, which will allow you to place and arrange them freely in your shop before you commit to the purchase.

"If you have the time and are technically or artistically inclined, drawing your floor plan and your machines in a drawing program like CorelDRAW, Adobe Illustrator or Inkscape, or modeling them – most likely as simple blocks – in a free 3-D design program like Google SketchUp, may offer you a more complete picture of how your space will come together," Campbell says.

3. DECIDE WHICH KIND OF MACHINE BEST FITS YOUR PRODUCTION GOALS

So, do you want to double your embroidery efforts by buying another embroidery machine – or do you want to diversify your shop by adding another embellishment method to your portfolio? Here are some guidelines for working through that process.

Purchasing an embroidery machine. Embroidery specialists who routinely take on large orders with short deadlines may want to invest in a second embroidery machine, Stone says. "If the owner of a single-head shop has two weeks to turn

around a 7,500-stitch, 72-piece cap order, that's no problem. But, if that same order has to be completed in two days, that's added pressure on the decorator," he says. "Plus, with the machine tied up sewing the large job, it leaves no time for the small one- or two-piece order, samples or sewouts."

Stone says that on the other hand, "If most of the business is monogramming and personalization, it may make better sense to add an additional employee to do hooping and name and monogram setup than to add another machine."

If you decide to add an embroidery machine to your shop, you'll need to know whether to go with a single-head or multi-head machine. "The average stitch count is a deciding factor in knowing when to add heads," Stone says. "If the owner's forte is jacket backs, one single-head probably isn't going to do the job if it's a high-volume shop. Some jacket backs have upward of 75,000 stitches to 100,000 stitches and can take several hours to sew."

Nick Mattina, sales manager for Prodigy, says the single-head vs. multi-head decision comes down to the amount of work you have and the clientele you serve. For example, most small decorators focus on individual, custom orders from one to five pieces at a time – in which case, the most practical solution is another single-head machine.

However, decorators who primarily sell to clubs and organizations, and take on higher-quantity orders, might want to go another direction. "For that, a dual-head machine is going to produce twice as much and cost about one-and-a-half times more than a single-head," Mattina says. "With dual heads, your costs and payments are a little bit more, but at the end of the day, it's a math equation and it just works better."

Purchasing a non-embroidery machine. Campbell suggests conducting an informal survey of current customers to find out whether they're interested in other embellishment methods, such as heat transfers – which is Campbell's first suggestion to decorators who want an inexpensive way to expand. "With the prices of heat printing so much lower than other options such as

To Own or Lease?

Two-thirds (67%) of decorating equipment is owned without being financed or leased, while one-quarter (25%) is financed to own.

Contract decorators (34%) are more likely to finance to own than either home-based (24%) or retail locations (23%). This is most likely because they purchase higher-priced, industrial-grade equipment.

"You have to consider the amount of space surrounding the machine to get a human being to operate it."

Steve Freeman, QDigitizing.com (asi/700501)

direct-to-garment printers, and the options for special effects, multiple finishes, and pre-cut or printed transfers increasingly provided by the suppliers of heat-printing consumables, it isn't the leap of faith that adding some processes may have been in the past," he says.

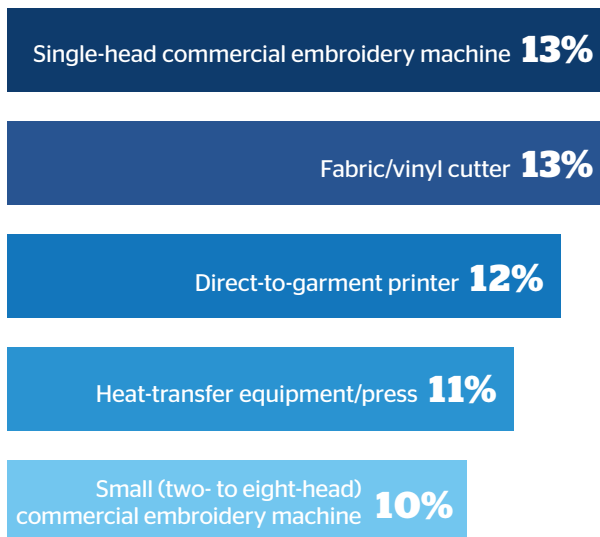
Cara Cherry, public relations director for Stahl's ID Direct, says heat presses allow embroiderers to offer on-demand personalization. "They can purchase pre-cut letters and numbers for instant customization on jerseys or uniforms," she says.

If a heat press isn't what you have in mind, digital transfers allow decorators to create full-color logos in metallic, puff and flock, "and add interesting special effects that may not be possible or may be too expensive to produce with embroidery," Cherry says.

If you don't know how to operate any decorating machinery outside the embroidery realm, Bonnie Landsberger, owner of Cannon Falls, MN-based Moonlight Design, says you must consider time and financial expenses before the purchase. "If

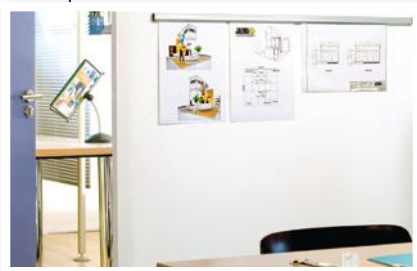
2011 Equipment Investment

Decorators plan to invest in a wide variety of equipment this year. Here are the top five:



GET ORGANIZED

Jalema Inc., a provider of large format filing solutions to the graphics industry, has developed the new Jalema Grip for organizing and displaying important



documents such as proofs, print samples, blueprints, maps and general office documents.

The purpose of the Jalema Grip is to better organize artwork from your clients, or any document

that needs to be on display to help fulfill an order. The Grip can be mounted to any wall with double-sided tape or mounting brackets. It comes in four sizes to accommodate most small and large sheets of paper. The gripping mechanism allows you to insert and remove one sheet or several sheets at a time.

Price ranges from \$26 to \$76 depending on size - the product is available in four sizes ranging from 24 inches to 96 inches: 24 inches, \$26; 36 inches, \$33; 48 inches, \$38; and 96 inches, \$76.

Contact: Jalema Inc.; Elkridge, MD; (800) 352-5362; www.jalema.com

hiring is necessary, an embroiderer should first determine whether the assumed profit can help retain an employee, or he or she must be absolutely comfortable with adding the extra production to his or her own agenda," she says.

Freeman strongly advises small decorators not to buy another piece of equipment simply to chase a trend. "If you really feel this is something you want to get into, do your homework and find a good vendor you can rely on and trust," he says. "After the cooling-off period, then make a decision if you want to expand into a decorating technique, but try to avoid the hot-trend decisions. I know a lot of people who have garment printers that have dust collecting on them."

However, diversification may be essential for survival in this economic climate, Stone says. "The most successful shops are the ones that are multi-dimensional," he says. "If a customer walks into your shop and you can't service him, he'll go to your competition. Today, customers are looking for one-stop shops that can do multiple types of embellishment - customers are looking for convenience. And, no one can afford to lose a customer."

4. BUY A MACHINE THAT WILL MEET YOUR COMPANY'S LONG-TERM GOALS

If you don't have a business plan in place that covers the next five years, forget about adding another machine, Campbell says. "Everything hinges on having that plan in hand before you even begin to consider expansion," he says. "Most five-year plans are going to call for expansion, but the question you must ask yourself is: How much do you want to expand?"

What Decorators Want Most From Machine Vendors

Decorators chose "nearly 24/7 tech support" as the most desirable quality in a machine vendor, ranked an average of 2.5 out of 6 possible points (1 being the most desirable and 6 being the least desirable). This ranking is marginally better than "lowest price year round," ranked an average of 2.9.

Here are the six features of top machine vendors ranked as most important by decorators.

1. Nearly 24/7 technical support
2. Lowest price year-round
3. In-person and online training
4. Technology leader
5. Special deals at trade shows
6. Offers more attachments than competitors

New or Used?

78% – Percentage of imprinting equipment that decorators purchased new in 2010

22% – Percentage of previously owned equipment purchased in 2010

Home-based businesses are more likely than retail locations or contract shops to purchase new equipment.

	Home-Based Shop	Retail Shop	Contract Shop
New	81%	77%	69%
Previously owned	19%	23%	32%

The most basic part of that plan, according to Campbell, includes deciding whether you want to grow to your limit before you buy new equipment, or if you want to increase your capacity and then boost your advertising to fill your production ability gap. Campbell says the second option is riskier: “In my opinion, you really need to push growth through the initial promotion and let it come organically.”

In order to put together a robust five-year business plan, decorators must have a sound idea of what their core business looks like right now, and what they expect that core to look like long-term. “For example, is a two-head embroidery machine really the way to go, or would your business benefit by adding one or two more single-heads for more versatility?” Stone says. “If personalization is the core business, adding single heads makes much better sense.”

Another part of that five-year plan is deciding whether adding contract business is in your future, Stone says. “If so, maybe buying a machine with greater capacity – for example, a multi-head embroidery machine or an automatic press vs. a manual – and growing into it would be a better fit,” he says.

Chase Roh, Ph.D., president, CEO and founder of AnaJet Inc., advises decorators to have the machine’s manufacturer perform an ROI analysis for the machine you might buy (example: AnaJet’s New Business Owners’ Guide for Garment Printing at www.anajet.com/new.html).

Roh also says decorators must be reasonably certain that the vendor will still be around in five years. “Since most manufacturers cannot provide product offerings five years from now, it’s important to check out the maker’s reputation and staying power, since you’ll continue to need their support and new application development and possibly a system upgrade,” he says.

The bottom line is this: If you have as much work as you can handle and have an aggressive marketing strategy, the addition of a second machine will probably be profitable five years down the road. However, Campbell says, “If you aren’t doing the work it takes to get yourself out into the community and maintain that top-of-mind awareness you need in order to be the first person people turn to, you likely won’t be able to expand to any significant amount.” – SD

CREATE A PROFIT MAP TO \$1 MILLION

To improve profitability, decorators first need to analyze exactly where their best profits are coming from – either the customers who are providing it or the products and services that yield the best profits.



Take a look at any company’s profits, and this is how they usually shake out: “Generally 30% to 40% of every company is unprofitable, and 20% to 30% provides all other profits and subsidizes losses,” says Jonathan Byrnes, president of Lexington, MA-based business consultancy Jonathan Byrnes & Co., and the author of *Islands of Profit in a Sea of Red Ink: Why 40 Percent of Your Business is Unprofitable and How to Fix It*. Byrnes, a senior lecturer at MIT, says the sooner decorators can pinpoint which percent of their business is more profitable, the more they can drive up revenue.




How? They should start, Byrnes says, by creating a “profit map.” That involves mapping every order for a two- or three-month period by creating an income statement for every transaction, answering questions like: Is the customer near to or far from your facility for this transaction delivery? Is it a product for which we’ve got good forecasts or bad?

Mapping the cost of each order – including shipping, product samples, administrative follow-up and other details – can help decorators see how much each and every deal costs their company, plus what equipment they can and should invest in.




Creating such a map can also help decorators figure out where costs can be cut. “Computer support, cell phones, additional tech support – those are little ways you can extend profitability without cutting into major expenses like insurance and rent,” says Brad Akers, president of Chicago-based Tip-Top Branding (asi/344851), which has \$3 million a year in sales and expects revenues to be up 30% this year. – Betsy Cummings

Machine Specs and Reviews

Single-Head Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
 <p>Elite Pro II</p> <p>Barudan America Inc.; Solon, OH 44139; (800) 627-4776; www.barudanamerica.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-head, 15-needle commercial embroidery machine • 330mm-by-500mm sewing field • Sews up to 1,300 stitches per minute • 170-lb. cast aluminum frame • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VT2 Automat • USB Port: use USB memory stick to load designs • Centering feature: one-touch hoop-centering tool • Servo motor driven <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laser point ensures proper placement • Exclusive solenoid-driven thread C-clamps reduce pullouts and thread breaks • Radius cylinder arm for highest stitch quality on caps • Outline perimeter to improve productivity • Networkable-ready • ZQ 15-needle sewing head 	<p>Victoria Daher, embroidery supervisor for Greensboro, NC-based Pace Communications, chose the Barudan Elite Pro II single-head for her company because of its reputation for reliability. "From the first machine I bought as a small-business owner, to the six machines we now run, I have had nothing but superior support and service," she says. "The machines are high-quality and dependable."</p> <p>Daher has benefited from the machine's 15 needles. "We offer more than 20 thread-color options in our catalog," she says. "So being able to leave 15 colors on the machine is a huge time-saver." She also enjoys the machine's durability, easy-to-use automat, networking capability and strong motors. "We work within a quick turnaround for our orders, so I need my machines to run as fast as possible and still keep accurate registration," she says. "We typically run them at 950 stitches per minute, but they do a great job with very little vibration."</p>
 <p>Quattro 6000D</p> <p>Brother International; Bridgewater, NJ; (800) 432-3532; www.brother.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-needle sewing/embroidery/quilting/crafting machine • Sews up to 1,000 stitches per minute while the embroidery arm is still attached • Includes more than 600 built-in embroidery designs and the new Jumbo 12-inch-by-8-inch hoop • 50 square inches of work space • 4½-inch-by-7-inch wide-angle HD LCD display by Sharp Corp. • Up Close Viewer function (1.5x larger thumbnail viewing, centering function, grid display and 200% magnification of needle position) • Runway Lighting • Named a <i>Consumers Digest</i> Best Buy • \$8,999.95; if purchased with two pieces of custom luggage and a dust cover, the price is \$9,899.95 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • InnovEye Technology Scan Capturing Feature (scans what is hooped on the machine and then displays it on the LCD screen for design alignment and realistic viewing) • Enhanced on-screen auto resizing from 60% to 200% <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print and Stitch technology to combine printed images with embroidery designs for 3-D art • Embroidery card reader: compatible with the entire library of Brother embroidery cards, including licensed designs from Disney and Nickelodeon (\$129.99) 	<p>Beverly Schleimer of California-based Xtra Embroidery Creations, bought the Quattro on the sole fact that she knew the dealer. "I think the most important thing is to trust who you are getting your machine from," Schleimer says. "I love that if I have a design, I can put in the machine and make it smaller or larger – no software needed." She also finds the upside-down sewing (the bobbin work) to result in great quality designs. Another Quattro owner, Ann Haupt, bought the machine for home use. "I use it mostly for embroidery and love the auto-threading," Haupt says. "The quality of embroidery is great, and so is the camera (InnovEye Technology) for embroidery placement."</p> <p>Both women agree that improvements need to be made on the bobbin case. "When you're in the middle of embroidery and run out of bobbin thread, it's a little difficult to change," Schleimer says. Haupt adds that she wishes the machine weren't made out of plastic. "But the overall quality of the machine is excellent," Schleimer says.</p>




Single-Head Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Tajima TEMX-C1501</p>  <p>Hirsch International; Solon, OH; (800) 394-4426; www.hirschinternational.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single head, 15-needle commercial embroidery machine • Compact body arm-type design • 6½-inch LCD control panel • LCD color monitor with USB and LAN connectivity/networkability • SOOMHz-32 bit processing • Memory of 2 million stitches (up to 200 designs) • Sews at speeds up to 1,200 stitches per minute • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twin thread trimmers • USB port • Immediate-stop safety breaker <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MicroSmart Technology, which uses microchip integration to make this machine operator-friendly • Driven by Windows CE Software (upgradeable) • Tilt head (angle of head is more upright, allowing for a bigger sewing area and better stitch quality) • Rotary-dial thread detection and auto-tensioning system • Automatic/manual offset function that provides frame movement to preset offset points • Origin return that ensures the return of the frame to the design's starting point 	<p>Cheryl Husslein, owner of Gold Canyon, AZ-based Gold Canyon Embroidery, has owned her TEMX-C1501 for over a year and typically uses it to embroider hats. "It comes with cap mode and flat mode, and I just leave it in cap mode and crank out 100 per order without a problem," she says. "It rotates automatically so I don't have to monitor it." Husslein also does large items on this machine, such as monograms on luggage and large bedspreads. "I love the large LCD control screen that shows the design and location of the needle at any point in the sewing process," she says.</p> <p>Since the TEMX-C1501 is specially made for mobility and smaller working spaces, it's light enough to move to remote locations. "I can easily take it to trade shows," Husslein says.</p>
<p>AMAYA XTS Single-Head</p>  <p>Melco; Denver; (800) 799-8313; www.melco.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA-made single-head modular embroidery system • Each head is 16 needles • Sews up to 1,500 stitches per minute • Uses the industry's smallest cylindrical lower arm, enabling users to embroider on a wider variety of products than any other machine • Precise laser registration • Adjustable presser foot • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built on the solid XT platform • Thread trimmer: new cutting action for clean, reliable cuts, slicing through thick Burmilana and metallic thread • Wide-angle cap frame: provides one of the largest cap sewing fields and requires little or no backing • AMAYA OS: built-in lettering and editing capability, and real hoop limit detection <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modular system is expandable from a single head up to 30 heads • Acti-Feed thread tension • High-performance trimmer 	<p>Carolyn Cagle, owner of Stacy, MN-based Strikke Knits Inc., enjoys the flexibility, size and portability of the AMAYA XTS single-head machine. "I can add more machines as the company grows," she says. "And I love that it came with DesignShop embroidery software." Cagle uses the machine for fleece, nylon, vinyl and leather ATV and motorcycle seats, as well as for animal collars. "The quality of stitches, speed and fabric range are what I love the most about this machine," she says. She would, however, like the "buzzing" feature removed when it sits idle for awhile, and suggests doing any project larger than 20,000 stitches and more than 12 pieces on a larger, faster machine.</p>
<p>Meistergram Pro 1500 Compact</p>  <p>Pantograms; Tampa, FL; (800) 872-1555; www.pantograms.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-needle single head compact embroidery machine • Sews at 1,000 stitches per minute • 2-million-stitch, 99-design memory • On-board LCD monitor • \$8,995.00 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and improved belts and motors to increase durability/longevity of the equipment <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panasonic power-control system using Japanese technology • Linear pantograph drive movement • Fast-change 270-degree cap frame kit with two cap hoops • User-friendly LCD control panel • Extensive hoop kit • Narrow cylinder arm • Automatic thread trimmers 	<p>Charles Jenkins runs Clearwater, FL-based Casual Wear Unlimited (asi/159085), which provides custom embroidery on shirts, caps, outdoor, industrial wear and more. Jenkins enjoys the Pro 1500's thread break sensors, auto color change and auto trim. "There are very few thread-breaks – very few stoppage points overall," he says. "It's an extremely efficient system." He also loves the large, full-feature screen that monitors the machine's speed, estimated time to completion and status of the embroidery.</p> <p>Jenkins recommends the machine for embroidering hats. "It works 270 degrees around the cap at 1,000 stitches per minute," he says. "It always gets the job done."</p>




THE BIG MACHINE ISSUE

Single-Head Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Toyota Expert Series ESP 9100</p>  <p>Pantograms; Tampa, FL; (800) 872-1555; www.pantograms.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-needle, single-head compact embroidery system • Sews at 1,200 stitches per minute • \$12,995.00 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved networking ability: Network up to 48 units together • Modular embroidery system <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast-change 270-degree cap frame kit (two cap hoops, gauge, driver) • Fully-loaded, easy-to-use control panel • Expert series stitch manager networking software • Wireless technology enhances production and efficiency and flexibility • Three ways to connect: USB, LAN and serial port • Quiet operation 	<p>Carol Chabay, owner of Lake Hopatcong, NJ-based DC Signature Gifts, purchased her first ESP 9100 after discovering that many of her friends in the industry had Toyota machines for several years and were satisfied with their purchases. She jokes about the day she finally decided to buy. "I bought the entire staff that day – they just happened to throw in the machine," she says. "The support that comes with it is outstanding."</p> <p>Chabay now owns two Toyotas. "I like the networking abilities – being able to send information to both machines, and their ease of use," she says. "I've had them for more than two years and they've never broken down. They're my two work-horses."</p>
<p>PMEC-6/9/1201-CSX (L)</p>  <p>Prodigi; Wentzville, MO; (877) 724-6400; www.prodigiemb.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-head embroidery and single-head chenille combination machine • Six-, nine- or 12-needle head configuration • Sews at 1,000 stitches per minute • Sewing area of 18 inches by 20 inches • Starting at \$22,000 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New style of high-visibility color controller <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class 4 bridge frame with an open back • Embroidery, chenille, chain, sequins and cording functions in one hooping • Networking controller with efficiency data reporting • Compact, wheeled frame fits through a standard doorway 	<p>Andrew Hill, owner of Texas-based A's Embroidery & More, chose the Prodigy PMEC 901 CSX single-head machine due to his business location. "I'm based near a college and I was turning away specialty jacket-back designs and lettering work because I couldn't do it," he says. Once he realized local competing companies were doing collegiate work, but their turnaround time and minimum order quantity was unacceptable to the clients, Hill saw this as an opening. "By being able to combine chenille and embroidery, I could supply all their needs with no real minimums," he says. "Now I specialize in hoodies and jackets with extra-large embroidery designs."</p> <p>He uses the nine-color single-head for shirts, caps, bibs and towels, "but having a chenille attachment means that I can produce jackets that combine lettering and chenille, without re-hooping," he says. "I also love the speed and the controller, which still accepts a floppy disk so I can use my really old designs."</p>
<p>SWF E-1501C</p>  <p>SWF East; Tampa, FL; (877) 793-3278; www.swfeast.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-head, 15-needle compact embroidery machine • Sews up to 1,200 stitches per minute • 6.4-inch high-resolution LCD control panel with USB, serial and floppy disk input • \$11,995.00 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWF exclusive quick-change cap driver: no tools required, fits right into the tubular arms • Laser design trace • 2-million-stitch memory • Automatic oiling • Upper and lower thread-break sensors • Includes three days of training for two people at SWF East offices • Five-year warranty 	<p>Wendy Merkey, owner of Morganton, NC-based Wendy's Custom Embroidery, opened her shop in 2007. "I was completely new to the embroidery business," she says. "I purchased a single-head SWF locally, and it was the best purchase I made."</p> <p>Merkey's husband set a two-year goal for her, and when she reached that goal, they purchased the new 1501C. "I love how the on-screen prompts guide you through every step," she says. "It comes with a complete starter kit, including a full hoop set."</p>




Multi-Head Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>X-Series</p>  <p>Barudan America Inc.; Solon, OH; (800) 627-4776; www.barudanamerica.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available multi-head models from two to 56 heads (15 needles per head) • Runs at 1,000 stitches per minute • 8.4-inch color LCD display: 640 x 480 screen resolution • Comes with four sets of frames, the Advantage EX cap frame system, machine manual, parts book, tool box, serial port adapter and compact flash card • Large sewing field: 17³/₄ inches by 20¹/₄ inches • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • XS/XY automat: stores up to 100 memory locations with 10-million-stitch capacity • Three USB ports • LAN connector standard <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curved radius cylinder arm • Quick changeover system • Adjustable table • Exclusive electronic thread clamps • Timeline shows sewing progress • Visual pattern preview shows sewing progress, color image of design before sewing and progress as it sews out 	<p>“We bought out a business in the past year that had a 10-year-old 12-head Barudan,” says Steve Bassett, owner and partner of Brandford, CT-based Bassett Logo Products (<i>asi/133633</i>). “And the machine operates like it’s brand new.”</p> <p>Bassett and his team love the XY multi-head’s speed, memory, reliability and quality. They use it eight to 14 hours a day mainly for logos, hats and jacket backs, and are already planning on buying another in the next year.</p> <p>For desired improvements, Bassett would like it to be “lighter at the needles.” Although he thinks the hat hooping system could use some improvement, overall, he’d highly recommend the machine. “To see this machine operate is just amazing,” he says.</p>
<p>Entrepreneur Pro PR-1000</p>  <p>Brother International; Bridgewater, NJ; (800) 432-3532; www.brother.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-needle home embroidery machine • Full-color 4.3-inch-by-7.2-inch HD touch screen by Sharp Corp. • Consumer Electronics Association named it an International CES Innovations 2011 Design and Engineering Awards Honoree • \$13,999.95 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy Eyelet Threading System and automatic needle threading • InnovEye technology (sharp, magnified view of needle area) • InnovaChrome LED Thread Color System <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultra-precise design positioning • 110 built-in designs, 28 size-adjustable fonts, plus frames and decorative alphabet designs • PE-DESIGN Next Upgrade software for linking machines, advanced editing and additional designs 	<p>Janet Arnold of Goodlettsville, TN-based Broken Cookie Embroidery chose to buy the PR-1000 after owning the PR-600 (a six-needle embroidery machine). “When Brother came out with a machine with more needles and the camera-like technology, I had to have it,” she says.</p> <p>The camera-like technology, auto threading system and 10 needles are Arnold’s favorite things about the machine; however, she sometimes has problems with threading. “After each color finishes the stitching, the thread is pulled into the wiper area, but the threads fall out of this area,” she says. “If the thread that falls is long enough, it could fall into the design when it shouldn’t be.” Arnold has told her dealer about this and it’s being addressed.</p>
<p>Tajima TFMX1506</p>  <p>Hirsch International; Solon, OH; (800) 394-4426; www.hirschinternational.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six-head commercial embroidery machine • Driven by Windows CE Software (upgradeable) • “Green” machine (uses less power than other models) • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCD color monitor with USB and LAN connectivity/networkability (expanded memory and ability to use PXF files) • “Tilt” head (angle of head is more upright, allowing for bigger sewing area and a better stitch quality, especially on headwear) • Rotary dial thread detection and auto-tensioning system • Highest residual value 	<p>As an owner of an older, four-head Hirsch-supplied machine, Jane Robinson of Douglasville, GA-based Gable Sporting Goods (<i>asi/30134</i>), visited the Tyrone, GA Hirsch location to check out newer models. “We know that the newer technology was only going to increase our output with better appearance,” Robinson says.</p> <p>When Robinson saw the Tajima TFMX1506 had less stoppage on thread breaks, a light fixture and produced beautiful stitchwork, she purchased it. “We needed a do-all machine because we’re in the team sports business,” she says. “We stitch everything from jackets to bags. This machine really makes our work look so much better than our competition.”</p>



THE BIG MACHINE ISSUE


Multi-Head Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>AMAYA XTS Multi-Head</p>  <p>Melco; Denver; (800) 799-8313; www.melco.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA-made multi-head modular multi-tasking system that's expandable from a single head up to 30 heads • Each head is 16 needles, with automatic thread tension • Sews up to 1,500 stitches per minute • One of the smallest cylindrical lower arms, enabling users to embroider on a wide variety of products • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built on the solid XT platform • Thread trimmer • Wide angle cap frame requires little or no backing • AMAYA OS: built in lettering and editing capability, and real hoop limit detection <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precise laser registration • Adjustable presser foot • Thread-break recovery • High-performance trimmer • AMAYA OS software runs up to 30 heads at once in multiple configurations 	<p>After witnessing the technology improvements introduced in the AMAYA machines, it was an easy decision for Brad Whirley, co-owner of Kansas City, MO-based TheBrandingIron.com, to switch from another popular brand he already owned. "The AMAYA machine and software save time, are easier to use and do a fantastic job," he says.</p> <p>Whirley especially likes that the AMAYA machines operate independently of each other, which means they can be running different jobs at the same time. "You can start one sewing as soon as you get your hat or garment mounted, and you don't have to get every head mounted," he says. "It also means a thread break or problem on one machine doesn't bring production to a halt on all heads, resulting in more, and faster sewouts." He admits that the AMAYA initially sewed too fast for him. "It sounds funny to say, but I had to slow it down to 1,000 stitches per minute instead of 1,250 spm to 1,400 spm," he says. "Many machines won't even sew that fast."</p>
<p>Meistergram Pro 1504 4-Head</p>  <p>Pantograms; Tampa, FL; (800) 872-1555; www.pantograms.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-needle, four-head, bridge-type embroidery machine • 2-million-stitch/99-design memory • Sews at 800 stitches per minute • On-board LCD monitor • Narrow cylinder arm • Automatic thread trimmers • \$24,995 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved belts and motors • Efficient step motor • User-friendly monitor <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panasonic power-control system • Linear pantograph drive movement • Fast-change, 270-degree cap frame kit 	<p>Buddy Newman, owner of Columbus, GA-based Stitched In Time, bought the PRO1504 because of Meistergram's reputation for producing reliable machines. And, Newman hasn't been disappointed with that decision. "This machine is so fast," he says. "I can pump out orders faster than I can hoop them." Since he only has hoops in sets of four, as soon as the first set is done sewing, he's already hooping the next set. "I plan to order more hoops," says Newman, who has embroidered names, designs and logos on thousands of shirts, towels, caps and handbags with the four-head machine. "The multi-heads are efficient and produce excellent monograms," says Newman, whose one request would be that the machine connected directly into his computer, rather than requiring him to use a USB device.</p>
<p>PMF series machines (12- to 42-head flat machines)</p>  <p>Prodigy; Wentzville, MO; (877) 724-6400; www.prodigymb.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom models available from one to 11 heads • Sewing areas of up to 36 inches per head • Sews up to 1,000 stitches per minute • Stitch decoration methods include embroidery, cording and sequins • Overlap sewing area between sewing heads • Starting at \$28,000 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-visibility color controller • 3-D built-in stitch simulator and laser guidance <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class 4 bridge frame with open back • Embroidery, sequins and cording functions in one hooping • Networking controller with efficiency data reporting • Three-, six-, nine- or 12-needle head configuration 	<p>Tom Reznicek, owner of Girard-IL based DTTLR of Girard Inc., owns two-head and six-head Prodigy machines. He enjoys Prodigy's hardware support and the simplicity of the software that comes with the machines, but his favorite feature is the control unit. "It's the best I have seen," he says. "It's touch screen, networkable and works off of a USB thumb drive. It's very easy to use and has been great for teaching my employees how to run the machine."</p> <p>So far, Reznicek hasn't found anything he can't do with these machines. "I do hats, flats, shirts, golf bags, baseball bags, sleeves, seat covers and floor mats for cars," he says. "I've even sewn gloves and pillow cases for kids, as well as wedding and anniversary blankets."</p>

Direct-To-Garment Printers	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Sprint</p>  <p>AnaJet (<i>asi/16000</i>); Costa Mesa, CA; (877) 626-3200; www.anajet.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made-in-the-USA direct-to-garment printer that prints on all types of garments, textile materials and decorative items • Prints graphics and text in full-color on white, pastel and dark garments • Offers eight ink channels that are user-configurable for colored inks • Printing speed of about one minute per garment • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PolyBright textile ink allows printer to print directly on polyester, nylon, rayon, spandex and other synthetic-fiber materials <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed-loop ink delivery system • Trouble-free user maintenance • Fastest throughput speeds available • Lifetime customer support 	<p>Chuck Northcutt, president of Cincinnati-based Creative Promotions Inc., decided to purchase a direct-to-garment printer for his company to fill a void in his product offering. "Based on the quality of the prints and how easy it is to print white, we purchased an Anajet," he says.</p> <p>And he wasn't disappointed. By the end of the year, the Anajet Sprint printer was the single most profitable piece of equipment in Creative Promotions' shop. Northcutt's favorite features are the ease of printing a small or quick-turn job, the wide variety of items that can be printed on and the ability to print on any color. "The printer really shines when it comes to printing white ink," he says. "The designs turn out extremely vibrant and really showcase the printer's true potential." Northcutt has also found that the Anajet printer is also great for very complex graphics with lots of color and fades and blends.</p>
<p>GT-541 Digital Garment Printer</p>  <p>Brother International; Bridgewater, NJ; (800) 432-3532; www.brother.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ink-jet technology digital garment printer • Prints on many garments in high-quality color directly from a computer • As simple to operate as a desktop printer • 14-inch-by-16-inch long maximum printing size • \$16,995 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster and less expensive to operate than traditional screen-printing machines • Water-based ink can be cured by a standard heat press eliminating the need to purchase a conveyor dryer • Cost-effective for short-runs • Prints graphics with up to 600 dpi and four ink cartridges to create over 16 million colors 	<p>Reliability is what Mike Brady, president of Biddeford, ME-based Brady Screenprint (<i>asi/144750</i>), looks for first in a machine vendor, which is why he chose to purchase the GT-541. "Like everyone else, we were watching technology advance and knew digital garment printing was coming," he says. "Once Brother came out with one, I bought it based on reputation."</p> <p>Reliability, ease of use and the support system that Brother provides have benefitted Brady the most. His screen-printing, embroidery and digital printing shop initially used the GT-541 for one-offs and fill ins, and now uses it for nearly every order no matter the size. "It's great for specific items, like six shirts that are each different," he says.</p>
<p>GT-782 Dual Platen Inkjet Garment Printer</p>  <p>Brother International; Bridgewater, NJ; (800) 432-3532; www.brother.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-volume ink-jet garment printer • Prints multiple prints simultaneously • \$54,995 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced cycle times • Fast, flexible downloading of images • High-performance platform <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual platens for increased productivity • Eight Brother ink-jet heads and dual gantry • CMYK and white ink • Economical and easy to operate • Extra-large print area 	<p>Mike Brady, president of Biddeford, ME-based Brady Screenprint (<i>asi/144750</i>), owns the GT-782, which he originally bought to do shirts. "We knew customers would be asking us to do a small quantity of shirts in full color, and we needed a machine capable of producing that," Brady says. "That's what drove us to buy the 782."</p> <p>In the nine months the team has owned the printer, they've printed more than 16,000 pieces. "We mainly use it for 36- to 144-piece jobs where we can give customers 15 colors on a shirt," Brady says. "I couldn't do that before I owned this machine."</p> <p>Brady Screenprint also uses the GT-782 for large jobs on white shirts simply because of the quality work the machine produces. "The biggest benefit is the low-quantity orders we can do in full color," Brady says. "Before, a six-color design on 48 black shirts wouldn't be feasible, because the setup would have been extensive."</p> <p>The GT-782 has saved Brady Screenprint time and money. "You can command top dollar with the quality the 782 produces," Brady says. "Customers will pay for value and extra color."</p>




THE BIG MACHINE ISSUE


Direct-To-Garment Printers	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Kornit Breeze, Kornit Thunder, Kornit Storm and Kornit Avalanche</p>  <p>Hirsch International; Solon, OH; (800) 394-4426; www.hirschinternational.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four direct-to-garment printer models available • Prints on light and dark garments • Speeds up to 300 pieces per hour • \$55,900 to \$270,000 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretreat and print on the same machine <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphics can be produced up to 600 x 1200 dpi • Affordable inks • Can print on cotton and polyester • Kornit's RIP software compensates for any type of fabric • Automatically maintains the heads 	<p>Red Bluff, CA-based Walker Printing prints on an array of garments, from standard T-shirts to gloves to Dickies jackets, and needed a direct-to-garment printer that could handle that. After much research, Jen Womack, the company's business transaction executive, settled on the Kornit Thunder from Hirsch. "We love the fast turnaround, great quality and easy file setups," she says. "Owning this printer has allowed us to add another department to our company."</p> <p>Womack recommends this printer for a shop that already has printing experience and file-manipulation training. As for improvements, "We'd love to see a way to have the squeegees automatically cleaned off before the next purge and wipe," she says. "That would help production time and help the print heads from clogging."</p>
<p>MelcoJet G2</p>  <p>Melco; Denver; (800) 799-8313; www.melco.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-format direct-to-garment printer that prints images up to 16½ inches by 23.6 inches • 220 ml sealed ink cartridges • Runs for thousands of high-output production hours • Prints on a wide variety of products, including T-shirts • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints on light and dark cotton and blends, plus polyester • High-resolution photo-quality prints at 1440 dpi • Easy to learn and use MelcoRIP software • Complements screen printing and dye sublimation • Variable graphics and text printing • Micro runs, short runs or production runs 	<p>Shreveport, LA-based City Printing purchased the I34 MelcoJetG2 because it was in the company's price range, and also because the staff felt it was the best direct-to-garment printer compared to others in its class. "It's small, compact and portable," says Sarah Green, office manager of City Printing. "The cost of ink for the shirts is so low, which means more profit for us."</p> <p>City Printing mainly uses the MelcoJetG2, which has a simple set-up and clean-up process, for T-shirts and sweatshirts. "We're able to do as many shirts as the customer needs," Green says. "We can even do just one without losing money in set-up costs."</p>
<p>DTG Viper</p>  <p>SWF East; Tampa, FL; (877) 793-3278; www.swfeast.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-format direct-to-garment printer that prints images up to 16½ inches by 29 inches • Uses White Ink Management System (WIMS) to prevent settling of white ink by circulation and filtration • \$20,995 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Versatile 4-2-1 platen system: You can print four mid-size prints, two large prints or one oversize print at one time • Active Print Head Collision Prevention • Pressurized bulk CMYK ink-delivery system • Includes one day of training for two people at SWF East offices • Two-year warranty 	<p>Jason and Melissa Spiers, owners of Hattiesburg, MS-based JMH Graphics, only took one to two orders a day in their 1,100-square-foot facility before adding direct-to-garment printing to their business. "When we purchased our DTG Viper, it was mainly for sample prints and small reorders for our pre-existing screen-print customers," Jason says. Soon after purchase, the two opened an online store that offered customization of single shirts. "By taking advantage of online advertising, we were able to make the digital side of our operation a huge success," he says. "I'd say we brought in over \$60,000 in the first six months of owning our DTG machine."</p>


Screen-Printing Equipment	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Titan</p>  <p>Anatol; Buffalo Grove, IL; (866) 426-2865; www.anatol.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textile printing press that can print 900 shirts per hour when upgraded to a fully automatic press • Available from two- to seven-color models • Comes with 15-inch squeegee holders, squeegee rubbers and flood bars • \$14,995 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital microprocessor control system • Easy-to-use operator controls • Tight three-point micro registration modifications <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the smallest footprints available • Maximum screen size of 20 inches by 28 inches • 16-inch-by-16-inch image area accommodates most average print jobs • Print head has independently controlled squeegees and flood bars 	<p>“I bought the Titan for three main reasons – it has a super-small footprint, low air consumption and a great price,” says Dan Zmuda, president of Kernersville, NC-based Castle Shirt Co. (<i>asi/44317</i>). He adds that a perk for home-based shops is that the Titan can fit through a single-width door.</p> <p>With this machine, Castle Shirt Co. produces true four-color process and simulated process printing on both light and dark garments, and creates unique layered effects with glitter, gel and high-density inks.</p> <p>“If you have a five-color Titan and a bunch of one-color jobs to process, you can set up all the jobs at once, line up the orders and let that machine do in an hour or two what it can take a manual printer a day to do,” Zmuda says.</p>
<p>MHM Synchroprint S-Type AC</p>  <p>Hirsch International; Solon, OH; (800) 394-4426; www.hirschinternational.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available in eight-, 10-, 12- and 14-color models • Production speeds up to 1,400 pieces per hour • Built-in USB port for online support and software upgrades • Requires a single-phase electricity supply • Minimal compressed air requirement • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-directional high-speed servo-driven indexing • AC drive printing heads with linear guidance • Drive belts are fully enclosed and shielded • Super-rigid support arms • Full-color touch-screen display • Print heads lift to provide an unobstructed view of the image during setup and ink refill • Adjustable screen holders • Fast single-lever angle adjustment in 5-degree increments (0-30 degree range) 	<p>Javier Guillan, president of Sanford, FL-based Transit Designs, purchased the MHM Synchroprint S-Type AC after seeing a demo of the top-quality work it produced and how hassle-free the machine was. “The speed, monitor and easy setup are what I like the most,” he says. “We use the machine to print from 50 pieces to runs in the thousands, from eight-color simulated process to two-color designs.” Guillan says the machine is best for longer runs, but he wouldn't recommend it for shops that do a lot of samples and shorter runs (E-type).</p> <p>As for future enhancements, Guillan would like to see improvements with the arms on the E-type using the S-type design, and also on the squeegee connector to the arm.</p>

Heat Press/ Transfer Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Hotronix Fusion (16 inches by 20 inches)</p>  <p>Stahl's ID Direct; St. Clair Shores, MI; (800) 478-2457; www.stahls.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used as a swing-away or a draw press • Features EZ-On platen (provides 360-degree access to the bottom platen) • UL/ULC/CE RoHS compliant • Comes in 110- and 220-volt models • \$1,795 	<p>What's New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch-screen technology • Live digital time, temperature and pressure readout • Easy-to-install interchangeable platens <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cast-in tubular heating element every 2 inches • High-quality cast aluminum framework • Lifetime heating element warranty; five-year framework warranty; two-year circuit board warranty; one-year parts and labor warranty 	<p>Craig Weiss, vice president of sales and marketing for San Diego-based Initial Impression (<i>asi/23110</i>), originally bought the Hotronix heat press because Stahl's “educated us on how to use a heat-transfer machine for promotional products and apparel,” he says.</p> <p>Weiss says the Hotronix heat press is easy to use and has the benefit of a slide-out to place the garment on so a user doesn't get near the hot portion of the machine. He also likes the digital display and the even pressure, so he can run more than one shirt a time, as opposed to a clamshell model.</p> <p>Weiss says he'd “like a ruler printed on the front, identifying the center.” He'd also like the slide-out to be more protected, since “long-sleeve shirts can get caught in the mechanism,” he says.</p>

THE BIG MACHINE ISSUE

Heat Press/ Transfer Machines	Description & Cost	What's New & Features	User Review
<p>Digital Combo DC16</p>  <p>George Knight & Co.; Brockton, MA; (800) 525-6766; www.heat-press.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swing-away press • Allows for pressing over 1-inch-thick products • Features fully modular hot-swappable heat platens and tables for changing out between items in less than a minute • Solid steel welded construction • Temperature readout accuracy +/-2 degrees; can show degrees in C or F • \$1,195 	<p>Whats New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital pressure bar graph • Dual cycle timers <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully digital temperature control in the 32 degree to 600 degree range • SuperCoil Microwindin heater technology • Automatic digital timer and dual pre-press timer • 70 programmable presets • Records number of pressing cycles done • Teflon-coated 3/4-inch-thick heat platen 	<p>David Gross, president of Mobile, AL-based Conde Systems, attributes the DC16's popularity to that the fact that it can quickly produce on-demand, minimum-quantity personalized products. "If you want versatility and efficiency, the DC16 is your heat press," he says. "Interior signage, tags, awards, mouse pads and lanyards – we've found this press can do it all."</p> <p>Gross says the large 14-inch-by-16-inch heating area is big enough to do more than one smaller transfer job at a time, and he likes how the lower platen is elevated about 9 inches, which makes it easier to transfer thick, bulky items like heavy jackets. "The sleeves, shoulder pads and collar drape over, which keeps the garment flat and makes the transfer simpler," says Gross, who notes that decorators do, however, need to buy an attachment in order to do caps.</p>
<p>Roland GX-24 plotter</p>  <p>Heat Transfer Warehouse; Fargo, ND; (888) 819-4421; www.heat-transferwarehouse.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutter that cuts vinyl, paint masks, reflective vinyl, twill, heat transfers and sandblast material • Mechanical resolution: 0.0005 • Power: max down force of 250 grams • \$1,795 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts material from 2 inches to 27½ inches wide • Cutting speeds up to 20 inches per second • Optical registration: recognizes crop marks produced by a variety of print-only devices and automatically aligns media so that printed graphics can be accurately contour cut • Roland CutStudio software included 	<p>Dana Mikkelsen, head graphic designer of Moorhead, MN-based Superfrog Signs & Graphics, chose the Roland GX-24 for its reliability. "Superfrog has been using Roland products for quite some time and has found them to be intuitive and durable," he says. A perk of the Roland GX-24 is that it's compatible with 64-bit operating systems and can accept 27½-inch material.</p> <p>Superfrog uses the Roland GX-24 to cut everything from standard lettering to reflective vinyl and heat-transfer material. As for features, the optical eye for cutting laminated prints has proven to be very effective for Superfrog. "It seems to track very well for a friction feed plotter," Mikkelson says. "And, the option of a detail blade for cutting small or intricate letters has been something we've used more than I thought."</p> <p>"It's going to be the workhorse for any vinyl cutting shop," Mikkelson says. "It's not my first choice for cutting printed material with registration marks, only because it's a smaller format and most digital printers use 54-inch material."</p>
<p>Roland VersaCAMM VS-300</p>  <p>Imprintables Warehouse; Mason-town, PA; (800) 347-0068; www.imprintables.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printer/cutter customization tool that integrates printing and countour cutting capabilities • Prints metallics, signs and full-color digital transfers • Accelerated print speeds in a 30-inch platform • Prints in white text, graphics, floods and hundreds of metallic colors for premium graphics and wraps • \$16,895 	<p>Whats New:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced ECO SOL MAX inks <p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver ink allows for over 512 mettallic shades • Can print 26 different textures and holographic effects • Three color printing options • Proven printhead technology featuring seven droplet sizes • Recirculation system 	<p>Sarah Singleton, owner of Friendswood, TX-based Oh My Gosh! Rhinestone Creations, likes the VS-300, the smallest wide-format inkjet printer, for its eight-color channel setup that she uses for printing metallic and rhinestone heat transfers. "My clients want gold, silver and other metallic effects on their apparel and accessories," she says. "It's all the rage right now." She also likes the VS-300's fast drying time and wide color palette, and would recommend the machine to decorators who want to get started with heat transfers.</p>

Heat Press/ Transfer Machines	Description & Cost	Features	User Review
<p>Model 228</p>  <p>Insta Graphic Systems; Cerritos, CA; (800) 421-6971; www.instagram.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual swing-away heat press • 15-inch-by-20-inch swing-away upper platen • UL, CuL and CE approved; RoHS/WEE compliant • Contact manufacturer for price 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built-in digital controller for regulating time and temperature • Lower cutaway base for ease of loading and unloading garments • Integrated digital controller for time, temperature and counter • Pressure adjustment scale for ease of reading pressure 	<p>Laurel and Jared Tinney own a small, family business called Just Be Tees in Berthoud, CO, where they use the Insta Graphic Model 228 heat press. “The swing-away press needs roughly twice the space as a clamshell, but it’s worth being able to work without the platen in your way,” Jared says. “It’s a heavy machine, but it’s a workhorse.”</p> <p>The swing-away type of press, according to the Tinneys, seems to be better for printing a wider variety of items such as mouse pads and tiles, and it won’t heat up an operator’s arms as he aligns his next transfer. “I’ve done thousands of pieces with this press, 750 of which were done in four days,” Jared says. “I’m very pleased with its output.”</p>

Laser Equipment	Description & Cost	Features	User Review
<p>Seit Single-Head Laser</p>  <p>Hirsch International; Solon, OH; (800) 394-4426; www.hirschinternational.com</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-head laser • Cuts appliqué and reverse appliqué designs directly on garments • Allows for complex and segment cutting of appliqué • Designed to embellish finished garments on tubular embroidery machines (any brand, any model) • \$20,000 	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to instantaneously change your program • System requires no new software training • Incorporates a CO2 laser on a moving galvanometric (scanning) head attached to a custom-length bridge beam • Working field of 300 mm by 300 mm • Max speed of 9 m per seconds • Includes a cooling system with a water thermostatic control chiller for continuous, steady power 	<p>Rob Dubow, owner of St. Cloud, MN-based Dubow Textile (<i>asi/700107</i>) wanted to produce reverse appliqué and other retail-type techniques for corporate customers, so he purchased the Seit Laser Bridge. “It has allowed us to become very efficient with all types of appliqué,” he says. “We no longer need to first cut the fabric and then apply it by hand. I used to count on losing money when doing appliqué work due to labor costs, but now I’m able to make a reasonable profit with the time savings.”</p> <p>Dubow Textile’s sales have increased, since the laser allows the company to serve a wider customer base. “It’s amazing how many corporate customers want distressed and reverse appliqué done on T-shirts, sweatshirts, polar fleece and performance wear products,” Dubow says.</p> <p>The laser, however, needs to be calibrated to the material being cut, Dubow says. Currently his operators use aluminum foil as insurance, so the laser doesn’t cut too deep and damage the garment. – <i>ET</i></p>

Go to *Stitches.com* for a super-expanded version of this Big Machine section. You’ll get an extended look at what’s new and the features for each machine, along with a list of available machine attachments, plus insight into who’s the ideal buyer for each machine (and what kind of shop would not benefit from that particular machine).



..... JAILHOUSE EMBROIDERY SHOPS



Many U.S. prison systems allow inmates to work in in-house embroidery shops that service external clients. Is this a brilliant rehab move or just a way to undercut competitors? It depends who you ask.

By Daniel Walsh

Pam Elliott sits at a computer in her windowless workshop in Billings, MT, working on a digital design for a dog bandana. She tweaks a few things, then walks over to the nearby screen-printing machine, where the design will be embellished on a bandana that will be sold to a local dog owner. “I edited two or three different clip-art images, and then added text,” says Elliott, a 45-year-old brunette and mother of three. “That dog’s name is Geysler. They’re hunting dogs, obviously.” Elliott works as a decorator Monday

Almost 200 inmates live in Montana Women's Prison in Billings, MT.



to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., just like anyone else might.

The difference is that Elliott does it inside Montana Women's Prison, where she's serving a 30-year sentence for deliberate homicide. Montana is one of an increasing number of states to run decorated-apparel operations inside their prisons. Inmates train and work in commercial operations providing embroidery, screen printing and other apparel decoration. Some, like Montana and West Virginia, have small operations that only sell to schools, school organizations, nonprofit groups and state agencies, and have just a handful of workers. The inmates with the best behavior records draw these jobs, learning how to work commercial embroidery machines and design spiritwear for schools and T-shirts for charities.

Other states, like Iowa and Utah, tie into a federal program that allows them to partner with private companies that can sell to anyone. Lansing Correctional Facility in Kansas partnered with a company called Impact Design to create a three-shift, 24-7 operation that is one of the nation's largest contract decorators – and the fourth-largest, public/private prison labor partnership in any industry, according to the National Correctional Industries Association.

Advocates of these programs say they help rehabilitate inmates by teaching them job and life skills that prepare them to return and contribute to society in a positive way, and many inmates prize the jobs as being among the most desirable in their respective prisons. A 2009 study by the Washington Institute for Public Policy found that every dollar spent on correctional industries resulted in \$32.70 less spent on dealing with ex-convicts renewing their criminal behavior, a practice known as recidivism.

"Ninety-seven percent of offenders here are going to be released," says Donna Gober, brand manager for Washington Correctional Industries, which runs embroidery and screen-printing operations. "They're going to be your neighbor. I'd much rather have someone with job skills next door to me than someone without them, because the risk of recidivism is so much lower."

Some critics, however, say some prison operations exploit powerless inmates in order to make money for private companies, and these critics push for reforming the system. "The current situation with regards to prisoners is equivalent to slave labor," says Alex Friedmann, associate editor of *Prison Legal*

News magazine and co-author of *Prison Profiteers: Who Makes Money from Mass Imprisonment*. "In their present form, they shouldn't exist." Meanwhile, questions consistently arise over whether companies using prison labor benefit from cheap labor.

For example, one Texas-based tractor trailer manufacturer cited prison-based competition when it closed a factory in 2008. "They're allowing someone to compete at an unfair advantage,"

says Harvey Mackler, owner of Gempire (*asi/55610*), a Florida-based supplier.

What's clear is that not all prison apparel operations are created equal. To understand the differences, it helps to understand how it all works.

ON THE CHAIN GANG

Prison labor has existed for almost as long as there have been prisons. Australia owes its origins to the British Empire's founding of penal colonies on the continent in the late 18th century. Japan and China have long put their prison inmates to work, and few things in human history are as notorious as Siberian labor camps in the former Soviet Union. In the U.S., the 13th Amendment explicitly allows prison labor, stating, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Despite constitutional protection, the use of prison labor in the U.S. had its share of infamy, largely in the Deep South, until the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 vastly expanded the rights of workers, including prisoners. "Wardens would lease out convicts to mills, plantations and the like," says Jeffrey Ian Ross, a criminologist at the University of Baltimore. "Either the warden would personally get wealthy in the process, or the money would go back to the state. That's sort of the underbelly of the history here. That's why Taft-Hartley addressed this." Taft-Hartley improved the rights of workers, but it also altered the prospect of private partnerships for prison labor, which cut out a source of revenue for running the prisons themselves.

Then in 1979, Justice System Improvement Act authorized prisons to engage in private interstate commerce – and authorized partnerships with private industry through the Prison Industry Enhancement Certificate Program, or PIE program, as it's typically called. PIE programs have several requirements, such as mandates to pay inmate employees prevailing wages similar



Pam Elliott is the lead designer for Montana Women's Prison. She learned embroidery and screen printing despite having minimal training and working with outdated and often broken equipment. She's helped produce high-quality designs for schools, charities and government agencies.

JAILHOUSE EMBROIDERY SHOPS



to what they would earn on the outside, provide written assurance they won't displace workers at competing companies, and ensure all inmate participation is voluntary. Currently, 37 states have PIE programs, and most states aim for them to be financially self-sustainable. As of September 2005, PIE programs had generated a combined \$198.7 million for victims' programs, prison room and board costs, inmate family support and state and federal taxes.

Many such operations are financially self-sustaining, such as the one in Kansas. "We try to teach inmates skills to prepare them for their release, and at the same time, we have to be profitable," says Alan James, director of Utah Correctional Industries. Some have had erratic histories, such as Washington, which had a thriving program until the Washington Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional and shut it down; a state constitutional amendment reauthorized it in 2007. Few companies were willing to take a chance on it after that, in part because of uncertainty, but also because of the economy. Louisiana's prison industries have been hit by the economy, too. "Especially with the economic downturn lately, we've had some companies that want to do it, but for some reason or another, they haven't taken that final step," says Mike Moore, director of Louisiana Prison Enterprises.

The jobs in PIE programs are often viewed as the best in the prisons and become an incentive for good behavior. "It's a way of rewarding and punishing inmates," Ross says. "Prisoners know that. If they don't follow the rules, working in the prison industry will be taken away from them." That doesn't mean inmates are getting rich. Prisons can take as much as 80% of inmates' paychecks to put toward victim restitution, room and board costs, and other PIE-related expenses. Also, the National Correctional Industries Association found six of 17 PIE programs it assessed "had wage issues of some kind" that were later resolved, in two cases with back wages being paid to inmates who were underpaid.

Friedmann says what often happens is

that prisons pay minimum wage rather than prevailing wage. Still, even that is more than inmates are paid in non-PIE programs, which pay most inmates under \$1 an hour. Still, it's often better than kitchen duty. "It's considered beneficial to be in the industry's program," says Eddie Long, director of West Virginia Correctional Industries. "It gives them something to do. It keeps them busy, and they're getting paid."

MIRROR FOR THE OUTSIDE

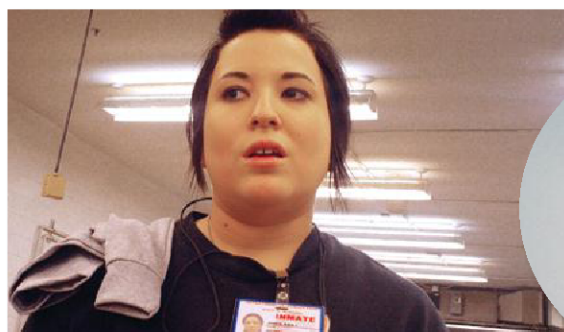
Stepping inside the embroidery and screenprinting workshop at Montana Women's Prison isn't all that different from going into a similar shop in the free world. Sure, there's the metal detector, a couple fences and lots of locked doors, but those differences are really pretty minor once you're inside. Workers clad in black shirts, khaki pants and sneakers move about freely, and there are just a few of them, as this is a fairly small operation. A dog named Leo walks around workers' feet and under tables; Leo is one of about 100 rescued dogs that inmates trained in 2010 to prepare them for adoption. Manager Kevin Mickelson handles sales and marketing in his office. There's not a single corrections officer in the workshop.

Before she went to prison in 2009, 27-year-old Emily James worked for Sutton's Sportswear, an embroidery and screenprinting company in Billings, MT, that closed in 2009. She says the only differences between Sutton's and the prison's operation is that Sutton's was busier and bigger, with

contracts for major companies like Nike. The industrial shop, James says, feels like normal life. "There's kind of a code of working in here," she says. "You treat everyone with respect. It's not like that in the rest of the prison. There's a lot of drama, a lot of negativity."

That's one of the reasons why the women try to get in here, but the opportunity to do interesting and creative work is also attractive. Most Montana inmates interviewed for this story have artistic backgrounds, including James, a skilled sketch artist with a love of Hello Kitty. She named her son, Ondrej, after a popular drawing by artist Shepard Fairey, who's best known for his iconic "HOPE" poster featuring then-presidential candidate Barack Obama. "You don't meet a lot of people who are worldly and into culture," says Lacey Tollefson, a 24-year-old former garage-band drummer who works with the shop's six-head embroidery machine, which she says is really a four-head, since two heads are broken. "So it's interesting that we all gravitated to this shop." Montana Women's Prison apparel shop isn't part of the PIE program – although an associated rifle sling and bow sight shop are – so much of the work the women are doing is for schoolchildren and charities. "I love it," says Elliott, the shop's lead designer. "Not only is it good experience on the design part of it, but it's also doing something positive for someone."

Without exception, these workers come across as women who could be employed in any other decorated apparel shop in the country – or they



Emily James worked for a major contract decorator before going into Montana Women's Prison, and she would like to decorate again after she's released. The work helps her deal with her sentence. "For someone who's going to be here for a long time, you need something like this," James says.



James drew this design based on her son, Ondrej, and screen printed it onto T-shirts for a Head Start event.

could be your sister, daughter or mother. Elliott's oldest daughter will graduate college this year with a double major in criminal justice and psychology, while her son is in the National Guard. James shows a cartoony T-shirt design she created that's based on her son, who she used to take to a nearby park before she was convicted in 2009. "It's good to have civilians come in here and realize we're normal people," James says as she works on a T-shirt screen print for students at a school in Roberts, MT.

Like many from rural Montana, these women ran into substance-abuse problems – either theirs or others' – that led to the crimes for which they were eventually convicted. The methamphetamine epidemic flourishes in rural agricultural areas, and Montana is no exception. "If it wasn't for drugs and alcohol, none of these ladies would be here," Mickelson says. But, they're there. Some, like 32-year-old former methamphetamine addict Cassandra Wood, are serving short sentences for drug charges or related crimes. "Meth was my life," Wood says. "I put it before everything and everyone." Others are in for more serious crimes. Tollefson stabbed two strangers during a drug and alcohol-induced fog she says she doesn't remember. Elliott's fourth child ended up dead in a trash bag on a shelf in her home as she struggled with substance abuse. (She says the child was stillborn – and authorities admitted they could not prove otherwise, according to court records – but Elliott was convicted of homicide after hiding the child's existence.) James fatally stabbed a drug-addicted boyfriend during a fight in their apartment not far from the prison, and was convicted of mitigated deliberate homicide. "I used to live five blocks away from here," James says. "So I can walk outside and see the park where I used to take my son. I can see the gas station where I went for tea."

Annamae Siegfried-Derrick, the prison's public and victim information officer, says she respects the women who are trying to turn their lives around. "In a lot of cases, their whole life changed because of a choice they made," she says. "Whether



Much of Montana Women's Prison is minimum security, and inmates have freedom of movement in a set of buildings that resembles a school. But it remains, above all things, a prison

alcohol or drugs played a part of it is probable. But they made a choice to do something rather than walk away. They already have a label and a stigma on their heads. They're convicted felons. That's going to haunt them for the rest of their lives."

PRISON LABOR'S BIG BOYS

If Montana's program is at one end of the pendulum, Kansas is on the other. The state prison system here, led by recently retired Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz, has been viewed as a model for other states for its low rates of recidivism and successful transitioning of inmates back into society. "The highest correlations are with those who have a job," says Kansas State Representative Pat Colloton. "So it's a very high priority within the Kansas prison system to do job training." A state budget crunch has necessitated cuts to the corrections budget, but Colloton says prison industries won't be touched because they're financially self-sustaining.

Impact Design employs about 250 medium-security inmates at its PIE-certified contract decorating operation inside Lansing Correctional Facility in Lansing, KS. "We pay prevailing wage," says Impact Design President Josh Batz. "One of the biggest misconceptions is we don't pay these guys. Because we pay these guys prevailing wage, we don't have any competitive advantage." He says he actually has to pay more because of the need for managerial

supervision over inmate workers. "The one advantage I have is, to my work force it's a high-wage, high-prestige job," Batz says. "But outside the prison, it's a low-wage, low-prestige job. That's the one thing to take away. It's not a cost advantage – it's a motivation advantage."

Batz declines to name the companies that have done business with Impact Design, other than saying he deals largely with distributors in the promotional products industry. Some clients are clearly well-known brands, though. A review of Nevada government documents and online news releases produces a list of brands that includes TEHAMA, Tri-cots St. Raphael, adidas, Columbia Sportswear, Nike Golf, Calvin Klein, Geoffrey Beene and IZOD G. (The deal for the last three, however, was "short lived" and "never really got off the ground," according to Bill Kluber, a spokesman for parent company Van Heusen.)

Batz's inclination to not identify those companies ends up being part of a pattern. A Kansas prison spokesman referred press inquiries to Lansing Correctional Facility Deputy Warden Kyle Deere, who declined to answer questions about Impact Design, other than to say how many medium-security inmates work there. "Really, until they give their approval concerning their operations, I'm not really at liberty to give any more information right now," Deere says. When asked why he bought the company in 2005, Batz says simply, "It was for

JAILHOUSE EMBROIDERY SHOPS

sale.” (When pressed further, he says only, “Really strong manufacturing company, with good quality processes and excellent management.”) Impact Design’s website touts its 24-7 operation but makes no mention of the fact that prison employees make it. Batz says clients know, however. “We’re very frank about it with our clients, but we don’t market ourselves to the public, so there’s no reason to put that in public because we don’t sell to the public,” he says.

Such practices don’t always go over well with others. Ira Neaman, president of Vantage Apparel (*asi/93390*), says he believes there needs to be public transparency about companies’ labor. “It puts the industry in a difficult place,” he says. “If *60 Minutes* comes into a prison and they’re putting a Coca-Cola

logo on the Nike shirt, what is the chairman of Nike going to say? What’s the chairman of Coca-Cola going to say?” Neaman alludes to Nike’s past usage of labor in Asian sweatshops, which drew public protests that prompted Nike to change its practices. “Does the apparel distributor know?” Neaman says. “Does the end-user know? Does the brand that hired the decorator know?”

Friedmann says they often don’t know the labor source because there may be layers of subcontractors. “The companies generally don’t like to advertise that,” says Friedmann, who spent 10 years in a Tennessee prison and worked there for a screenprinting operation producing T-shirts for Taco Bell and other major brands. “If Victoria’s Secret let people know that

their frilly, skimpy undergarments were made at a prison, that might not go over so well. Sometimes it goes through a subcontractor who maybe subcontracts out to someone else. Whether or not the brand-name company knows it’s being produced there is another thing. It’s insulated.”

THE SALVATION SIDE

Whatever outside debates rage over the ethics of prison embroidery and screen printing, the activity offers inmates a measure of hope, as shown by the success stories of ex-convicts who have productive lives after their releases. Peter Ninemire spent time in federal prison for growing marijuana. After his release from prison, he earned a masters degree in social work from Wichita State University and now works as an addiction treatment supervisor for the Sedgwick County Drug Court in Kansas. “It worked great for me,” Ninemire says. “It gave me some new skills. It helped me to get where I am.”

At Montana Women’s Prison, James eventually hopes to leave in order to do embroidery and screen printing on the outside. When she was sentenced in 2009, she publicly read a nine-minute, 30-second statement about herself and her late boyfriend, Seth Drinkwater, at a court hearing. (The video remains online at www.billingsgazette.com.) She talked about her dreams, her loves, his drug problem how she tried to help him beat it, and how she’ll forever regret the day she stabbed him during an argument. “Seth didn’t deserve any of the pain that he endured,” she said during the tearful video. “Whether it was from the drugs or by my hand, I never meant for him to be hurt. I love Seth so very much. All I wanted to do was protect him, but I failed.”

Nearly two years later, James has had a lot of time to think about her and Drinkwater’s families. “They lost their son,” she says. “My mom lost a daughter. I try to live with a lot of empathy. When you’re in here, you just start to look at things differently. You learn not to take things for granted. You look at people who come here for a few months and go out. I’d like the opportunity to do that too, live a normal life.” ■

DANIEL WALSH is a contributing writer for *Stitches*.

REHABBED BY THREAD

There’s another model for embroidery in prisons, and that’s the Ray Materson model. Materson, 56, went to prison in 1987 as a college-educated cocaine addict imprisoned for robbing someone for drug money. In prison, he picked up hand embroidery one day while thinking of his grandmother, who hand embroidered. “It turned out this guy in the next cell was hanging up these socks to dry,” Materson says. “They were blue and yellow, or blue and maize, for the colors of the University of Michigan. I had a lot of good memories in Ann Arbor. So I swapped a pack of cigarettes for the socks, and I unraveled them and got a hoop.”

That hoop was handmade from a round Rubbermaid container. “I whittled the top off of it and made myself an embroidery hoop,” Materson says. “And I tore off a piece of my sheet and cut it into a letter ‘M,’ and I taught myself to embroider.” Inmates asked for Puerto Rican flags, Harley-Davidson emblems and various other designs, and Materson obliged.

Today, Materson is a well-known and respected embroidery artist, activist for the Vermont-based Community Justice Project, and author of the book, *Sins and Needles*, which tells his story. He advocates prison programs teaching inmates to embroider. He has

contacted several state prison systems about the idea, but never heard back.

A successful model for this thrives in Great Britain, where the charity Fine Cell Work trains prison inmates to embroidery by hand. In 2008, 403 inmates earned 61,890 British pounds, or \$96,363.10, for embroidering cushions, clothing, bedspreads, quilts, bags and cushions. Those cushions are popular with customers, with prices ranging from 45

to 150 pounds, or about \$70 to \$234. “It brings a calmness, focus and a kind of meditative quality that comes through, that releases people from their anxieties,” says Katy Emck, chief executive of Fine Cell Work. “Now if you can imagine this inside a prison, that can be a lifeline.”

Materson and Emck believe that hand embroidery can have a role in rehabilitating convicts because it affects how

inmates spend their time in prison. Inmates can get involved in prison gangs, drugs and weightlifting, or they can look inward and consider how they got there. “Prison saved my life,” Materson says. “You could still get drugs or anything you want in prison. But I was sentenced to 15 years. That’s a pretty lengthy stretch. That gave me some serious time to look at what I was doing wrong.”



Made of threads from unraveled socks, Ray Materson’s “They Look Over Her Shoulder” is housed in the American Primitive Gallery (www.americanprimitive.com).

SWIMWEAR

Behind the SEAMS

Decorated swimwear is a top-selling niche apparel item. Here we offer examples of how creative embroiderers pitch, decorate and sell this sexy (and functional) wearable.

By Erica Young
Photography: Andrew Milne

Valeska splashes in the pool in a two-piece bikini (2079) customized for Miller Lite Chill from Bishop The Garment Co. (asi/40586; circle 154 on Free Info Card).

There's money to be made in decorating swimwear, with styles that run the gamut from modest one-piece suits to eye-catching string bikinis. Competitive swimwear is a year-round goldmine for suit sales, as Speedo introduced the Fastskin FS-PRO high-performance swimsuit in 2007. Tan-through swimwear is a relative newcomer to the market, as well as total UV-protective suits at the opposite end of the spectrum. Here are five ways you can grow your bottom line with decorated swimwear.

1. FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND BUYERS

There are lots of year-round competitive swim professionals who require swimwear, such as competitive diving teams and indoor lifeguards. Dawn Cameron, owner of Orlando, FL-based DawnSews, makes and embroiders swimsuits that are purchased directly by year-round competitive divers. "I take a notebook of fabric samples and suit ideas that they love to pore over," says Cameron, who sells these suits at diving meets where athletes have the opportunity to "design" their own suits.

Cameron's bulk sales come from swim and dive teams that buy suits from her as a group purchase. "When that team goes off to different colleges, for example, they show their suits to their new teammates and I often get new customers," she says. Cameron also gets team orders from colleges. "After they graduate college, some of my clients go on to coach and they contact me for team suits," she says. "This sport has a beneficial life cycle."

Lori Coulter, owner of Lori Coulter Made-to-Order Swimwear, recommends hunting for businesses with large pools or ones that are located near water, such as water parks and boat dealerships. "Even consumers who buy products like sunscreen would be a great target for a swimwear sale," she says.

2. BE AN APPLICATIONS EXPERT

Embroidery, crystals, nailhead studs, heat transfers, screen printing, decorative hardware and appliqué – you can do it all on swimwear. Coulter once filled an order for fully encrusted Swarovski-crystal bikini tops. "The crystals were set up in an elaborate template and then heat-transferred onto the bikini tops," she says. However, decorator beware: Cameron's biggest application disaster was with fabric that she didn't test – she used royal metallic thread on black spandex. "The metallic came off at the very first swim meet," she says.

Athletic swimmers and divers wear their suits very tight to the body, and the suits get beaten by the chlorine and impact of the dive. One way to avoid larger added embellishments is to manipulate the fabric. "I do a lot of color blocking and put different fabrics together as I'm constructing the suits," Cameron says. "Piping adds pizzazz, but also extra time and bulkiness in the seams."

You can also decorate a swimsuit with sequins and beads for



On Harmony Lynn, a custom two-piece one-shoulder cerulean frill bikini from Lori Coulter Made-to-Order Swimwear paired with a blue and white fringe sarong (19166) from Peace Frogs (asi/292442; circle 156 on Free Info Card).

sparkle. Fred Prize, co-owner of Minneapolis-based Rhinestones Unlimited, recommends hand sewing sequins onto swimwear. “Thread a fine needle that will fit through your seed bead with quilting thread, cut a manageable length, and then double your thread and knot it,” he says. “On the underside of your garment, come up through the fabric, go through a sequin and then go through a seed bead. Finally, go back through the sequin to the underside of the fabric.” Prize strongly advises against going back through the seed bead, or it’ll come off. “Come back up through the fabric where you want the next sequin and continue the process,” he says. Prize also suggests knotting for safety every so often so that if a thread is broken, the suit will lose only a small amount of bling. He adds, “The sequins must be high-quality, or the color will rub off.”

3. EMBROIDER FOR COMFORT

This means sewing on cut pieces instead of finished suits. Since Cameron makes her suits from scratch, she embroiders on a cut-out fabric piece. “It’s easier, and if something goes wrong I don’t



▣ Valeska exudes radiance in a custom taupe halter bikini top from Lori Coulter Made-to-Order Swimwear (circle 152 on Free Info Card) paired with a funky floral skirt (RWSK) from Days Off Design (asi/48720; circle 151 on Free Info Card) and a fun blush pink canvas bag (X539) from Atlantic Coast Cotton (asi/37355; circle 153 on Free Info Card).



◆ Harmony Lynn sports a two-piece black bikini (2079) customized for Jägermeister from Bishop The Garment Co. (asi/40586; circle 154 on Free Info Card), as well as high-waisted orange shorts (W301) from American Apparel (asi/35297; circle 155 on Free Info Card). Accessories included are a canvas tote bag (19167) from Peace Frogs (asi/292442; circle 156 on Free Info Card) and amber-tinted sunglasses (ELT) from Fields Manufacturing (asi/54100; circle 157 on Free Info Card).

LEARN IT LIVE!

Want to sell more than an order of T-shirts or caps to a new client? Learn what industries are ripe for buying whole decorated apparel programs in “Sell Apparel Programs to 3 Hot Markets” at *The ASI Show Dallas (Wednesday, February 16, 1:30 p.m.)*. You’ll walk away from this session knowing how to position yourself as a skilled apparel-program designer with the latest decorating techniques and the hottest styles and graphic designs.

SWIMWEAR



■ Pink Hawaiian flower on a custom bright yellow halter bikini from Lori Coulter Made-to-Order Swimwear (circle 152 on Free Info Card) is completed by a pink crop top (RSABB380) from American Apparel (*asi/35297*; circle 155 on Free Info Card).

Case Study: Decorating Speedo's Suits

John Horne, president of Louisville, KY-based Stitch Designers (*asi/741145*), won a three-year contract with Speedo, the world-renowned competitive swimsuit brand, for the Olympics. When Speedo contracted with nearby Kentucky Textile to cut and sew its suits, Horne had no idea his friendship with the family that owns Kentucky Textile would come in handy: The owner's son-in-law recommended that Stitch Designers embroider the Olympic rings on the suits.

Speedo sent one of its master tailors to work with Kentucky Textile and Stitch Designers staff to ensure the manufacturing and embroidery were up to par. "We embroidered on cut pieces," Horne says. "We embroidered the Speedo logo on a one-piece ladies' suit on the right thigh. In the Olympic years, we'd put the logo on the left thigh." Horne spent countless nights running swatch after swatch until he got the embroidery just right; ultimately, Stitch Designers would embroider a run of 50,000 swimsuits. "We had to be on point since it had to be the exact same logo for swimmers around the world buying Speedo suits," Horne says.



■ On Harmony Lynn, red lifeguard suit (101040) from Gulbenkian Swim Inc. (*asi/58650*; circle 158 on Free Info Card) paired with red and navy board shorts (101042) and whistle (161002) on red lanyard (162001) from Gulbenkian Swim Inc. (*asi/58650*; circle 158 on Free Info Card), along with large white frame sunglasses (St. Moritz) from Fields Manufacturing (*asi/54100*; circle 157 on Free Info Card).



■◆ On Valeska, a custom striped bikini (left) and matching coverup (above) in neutral colors from Lori Coulter Made-to-Order Swimwear (circle 152 on Free Info Card, combined with a wide sterling silver cuff bracelet (MP1601) from Sticky Jewelry Inc. (*asi/89811*; circle 159 on Free Info Card).

lose the whole suit,” she says. “And, the backing and thread are between the fabric and lining so it’s less scratchy for the wearer.” Cameron uses Sulky medium-weight cutaway stabilizer, as it works best on the fabric’s stretchiness.

John Horne, president of Louisville, KY-based Stitch Designers (*asi/741145*), embroiders on cut pieces for Speedo, the best-known brand of competitive swimwear. “It’s difficult to embroider finished swimsuits because you can’t sew through the lining, or else you’ll create an irritant from the back side of the embroidery on something that fits tight and will be uncomfortable to the wearer,” he says. “Find a place to put the logo that won’t cause irritation if you’re doing a finished suit.”

Cameron recommends keeping your embroidery area small, “because the stabilizer and the stitches themselves make that suit section not stretch so much,” she says. She’s tried cutting between each letter to free up the fabric, but wasn’t happy with the results. “I’ve discovered that larger words work best on the chest,” she says. “And, smaller works better on the hip front or back.”

4. UNDERSTAND THE FABRIC

The type of stabilizer, size of design and tension of hoop are keys to embroidering swimwear fabric. Evy Hawkins, owner

of Sumter, SC-based A Bit of Stitch, says Lycra is tricky since it must move with the body and requires a needle meant for stretchy, elastic fabrics. “The embroidered area won’t move on Lycra,” she says. “And if it does, it’ll be distorted or distort surrounding the area.”

Hawkins backs the fabric with a lightweight, iron-on, nonwoven interfacing first, and then backs it with two additional layers of iron-on tearaway. “The nonwoven interfacing doesn’t affect the drape nearly as much and keeps the embroidery looking good during wear,” she says. “The interfacing helps keep the machine from ‘eating’ the fabric, since it has a tendency to want to pull down into the bobbin.” Hawkins has also found that the iron-on tearaway works better than Vilene (a strong, water-soluble stabilizer) applied with temporary spray adhesive, as a suit will be damaged by ripping away a sticky stabilizer.

For hooping, Hawkins wraps both hoops with gauze to prevent burn and ensure the stabilizer is completely caught in the hoop. After removing the excess stabilizer, she cuts away the excess interfacing, gently pulling it away from the fabric to do so.

In Horne’s experience, there are three keys to embroidering four-way-stretch fabric, which is 80% nylon/20% Lycra:

- Use a light cutaway stabilizer (2 oz. to 2.5 oz.).
- Make sure the design is simple.
- Set the hoop with just enough tension.

Although Horne says it would be nice to be able to tear away the stabilizer around a logo, he could never pass Speedo standards that way – whether using dry laid or wet laid – so he uses a light cutaway backing to get the job done. The design itself can’t be too complicated or big, or it will require too large of a piece of backing.

For hooping, Horne recommends using a hoop that’s slightly bigger than the embroidery. For Speedo swimwear, he uses a 9 cm hoop, and sets it so that the backing and the four-way stretch will just barely slide into the hoop, creating the right amount of tension. “I tell new swimsuit decorators to go buy four-way stretch, cut squares and just practice,” he says.

5. PROVIDE AN ALL-AROUND SOLUTION

Competitive teams may need more than just suits – think about warm-ups, bags, caps, flip-flops, goggles and more. Once Coulter finds her swimwear clients, she focuses on listening to their needs and understanding their individual brands. “Ask yourself – are they high-end and glamorous, or more conservative?” she says. “Also, consider their environment – is it family friendly or a sexier, adults-only scene?”

The weather and location also affect the items you can offer as an additional source of reeling in some revenue. “Think about the climate – will they need cover-ups or warm-up suits too?” Coulter says. Providing creative solutions and property-appropriate recommendations outside of solely a swimsuit can take a simple sale and turn it into a lucrative one. ■

ERICA YOUNG is a contributing writer for *Stitches*.

Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach, offers six tips for embroidering on swimwear:

1. Use a ball-point needle when embroidering Lycra.

Try a 70/10 ball-point. Too sharp a needle will cut the fibers and create runs in the fabric.

2. Use a lightweight topping over your fabric that covers the entire hoop. This keeps the fabric from pulling up in the hoop and keeps the hoop from burning the fabric.

3. Use two layers of no-show and one layer of lightweight crisp tearaway backing. The no-show is a cutaway backing that gives the Lycra stability, and the crisp tearaway backing keeps the small lettering from sinking into the fabric. The no-show backing has a slight stretch to it. Decorators often think they should use a tearaway backing because the garment needs to stretch, but this isn’t true. When the Lycra fabric is stretched after being embroidered using the tearaway backing, the stitches will pull apart because they have no stability.

4. Stretch the fabric slightly as it’s being hooped. This will keep the design from being distorted while it’s being worn.

5. Remove as much of the backing as possible. If there are lines of lettering, cut between the lines to allow for more stretch. It’s not necessary to cut around each letter, but making a slit between the lines and the spacing between words will allow for more stretch and the embroidery will remain stable.

6. Use polyester thread. Due to the chemicals used in pool water, rayon thread isn’t an ideal choice for sewing on Lycra.





Getting Noticed

A contract-shop owner wants to create lots of business buzz to get the right customers coming through her brick-and-mortar and cyber doors.

Meet the Mentee



Jane C. Cibulskas has owned National Embroidery & Transfer Services Ltd. (*asi/299298*) in Berea, OH, for five years. In that time, she's moved her business from her home to a 2,600-square-foot store, and went from one single-head embroidery machine to 50 machine heads, adding screen printing, garment printing, heat transfers and promotional products along the way. Cibulskas currently has one full-time employee and four part-time employees at her disposal, along with her husband (when necessary).

"Our embroidery and garment printing are our biggest things right now," says Cibulskas, whose business focuses on corporate and team wear. "We also have an ongoing relationship with one customer where we sell decorated wares for him through his website."

And while business has been good for the majority of her company's tenure, Cibulskas realized things needed to change last year. "With the loss of two major contract customers, it became evident that our business plan had to be modified," she says. "In addition, we need to develop online sales and upgrade our production methods."

Week One

Enhance your website, devise a basic marketing strategy and attend a school fair.

Step 1: Build your website so it lists all of your shop's capabilities and offerings.

Step 2: Write a basic marketing plan for your company.

Step 3: Reach out to decision-makers at an upcoming school fair.

The Challenge

One of Cibulskas' biggest marketing hurdles is one that's become a bare necessity in the 21st century: a fully functional website. "We're in the process of getting a completed website," she says. "That's one of our biggest problems. Now, we're at a point where we need a process online."

Nearly all of Cibulskas' business to this point had been by word of mouth. "We've done some advertising in a cou-

ple of community newspapers," she says, noting that it's never amounted to much business.

The Mentor's Take

One of the first things that Jay Fishman, owner of Beachwood, OH-based Wicked Stitch of the East Inc., encouraged Cibulskas to do during this process was attend a local school trade fair in order to promote some of her school apparel and spiritwear – but more importantly, for the marketing opportunity.

But Fishman recognized that the most important effort for Cibulskas on the marketing front was to get her website in good working order. "Announcing the website is crucial to 'going national,'" he says.

Fishman also emphasized how important it was for Cibulskas to create a written marketing plan outline, "so she has something to refer to," he says. "She's task-

Want to Get Educated?

Visit ASI Education's Online Learning Center at www.asicentral.com/onlinelearning to register as a student. You'll be able to take "Steps to Selling Success" and our other on-demand courses.

MY GOALS

1. Come up with a new sales strategy. Cibulskas has been doing a lot of single-piece orders, but recently realized that she wanted to focus on gaining larger orders to increase her bottom line.

2. Create a new marketing plan. "Marketing has never been our strong point, and it became obvious that we need to develop and implement a strong and effective marketing, sales and advertising program," she says.

3. Develop Internet sales. While Cibulskas has a basic company website (www.nets-1.com), it lacked a lot of basic information on her product offerings, and the content was largely unedited, which resulted in a great deal of untapped online sales potential.

oriented and she's much better when she has it down in black-and-white. And she needs lists; she needs tasks to complete."

The Result

She didn't characterize it as a smashing success, but Cibulskas did consider the school fair she attended a win. "I made some good contacts at schools who are interested in club clothing and PGA clothing," she says. "It was probably worthwhile, since I did meet some people who are the decision-makers. I discussed sending out fliers that have logoed clothing on it so they can order from us. That's

a good thing, since it keeps our company name in front of their face.”

An unintended benefit of the fair is that it allowed Cibulskas to discover the kinds of items that kids buy (she noted beanies are a bestseller), and consider her target audience and products more wisely. “This is a market that we need to refine a little bit and look into, and decide what our best products are in this area,” she says.

Cibulskas estimated that she was about 75% finished with her written marketing outline at this point. “We’re working on short-term and long-term goals,” she says. “We’re looking at e-mail blasts and keeping in constant contact with prospects and clients. We’re also setting up online metrics so we can track these efforts and know what worked, what didn’t, where the business came from and where we should put our marketing dollars.”

Fishman assisted Cibulskas in editing her revamped website content and adding important information for readers, including a pair of case studies:

1. *Embroidered designs for a wedding dress.* “A bride’s mother came in and said, ‘I want to have my daughter’s wedding dress decorated,’” Cibulskas says. “They brought the dress to me with a two-week deadline, which made the process 10 times harder. But they were so happy with the end result that they brought in the flower girl’s dress, and we did designs on that dress, as well.”

2. *A landscaping company’s logo.* “The business owner didn’t have a logo and didn’t have any idea really of what he needed,” Cibulskas says. “We had our graphic artist develop a logo for him; then, we helped him develop business cards and stationery, and did some hats and winter clothing for him. His logo was kind of detailed, so the lettering was embroidery and his logo was direct-to-garment. We also helped him get some signage for his truck, and we did promotional items for the office staff.”

Week Two

Write up a marketing outline, market to your mentoring group and complete ASI Education online courses.

Step 1: Create sample items for your mentoring group’s Christmas party.

Step 2: Take two online ASI Education courses, “Marketing Your New Business” and “Write Your Business Plan” (www.asicentral.com/asionlinelearning).

Step 3: Explore the possibilities of expanding your social media presence.

The Challenge

Despite the craziness presented by the fast-approaching holiday season, Cibulskas was pleased with her progress to this point, but realized there was a lot more

work to be done from a marketing standpoint. “We’ve gone through revamping our website and gone through some things on the computer to figure out what we need to do,” says Cibulskas, who also made arrangements with a fellow business owner who uses Facebook and LinkedIn for business to show her the social networking ropes. “Mostly I’ve been information-gathering to start to formalize and fill out my marketing plan, and formalize the areas that we’re going to work in, figure out who’s going to do what, how much I’m going to do, that sort of thing,” she says.

As for the word-of-mouth marketing to which she’s accustomed, Cibulskas made preparations to feature some embroidered giveaways at a Christmas party for a men-

Meet the Mentor



Jay Fishman, owner of Beachwood, OH-based Wicked Stitch of the East Inc., began working in the embroidery business with his grandfather when he was only a teen. “Some of my earliest memories of the industry are the sounds of manual embroidery machines and the smell of the machine oil,” he says. “My first exposure to digitizing was for Schiffli machines that produced yard goods of laces and trims, and also could be used for patches. Digitizing in the days before computers was a manual process – literally one stitch at a time.”

When he began his professional career as a digitizer 30 years ago, Fishman was appreciative of his stitch-by-stitch upbringing. “My formal computer training was very helpful as the embroidery industry began moving toward computerization,” he says. “I didn’t leave the manual work behind – I still had some machines that my grandfather had used and was very fortunate to be able to work with him in his advanced years to combine computerized and manual embroidery. This led to my involvement with clothing designers to create embroidery-centric designs, meaning clothes designed specifically to highlight the different types of embroidery.”

Through the years, Fishman has trained individuals and groups on ornamental techniques via manual specialized machines, lectured on the history and symbolism of embroidery in art and fashion programs at the college level, and authored numerous articles for embroidery trade journals. Today, he’s an independent embroidery machine and digitizing software trainer and consultant.

In fact, Fishman knew Cibulskas prior to the beginning of the mentoring process, as he’s been her digitizer for about a year. “She’s not around the corner from me, but we have met on two occasions,” says Fishman, who was more than ready to start mentoring Cibulskas and help take her business to the next level.



mentor for a month

toring group to which she belongs. She decided to embroider Christmas designs on about 50 inexpensive hand towels. “I’ve done this for a couple different groups, but this time I attached my business card,” she says. “Everybody needs a Christmas towel, right?”

The Mentor’s Take

Fishman strongly encouraged Cibulskas to expand her almost-nonexistent social media presence. “I’d really like to go through LinkedIn, which she’s already part of, to find local groups and expand,” he says. “She might also do a business Facebook page.” Fishman told Cibulskas that Twitter was something that was better off not spending her time on at the moment.

The Result

The social media project had to be delayed a bit, as Cibulskas’ meeting with her social networking guru had to be postponed due to illness. However, she did get the chance to add a couple social networking goals to her marketing plan. This is how the social media part of the write-up looked:

“1. Develop a business page for Facebook and read and research pointers for success on that site.

2. Develop an improved business profile on LinkedIn. Get professional references from peers. Also, join industry-related groups.”

At her mentoring group’s Christmas party, Cibulskas didn’t win any on-the-spot orders, but received a lot of compliments. “I had some feedback a couple days later from people who were pleased, thought it was a good idea, and said, ‘We’re going to keep the business card,’” she says.

Perhaps the most important part of the week for Cibulskas was taking ASI Education classes through the ASI Online Learning Center and each only required about 30 minutes of her time. “There’s a

THINKING-AHEAD TIP

Fishman says owners of multi-head shops like Cibulskas are often missing golden opportunities to increase their sales because they neglect the contract side of the decorating business. “She needs to do more contract work,” he says. “She’s set up to be a contract embroiderer and a fulfillment house. She’s a multi-head shop, so she needs to keep the cash register busy, and the way to keep it busy is selling to people who don’t necessarily need 10,000 pieces, but 500 would be good.”

lot of really good information there – the classes were excellent,” she says. “Some of the topics about the things we need to do in our business and our shop to improve our marketing and sales – some of those things we’ve talked about but we’ve never put into play, but we’re getting our information together.”

Cibulskas especially appreciated an idea in the “Marketing Your New Business” course about the way a business owner and employees should answer the

“It’s important that everybody answers the phone the same way and has the same information so we’re not confusing our customers with partial information.”

Jane Cibulskas, National Embroidery & Transfer Services Ltd.

phone. “It’s important that everybody answers the phone the same way and has the same information so we’re not confusing our customers with partial information,” she says.

At this point in the mentoring process, Fishman says Cibulskas had absorbed a lot of new information, and he was pleased to realize just how teachable she is. “You go back a couple weeks ago

to things she didn’t know, and now she understands these concepts,” he says. “She’s come a long way. That’s important, because I work with a lot of people, and sometimes they just don’t get basic business concepts.”

Week Three

Submit an e-blast through a popular decorating listserv, look into creating regular e-mail updates and finish your marketing plan.

Step 1: Send an e-blast ad through NNEP.

Step 2: Explore marketing websites that can help create e-newsletters and invitations at regular intervals.

Step 3: Complete your written marketing plan.

The Challenge

One thing that Cibulskas had in the works for the past couple of weeks, but hadn’t been able to complete, was sending an e-mail blast through the National Network of Embroidery Professionals (NNEP). The blast contained a single-

page ad that informed NNEP members about the numerous services that National Embroidery & Transfer Services offers.

Cibulskas wrote up an ad, but it took her some time to edit it and get in touch with the NNEP president, who was out of town. This week, with the final edits completed, she finally planned on submitting the ad and having it sent to NNEP members.

LEARN IT LIVE!

Want to create a crazy amount of buzz about your business? Then don't miss "Social Networking Smarts: 5 Success Stories You Can Copy" at *The ASI Show Dallas* (Wednesday, February 16, 1:30 p.m.). In this exciting panel discussion, you'll learn the top websites you need to use to attract prospects and stay in touch with clients, effective e-mail marketing campaigns that deliver successful call-to-action messages, and more.

Also, remember that marketing plan that was 75% complete? Cibulskas made it a priority to make it 100% complete by the end of the week.

The Mentor's Take

Fishman agreed with Cibulskas that the e-blast needed to go out quickly – namely, before the end of the year. "It really has to be done this week or it's no good," he says. "Her e-blast is basically saying, 'We're right in your backyard.' There are a lot of people from NNEP from Ohio, because that's where NNEP is."

Fishman also emphasized the need for Cibulskas to send out e-blasts on a regular basis, which she could do through a website like www.myemma.com that allows users to produce creative, aesthetically pleasing e-blasts to send out to subscribers on a monthly basis.

The Result

Cibulskas submitted the e-blast through NNEP and received a couple of nibbles in the next several days. "We got two responses from it," she says. "One person just asked for our price list; the other has some patches she needs to have done, so we've been in a discussion with her about patches," she says. "Also, one of our customers who's on the NNEP mailing list – I garment print for her – said she was very impressed with the e-blast."

Cibulskas also took time to explore www.myemma.com per Fishman's suggestion. "We're going to try to coordinate all our info with a message, font, colors and everything," she says.

Finally, Cibulskas finished her written marketing plan outline, which contained six objectives, along with a strategy and a list of tactics for completing each goal. For example, her fourth objective is "relationship marketing." The strategy: "Don't promote sales; promote solutions." Some of the tactics that she listed for this goal included focusing on the development

"She's a multi-head shop, so she needs to keep the cash register busy, and the way to keep it busy is selling to people who don't necessarily need 10,000 pieces, but 500 would be good."

Jay Fishman, Wicked Stitch of the East Inc.

of trust and confidence with customers, and deciding upon information-gathering procedures.

One bonus for the week: Cibulskas created a multicolored sales brochure that included her company's contact info and a detailed description of its embellishment capabilities. "It's a brochure we've had for a while, but we've reworked it, and this is the one we're using now," she says.

Fishman liked the brochure and approved of the marketing outline, with one additional suggestion. "Part of her business plan should be about doing more fulfillment services," he says, noting that Cibulskas already has some experience in this area. "Also, her demographics need to change. I need people who do production embroidery in order to get production digitizing orders. It's really about how to focus your marketing in order to change your demographics and encourage individual sales."

The Ultimate Wrap-Up

Fishman says he couldn't even begin to describe the amount of progress that Cibulskas made in terms of a brand-new marketing scheme for her company. "The marketing plan outline is excellent. Nothing was happening with that before," he says. "Her website is pretty much done, whereas there was really nothing to see there before. With a Web presence, you don't have to be local. Now, she has a market anywhere."

Fishman emphasized how important it is for Cibulskas to send out e-blasts

and newsletters through sites like www.myemma.com and contract-embroidery services. "That's really important, the realization that her company doesn't have to think local anymore – that she can provide services to multiple states," he says.

Most importantly, Cibulskas ended the month-long process with a marketing compass that she previously lacked. In addition, ASI provided her with a free LogoMall company website (which will market her services to promotional products distributors), and 50 Spectrum and 50 Idea Showcase marketing catalogs imprinted with her business information that she can send and show to prospects and customers. "I must say that the marketing help from ASI, and the online courses, were excellent," she says. "They've helped us focus in areas that were not exactly focused."

Those classes, along with her marketing outline, have given Cibulskas a new way of approaching her competitors – namely, the realization that they're not always competitors, after all. "There was an embroiderer yesterday whose machine was broken down, and she needed to have a cap done," she says, adding that she was happy to help the woman – which immediately led to bigger and better things. "Then, she said, 'I have 27 jacket backs coming in. Can you help me with that?'" Cibulskas says. "We're not limiting ourselves by thinking they're all our competition. We're all in this together, so we need to help each other." ■

SHANE DALE is a contributing writer for *Stitches*.

CLASSIFIEDS *Circle reader service number on reply card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo*

APPAREL



Your Private Label,
Phoenix Label or
No Label

Call for Catalog

Phoenix Owned
U.S.A. Factories -
We Knit, Dye,
Cut, Sew

Large Selection of
Styles and Colors

Excellent Quality—Low Cost
Direct from MFR Pricing

PHOENIX
TEXTILE & APPAREL MILLS, INC.

1-888-466-7008
phoenixtextilemills@frontier.com
P.O. Box 169 Middlebourne, WV 26149

RS No. 149

HnH Apparel Inc.



ASI # 61132
RN # 132774

Manufacturer of blank t-shirts and Polos
in popular colors. Specializing in custom
label and large volume orders.




www.hnhapparel.com
info@hnhapparel.com
office 310-860-6240
Fax 310-295-2302

RS No. 148



Scan to
view our
video

Get the free mobile app at
<http://gettag.mobi>



pizzazzwear.com/v14

RS No. 102

CUSTOM PATCHES & PINS

Custom embroidered patches
Factory Direct

ABemblem.com
800-438-4285

1-Day Service Available!



RS No. 119

CUSTOM
EMBROIDERED PATCHES
KEYCHAINS & DOG TAGS

(800) 872-8778 Fax: (619) 281-6687
DoctorPatch.com



RS No. 117

CUSTOM PATCHES

- Guaranteed Quality • Wholesale Pricing
- Reliable Delivery
- In Stock US Flags and Blanks

PATCH SUPPLY INC
(800) 851-7096 fax (800)851-7097
e-mail: sales@patchsupply.com

RS No. 110

DIGITIZING



MADE
IN
AMERICA

Great Quality
Exceptional Service

Tired of your Digitizing Dollars Going
Overseas!! Give Us a Call, We're Easy
to Work With; Easy to Understand

Toll Free: 888 827 7074
Phone: 651 773 7027
Fax: 651 777 7087
designs@shamrockthread.com
www.shamrockthread.com
Located in St. Paul, MN

RS No. 101

Make an Impression

To advertise in *Stitches*
contact: Cindi Mann

(215) 953-3304

cmann@asicentral.com

DIGITIZING

1ST DESIGN FREE!

\$29 Simple	\$39 Complex	\$49 Very Complex
-----------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------

\$59 and up for jacketbacks
Call Stan at 704-548-2434 or
email to art4@southerndigitizing.com

RS No. 115

**Art Services
&
Online Solutions!**

Digitizing Factory

Embroidery Digitizing
US\$ 3-5 per 1,000 Stitches

DIGITAL GRAPHX FACTORY *Digital Graphix-Factory*

Artwork Set Up,
Vectorizing Services
File Manipulation

Eflash Factory

Web design, Programming,
Flash Introduction, Animation
Powerpoint Presentation

Contact Us:
www.digitizingfactory.com
www.designcommunicator.com
digitize@digitizingfactory.co.th
Quality, Price, Delivery and Passion!

RS No. 136

CHEAPEST DIGITIZING
Top Quality, Fast Turn-Around and Lowest Cost Always!

\$1.49 /1k
Minimum US\$12 (up to 5099 sts)

CDigitizing@gmail.com

ON-LINE Digitizing Service
24 hrs FAST TURN-AROUND

Log on our website to place order
www.CheapestDigitizing.com



RS No. 126

DIGITIZING

EMBROIDERY DIGITIZING
 8-24 HOURS Turn-Around GUARANTEED!
 Now you can enjoy the best of the three worlds

Top quality,
 Unbeatable price and
 Best customer service

\$1.99 /1k
Min. US\$15.00 (up to 5000 stitches)

www.ideasplus.biz • sales@ideasplus.biz

TOLL FREE 1-877-877-2700

IP IDEAS PLUS+ DIGITIZING MART
 675 Brea Canyon Rd. Suite 8, Walnut, CA 91789 U.S. Based Company

RS No. 132

LOW PRICE - 1 DAY TURNAROUND - ASI - SAGE

ExpressDigitizing.Com
 Decorate with confidence
 art@expressdigitizing.com

\$1.99/k

QUALITY GUARANTEE - BEST SERVICE
 1-866-988-3110

ExpressVector.Com
 art@expressvector.com

YOU PROVIDE IMAGE WE VECTOR
 CAMERA READY ARTWORK PRINTING

\$15 SIMPLE VECTOR
 BITMAP TO VECTOR
 COLOR SEPARATION
 PHOTO TO CLIPART
 FAX TO VECTOR
 LINE ART DESIGN

FREE QUOTE
 24 HOURS TURNAROUND

RS No. 132

ABSOLUTE DIGITIZING
\$2 / K STITCHES
 www.absolutedigitizing.com
 absolutedigitizing@gmail.com
 24 hours turnaround - Paypal accepted

RS No. 141

DIGITIZING

RUSH DIGITIZING

www.rushdigitizing.com
 order@rushdigitizing.com

\$ 2.99
 Per 1K stitches

We have the best on-line control system!

The best choice!
 Embroidery Digitizing Service

RS No. 134

Make an Impression

To advertise in *Stitches*
 contact: Cindi Mann

(215) 953-3304

cmann@asicentral.com

Stitches reader service numbers

American Apparel 155.....	53, 54
Atlantic Coast Cotton 153.....	53
Bishop The Garment Co. 154.....	51, 53
Days Off Design 151.....	53
Fields Mfg. 157.....	53, 54
Gulbenkian Swim Inc. 158.....	54
Lori Coulter Made-To-Order Swimwear 152 Cover, 52, 53, 54	
Peace Frogs 156.....	52, 53
Sticky Jewelry 159.....	54

EMBROIDERY EQUIPMENT

WANTED
 USED EMBROIDERY MACHINES
 VARIOUS MAKES AND MODELS

•••••

TAJIMAS WANTED
 SINGLE HEADS
 MULTIHEADS

•••••

CHL, INC.
 3229 Cherry Lane
 FT. WORTH, TX 76116
 TEL: (817) 560-0390
 FAX: (817) 244-5865
 E-mail: chlinc@att.net

RS No. 106

LABELS & EMBLEMS

DJSLABELS.COM
 Printed Labels, Woven Labels,
 Hang Tags, Stickers
(800) 967-2323

RS No. 77

Printed & Woven Fabric Labels
 CUSTOM DESIGNED TO YOUR NEEDS

SEW ON STICK ON IRON ON

Minimum Order: 75 labels
 Fast Manufacturing • Excellent Prices

FREE Introduction Pack
 Includes: Samples, Order Forms & Coupons
1-800-944-4696

PHONE ORDERS ACCEPTED VISA MasterCard AMERICAN EXPRESS DISCOVER NOVUS

GENERAL LABEL MFG. • P.O. Box 640371 • Miami, FL 33164
 www.generallabel.com

RS No. 125

MERCHANDISE

Manufacturing Quality Leather Goods For Over 25 Years

• Custom products and private labeling
 • In-house decoration services
 • Embossing and embroidery available
 • Direct from the manufacturer

Call Toll Free Now!
 1-877-625-7230
 sarahfashion@msn.com
 Toll free fax: 1-877-698-8384

ASI 5-STAR SUPPLIER

www.asisupplier.com/68595

RS No. 144

BLANKETS, TOWELS, BIBS & BURPCLOTHS

We manufacture a variety of baby blankets, towels and bibs for the embroidery trade...

❖ Baby Blankets ❖
 ❖ Hooded Towel Sets ❖
 ❖ Bibs & Burpcloths ❖

No minimums, quick response.
 For a free brochure call

1-800-783-8555
 GARDEN LANE
 Layotte

RS No. 124

CLASSIFIEDS Circle reader service number on reply card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo

SUPPLIES



GUNOLD'S YOUR ONE STOP SHOP FOR EMBROIDERY SUPPLIES

1-800-432-3781
 WWW.GUNOLD.COM
 24HOURS/7DAYS A WEEK

Differentiate YOURSELF WITH OUR Quality

GUNOLD USA

RS No. 145

WHOLESALE MERCHANDISE



Quality Crib Blankets!

and other fine baby items made in USA exclusively for embroiderers.

www.crib-blankets.com

1-800-426-3373
 Monograms of Distinction
 Middlebury, CT

RS No. 122

WHOLESALE MONOGRAMS

WholesaleMonograms.com

Monogram Designs for Embroidery Machines since 1996

designs by *embroideryarts*

RS No. 135

WHOLESALE EMBROIDERY

Three Cord

WHOLESALE EMBROIDERY & SCREEN PRINTING
 1-866-445-2673
www.threecord.com

RS No. 116

Reserve Your Adspace **TODAY!**

To advertise in *Stitches* contact: Cindi Mann
(215) 953-3304
cmann@asicentral.com

Circle 61 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo

Measure UP In 2011.



Take your decorating business to the next level with the *Stitches Roadshow*.
 Created to Bring Together Suppliers and Decorators in a Productive Environment!

- Spend one-on-one, quality time with key equipment, software, supply and wearables vendors
- Find new products and services to set you apart from the competition
- Discover new ways to grow your business through advertising specialty products — (each *Stitches Roadshow* is co-located with the ASI Advantages Roadshow)
- Participate in in-depth education from *Stitches University* to take your business to the next level
- Network with other decorators and suppliers to gain new ideas and learn best practices

Upcoming Roadshows

March 11 • St. Louis, MO	May 3 • Denver, CO
Hilton St. Louis Airport 10330 Natural Bridge Road St. Louis, MO 63134 314-426-5500	Crowne Plaza Denver Int'l Airport 15500 East 40th Avenue Denver, CO 80239 303-371-9494

All decorators are invited to attend for FREE!

Register today at www.stitchesroadshow.com.

S.TITCHES ROADSHOW

SR-162

Advertiser Index

ADVERTISERS/SUPPLIERS

COMPANY NAME RS# PG#

Blue Generation	10.....	1
Bodek and Rhodes	22.....	13
Cotton Fruit Inc.....	16.....	7
The EGC Group.....	1.....	9
Embroidery Network Inc.....	20.....	22
Gildan Activewear SRL	26.....	2, 3
Hanes/OuterBanks	28.....	IFC
Imprintables Warehouse	33.....	IBC
Jerzees	30	BC
Outdoor Cap Co	36.....	23
Stahl's ID Direct.....	47.....	5
SWF East.....	49.....	16, 16A-H
Toyota/Pantograms	53.....	21
Transfer Express.....	55.....	25
World Emblem	57.....	11

CLASSIFIEDS

COMPANY NAME RS#

A-B Emblem	119
Bc Supply Co	110

Chl Inc	106
Digitizing Factory Co Ltd	136
DJS LABELS INC	77
Express Digitizing.com	132
Garden Lane Layette	124
General Label Mfg.....	125
Gunold USA Inc.....	145
HnH Apparel.....	148
Ideas Plus Inc	126, 133
Mak Group Of Companies/Tomahawk Garment.....	144
Monograms of Distinction	122
Pacific Sportswear & Emblems.....	117
Phoenix Textile and Apparel Mills	149
Pizzazz	102
Rush Digitizing	134
SGL International (Pvt) Limited	141
Shamrock Design	101
Southern Digitizing	115
Three Cord LLC.....	116
Wholesale Monograms.....	135

Stitches February 2011, Vol. 25, No. 2 (ISSN 099-5893) (USPS 2387) is published monthly, except bi-monthly in March/April and September/October, by Advertising Specialty Institute, 4800 Street Road, Trevose, PA 19053. Periodical postage paid at Langhorne, PA and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: free and controlled circulation to qualified subscribers. Non-qualified persons may subscribe at the following rates: USA, 1 year, \$35, 2 years, \$69. Canada, 1 year, \$39. Outside USA and Canada, 1 year, \$59 (\$95 airmail delivery). POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Stitches, PO Box 2197 Skokie, IL 60076.

GO ONLINE! Get valuable product information by visiting us at www.stitches.com/freeinfo. It's fast and easy!



ask an expert ■ your most pressing business dilemmas solved

By Kristine Shreve



Got a decorator dilemma?

E-mail your question to nrollender@asicentral.com. We'll request your permission to print your question and our expert's response in *Stitches*. Note: Unfortunately, we're unable to answer each individual question.

Looking Forward

In the next issue we'll review the top five markets that are buying decorated apparel.

See you then!

Q I want to add sublimation to my shop, but I am not sure where to begin. Can you give me some pointers?

A To begin your research process, I'd recommend that you see a demonstration of the sublimation process, either at a shop or at a trade show, to decide if it's something you'd like to take on. To create a productive sublimation operation, you need six basic components (this is a very basic overview, so be sure to talk with your vendor about the setup that's right for your shop):

1. A supported sublimation printer. Think about the size of the largest item you'll ever want to print, and that's the maximum print size the printer you choose will need to create. Sublimation transfers can be created using either a Ricoh or Epson printer; either brand provides great quality. Be aware that ink is available only for certain Epson and Ricoh printer models, so you should do some research before purchasing a printer. The cost of a sublimation printer can range from under \$100 for a minimum-use printer to \$1,000 or more for a production-level printer.

2. Sublimation ink. Sublimation ink is manufactured by Sawgrass Technologies, and is available as Sublijet for Epson printers and Sublijet-R for Ricoh printers. Formulation and cartridge size can differ based on the make and model of the printers you're using. Ink prices will also vary based on the printer.

3. Sublimation paper. High-release sublimation paper typically requires shorter press times to release the majority of its sublimation dye into the substrate, but it doesn't dry quickly. If you're printing large numbers of sheets and allow the sheets to stack up, you may experience some smearing of the ink. There's also the potential for "blow out" on hard goods, such as ceramics. High-release paper may also be more susceptible to curling, printer jams, humidity and other environmental issues.

Low- or standard-release paper, on the other hand, dries very quickly, so there are rarely any smearing issues. It works very well on all hard goods, such as ceramics. Low-release paper, however, requires much more time in the heat press to get the dye out. Reducing the press time even a little can cause colors to be less vibrant. This class of paper, however, is virtually immune to paper jams or other environmental issues, and works equally well in a variety of printers and

environments. Hybrid paper combines the best properties of both high- and low-release types of paper.

4. A computer loaded with graphics software, and either an ICC color profile or specific sublimation-printer driver. You can use any graphics program to design your artwork. Graphic templates are available for most sublimation blanks.

Color profiles and sublimation printer drivers can be downloaded from the Sawgrass website (www.sawgrassink.com). Some suppliers may also provide these items.

5. Sublimation blank items to print and sell. Sublimation blanks come in a variety of sizes and shapes. From flat goods, like mouse pads or T-shirts, to things like mugs or jewelry boxes, there are literally thousands of sublimation blanks available.

6. A heat press. A clamshell press can be an economical option, but if you plan on pressing anything other than thin, flat goods, it's not always a wise choice. The design of a clamshell press may prevent closure when pressing non-flat items. In cases where you are sublimating more bulky items, a swing-away may be the better choice. Swing-away presses are generally more robust and designed for longer-term use, and usually have a larger platen.

From flat goods, like mouse pads or T-shirts, to things like mugs or jewelry boxes, there are literally thousands of sublimation blanks available.

Press grades range from casual, occasional use all the way up to industrial-grade. If you plan to use your press more than six hours a day, consider purchasing an industrial-grade press. As with a printer, also consider the largest item you'll ever want to press when deciding what model of press to purchase. Also, keep in mind that some items will require a specialty press, or a specialty attachment for a standard press. Like prices for printers, press prices can range from a few hundred dollars to more than \$1,000. ■

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.

Imprintables® WAREHOUSE

EXCLUSIVE:



NEW! Your full color heat transfer and sign graphics just got a boost! Imprintables Warehouse® introduces the Hybrid 300™ - the only 30" print/cut machine to print metallic and white inks.

For equipment information and a free sample of your custom graphic, call us at 800.347.0068 today or visit imprintables.com to find out more!

NEW! Try using your smart phone now. Scan the bar code below to watch the Hybrid 300™ in action!



asi/58475

Want to see the Hybrid 300™ in person? Visit booth 600 at ISS Orlando or go to imprintables.com/events for a list of all the shows we will attend this year!

IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE WHAT YOU NEED
WHEN YOU NEED IT.



We're making the JERZEES® Heavyweight Blend T-Shirt Collection easier than ever for you to find. With 5 styles and up to 27 colors, selection has never been an issue and now availability shouldn't be either. That's because we're maintaining higher inventory levels at more locations nationwide by increasing production capacity and distribution. For over 100 years, customers have depended on the JERZEES® brand for quality, innovation, performance and value. Today, we have the availability to match.

JERZEES.COM / 800.321.1138

asi/84257

©2011 Russell Brands, LLC

Circle 30 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfo