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July 2014



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Automate Your Shop

From design shortcuts to paperless offices, there are many ways to streamline your processes and increase your efficiency. We explore a few ways shops are using software to save time.

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You'll find the newest and newly upgraded software in business management, digitizing and graphics, mono-gramming and lettering, specialty graphics and more – with real user reviews – in the 2014 *Stitches* Software Guide.

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Boxercraft Apparel (asi/41325) is offering logoed loungewear for Minor League Baseball; alphabroder (asi/34063) is adding InkSoft's Design Studio to its website; and more.

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About the Cover
Design: Hillary Glen
Photography: Mark Prickett
Decoration: Designed and digitized by Augustu Leor, DLT, using Wilcom's EmbroideryStudio and a Proel Laserbridge embroidery laser. Sample provided by BITO, www.bitousa.com

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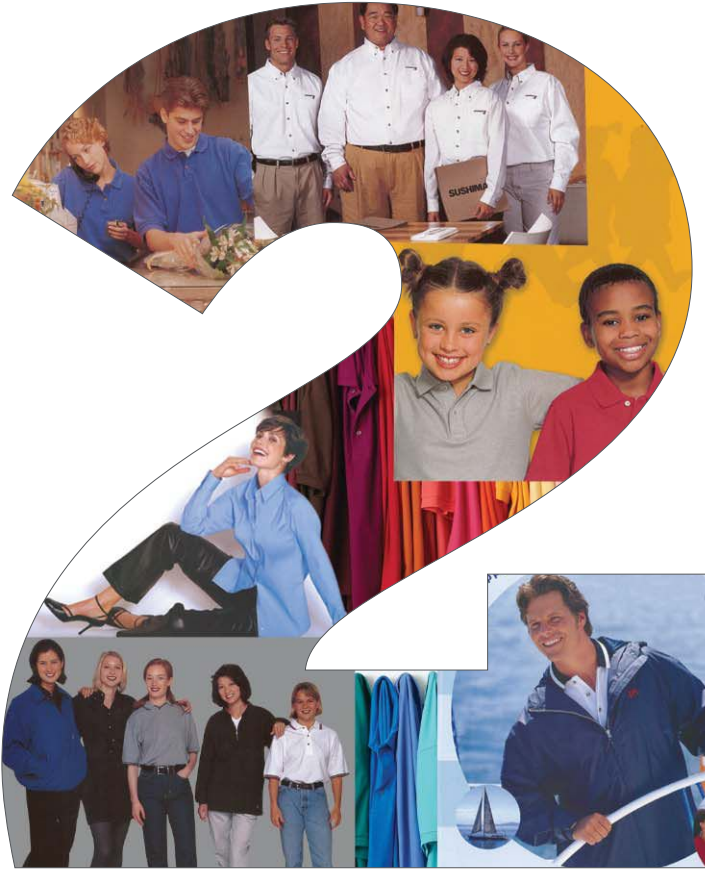
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In this issue's "Ask an Expert," **KRISTINE SHREVE**, director of marketing for EnMart and Ensign

Emblem, offers advice to a new shop owner who's not sure how to track and manage her accounting and financial information. One tip: Watch your invoices. "If you offer customers terms, then you need a system to ensure invoices get paid in a timely fashion," she writes. "Set up some sort of monitoring so you'll be alerted if an invoice isn't paid on time, and then have a plan for what happens in that situation."

In this month's "Expert Weigh-In" section of our "Decorating Solutions" department, **PAUL ASHWORTH**, president and CEO of Bernina of America, talks about ways that decorators can compete with offshore competitors. "To compete, decorators need to emphasize the two advantages they have over the competition – proximity and personal service," he says. For example, "A domestic decorator can visit a home or business, discuss ideas with clients and visit nearby supply houses, sometimes in the same day. They can more easily develop a relationship with customers. If there's a problem with the order or the customer changes his or her mind, the decorator can work in real time to make corrections and adjustments. Time differences and language barriers make that much more difficult for overseas competitors."



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This white fleece hoodie features a reverse-cut appliqué backed with a black jersey fabric. It was created by Los Angeles-based DLT, a retail clothing manufacturer that serves the boutique market. It was designed and digitized by Augustu Leor using Wilcom's EmbroideryStudio software. Using a Proel Laserbridge embroidery laser attached to a multthead embroidery machine, the piece was seamlessly cut and sewn all in one operation. Software for the laser cutting was BITO's Focus Cut III, a vector-based laser design program that's used to create text and shapes to be cut on a wide range of materials. This intricate of a design can only be done on a production basis with an embroidery laser. If a running stitch is used to sewn down the appliqué, the raw edges curl up, creating a distressed look. Sample provided by BITO, www.bitousa.com.

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Be honest: Are you still using floppy disks to transfer designs to your embroidery machine? Spending hours manually digitizing every design that comes into your shop? Storing your handwritten order forms in jam-packed file cabinets? If so, now's the time to stop – and start taking advantage of the industry's best software programs to automate your shop and streamline

your business.

“If you can replace repetitive processes with automation, it's counter-productive not to do it,” says Ed Levy, director of software technologies for Hirsch International (asi/14982). “The largest issue is that many companies I work with have a hard time envisioning life after automation. I can show ROI charts, and explain error reduction, increased output per operator and consistency from job to job, but until most companies experience this for themselves, the light bulb doesn't come on.”

In this annual issue all about software, you'll learn from the experts how to automate your shop in our cover story by Senior Staff Writer Theresa Hegel (pg. 44) and then browse top vendors'

newest and upgraded software packages (turn to pg. 50 to see the 30 business management, digitizing and graphics, monogramming and lettering, and more offerings).

Some *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board members weigh in on time-wasters they see in embroidery shops:

1. Synch your active and backup design archives with floor machinery and staff devices. “Version control can be managed seamlessly via visual programs and automated archiving protocols, thereby reducing the risk of the wrong design being sewn,” says Joanna Grant, vice president of Graphic Production and Support Services at Affinity Express.

2. Kick to the curb the amount of downtime between orders. “Properly programmed and implemented software will enable your operators to look to see what's coming up next,” says Steve Freeman, managing partner at Qdigitizing.com. “While the machine is running, the operators prep for next the job. The amount of time that can be recovered is staggering in a properly implemented system.”

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Nicole M. Rollender

asi/88984



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The Stitch Report

Stitches Editor Nicole Rollender talks about some ways to handle your financials if you're a small or startup shop. Watch it on *Stitches.com*.



Podcast: Be Prepared

Stitches Senior Staff Writer Theresa Hegel talks with Ed Levy, director of software technologies at Hirsch International (asi/14982), about some ways that decorators can automate processes in their shops for greater productivity. Listen on *Stitches.com*.

A Reflective Moment

From safety to fashion, reflective designs light up apparel decoration. Savvy decorators are capitalizing on the growing demand, using specialty inks and heat-applied transfers to create reflective designs on apparel for a wide array of clients. Read the article on *Stitches.com*.

SOCIAL FEEDS



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What software have you most recently invested in to improve operations or artwork design/processes in your shop?

YOU ANSWERED HARRY HAWKINS

Toshiba Canvio Connect 500 GB to back up art in case of a hard drive problem, and Quicken Premier 2014 from Intuit to manage investments.

TAMMY BILLS

I recently upgraded my Wilcom to ES3. I love it! The fonts are tremendous and I have done a lot with the Auto Digitizing. Everything comes out beautifully!

BECKY CARR

I purchased Wilcom digitizing software to improve my business.

WAVENEY PAUL

I've invested in Inksoft and CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X6.

HANK OAKES

We upgraded from CorelDRAW X5 to X6 and shortly thereafter upgraded from SmartDesigner X4.5 to SmartDesigner Pro from Digital Art Solutions. We also invested in additional art templates from DAS.

JOYCE TRINDER

I just upgraded my Generations Digitizing Software.



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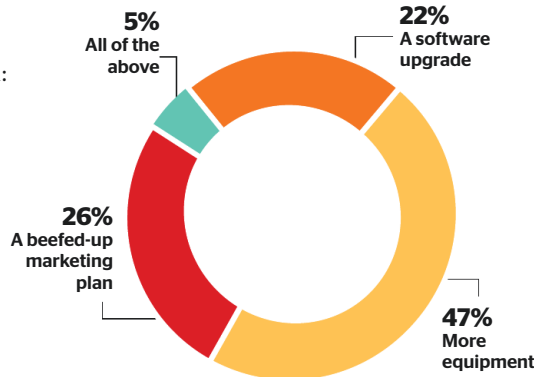
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INDUSTRY POLL

On *Asicentral.com*, we recently asked:

What investments do you plan to make to grow your business in 2014?



BLOG EXCERPT

DecQuorum Small-Business Owners Must Support Small Business



"In recent years, supporting local businesses seems to be in the forefront of everyone's mind. American Express has even created a sort of holiday around this concept with its Small Business Saturday initiative. People who run small online businesses are also riding on this bandwagon. The message that seems to be heard over and over again is to buy local, support small businesses in both brick-and-mortar stores and online, and to use your gift-giving dollars to support something other than the corporate giants. It's not a bad message, and most small-business owners will do everything they can to support this initiative, except the most important thing of all: They often forget that 'shop local' and supporting small businesses works both ways."

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



Pinterest

Check out the following designs that we pinned on Stitches' Pinterest page – from the **Digital Design** and **Sequins, Rhinestones & Bling** boards.

From the Board: Digital Design



American Pride pre-separated designs are perfect for screen printing, direct-to-garment printing, sublimation and heat-applied printing. From Great Dane Graphics (circle 98 on Free Info Card), greatdanegraphics.com.



This set for BBVA Compass includes a custom sublimated silk scarf and tie, with matching cufflinks and bracelet. From Diane Katzman Design (asi/63988, circle 99 on Free Info card), dianekatzman.com.



Sublimated lightweight hoodie (23100080) is made of Pro Tek active fabric in a compression-style fit and features protection from UV rays. From UV Promo (asi/41988; circle 100 on Free Info card), uvpromo.com.



Wrapbands printed with a DTG printer can be worn as bracelets, headbands or chokers. From designer Rebecca Levine, owner of R. Levine, rlevine.net.

From the Board: Sequins, Rhinestones & Bling



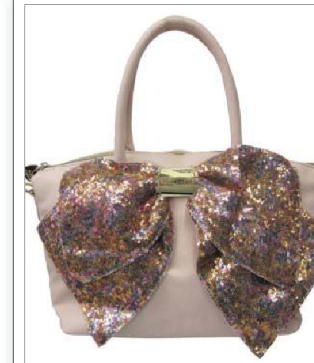
This precut sublimated appliqué design, called "Tumble," includes a scroll-laced crest studded with clear rhinestones. From Dalco Athletic Lettering, dalcoathletic.com.



This precut sublimated appliqué design, called "Tumble," includes a scroll-laced crest studded with clear rhinestones. From Dalco Athletic Lettering, dalcoathletic.com.



Glitter T-shirt (8138) is made of 95% cotton and 5% Lurex and features glitter thread woven throughout. From J. America (asi/62977; circle 101 on Free Info card), jamerica sportswear.com.



Betsey Johnson handbag (BJ25610) features oversized bow in multicolored sequins. From A M C Special Markets (asi/30198; circle 112 on Free Info Card), amcspecialmarkets.com.

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

INTERACT

Letters

We received these letters in response to the question: What software have you most recently invested in to improve operations or artwork design/processes in your shop? If you haven't invested in software recently, what would you like to invest in next, if budget wasn't an object?

No Substitute

We are a full-service embroidery and printing company that offers digitizing, embroidery, digital garment printing, vinyl and bling. We have three embroidery heads, one printer and one vinyl cutter, and we've been in business for over 10 years. Our primary focus is on small businesses and sports teams. I finally broke down and upgraded both of our workstations to CorelDRAW X7. Previously, one work station was at X4 and the other at X5 which caused compatibility issues. Since we do a lot of vinyl, the next step is to see if I can get the Stahl's vinyl cutting plug-in to work in X7.

If I could, I'd upgrade my Wilcom Embroidery software. However, due to the lack of training available in Northern California, I'm not sure it's

cost-effective. I'd also absolutely love to find a software package that easily and efficiently handles work orders. We currently have QuickBooks and I've figured out a totally clunky way to get it to work, but it's a very poor substitute for a package designed to handle what we do.

Janet Bauerly

JB Logo & Design, Livermore, CA

In Control

In February, I invested in Floriani Total Control digitizing software for my small embroidery business. I learned it very quickly and digitized about 10 designs so far. I'm loving it. It's easy to use, very intuitive and comes with fantastic support. I send a quick e-mail to the support team, and generally I hear back in less than 24 hours

with solutions. Plus, I have some local help from the store where I bought the software. The online tutorial videos are really good, and the workbook is very easy to understand.

Kay Johnstone

Innovative Stitches, Graham, WA

Constant Clean-Up

If the budget permitted, I would definitely invest in ShopWorks or another package designed for tracking orders/inventory in our industry. We currently use QuickBooks Online and tracking inventory in there is a nightmare, but it's better than nothing. I routinely clean up duplicate inventory entries because one of us made a new entry when we couldn't find the first one. It's great for accounting but really wasn't

designed to do inventory tracking. Having to make 21 separate items because a shirt comes in three colors and sizes XS to 3XL is just crazy.

Sharon Commerford

Embroidery On Demand, LLC (asi/187799), St. Louis

Technological Challenges

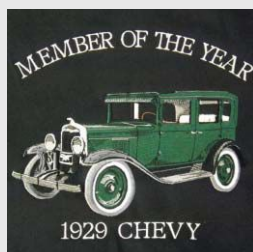
We upgraded our Dakota Alphasizer program when we upgraded our computer operating system and had to make two hardware upgrades that helped us in processing our designs. We own two Tajima NEOs with floppy drives that we converted to USB processors. Prior to our conversions, designs were being distorted when downloaded or our embroidery machines couldn't read our designs at all. You can imagine the concern and confusion this caused. In short, without these conversions, we were temporarily out of business.

Cosma M. Stamis Jr.

Wee Tole-U-Sew Embroidery & Long Arm Quilting Perris, CA

VOILA!

The Best Piece I Ever Embroidered



My best work is this jacket that features an embroidered 1929 Chevy for the Caprock Classic Car Club in Lubbock, TX. The owner was crazy in love with it; he spent thousands of dollars restoring it as close as possible to its original state (even buying horsehair material to cover the seats!). I digitized with DesignShop Pro software from a photo taken in low light, because the owner couldn't risk allowing the sunlight to fade the paint. I loved the car but I felt so pressured to get it just right for him. The design is a full jacket back with 83,256 stitches. I used a Melco/Saurer Amaya XT machine, and Madeira,

Isacord and Serafil thread. The customer was very pleased with the end result. Then, a month later, he sold it and bought a 1967 Camaro.

Submitted by Marcia Coulombe, digitizer at JP's Fundwear, Lubbock, TX; embroidery@fundwear.com

TALK TO US!

Tell us what challenges you're facing in your shop. React to a story you've just read in *Stitches* or on our Facebook page. E-mail us a shot of the latest and greatest embroidery design you've just run. We can't wait to hear from you, so send letters to the editor to nrollender@asicentral.com.

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NEXT LEVEL
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INTERACT

Expert Weigh-In



Paul Ashworth, president and CEO of BERNINA of America, talks about today's challenges for decorators, contending with outsourcing and his favorite business book.

Customers are taking a more active role in the creative process. A current challenge for decorators is a more knowledgeable consumer. Whereas decorators may once have visited a client to assess their needs and provide recommendations, today's clients are taking on more of the creative role themselves and providing ideas to decorators to execute. Additionally, websites and blogs have joined the traditional media outlets like magazines

to provide consumers with fresh decorating ideas and trends. Decorators need to have the means to make those customer requests a reality. Meanwhile, machine and software manufacturers need to keep software simple enough for customers to use while continuing to provide the capabilities that meet the user's needs.

There are myriad ways in which decorators can successfully fulfill their cus-

tomers requests. Decorators should take advantage of the technologies and techniques that allow them to customize and personalize design ideas that satisfy their customers' demands. To stay competitive while doing so, decorators can keep costs down by honing their skills to provide the finished materials themselves rather than contracting them out to third parties.

The different influences on decorators'

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work make this industry even more interesting. Designers and decorators are eclectic today. So many interesting and distinct influences affect design and decorating trends nowadays, along with customers' strong desire to express their cultural traditions and individuality. Fortunately, today's eclecticism has room to encompass all of these tastes, sometimes in a single home. Traditional, modern, neo-classic, bold or natural patterns and aesthetics are mixed and matched according to personal taste.

Decorators can increase sales this year by focusing on diversifying skills. Decorators need to be flexible. Investing heavily in one piece of equipment or software that does a single thing or a few things very well isn't a good strategy. Today's successful decorator needs

expertise in a number of styles and influences. They need to be able to fulfill the demands of their clients, who want a greater variety of products and services at an affordable price.

Domestic decorators have many benefits they can offer their customers, as opposed to overseas companies.

To compete, decorators need to emphasize the two advantages they have over the competition – proximity and personal service. A domestic decorator can visit a home or business, discuss ideas with clients and visit nearby supply houses, sometimes in the same day. They can more easily develop a relationship with customers. If there's a problem with the order or the customer changes his or her mind, the decorator can work in real time to make corrections and adjust-

ments. Time differences and language barriers make that much more difficult for overseas competitors. There may be cost savings associated with taking your decorating business overseas, but how valuable is that savings when you're facing the aggravation of a delayed, incorrect or less-than-satisfactory order from a voice on the phone or the words in an e-mail?

My favorite business book is...

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell. I'm a big believer in "timing is everything" and building teams with a diversity of backgrounds and, hence, opinions. If you feel similarly, this is a great read.

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INTERACT

Problem Solved

Q *My shop's getting busier and busier, and I'm hearing from successful shop owners that arranging my shop's physical layout to optimize the speed with which an apparel shipment can be received, decorated and sent out is essential. Plus, to further ramp-up efficiency, I can leverage technology tools to better automate operations. Can you recommend some ways to enhance automation at my shop?*



Howard Potter, A&P Master Images (asi/702505): I have five top tips, all of which make a difference:

- Move equipment closer to each other.
- Lay out the building based on workflow.
- Use cameras to locate staff.
- Use phone systems with intercoms to contact staff or to transfer calls.
- Invest in better equipment and software.



Lee Romano Sequeira, Sparkle Plenty Inc. (asi/88442): I'd look at your typical order process and create a flow around the rooms

based on that. Stop and take notice of where you crisscross around your shop and see if you can rearrange the space for optimum flow. For our needs, we created a flow of workspace in our production center area so that boxes to be unpacked are at the beginning of the flow, then to a table so we can hand-correct rhinestone designs. Next they're put on the pressing tables and we've set up racks to let the apparel cool down. Then they're folded in our shipping center area that has tape, labels and boxes; then they're ready to be weighed and shipped to our happy customers.



Cory Dean, Artwork Source: There's a lot of free software out there that facilitates efficient communication between customers and staff. Google Docs are great for sharing simple data, Asana is perfect for sharing projects, Salesforce is ideal for making sure your customers are taken care of and Dropbox is great for sharing files.

HAVE A PROBLEM YOU NEED SOLVED?
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I need your assistance with a customer request. They need nice dress shirts or blouses in maternity sizes. Any ideas? Thanks! - Brenda

Mommies-to-be will love the Port Authority Maternity Long-Sleeve Easy Care Shirt (L608M) from SanMar (asi/84863); (206) 727-3200; www.sanmar.com; it features wrinkle resistance, cotton/poly construction and an adjustable back tie.

In addition, they'll enjoy the Ladies' ¾-Sleeve Poplin Swing Shirt from Blue Generation (asi/40653); (888) 336-4687; www.bluegeneration.com; it's got stain-release and wrinkle-resistant properties, hemmed sleeves, a double back yoke and two back side pleats. One more choice is the cotton/acrylic/nylon Women's ¾-Sleeve Maternity Stretch Blouse (5029) from Edwards Garment Co. (asi/51752); (800) 253-9885; www.edwardsgarment.com; it comes in French blue, pink and white.

I've got a client looking for high-visibility seat belt covers. Do you have any suggestions on where to look? - Kera

I've got you covered. Head to Occunomix International (asi/74830); (636) 625-1565; www.occunomix.com; the Value Seat Belt Cover (LUX-900) is available in high-visibility orange and yellow. It contains silver reflective tape for added visibility while wearers operate equipment or drive

emergency vehicles.

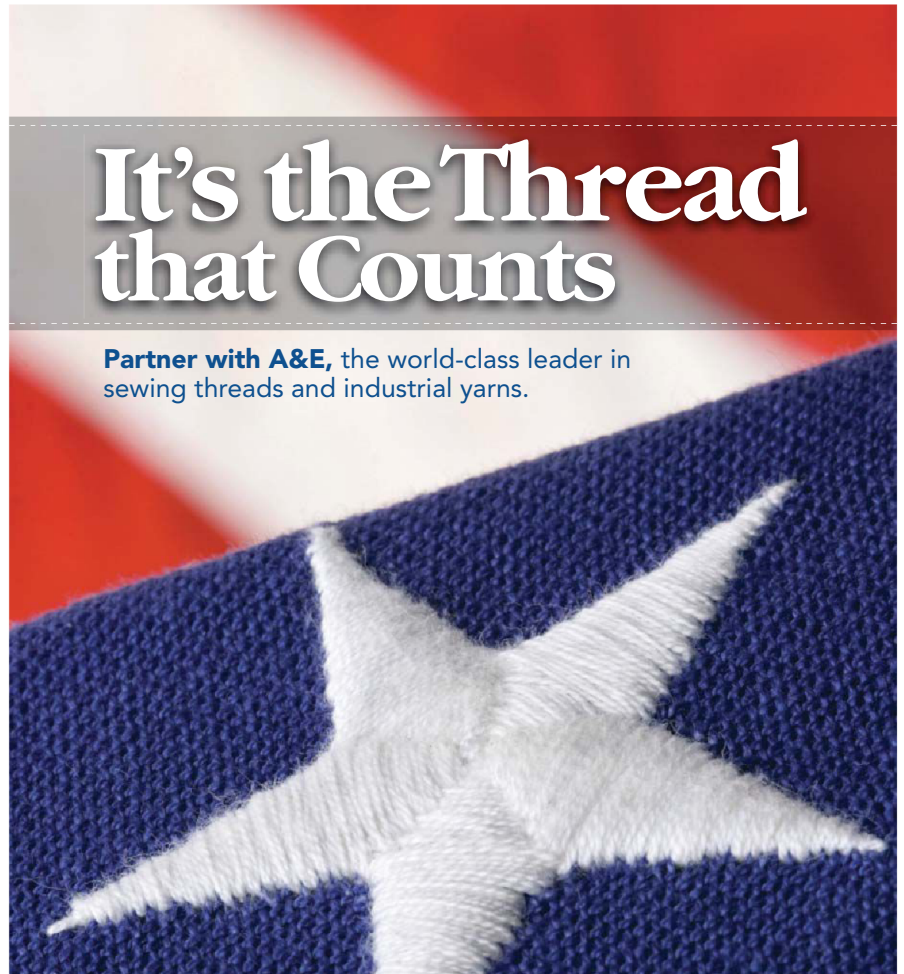
Also, buckle up with Emergency Disaster Systems Inc. (asi/52333); (877) 693-3754; www.edisastersystems.com; product ML3900 will protect with lime and

orange coloring, 2" wide silver reflective material and a Velcro closure.

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By Theresa Hegel

Boxercraft Hopes to Score Points with Partnership

Boxercraft Apparel (asi/41325) scored a homerun with its latest partnership. The company is offering a line of logoed loungewear for Minor League Baseball this season. Merchandise for all 160 clubs will be available at Minor League retail and team stores at participating ballparks across the U.S. and online.

“We’re always looking for ways to expand the Boxercraft brand, and working with Minor League Baseball seems like a perfect fit,” says Shelley Foland, CEO of Boxercraft. “We understand brand passion, as we see with our college consumers wearing our apparel showcasing their

favorite schools. Now, we’re giving baseball fans the same opportunity to show their brand loyalty for their favorite teams.”

Boxercraft is offering a variety of logoed adult and youth loungewear, including men’s, women’s and youth styles for Minor League Baseball consumers. Items include several styles of pants and boxers, both in flannel and cotton.

“Anytime we can give our fans another way to show their enthusiasm for their (favorite team), it’s a win,” says Sandra Hebert, director of licensing for Minor League Baseball. She added that loungewear is a new category for the organization, and she expects it to appeal to all ages.

Alphabroder Offers Design Studio to Customers

Apparel supplier alphabroder (asi/34063) is collaborating with InkSoft, adding the software developer’s interactive design tool, Design Studio, directly to the alphabroder website.

The integration will allow customers to quickly create custom artwork for clients. The new tool features a library of high-quality professional vector design templates and clip art for a wide range of businesses, clubs, sports and more. Customers can also upload their own art, easily edit stock templates and manage and save their images. “We’re delighted to team up with InkSoft in bringing their Design Studio to our valued customers,” says David Clifton, chief marketing officer for alphabroder. “We’re always looking for ways to enable our customers to succeed by providing them with unique value-added solutions.”

InkSoft President Scott Allen says his company welcomes the opportunity to work with alphabroder’s client base, helping decorators create and process orders more quickly. “Together, we want to help alphabroder customers take their businesses to the next level,” he says.

Staton Talks Fashion and Business

Sportswear supplier Staton Corporate & Casual (asi/89380) wants you to tune in to its new Web-based talk show. *The Thread* by Staton features industry news and in-depth coverage of fashion, lifestyle, business and live events. The show was conceived by Lea Robinson, vice president of sales and marketing, and Kara York, vice president of product marketing.

“In an era of information overload, we recognize that we aren’t just competing against other suppliers selling similar

products through social media, we’re also competing against our customers’ friends, family, viral videos and cute puppies,” Robinson says. “We had to ask ourselves how we can be of service to our customers. Our goal is ... to focus on being useful, relatable and entertaining to our customers – bloopers and all.”

The videos and supplemental information are available at www.thetbreadbystaton.com.

Cintas Releases Green Apparel Line

Cintas Corp. (asi/162167) introduced a plant-based apparel collection to help organizations go green. The AR Red Suiting Collection, a collaboration with Austin Reed, is made with DuPont Sorona renewably sourced fiber. As much as 63% fewer carbon dioxide emissions are released during the manufacturing process.

Event Calendar

July 15-17, Chicago
ASI Show
(800) 546-3300;
www.asishow.com

July 26-27, Nashville
Embroidery Mart - EAST
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www.nnep.net

155.6 million

The number of unique viewers watching videos on YouTube and other Google sites in March.

Source: comScore

“Cintas is committed to identifying sustainable options that not only lessen the impact of our manufacturing processes, but also allow our customers to reduce their environmental footprint,” says Melanie Boyle, manager of sustainability for Cintas. Garments in the collection include the Grafton blazer, Celeste blazer, Kensington modern slacks and Devoe skirt for women, and Lenox blazer and Crosby pants for men. The blazers are fully lined with breathable AEROCOOL technology to keep wearers comfortable and also feature multiple inside pockets for added functionality. The collection is offered in a full range of sizes, including petite.

For more information about suiting collections from Cintas, visit www.docandamelia.com. More information about all of Cintas’ apparel solutions for business is available at www.cintas.com.

The Magna Carta, 800 Years Young

Next year marks the 800th birthday of the Magna Carta – the historical charter sealed by King

John at Runnymede in June 1215 that spurred the development of constitutional law in England and beyond. Celebrations leading up to the anniversary are planned throughout the world, but the real question is: What do you get for the ancient document that has everything? Rhoda Nevins, member of the UK's Royal School of Needlework, has the answer. The embroiderer was commissioned to create a 10-panel tapestry depicting the spread of law and order throughout England and the rest of the world.

Several of the panels will depict English



locales – Bury St. Edmunds, St. Albans, Runnymede, London and Canterbury.

One panel will feature the colorful shields of the 25 barons present at the Magna Carta's sealing. The rest depict places in the Commonwealth or that once belonged to the British Empire: the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada and Africa. Those panels will feature historically significant figures like Mahatma Gandhi, George Washington and Nelson Mandela. The hand-embroidered tapestry is expected to be completed before the Magna Carta's big day next June.

"It's such an honor to have been asked to create this piece to celebrate this historic event," Nevins says.

Chinese Artists Recreate Old Currency



Chinese husband-and-wife artists Shao Yinong and Muchen used traditional embroidery techniques to create larger-than-life versions of outdated Chinese currency for their collection "Autumn Spring," exhibited at a gallery in Hong Kong earlier this year. The pair has been working on the series for a decade.

The Beijing-based artists told *TimeOut Hong Kong* that they used modified traditional Suzhou embroidery techniques to create the depictions of obsolete money. The artists approached the silk by separating threads into smaller, finer strands to give each piece a deliberately washed-out look. The collection has a political message: "What's interesting to us is that, normally, when a new government comes in, they will release their own money so the old currency becomes useless," Muchen tells *TimeOut*. "Though at first glance we want people to be attracted by the beauty of the embroidery, when people look at these, they can tell the message behind it. It's a window and symbol and gives an insight into the aesthetic of that time."

Bangladesh Factory Owner to Face Murder Charges

Police in Bangladesh are pressing murder charges against Sohel Rana, the owner of a nine-story factory that collapsed last April, killing more than 1,100 garment industry workers in what was the worst industrial disaster in the nation's history. If convicted, Rana could be sentenced to death. The head of the Rana Plaza complex outside the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka, Rana is one of approximately 40 people who will be charged in connection with the catastrophic building collapse, according to police. Others expected to face prosecution include five bosses and Rana's father, who co-owned the complex.

While Rana is jailed, most of the accused are out on bail. One of the bosses – a Spanish citizen named David Mayor – was out of the country when the collapse occurred and has not returned to Bangladesh to avoid arrest. Rana was arrested while trying to flee Bangladesh and already faces charges related to building code violations and constructing the complex without government approval.

On the day the building crumbled, thousands of laborers – among the worst paid industrial workers in the world – were forced by factory bosses to enter the complex and start their jobs despite the fact that cracks were apparent in the building, survivors have said.

Americans who are 65 or older are more likely to own a tablet or e-reader than a smartphone.

Source: Pew

SALES

Capital Gains

Graffiti isn't afraid to try something new. The 30-year-old Cleveland company, which makes and decorates custom caps, is always on the lookout for the next big thing. "Every time a door opens, we take a look at it," says Rob Hatfield, operations manager. "We're constantly taking risks."

The strategy doesn't always pan out. Graffiti's attempt to break into T-shirts was a bust. But more often than not, the shop's forays into new product lines and decoration methods have met with resounding success. For example, during the recession a few years ago, Graffiti decided to create its own knit caps, dissatisfied with the quality of the beanies they'd been importing. Graffiti's knit hats are lined with Thinsulate for warmth. They fold the hats inside out to embroider, and then assemble them so the backing ends

up hidden and doesn't irritate the wearer's forehead. "Sales just took off, and we couldn't keep up with it," Hatfield says.

More recently, Graffiti has been dabbling in the endless possibilities of dye sublimation, hot-stamping designs onto fabric, which is then assembled into baseball caps. "It's a huge advantage to make the hats here," according to Hatfield. Another popular product is the foam-insulated trucker-style caps the company started making in 2011.

With three factories and 150 embroidery heads, the shop brings in nearly \$5 million in sales each year, and has set a goal of upping revenues to \$6 million by 2015, Hatfield says. Not bad for a shop that began life three decades ago when husband-and-wife owners Abe and Barb Miller bought a single sewing machine and opened a small storefront.

MARKETING

PTA Potential

Kelley Waltz, owner of The T-Shirt Guy LLC in Las Vegas, was a member of the Parent-Teacher Association at her children's school before getting into the T-shirt business a few years ago. With its emphasis on fundraising, she says, the PTA is an ideal, but often overlooked group decorators should target. Knowing this, the T-Shirt Guy has set up a booth at regional PTA conventions for the last two summers.

At those conventions, the decorator touted its fundraising kits, which include samples, order forms, a stand they set up at the school and an online store that saves the PTA from guessing on order amounts and getting stuck with unsold inventory. The kits were popular, Waltz says, but she likes

to come up with new ideas to wow convention-goers. "We're trying to keep things new and fresh for them," she says.

This year, The T-Shirt Guy took a new approach, handing out free vehicle window stickers, featuring soccer balls, music notes, megaphones and other school activity-related icons – perfect fundraiser fodder. It was also the first time the company attended the much larger statewide PTA convention, held in Las Vegas this spring. Though Waltz says her shop did not push any sales at the convention, she received a lot of interest that she expects will pan out over the summer. "Our whole goal is to get information into people's hands," she says. "I know enough about PTA to know it's hard to get people to commit right now."

WEB

Name Recognition

Denver Screen Print and Embroidery's online strategy begins with its name. Type in a Google search for "Denver" and "screen printing," and Ron Katz's 31-year-old business will likely be the first shop to pop up. That's intentional: "We've got a great name," Katz says.

The business is also well-known for its environmentally friendly products, with a strong focus on waterbased screen-printing inks and sustainable apparel. Katz says he's employed search-engine optimization companies to make sure his shop is near the top when people search for terms related to eco-friendly T-shirt printing. "We see a lot of returns on the Web," he says. "We don't have any print advertising anywhere."

But a robust SEO strategy isn't the only way the company gets noticed online. Katz says Denver Screen Print maintains an active presence on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, as well as the review site Yelp. The industry veteran says he relies on one of his employees to keep the posts on-trend, fresh and engaging. "There was a time in my life when I was really hip; I'm not anymore," he jokes. "I'm afraid to even go on Twitter."

Sometimes more effective than the shop's own social media posts are the times that satisfied customers mention Denver Screen Print on their sites. For example, Katz once helped a friend whose daughter was suffering from a rare disease, printing T-shirts for a fundraising walk and giving the event organizer a "smoking hot deal." Afterward, the fundraising group posted a slew of photos from the walk online, thanking Denver Screen Print for its help. "We got so many different jobs from all over the country just from being on their website and their blog," Katz says.



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SHOP MAKEOVER

Room to Grow

Classic Creations Screen Printing in Hillsville, VA, opened the doors of its \$2 million facility in December, but the brand-new company is already poised to grow. “We’re still in our building process and taking baby steps,” says owner Keith Sanders. “Sales have far exceeded my expectations. We still have to be frugal and wise.” Right now, the shop employs about 20 people, but expects that number to grow to close to 60 by year’s end. As the customer base expands, Sanders says he expects to install more presses and add embroidery to the mix.

Sanders, an industry veteran with more than 30 years on the job, says he spent about 15 months refurbishing the building that now is Classic Creations’ home base. “I’ve got a state-of-the-art facility,” he says. The 54,000-square-foot warehouse is designed so that production flows in a loop, with a layout that’s

meant to minimize the amount of steps employees need to take, Sanders says.

Many of the employees started out as fresh and untried as the brand-new equipment they’re using. Sanders said he and his vice president of operations decided their main requirement for new hires would be their desire to work. “We’re willing to train them, and we’ve decided we’d like to train them in the way we want to train them, the way we want them to work,” he says. And, recent studies indicate that employers prefer to hire attitude and personality over skills, which can often be taught to new employees.

Classic Creations does work for sports licensing groups, collegiate programs, advertising specialties and also has been trying to break into the music industry. The shop has nowhere to go but up.

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MARKETING

Quirky Contest

Everybody has one: That beloved, yet threadbare T-shirt, its design faded and cracked with age, a tear in the back so big you can fit your whole hand through. You can't really wear it out of the house anymore, but you also can't bear to part with it.

Ambro Manufacturing (asi/35201) spun that worn cotton into marketing gold, holding a "Ratty Old T-shirt Contest" to help grow the audience of its nascent Facebook page.

Customers were encouraged to post pictures of themselves wearing their favorite, frayed garment, to show off "the dregs of the dregs," says Darren Amato, vice president of sales at the Flemington, NJ, shop.

The prize? Ambro vowed to replicate the old T-shirt, plus a dozen more, for the winner.

Though only a few people entered the contest, the real reward for Ambro was the excitement it generated. The contest



brought the shop 263 organic likes on its Facebook page. That number may not sound like a lot, but Amato notes that they were "high-quality likes" that have already generated three real sales leads. "There are 13-year-old girls who have more likes than my website will ever have, but it's not going to generate them one dollar of revenue," he says. "For what I paid to do 13 T-shirts, to generate three leads, that was well worth it."

Ambro plans to offer new contests monthly, in the hopes that each will bring at least 200 more fans to its Facebook page each time.

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DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Five Steps

By Tonia Kimbrough

Refine a Logo With Specialty Thread

By choosing the right threads for a logo, you can refine it and up its quality past that of your competitors. Here are five steps to create a “high-resolution” logo in embroidery.

1

PLAN THE DESIGN.

What's the size of the design you've been asked to embroider? And what is its application? Will it appear on a cap, or the left chest on a pique sports shirt? Size the design appropriately. If height is the biggest consideration, you may need to create more than one design, digitized correctly, to accommodate your client.

2

BRING SOMETHING UNIQUE TO THE LOGO.

Experiment with the many different thread types available. Metallic threads can offer bling or, in this case, refined elegance, while matte finished threads offer clarity. If you're doing caps, size the logo to the max, but add an interesting element or two. In this case, mixing a 45-weight metallic thread with a thin 60-weight rayon allowed the letters to get small enough and added an element of sparkle for a tone-on-tone effect.

3

PREPARE THE ART-WORK.

Thicken up all elements to meet the 1mm criteria for satin stitches. Eliminate extraneous elements if possible. Measure all elements, lettering and columns. Go as wide as you can while maintaining serifs in any small lettering. Letters shouldn't go smaller than 6mm if you're using 40-weight thread, but you can go down to 4mm with 60-weight.

4

CONSIDER SPECIAL ELEMENTS.

On most caps, designs should be set to sew from the center, out and from the bottom, up. An exception to this rule would be determined by the target material governing which part of the design to sew first. With this logo on a knit shirt, the lily and word “Red” sew left to right; “Vineyards” sews right to the left. The flower is sewn by itself. The sequence would be a different consideration for caps. Always test-sew on the actual item to be embroidered, or on fabric as similar as possible, to see the results.

ABOUT THE LOGO:

Rich Medcraft, owner of StitchWise Embroidery Design in Eagle Point, OR, and a founding member of Madeira USA's NAMES (National Association of Madeira Embroidery Specialists) advisory board, created this unique, high-end logo on knit for his client using Madeira USA's 40-weight rayon, 45-weight smooth metallic and 60-weight rayon. Contact: www.stitchwise.com or at stitchwise@earthlink.net.



Madeira USA; circle 102 on Free Info Card or call (800) 225-3001.

5

EMBROIDER YOUR UNIQUE DESIGN.

Add a final element for maximum effect - here, the lily petals sew in overlapping satin stitches (remember, the maximum width for satin stitch is 8mm), in different directions, which gives it more dimension than a standard fill. A color-matching metallic is used for the inside of the petals, giving the logo an enhanced appearance. The red flower is 40-weight and the outline 60-weight to give a crisp look. Matching dye lots ensure consistent colors.

This last step keeps you ahead of your competition and sets your work apart from every other embroiderer in town.

DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Decorating & Fabric Trends

Create a Three-Color Look for Special Occasions

Add sparks to your client's next celebratory or novelty T-shirt. Dalco's new Triple-Double precut heat-applied lettering is a fast and easy way to offer an exciting new look ideal for spiritwear and fashion apparel, particularly if the garment highlights a patriotic message. Use it to showcase the colors of the American flag – red, white and blue for the Fourth of July, for example.

This concept incorporates the Yikes font and allows you to choose from two materials – Dal-Glitter or Dal-Sparkle – and two colors. Lettering is cut in one material/color, a border is cut in another, and the color of the shirt shows through for a dynamic three-color look.



DALCO ATHLETIC; CIRCLE 103 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 288-3252.

The finished piece measures approximately 3 1/2" x 10 1/2". It can be heat-applied to cotton, polyester or cotton/poly blends. For more information, visit www.dalcoathletic.com

Scannable Patches to the Rescue



PENN EMBLEM CO. (ASI/77120); CIRCLE 87 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 793-7366.

A patch can do more than identify a person. When combined with a QR code, it becomes a scannable tool to identify someone and to provide important information. To create such a patch, Imprints USA, a subdivision of Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120), and If I Need Help, a California nonprofit corporation that reunites lost children with their parents, have come together. The QR Code ID Patches are sublimated with scannable codes providing individual contact and emergency information.

A QR Code ID recently proved priceless for one California family. While at a large sports tournament, a 5-year-old with Autism was separated from his parents. As the family began searching the park a parent in another part of the park noticed the boy and his QR Code ID. She scanned it and the boy was reunited with his parents.

Imprints USA and Penn Emblem Co. are proud to have partnered with Bruce and Erin Wilson, founders of the If I Need Help organization to produce these safety patches. For more information, visit www.qrcodeid.org.



TRANSFER EXPRESS (ASI/91804); CIRCLE 104 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 622-2280.

CLIPARTBOOM; CIRCLE 105 ON FREE INFO CARD OR E-MAIL CONTACT@CLIPARTBOOM.COM.

Cheers for Collegiate Apparel

Are you college-ready? Headquartered in Oberlin, OH, the National Association of College Stores (NACS) is the professional trade association representing the \$10 billion collegiate retailing industry. Its members include nearly 3,000 college stores throughout the U.S., Canada and more than 34 other countries. NACS research finds the average student spends \$711 annually at their campus store. More specifically, \$291 of what they spend goes to a variety of products – including insignia apparel.

Apparel suppliers and decorators are ready to school you on the market. Transfer Express (asi/91804) for example, offers a free webinar on heat-printing for campus bookstores. The presentation shows apparel designs and print locations for school names and mascots on a variety of apparel.

Tap into the lucrative Greek market with a new package of fresh designs from ClipArtBoom (www.clipartboom.com). Offered in vector format, these designs include modern, trendy looks that are perfect for the collegiate market. Cater to all sorority and fraternity activities including bid day, rush week and Spring Break. The Greek Pack includes 35 designs in color and black and white, 35 clip-art illustrations in color and black and white, and 35 fonts.

Machine & Software Updates

Top-Notch Online Design Tools



INKSOFT; CIRCLE 109 ON FREE INFO CARD.

Designing custom apparel and imprints has never been easier now that online tools for collaboration and approval are on the market and improving constantly. Here are three online tools to consider:

1. InkSoft introduces Design Invite, a new software feature that allows users to e-mail customers and prospects invitations that enable them to take part in the design process. This easy-to-use tool provides a unique way of engaging customers by involving them in the creation of graphics from their own desktop using the InkSoft Design Studio, while at the same time facilitating communication and differentiating printers from the competition. Learn more at www.inksoft.com.

2. Cadworxlive, a Web-based graphic design service for garment decorators and sign makers with tools for design,

production and promotion, is undergoing a complete makeover. New features include a mode-based designer that will work with the Roland VersaCMM and the Epson SureColor F2000 direct-to-garment printer. Also new is an improved VectorCut 2.0 cut driver. This online designer has premium artwork created by well-known artist Dane Clement of Great Dane Graphics. It also includes a unique process for creating split-front designs. It can be used to create artwork for digital cutters, digital transfers, printer/cutters, screen printing, direct-to-garment printers and appliqué when used in conjunction with Twill Stitch Pro or Ioline 301 software. Learn more at www.cadworxlive.com.

3. Transfer Express (asi/91804) debuted an updated, more user-friendly version of its Easy View online designer. A how-to video gives users a complete tour of the new features and how to use it to create full-color, professional-looking custom designs in minutes. "Designing T-Shirts For Free" will show how Easy View gives users more creative freedom. You'll learn how to choose from graphics, layouts, type and colors to create custom designs that clients can preview or you can invite them to create designs along with you. To view the video, go to: <http://www.transferexpress.com/play-video?id=rNwbTC2OFvU>.

NEW PRESSES



Riley Hopkins Manual Screen-Printing Press

Ryonet Corp. (circle 107 on Free Info Card) offers the powder-coated, super-durable 2014 Riley Hopkins press, available in matte black and iconic neon Riley green. It features JoyStick Registration for easy registration with minimal effort. The new Wheel Detent holds the platen in place to ensure quality printing, and each press features sturdier construction with minimal weight increase.



Hotronix Auto-Open Clamshell Heat Press

Stahls' Hotronix (circle on Free Info Card) has added a quick-change platen to new models of its Auto Open Clam Heat Press. The feature allows the user to simply flip open the quick-change latch, lift out the platen and replace it with another in a tool-free process that can be completed in just a few seconds.

Quick Tip

Remove the remnants of a topper/stabilizer without water. New Heat N Gone offered by Floriani Commercial gives you the stability you need for embroidery without the need to wash residue away. This film can be completely removed by using a heat press between the temperatures of 260° to 300° Fahrenheit. Heat N Gone can be used as a topping or a stabilizer. For more information, visit www.florianicommercial.com.



FLORIANI COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS; CIRCLE 106 ON FREE INFO CARD.

DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Saving 9



WORKHORSE PRODUCTS; CIRCLE 110 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 778-8779.

Video Highlights Mach Manual Printer's Versatility

Shop for a commercial-quality manual press without leaving your office. Workhorse recently released a video that offers a close-up look at the Mach manual printer line. The introduction shows how these printers meet the needs of growing and high-volume shops with machines designed for accuracy, day-in/day-out ease of use and durability.

The video highlights the large-diameter, full-length center shaft with tapered bearings and print station support struts for maximizing rigidity and platen stability, as well as other features designed for long-lasting accurate registration. These include the Mach's welded steel construction and lightweight, cast-aluminum center wheel for tight registration and smooth, quick turns.

The demonstration also showcases the Mach series' cast-aluminum print heads, which feature tool-free, dial-in off-contact and large-diameter registration knobs with x, y and z micro-registration and screen-angle adjust. In addition to being capable of using aluminum and wood quick-release platens, these printers can accommodate manual, automatic and oversized screens. Mach printers come in a variety of sizes and feature a lockable caster system, allowing for mobility. For more information, visit <http://workhorseproducts.com/blog/mach-manual-printer-series>.

End Costly Thread Breaks

How costly can a thread break be? Madeira USA offers a quick online tool to help embroiderers know just how much revenue is lost in production when thread breaks. This easy-to-use calculator is available to all at www.madeirausa.com; drop down from the "Services" tab and click on "Cost of a Thread Break."

For example, if you run a small shop, with a single commercial embroidery machine (one multi-needle machine = one head), you run your machine at 1,000 spm (stitches per minute), you charge \$1.50 per 1,000 stitches in a design that requires no digitizing, and there are 15,000 stitches in the design, enter these four underlined numbers to learn what a single thread break in an hour will cost you. While you should be able to run 60,000 stitches in an hour, you've just

cut that down to 56,250. Your profitability just went from \$90/hour to \$84.38/hour. What should have taken 15 minutes per run will take you 16, assuming you are pretty efficient at re-threading your machine. Instead of accomplishing four runs in that hour, you'll complete 3.75. And, you've lost about \$1.50 per run, which translates to \$5.63 in that hour – and that's a single-head machine.

Madiera USA MarCom Director Alice Wolf offers these tips: "First, start out with a good, quality embroidery thread. Beyond that, a break can be caused by poor tension, an old needle that may have a rough burr, the wrong size needle for the thread you're using or running the machine too fast on an intricate design. Remember the wise embroiderer's adage: 'Time is money. Don't waste it.'"

Product Pick



GREAT DANE GRAPHICS; CIRCLE 98 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 829-0836 TO LEARN MORE.

Go wild this summer with animal imprints. Great Dane Graphics has added a wide range of new designs to its wildlife stock art category. A few examples include a cardinal, swordfish, crappies and wolves. Choose from a

generous assortment of themes including African (lion, giraffe, gorilla, elephant, zebra), fish (freshwater and salt water) and tropical/resort (sea turtle, parrot, dolphin, sea horse) to name a few.

All designs are high-quality, pre-separated four-color process stock artwork that can be further customized with text, logos or other graphics.

As part of the new Volume 4 Raster Stock Art Collection, these designs come in separate files for screen printing and several types of digital printing. Screen-printing files are separated and saved as DCS 2.0 EPS files. Digital files are high-resolution .png. These can be used for direct-to-garment printers, dye sublimation, large-format printing and more. For printer/cutters, graphics are formatted as CorelDRAW and EPS files. All images include a cut line and extra bleed space around the image to prevent white gaps. All designs are royalty free.



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Look Book

Runway

By Alissa Tallman

Trend Alerts

July is an exciting month when it comes to fashion. Summer styles are at their peak, and brand-new fall looks are right around the corner. Keep your eye on the following trends: First up, nautical designs are giving vivid primary hues like red and blue their due in the spotlight. Next, aluminum, a Pantone favorite, casts its metallic sheen on fashions for both men and women and is slated to be a major contender once September arrives. Last and definitely not least, rhinestones and crystals continue to bedeck everything from dresses to blouses and handbags to shoes with dazzling bling.

Lacoste



PHOTO: FRAZER HARRISON

Apparel: Nautical Designs

Lacoste debuted a sporty lineup during New York Fashion Week that included nautical-themed stripes and solids. This super-comfy PJ-styled outfit displays the classic red-and-blue nautical combo via subdued shades for a unique look.

Jeremy Laing



PHOTO: MARK VON HOLDEN

Color: Aluminum

This clubby sci-fi ensemble by Jeremy Laing put aluminum in the spotlight during New York Fashion Week. The radiant sheen of this grayish hue pairs splendidly with darker neutrals like black and dark brown.

Blumarine



PHOTO: ITULLIO M. PUGLIA

Embellishment: Rhinestones and Crystals

This gorgeous dress shimmering with rhinestone embellishments was spotted during Blumarine's Milan Fashion Week show. Glitter and glam pops off especially well when applied to dark neutral backgrounds.

Trends

APPAREL

Nautical Designs

Nautical-themed apparel set sail on the summer runways in whimsical and fun ensembles by Hussein Chalayan, Lacoste and Balmain. Dresses and tops banded with red or blue and white stripes were a hot item, as were outfits combining reds and blues of various shades.

“The nautical theme is an extremely popular trend, from clothing and accessories to shoes and hairstyles,” says Heather Brunner Kelly, marketing manager for Charles River Apparel (asi/44620). Kelly lists the most notable trademarks of this trend: “Horizontal stripes, stars, anchor images and red, white or blue [coloring] all represent a timeless style appropriate for women [and men] of all ages.”

While Kelly considers nautical apparel best for travel-related businesses, she also says it's excellent for everyday workwear, noting that the promotional industry has a lot to offer in this category.

Kelly suggests being minimalist when integrating this trend into an outfit. “Less is definitely more. Just a few accessories or a combination of items is what makes this style classy and sophisticated.”



Ash City USA (asi/37127; circle 76 on Free Info Card) distributes this retro-styled lightweight recycled polyester jacket (88188); decorated by Kevin Orga, owner of Pittsburgh-based Embroidered Apparel Solutions.



Charles River Apparel (asi/44620; circle 77 on Free Info Card) carries this yarn-dyed hooded rugby pullover (9574); decorated by Janelle Bolt, owner of Dundee, OR-based Busy Hands Embroidery.



This men's antimicrobial striped polo (FA5041) is available from Fersten Worldwide Inc. (asi/53974; circle 78 on Free Info Card); decorated by Janelle Bolt, owner of Dundee, OR-based Busy Hands Embroidery.

LOOK BOOK

Trends

COLOR

Aluminum

Aluminum is forecast for instant success this fall. This enterprising, pewter-esque neutral showed up during Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter Fashion Week in both men's and women's designs by the likes of Roberto Cavalli and Jeremy Laing.

The presence of gray in fall's fashion lineup can't be underestimated. "This shade, with all of its varieties from dark to light, has been observed in almost all of the recent fashion shows," says Rima Kh, writer for Fashionisers.com. "It's really incredible and über-impressive to watch the ways in which fashion giants have interpreted the stylish shades of gray."

The Pantone Color Institute describes aluminum as "a futuristic stainless steel shade that serves as a complex neutral." Pantone's color palette for the upcoming fall and winter season consists of somewhat staid but sophisticated, elegant hues. Leatrice Eiseman, the institute's executive director, explains that "this is a season of untypical colors – more reflective of the imagination and ingenuity, which makes for an artful collection of colors and combinations not bound by the usual hues for fall."



This Nike performance backpack (TG0243) with contrast piping can be found at SanMar (asi/84863; circle 79 on Free Info Card); decorated by Kevin Orga, owner of Pittsburgh-based Embroidered Apparel Solutions.



Stormtech Performance Apparel (asi/89864; circle 80 on Free Info Card) carries this water-repellant women's fleece hoodie (SFH-1W).



Driving Impressions (asi/50864; circle 81 on Free Info Card) distributes these eye-catching, suede-accented women's golf shoes (15372); decorated by Stahl's ID Direct (asi/88984; circle 82 on Free Info Card).

Trends

EMBELLISHMENT

Bling

If it's shiny and it sparkles, it's stylish and on-point. Current ensembles from Prada and Diesel Black Gold incorporate tons of bling, proving rhinestones and crystals are embellishments with plenty of staying power.

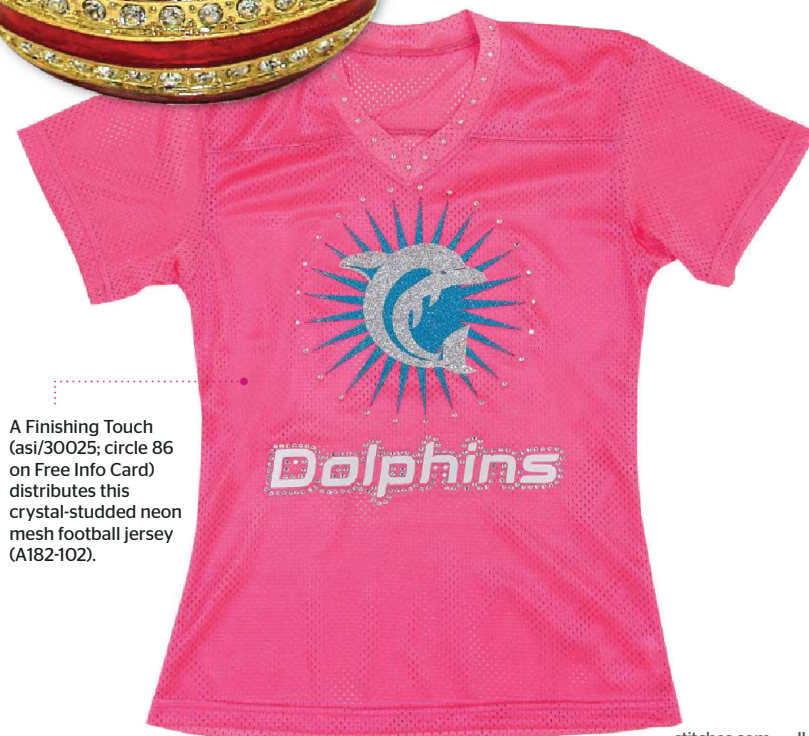
Lee Romano Sequeira, co-owner of Philadelphia-based Sparkle Plenty Designs Inc. (asi/88442), emphasizes the significance of these embellishments, especially for women's promotional items: "Rhinestones are of particular importance in the promo products world. While apparel makes up the largest segment of the product categories for promotional items, bling decoration is the one specifically feminine form of decoration." She says that rhinestones provide female clients with the kinds of items they're seeking. "We're always hearing from women in the market that they want something especially for them," she says.

Sequeira says let clients know you sell bling. Decorators "can provide better service to their female clientele by making them aware of the options available with bling, not just in custom apparel but with bling decals and crystal body tattoos," she says.

You can find this outstanding red, white and blue crystal handbag (318) at Artform, LLC (asi/30230; circle 83 on Free Info Card).



The team at Sparkle Plenty Designs (asi/88442; circle 84 on Free Info Card) added crystals to this V-neck tee (6405) from Bella+Lo (asi/39590; circle 85 on Free Info Card) and this tank top with a private label.



A Finishing Touch (asi/30025; circle 86 on Free Info Card) distributes this crystal-studded neon mesh football jersey (A182-102).

LOOK BOOK

Showcase: Woven Shirts

Wovens have long been a staple item in the promotional industry, but they've gotten quite an upgrade over the past year or so. Whether you're seeking a shirt for the hospitality industry or for a corporate environment, here are some of the latest trends.

Elson Yeung, product line manager and designer for Ash City USA (asi/37127), points to button-down as well as clean-collar looks. "Clean-collar points tend to offer a more fashionable and contemporary touch of styling, whereas button-down collar shirts provide a certain professional and welcoming appearance," he says. "The main idea is to make sure both options are within your wardrobe." Another current trend in wovens, Yeung says, is performance. "The availability of performance features beyond your typical wovens is a hot trend right now, as many new styles incorporate moisture wicking within woven shirts to keep wearers dry and comfortable all day long," he says.

Jackie Whitfield, vice president of merchandising at Trimark Sportswear Group Inc. (asi/92122), cites other trends. "There's a significant interest in checks and gingham yarn dyes for both men's and women's woven shirting, and wrinkle-free and wrinkle-resistant finishes are becoming a necessary requirement," Whitfield says.



This women's button-down (78690) can be found at Ash City USA (asi/37127; circle 76 on Free Info Card).

Bodek and Rhodes (asi/40788; circle 88 on Free Info Card) distributes this silky and supple women's sateen woven (V0219); choose from several colors, including almond, Danish blue and sage.

Trimark Powered by Leed's (asi/66888; circle 89 on Free Info Card) is where you'll find this women's long-sleeve shirt (TM97654) featuring a subtle check print. Choose from china blue, lavender/white, matchstick and gray storm.

Abacus Solutions LLC (asi/30279; circle 90 on Free Info Card) distributes this women's 3/4-sleeve non-iron button-down (RH69); choose from several colors, including deep red, celery and teal; decorated by Janelle Bolt, owner of Dundee, OR-based Busy Hands Embroidery.

This lightweight poplin woven with roll-up sleeves (5288) is available from Edwards Garment (asi/51752; circle 91 on Free Info Card).

Niche: Swim Apparel

Swimwear will surely inspire this season. Designs and styles are innovative and daring, and reference everything from Bollywood fashion to men's 1960s surfer culture.

For women, embellishment is queen. Monika Rene, customer service representative at Bishop Garment Co. (asi/40585), says, "Swimwear in 2014 is all about accents and features a variety of embroidered detailing and gilded hardware, making this year's suits more glamorous than ever," she says. Additionally she details a few other types of embellishments: "This year's trends focus on crochet, strings and fringe. Crochet makes for a bohemian beach look, perfect for free-spirited fashionistas," she says. "String accents are a standout style. Finally, fringes will remain in full force in 2014, but they'll be bigger and bolder – and they'll certainly take center stage."

For men, shorter board shorts are in considerable vogue. Stan Rudman, owner of Sportailor Inc. (asi/88796), says this resizing is adhering to retro trends. "We're seeing a return to the original volley length, with a 16" outseam," he says. "Board-short lengths are shorter now because they're tying back to retro styles, which are bigger than ever and here to stay. But, longer shorts will always be in style."



This one-piece women's suit (101045F) featuring a nylon/Lycra lining is available from Gulbenkian Swim Inc. (asi/58650; circle 92 on Free Info Card); choose from royal blue, black and red.



Hammacher Schlemmer (asi/59444; circle 93 on Free Info Card) offers a spectacular range of pool accessories, including these photochromatic swim goggles (83998).



Wet Effect Inc. (asi/98103; circle 94 on Free Info Card) carries this neon rash guard (RG-100L); choose from gray, lime, pink or yellow. It was decorated by Kevin Orga, owner of Pittsburgh-based Embroidered Apparel Solutions.



Eva Sportswear (asi/52834; circle 96 on Free Info Card) carries these men's striped board shorts (18486) in medium black, medium red and medium yellow; decorated by Kevin Orga, owner of Pittsburgh-based Embroidered Apparel Solutions.



Bishop Garment Co. (asi/40585; circle 95 on Free Info Card) carries this knockout sublimated bikini (2079).



These men's surfer board shorts (M036680) can be found at Sportailor Inc. (asi/88796; circle 97 on Free Info Card) in a range of colors, including orange, red and black; decorated by Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120; circle 87 on Free Info Card).



LOOK BOOK

Inspiration: Susan Elliott

Ever since childhood, when Susan Elliott received an embroidery kit from her grandmother for Christmas, needlework has played a central role in her life. “No matter where I went or what I did, I always sought out local embroidery methods and spent most of my free time embroidering,” she recalls. After receiving formal training at Atlanta’s Japanese Embroidery Center in addition to taking courses with the Embroiderers’ Guild, Elliott began to find her own artistic voice.

“I find inspiration for my designs from my own life, whether it’s the books I read, the places I go, the movies I see or people I know,” Elliott says. “All of them inspire me to create an embroidered textile to tell a story.” And tell stories she does with sewn 3-D characters such as Alice from *Alice in Wonderland* and even Audrey Hepburn, the latter appearing in a piece Elliott based on *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*.

Elliott is well-versed in numerous embroidery techniques: “I use all of the different approaches in working on a piece to get my point across, and there are no supplies that are off limits.” She labels this her “mixed-media approach” to embroidery, but claims it’s mostly crazy quilting and stumpwork that she takes after.

Susan Elliott blogs regularly at Plays with Needles (plays-with-needles.blogspot.com), where images of her past work and current pieces can be found.



Susan Elliott is well-versed in numerous embroidery techniques, including petit point, whitework, canvas work and crazy quilting, and tries to use as many as possible in her busy artwork.

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AUTOMATE

YOUR SHOP

From design shortcuts to paperless offices, there are many ways to streamline your processes and increase your efficiency. We explore a few ways shops are using software to save time.

By Theresa Hegel





Jan Calahan of Oaktree Embroidery in Oakland, CA, remembers one of the first moments she realized how much time she could save using software. She and her sister were attending a trade show not long after opening her first embroidery shop 14 years ago. At a class for CorelDRAW add-on program Smart Designer Pro, Craig Mertens, owner of Digital Art Solutions, asked how many decorators had trouble creating an arched text effect. Hands shot up across the room, Calahan's included.

When clients wanted their text arched, Calahan was accustomed to cutting out individual letters, then plac-

ing each by hand to give the spelled-out word that distinctive curve. "To put the letters on, it was painstaking and horrible," she says. After seeing Mertens click three buttons to make perfectly arched text appear onscreen, Calahan leaned over to her sister and whispered, "Hand me my purse." She purchased that early version of Smart Designer and never looked back.

These days, Calahan can rattle off a long list of software she's tried and programs she can't do without, from one that digitizes her tackle twill files with the push of a button to another that helps her easily create and cut rhinestone designs. "The way business was 14 years ago



to the way it is today, it's completely software-based," she says.

There are so many software packages available to help automate an embroidery business, streamlining the process from the time an order is placed until the finished product is picked up or shipped. But many shops, even larger ones that appear to be thriving, aren't taking advantage of available technology. Or, they're relying on a cobbled-together combination of competing programs and stacks of paperwork or maybe even an order hastily scrawled on the back of an envelope.

"It's startling how these businesses are successful, and it's almost by mistake," says J.P. Hunt, vice president of sales and marketing at InkSoft, which develops online design and business software for decorators. "People spend more time managing their Frankenstein system and processes than they do running their business."

One of the problems shared by many small-business people is the lack of value they place on their own time, according to Ed Levy, director of software technologies at

Hirsch International (asi/14982) and owner of Digitize4u, an embroidery and digitizing operation. He's talked to shop owners who would rather spend two days digitizing a piece of art than shell out \$50 to outsource the work. In the long run, he says, the shop owner ends up losing more money than was saved; the hours lost to digitizing could have been better employed marketing the business or making sales, potentially bringing in hundreds, even thousands, of dollars.

In the same way, software that automates a shop's processes comes at a price, but it'll help a shop save time, increase efficiency and ramp-up production. "If you have something that's repetitive and you can replace that process with automation, it's counterproductive not to do it," Levy says. The other huge benefits of automation software are error-reduction and consistency: "Automation is a series of set-in-stone rules. If I put a process in place for handling long text, that process is going to occur over and over and over consistently," he says. "You don't have that judgment call; you have pure, hard, factual actions."

USE DESIGN SHORTCUTS

It's pretty much standard for a shop to create artwork with graphic design programs like CorelDRAW or Adobe Illustrator, but oftentimes no one in the shop has formal graphic arts training. Luckily, there are add-ons like Smart Designer Pro that drastically cut down the learning curve and add countless shortcuts and features to such programs. "Somebody can be instantly effective in it," Mertens says of Smart Designer Pro. "You're just making choices, instead of having to learn steps. Something that could take months to learn in CorelDRAW, they can do that in minutes."

The program turns text effects that once could be achieved only through 20-step processes and condenses them into the click of a button. Calahan estimates that she only requires about a quarter of CorelDRAW's functionality to run her business, and she doesn't have time to click through "every little box" to explore all the features or do complicated things like creating split-front tackle twill artwork for jerseys from scratch. "I need to be able to have the tools right at

my fingertips,” she says. “It just really takes CorelDRAW back to a level of understanding. I have no graphic art background behind me at all, but I can create some killer stuff.”

Many software packages also offer high-quality clip art to jump-start creativity, and interactive design templates, such as one in Smart Designer Pro that allows users to throw together a professional-looking sales flier in five minutes. It doesn’t make sense to spend an hour putting together a sample design to attract one client, but if you can spend an hour creating fliers for 15 potential clients, it’s time well spent, Mertens says. “It’s a phenomenal marketing tool,” he says.

When it comes to converting a design into stitches, software that recognizes vector artwork can cut the design process by several hours, depending on how complicated the design is. Vector recognition preserves the shapes of an electronic design file, saving the digitizer from having to redraw the design, Levy says. “Now, the digitizer’s role is just assigning stitch types and workflow,” he says.

Most embroidery software also has smart functions that automatically apply suitable underlay, pull compensation and stitch density settings for different fabrics.

MANAGE A PAPERLESS BUSINESS

Many shops are slaves to their paperwork, with owners losing valuable time when they have to search through stuffed file cabinets or teetering stacks of purchase orders. “We’ve seen some very large-volume companies running on paperwork,” says Jay Malanga, president of ShopWorks, which makes the business management software OnSite. “It’s brutal; their costs are a lot higher than if they were automated.”

Good business management software can help a shop better track its orders. The more hands involved in processing and fulfilling an order, the more important it is to stay organized. Paperwork can help with this, but what happens when you have to change an order? Or when you need to process a reorder six months after the original

is placed? How much time do you waste sifting through paperwork? How often are mistakes made? With business management software, it’s easy to change an order and make everyone in the company aware of that change without having to reprint and redistribute paperwork, Malanga says. And if you get a reorder, it’s simple to bring up the original and clone it, he adds.

Business management software should be seamless through all aspects of your business, from accounting to order processing and fulfillment, allowing you to enter data once, instead of having to input the same information in several places, he says. Another bonus: Programs like OnSite integrate with UPS and FedEx shipping programs, pulling their data into your shop’s records for easy package tracking.

AUTOMATE PRODUCTION

Once your orders are stored electronically, whether in a simple spreadsheet or in more robust business management software, you can make that data work for you, using software to cut down on human error and increase your efficiency. One area where this is really valuable is in fulfilling orders with variable data, such as jerseys with individual names and numbers for youth sports leagues.

In the old days, Calahan remembers, Little League moms would write children’s names on a piece of tape, stick it on a blank jersey, and her shop would take it from there. This, of course, led to many misspellings. “Sometimes you can repair it, but most of the time you’re buying a new jersey, which is very costly,” she says.

Now, she gets the information electronically, significantly cutting down on mistakes. When personalization is done manually, data shows that at least 5% of the orders have errors, says Brian Goldberg, president of Pulse Microsystems, which developed Pulse ID and other software. “If we eliminate the human interaction, we can eliminate the errors completely,” he says.

Pulse ID takes electronic order data – things like the desired color, the text, design

WHAT TO ASK BEFORE BUYING

Purchasing software is a big decision. Not only will it put a dent in your wallet, but the software you choose will, in many ways, dictate how your business runs for years to come. It’s not a decision to be made lightly, says Jay Malanga, president of ShopWorks. “People should understand it’s a process. They really should spend time evaluating software packages,” he says.

Here are a few questions to consider:

Does the software do what I need it to do? Any company can say its software is tailored to your niche, but that doesn’t necessarily make it so, Malanga says. Find out what specific features are available to meet your needs, and make sure the software is compatible with what you already have in place.

How long has the software vendor been in business? Seeking out a “reliable long-term vendor” can give you peace of mind, says Brian Goldberg, president of Pulse Microsystems. “You want to know that you’re dealing with a substantial company with history that’s not going to leave you in the lurch,” he says.

Who else has bought the product? Ask for testimonials or seek out online reviews to determine how satisfied other customers are with the software you’re researching.

What kind of training and support is offered? Fancy automation or design software does you no good if you don’t know how to use it. Make sure the software company is committed to training its clients, whether by sending someone to your shop, offering classes or regularly posting online videos and tutorials. If you run into glitches later on, you want to know technical support is readily available. Some software companies even provide shops with 24/7 support (for an extra charge, of course).

How often is the software updated? Make sure the company regularly updates the program to keep up with the latest decoration trends and challenges. You need to ensure the product will be maintained and enhanced well into the future.

Now Madeira is even more colorful, with the addition of these new colors:

- 57 solid fashion colors
- 5 electric fluorescent colors
- 10 multi shades



Madeira's Polyneon embroidery thread is ideal for embroidering on uniforms, work wear and commercial linens, due to its ability to hold up to heavy duty, commercial laundering.

Be sure to visit www.madeirausa.com to look for special pricing, thread kits and to learn more about the quality threads and embroidery supplies offered by Madeira.

Suitable for almost any application, Polyneon's unique formula makes this thread extremely durable and smooth running. Vibrant colors are glossy, as well as resistant to chlorine bleach, making Polyneon the ideal thread for embroidering on uniforms, safety garments and commercial linens.

Pantone® Color Matching Made Easy

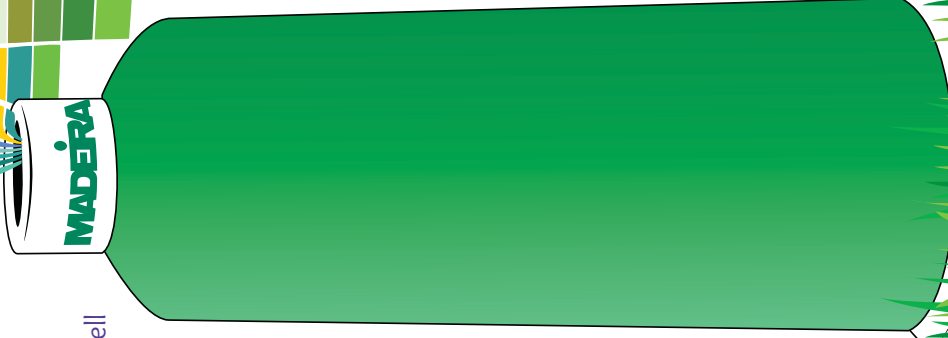
We submit our colors to Pantone® in order for them to officially match our thread colors to existing Pantone® (PMS) colors. On our website we offer an automatic Pantone® Color Matching tool, where you can enter a Pantone® color and automatically receive the Pantone® approved Madeira thread color match.

Visit www.madeirausa.com, go to the Services tab at the top, and drop down to Pantone® Color Matching.

Please note, since Pantone® has thousands of colors and Madeira has hundreds, there may not always be a PANTONE® authorized match available. In the case where there is no exact match specified by PANTONE®, please call 800-225-3001 and have a Customer Service Representative suggest Madeira's closest color match.

Advantages of Madeira 100% Polyester Polyneon Include:

- Superior strength for fewer thread breaks and reduced down time
- Low elongation eliminates looping and puckering for hours of worry-free embroidery
- Color-fast to chlorine bleach; ideal for embroidery on items which are subject to harsh industrial laundering
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- Great tensile strength



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5/2014


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**Madeira is happy to announce
that we've added 72 new colors
to our Polyneon Line!**

POLYNEON #40

Now with 62 new solid & 10 new multi colors!

Use them:

- To enhance your designs
- For color matching
- To offer your clients
- To add a fashion element
- To embroider on jeans, pockets & seams

Solid Colors	Solid Colors
#1594	#1572
#1593	#1575
#1528	#1502
#1577	#1544
#1542	#1539
#1531	#1540
#1566	#1564
#1555	#1506
#1563	#1574
#1592	#1507
#1545	#1589
#1578	#1582
#1505	#1541

Solid Colors	Solid Colors
#1552	#1529
#1599	#1550
#1532	#1562
#1580	#1522
#1569	#1553
#1561	#1554
#1526	#1548
#1556	#1549
#1527	#1595
#1573	#1584
#1538	#1597
#1535	#1596
#1568	#1598
#1565	#1588
#1557	#1508
#1560	#1509
#1559	#1521
#1558	#1567

Multi Colors	Multi Colors
#1510	#1515
#1511	#1516
#1512	#1517
#1513	#1518
#1514	#1519

Madeira's 100% polyester embroidery thread, Polyneon is constructed of a specially developed raw material, designed to eliminate looping, puckering and thread breaks. Since 2011, a significant portion of recycled polyester fibres has been incorporated into the production of Polyneon #40. Vibrant colors are glossy, as well as resistant to chlorine bleach.

While every attempt is made to reproduce thread colors accurately, colors on your monitor may not precisely match actual thread colors.

These colors will be appearing on the new Polyneon color card item# 100-82

POLYNEON 40
 Art. No. 919
 10 x 1.000 m
 Art. No. 918
 10 x 5.000 m
 60#8 - 75#11
 dtex 135 x 2
 den 120 x 2

CONFIDENCE IN TEXTILES
 Tested for harmful substances according to Oeko-Tex® Standard 100 (p. 0.5007)
 DEKRA
 max. 20g / active chlorine - max. 30°C - max. 30min

95°C
 max. 20g / active chlorine - max. 30°C - max. 30min



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“If you have something that’s repetitive and you can replace that process with automation, it’s counter-productive not to do it.”

Ed Levy, *Hirsch International (asi/14982)*

placement and whether there are color or text changes in a template – and converts it into a form easily read by the embroidery machine, he says. There’s no need to carry a disk or thumb drive to the machine – the order is processed and sent automatically in a matter of seconds. Once a machine operator is ready to print, he or she just scans a barcode on the garment and puts it on the machine. Operators don’t even have to set the needles; it’s all done for them, Goldberg says. “It’s a big elimination of labor costs,” he adds. “We have some clients who handle as many as 200,000 designs a day. If you had a human dealing with those, it wouldn’t be possible.”

He gave an example of one business that was able to triple production after implementing the software. The company specialized in personalized dog collars. The work involved – typing in data, sending it to the machine, mounting the collar and setting the needle – meant each employee could handle only two machines, he says. Thanks to production automation from Pulse, each operator now is able to oversee six machines without trouble.

TAKE YOUR DESIGN ONLINE

Another way a shop can save time is to add an online design studio. Customers love how easy, convenient and fun they are, and online designers lift the burden of art creation off the decorator’s shoulders. The biggest holdup in the decoration process often is getting a client to approve the artwork, Hunt says. “Until you can get a customer fired up about a design, you can’t really get to the next level. You can really be efficient and remove the bottleneck by delegating

design to your customers,” he adds.

With sites like CustomInk and Zazzle steadily growing in popularity, customers have begun to expect all custom decorators to offer similar services. “Being online with a great, functional website is as critical as having the phone and power connected to your business,” says Brenden Prazner, product marketing manager at DecoNetwork, a software company that offers online design and business tools. “Without it, you cannot compete, and you won’t last as a business.” Not all online design software on the market today can accommodate embroidery, but the number of programs that can has been growing.

Australia-based decorator The Print Bar has been using an online-based design and management system since it opened in 2011. Empowering customers to design their own T-shirts has really freed up employees, says Athalia Foo, marketing manager. “In the past, custom-design businesses like ours would have involved a great deal of one-on-one interaction with clients to place orders and create designs,” she says. Those one-on-ones cut into efficiency and productivity, significantly lowering output. With an online designer, customers can log on and start creating whenever and wherever they want. “It gives our customers great self-satisfaction when they have the power to create their own custom garments from scratch themselves. It’s a truly thrilling and often a very special experience,” Foo says.

THERESA HEGEL is a senior staff writer for *Stitches*. Contact: thegel@asicentral.com; follow her on Twitter at [@TheresaHegel](https://twitter.com/TheresaHegel).



AUTO-DIGITIZING: HYPE OR HELP?

With all the focus on automation, one buzzword being bandied about is auto-digitization. It’s a feature of just about every embroidery/digitizing platform out there, but is it practical to use in a production setting? For most experts, the answer is no. “It’s not a reality,” says Ed Levy, director of software technologies for Hirsch International (asi/14982). “You might get lucky every once in a while and have a design work, but true digitization is far from an automatic process.”

Once you run a design through an auto-digitizer, it still needs to be cleaned up and edited. The auto-digitizer may put a color in an area where there shouldn’t be color, or stitch in the wrong direction, creating an inefficient workflow. Some people like to use a combination of automatic and manual processes, editing a design file after running it through the auto-digitizer, says Clark Collins, director of training for Wilcom America, which developed the Embroidery Studio design software. “You don’t have to start from scratch,” she says.

But other digitizers don’t like to give up that control. “I’m probably old-school,” says Doris Boyer, who runs Mom’s Sewing Room, a home-based business in Aurora, Ontario. “I like to do it myself. I guess I’m a control freak.”

One good way to make use of the auto-digitization tool, however, is to estimate stitch counts to quickly put together a price quote, or to simulate an embroidery design to help land an order, says Brian Goldberg, president of Pulse Microsystems.

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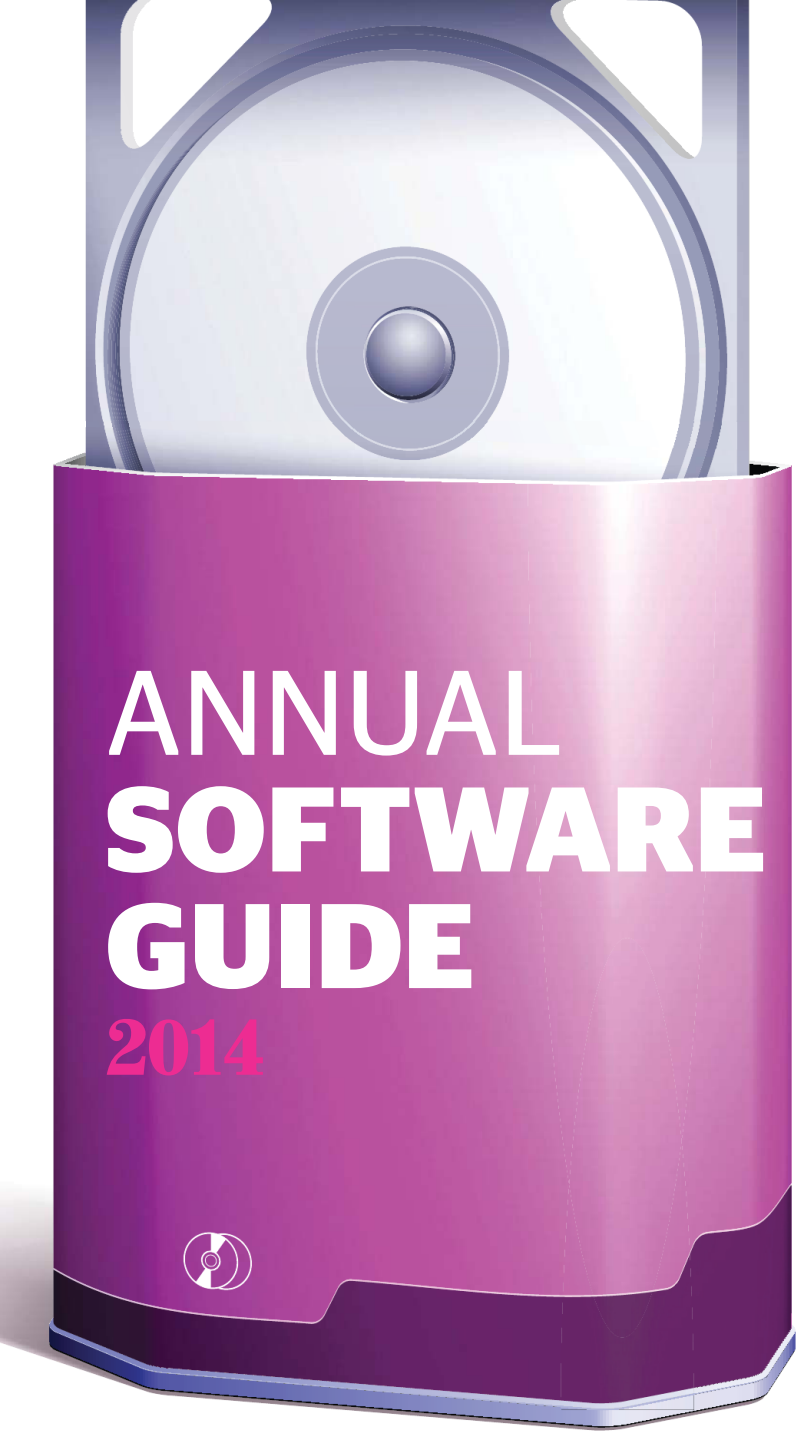
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ANNUAL SOFTWARE GUIDE

2014

You'll find the newest and newly upgraded software in business management, digitizing and graphics, monogramming and lettering, and more - with real user reviews - in this special annual section.

By Sara Lavenduski and Nicole Rollender

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

ASI SmartBooks

ASI Computer Systems,
Cedar Falls, IA; (319) 266-
7688; www.asicomp.com

Cost: Contact manufacturer
for price.

What it is: ASI SmartBooks
is business management soft-
ware that allows companies to
manage all intricate business
processes with a single, flexi-
ble, powerful business applica-
tion. It integrates accounting,
sales, marketing, order entry,
inventory, purchasing, ship-
ping, reporting and product
sourcing from ESP into one
application.

What's new:

- Artwork tracking, decorator instructions, size/color matrix and tracking on additional charges/costs for wearables orders
- Drop ship, inventory and customer-owned inventory order management
- Custom user-defined order tracking.

Key features:

- Fully ESP-enabled
- Ability to pull product data directly from user's database or ESP when adding products
- Data for each customer prefills the purchase order and order costing for instantly cutting checks
- Ability to move from quote to cash without rekeying data
- Pre-set with over 100 of the most-used reports, which can

be customized.

Buyer's note: This software is designed for companies in the advertising specialty industry looking to save time and money by managing the entire front- and back-office functions with a single application.

Fast Accurate Bids

Fast Accurate Bids LLC, Bell-
ingham, WA; (360) 752-3310;
www.fastaccuratebids.com

Cost: \$297; no monthly fee,
free customer support and
30-day free trial

What it is: Fast Accurate Bids
is new PC-based estimating
software for embroiderers,
screen printers and other
apparel decorators. In less
than two minutes, users can
create finished, professional-
looking bids ready to e-mail
to customers or print. This
software is the result of three
years of collaboration between
a screen printer and software
professionals.

Key features:

- Support for all types of bids, including mixed item bids and itemized pricing
- Create pricing profiles for different types of customers and jobs, such as typical pricing, schools, nonprofits and contract work
- Includes updatable item pricing for alphabroder (asi/34063), American Apparel (asi/35297) and SanMar



PulseID

(asi/84863)

- Quick to set up, and easy to learn and use.

Buyer's note: This software is suited to new and established apparel decoration companies. For shops uncertain about what to charge, the built-in pricing, based on a wide survey of industry data, can be used without changes. For shops with established pricing, even the most complex pricing structures can be easily and reliably matched.

Impress

Precise Software, Chaska, MN; (888) 496-9996; www.precisesoftware.net

Cost: Modular design; contact vendor for pricing.

What it is: Impress is business management ERP software designed for businesses in the decorated apparel and promotional products industries.

What's new:

- Online Web stores and a customer Web portal
- Barcode order tracking
- Windows 8 compatibility

Key features:

- Order entry designed for decorators' unique requirements, such as multiple decorations per garment or order, name drop, personalizing details and more
- Auto-generate purchase orders based on sales order needs, on-hand inventory and required safety stock; can also auto-generate invoices from sales orders
- Manage artwork and artists
- Print work orders and departmental worksheets
- Manage multiple types of inventory, such as customer supplied, stock, non-stock, drop ship
- Drag-and-drop production scheduling

- Shipping integration with UPS and FedEx.

PulseID

Pulse Microsystems Ltd., Mississauga, ON; (416) 855-1650; www.pulsemicro.com

Cost: Contact distributor for price; in the U.S., contact Hirsch International, www.bic.us.

What it is: PulseID offers versatile applications and powerful design engines for embroidery, print and more.

Key features:

- API toolkit enables software and application developers to add embroidery and digital print functionality to their own websites and internal applications
- Web modules allow customers to complete personalized designs on a user's website in minutes
- Automation solutions standardize critical production processes to increase efficiency and eliminate costs from manual errors
- Networking capabilities offer detailed reports and status information on machines, designs and operator efficiency, ensuring high productivity levels from machines and operators.

Buyer's note: PulseID offers online and offline automation solutions for all shops that offer embroidery, digital printing, laser and rotary engraving, and rhinestones. The software is designed to integrate into a shop's current production processes.

OnSite 8

ShopWorks, West Palm Beach, FL; (800) 526-6702;

www.shopworx.com

Cost: Based on total number of concurrent users. Cloud version starts at \$347 per month; users have the option to host data on their server.

What it is: This business-management software allows a user to manage order entry, purchasing, production, sales, marketing and accounting. It's a single, integrated package designed for embroidery, screen-printing and promotional products companies.

What's new:

- Cloud version
- Inventory app that works on Apple iPad or other mobile devices
- Accounting improvements.

Key features:

- Ability to manage entire business in a single application
- Runs on Windows and/or Mac platforms
- Cloud-based or runs on user's individual server
- Integrates with websites.

QuickP Plus 2.0

Kornit Digital, Mequon, WI; (888) 456-7648; www.kornit.com

Cost: Contact vendor for pricing.

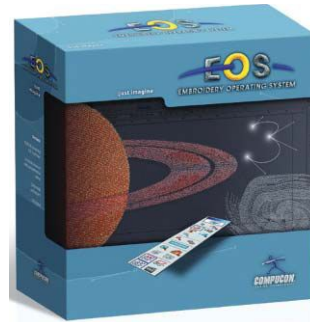
What it is: Quick P Plus 2.0 is a complete design, order, create and print workflow system.

What's new:

- Connect more than one creator station to a central database through LAN/Internet; multiple stations create and upload files to same location
- Transfer design files and printer setup information into a Hot Folder to auto-send completed designs to software
- Input product quantities to program; software automati-


BERNINA Emb Software 7


DesignShop V9
Scan this code to download the DesignShop V9 brochure.


Compucon EOS

cally changes products and styles available for production based on current inventory.

Key features:

- Combines easily accessible interface with improved functionality for mass personalization
- True live viewing experience – design changes update instantly on screen, giving a clear visualization of the final product before printing
- Drastically reduce the time it takes to prepare an order, so machines keep printing
- Auto-generate personalized designs: Create a single template and use comprehensive variable data solution to output multiple designs
- Manage colors and transparency: Advanced color-swapping tool can identify and swap shades/transparency in multiple areas simultaneously.

Buyer's note: Created specifically to support Kornit direct-to-garment printers and the NeoPigment process, this program connects Kornit printers to a centralized design database and to customers.

DIGITIZING & GRAPHICS

BERNINA Embroidery Software 7

BERNINA of America, Aurora, IL; (630) 978-2500; www.bernina.com

Cost: MSRP DesignerPlus: \$1,999

What it is: BERNINA Embroidery Software 7 is the latest version of BERNINA's embroidery software. It includes 3-D effects, simple editing and extensive lettering options that give sewists a chance to enjoy advanced embroidery software. Users can quickly preview designs in alternate colors with the Color Wheel, create motifs with automatic digitizing and fine-tune them with various editing features – all on an intuitive user interface with larger icons.

What's new:

- Advanced monogramming and lettering
- Auto-digitizing and full manual digitizing functionality
- 3-D effects, including StumpWork, Trapunto and PunchWork.

Key features:

- Hundreds of built-in, ready-to-stitch designs
- Multi-hooping enhancements for digitizing registra-

tion marks

- Artistic view of pattern fills, borders and stamps
- Lettering additions such as micro lettering, run alphabets, 3-D alphabets and calligraphy
- Choice of women's, men's or children's apparel for a design background
- Integration with COREL Essentials X6.

DesignShop V9

Melco, Denver; (800) 799-8313; www.melco.com

Cost: Contact distributor for price.

What it is: This digitizing software is available in multiple levels for various business applications.

What's new:

- Auto-digitizing feature converts vector graphics to embroidery in seconds
- Scan & Sew Technology enables embroidery files to be stored in barcode format; barcodes can be printed on a production ticket and then scanned into the AMAYA machine. This feature boosts production and accuracy, especially in multi-head configurations.

Key features:

- Available in four levels; users

choose the level appropriate for a specific embroidery business

- Fabric profiles enable operator to assign information (such as stitch density) to specific fabrics; save and use as needed
- Underlay enables designers to choose from multiple underlay styles. Digitized objects maintain color properties, even when copying and pasting.

User review: "I've been in business for 28 years," says Chuck Northcutt, owner of Seattle-based *Creative Promotions*, which specializes in large corporate embroidery orders and direct-to-garment printing. "I actually taught DesignShop to new users for about 15 years. This software is amazing. Say you have a run of 1,000 flags, and five beads are stitching in red, five in white and five in blue. If there's a thread break, it'll stop and use other multibeads as backups. It keeps the machine sewing." DesignShop was one of Northcutt's first experiences with on-screen digitizing, as opposed to manual. "It's very easy to learn," he says. "It's Windows-based and very user-intuitive."

Embroidery Operating System (EOS)

Compucon USA, Stokesdale, NC; (336) 294-0604; www.compuconusa.com

Cost: \$695 to \$5,000

What it is: This professional embroidery software suite for digitizing quality embroidery lettering and designs includes the ability to transfer designs from the computer directly to the embroidery machine.

What's new:

- Conversion of stitch designs for fuller editing capability and appliqué lettering
- Font profiles
- Monogram lettering level with suitable font styles
- Plug-ins for CorelDRAW and Adobe Illustrator
- Operates on Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8.

Key feature: Professional control parameters and assignment of colors to needles.

Buyer's note: This software is suitable for all machine table pantograph sizes. It contains all major machine sew formats and features unlimited one-on-one online live training for current versions. Additionally, font profiles are useful to retailers who incur inconvenient staff turnover.

EmbroideryStudio Designing e3.0

Wilcom America, Norcross, GA; (800) 657 7500; www.wilcomamerica.com

Cost: Contact vendor for pricing.

What it is: This design software offers multi-decoration for printing, embroidery and bling. The vendor offers free online training, support and in-house training in its Atlanta office.

What's new:

- User-friendly wizard automates user's settings based on fabric selection from underlays to stitch density and compensation
- Automatic bordering/outlining on all fonts
- Over 170 keyboard embroidered fonts
- Full license of CorelDRAW X6

- Ability to build a software package as shop grows with Wilcom Elements; add functionalities on an as-needed basis.

Key features:

- Wilcom stitch processor for true object-based editing of all major stitch files
- Embroidery lettering and branching
- 13 digitizing input tools and auto-digitizing with the ability to edit all design elements after conversion
- CorelDRAW integration.

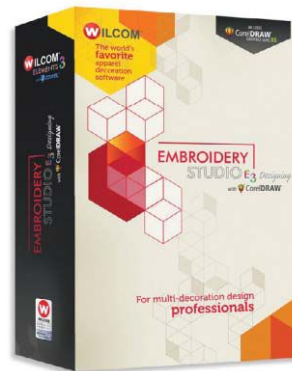
User review: *Doris Boyer, owner of Mom's Sewing Room Custom Embroidery in Aurora, ON, embroiders everything from towels, aprons and blankets to shirts, jackets and caps, while offering minimums of just one piece. She also creates baby gifts, including plush animal apparel and embroidered aprons for dolls. "There's a learning curve with Wilcom's EmbroideryStudio Designing e3.0 software because it's so powerful," Boyer says. "The best way to overcome it is to take advantage of the free in-house training the vendor offers. I've attended it three times, each time I upgraded, and they're always congenial and welcoming. It was worth paying the travel costs to be there."*

Floriani Total Control Version 7.25

Floriani Commercial Products/RNK Distributing, Knoxville, TN; (877) 331-0034; www.florianicommercial.com

Cost: Contact manufacturer for price.

What it is: This complete digitizing and embroidery



Wilcom Embroidery Studio



Floriani Total Control Version 7.25

software solution offers lettering, editing, intermediate and advanced digitizing tools.

What's new:

- Design splitting, advanced run-stitch mode, social network upload, variegated thread support, text on path feature, enhanced auto-digitizing conversion and more
- Design Analysis includes a production section for modifying settings for multiple machines
- Ability to see design dimensions and stitch information, including total stitch count, number of colors and number of trims.

Key features:

- Save designs as images to send to customers.
- Fully edit DST files as well as density, stitch length, object size and shape, stitch angles, start and end points, underlay and more
- Full digitizing capabilities, including tools to create appliqué, tackle twill, sequin, chenille, Appli-Stitch and cross-stitch designs
- Save2Sew feature modifies designs for over 60 different fabric types and provides stabi-

lizer recommendations

- Design library gallery provides a quick view of saved designs with the ability to drag and drop files directly onto work page
- Works with any embroidery machine; can be used on a Mac modified to run Windows
- Over 140 keyboard fonts.

Forté by Pantograms

Pantograms Mfg. Co. Inc., Tampa, FL; (800) 872-1555; www.pantograms.com

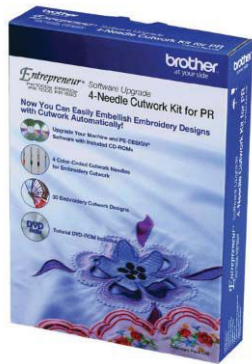
Cost: Contact vendor for pricing.

What it is: Forté comes in three levels: the FortéLE lettering and editing program, the FortéID intermediate digitizing program, and the FortéPD advanced professional digitizing program.

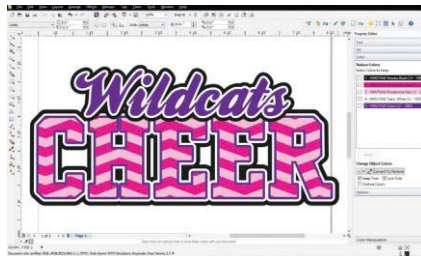
What's new: Windows 8 compatibility and additional thread colors.

Key features:

- Accommodates vector artwork for easier digitizing
- Users can import and auto-digitize vector designs as stitches using DRAWings Converter
- Over 250 pre-digitized fonts



Brother PE-Design
Next V. 9.2



Smart Designer Pro

in five categories

- Lettering controls for adjusting line spacing, kerning and word spacing, as well as controlling character size and width, character angle, paragraph justification and monogram sizing.

User review: *Josh Orosco, owner/digitizer at Spring Hill, FL-based StormRider Embroidery and Custom Digitizing, specializes in custom designs for direct embroidery customers and other embroidery companies. The team also creates custom patches and direct embroidery on many items, including welcome mats, bike club leathers and canvas shoes. "As a digitizer, one of the features in Forté that I rely on is Design Information," Orosco says. "It gives me information on each section of stitches that I create and lets me easily make changes, like adding and removing lock stitches, changing the order and grabbing different sections." Orosco also appreciates that Forté allows him to create custom keyboard fonts, so he can use any true-type font that a customer has chosen. "The editing features in the program are awesome and easy to use," he adds. "I can create amazing stitch art that our clientele has come to expect from us over the years. If*

you're new to commercial embroidery or are thinking of getting in the business, this is a great product to have."

PE-Design Next V. 9.2 + CW Upgrade With 4-Needle Cutwork

Brother International Corp., Bridgewater, NJ; (800) 4-A-BROTHER; www.brothersews.com

Cost: Contact manufacturer for price.

What it is: This versatile 4-Needle Cutwork Software Kit upgrades both a user's Brother Entrepreneur PR-Series machine (PR650 Series or PR1000 Series machine) and existing PE-DESIGN software, allowing the user to create and customize beautiful embroidery cutwork.

What's new:

- Easily cut and embroider designs without having to stop to change needles
- Create custom cutwork designs using the included PE-DESIGN NEXT embroidery design software.

Key features:

- Create appliqué and outline cuts without a PC connection
- Four color-coded cutwork needles for embroidery

cutwork

- Versatile range of cutwork options, including the ability to create custom embroidery designs
- 21 outline cutting shapes for appliqués, patches and other cutwork projects
- 30 cutwork embroidery designs built into creative library.

Buyer's note: This software is designed for the advanced multi-needle embroiderer who's looking to expand creative options with cutwork capabilities.

Smart Designer Pro

Digital Art Solutions, Tempe, AZ; (800) 959-7267; www.digitalartsolutions.com

Cost: \$699

What it is: Smart Designer Pro software transforms CorelDRAW X6 and X7 from a generalized design application into an industry-specific graphics system designed to simplify and automate the graphic design process.

What's new:

- Over 100 new features have been added using Corel Corp.'s new seamless docker technology
- Compatible with CorelDRAW X6 and X7 and Windows 8.

Key features:

- Automates and simplifies more than 100 complex design and production tasks, including text effects, circle text, arches, athletic tails and weathered effects
- Automatically creates virtual samples from a library of stock product templates in vector and high-resolution formats
- Integrated with more than

30 titles of Digital Art Solutions' digital art volumes, capable of interactively editing stock design templates to create custom graphics.

Buyer's note: This software is designed for shops that want to streamline graphics design and production for the apparel decoration industry. It reduces design and production time by up to 90% through automation as well as by adding industry specific features to CorelDRAW, according to the manufacturer.

Stitch & Sew Suite

Compucon USA, Stokesdale, NC; (336) 294-0604; www.compuconusa.com

Cost: \$135 to \$1,495

What it is: Stitch & Sew Suite is professional-grade commercial embroidery software for lettering/editing and digitizing designs as well as design preview and transfer from computer to embroidery machine.

What's new:

- Time- and work-saving NameDrop feature, auto outlines and sequin digitizing
- Plug-ins for CorelDRAW and Adobe Illustrator
- Plus level includes more than 4,400 stock designs
- Operates on Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8.

Key feature: Contains all digitizing functions

Buyer's note: This software is suitable for all machine table pantograph sizes and contains all major machine sew formats.

Tajima DG/ML V.14

Pulse Microsystems Ltd., Mississauga, ON; (416) 855-1650; www.pulsemicro.com

Cost: Contact distributor for

price; in the U.S., contact Hirsch International, www.bic.us.

What it is: Tajima DG/ML V.14 is advanced commercial software for embroidery lettering, monogramming, digitizing, laser, sequin, chenille, appliqué, rhinestones and more. DG/ML is the official software associated with Tajima embroidery machines.

What's new:

- QuickName Express and Quotation Estimator
- Special border fonts allow for automatic borders
- New appliqué backgrounds
- Template function allows user to create multiple files in a single step by importing spreadsheets
- Improved user interface and personalized workspaces.

Key features:

- True vector-based embroidery
- Easy and accurate conversion from vector files to embroidery
- Built-in Draw Fusion feature for instant conversion of CorelDRAW artwork into stitches
- Digitizing tools, advanced lettering and monogramming features
- Huge variety of language fonts, fonts with outlines
- Variable density and specialized stitch effects
- Extensive worldwide support.

Buyer's note: This software is best suited for commercial embroidery businesses. Additional specialty options like sequin, chenille, rhinestones and laser-enhanced embroidery provide another avenue for greater profitability.

MONOGRAMMING & LETTERING

Autograph Version 2

Pulse Microsystems Ltd., Mississauga, ON; (416) 855-1650; www.pulsemicro.com

Cost: Please contact distributor for price; in the U.S., contact Hirsch International, www.bic.us.

What it is: Autograph provides efficient embroidery personalization for retail businesses and features an easy-to-use interface, logical workflow, sample designs and time-saving templates.

Key features:

- Helpful templates facilitate the design process
- Powerful editing tools perfect designs
- Wide selection of fonts and thread charts
- Garment previews show designs on intended product
- Practical fit-to-hoop option
- Barcode technology for easy machine input.

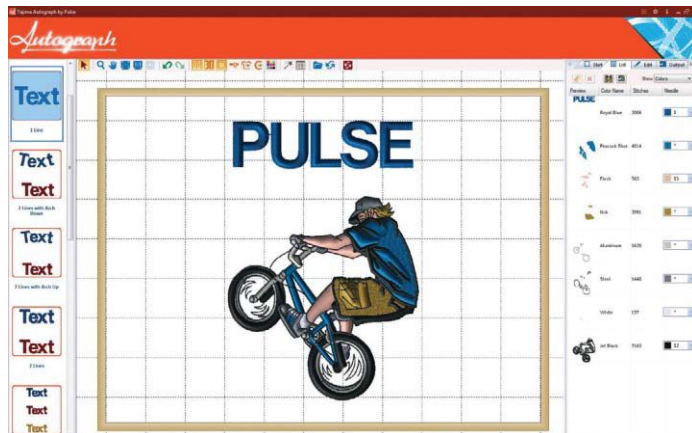
Buyer's note: Designed for retail businesses, Autograph is easy to learn and use. It's designed for working on designs for sports teams and other organizations and clubs, and its template approach allows for instant personalization.

E-Fect Promotion

DecoDynamix, Durban, ZA; (27) 82-3444068; www.decodynamix.com

Cost: Contact vendor for pricing.

What it is: Wilcom Keyboard Fonts (ESA) are add-on software packs for users of Wilcom Embroidery Software. ESA fonts are pre-digitized



Autograph Version 2

with enhanced manipulation capability to create powerful keyboard layouts. These are lifetime software assets that will remain with each upgrade, and keyboard fonts never expire or become obsolete. Users can download the free BallantineScript ESA to test and compare, as well as additional free font and design data.

What's new:

- High-quality personalization, corporate and monogram styles
- Large text format styles and large format monogram styles with auto download on all font packs.

Key features:

- Lossless resizing within a larger range than any machine file
- Enhanced manipulation capability within the software
- Powerful and instant layout capability with team names, monograms and closest point connection styles.

Embroidery Express Sew Files

Stahls' (asi/88984), St. Clair Shores, MI; (800) 478-2457; www.stahls.com

Cost: \$24 for Any Word. Any Way. Appliqué; \$36 for a split-front appliqué; \$45 for a custom appliqué; \$129 for the CD collection.

What it is: Embroidery Express Sew Files save embroiderers time and digitizing costs. Available for Custom Cut appliqués or appliqués created through Stahls' Any Word. Any Way. online lettering designer, they're available for an individual appliqué order or as a collection of CDs, which contain the sew files for Specialty Numbers, Auto Stitch and Appliqué Shapes.

What's new: Available for a growing line of appliqué products.

Key features:

- Eliminates unnecessary stitches where appliqué pieces overlap for a smooth finish
- Stitching is calculated to overlap the appliqué design perfectly, with no fraying or ragged edges.
- Mitered corners for ease of sewing and a great finished look.

I-Cliqq Embroidery Software

I-Cliqq, United Arab Emirates;

+971 505 042790; www.i-cliqq.com

Cost: Contact U.S. regional agents.

What it is: I-Cliqq is ideal for designers who prefer control over the design process. Although I-Cliqq can convert vector outlines to stitches, this isn't auto-digitizing software. I-Cliqq includes different levels with simple, transparent options. Users can download the free Lettering Version that includes three font styles to lay out, save and export. You can also use vector files from CorelDRAW or similar graphics software.

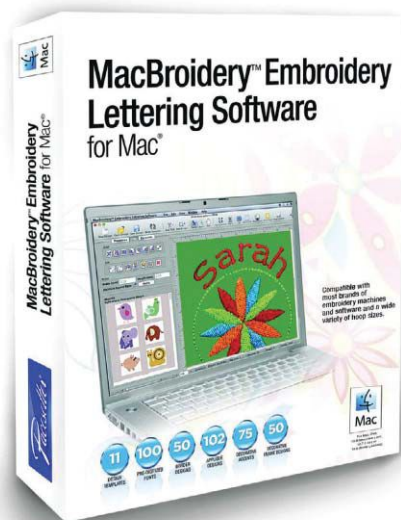
What's new:

- Create multiple glyphs on any font styles
- Integrated colorways save and export; export .txt and CSV thread charts; and eye-drop color
- Integrated font categories; independent layer handling up to four colors; and edit font list.

Key features:

- Auto-kerning and glyph-by-height refinement
- Multiple character save modes
- Import glyphs on the fly.

Buyer's note: I-Cliqq suits creative and progressive businesses that are deep into personalization and monogram markets and want to offer more expansive, creative font ranges. Also, the ability to create resizable text combined with creative stitch types means that small or commercial operations can offer unique, custom design work.



Brother MacBroidery Embroidery

MacBroidery Embroidery Lettering Software

Brother International Corp., Bridgewater, NJ; (800) 4-A-BROTHER; www.brothersews.com

Cost: \$499

What it is: MacBroidery Embroidery Lettering Software is designed to work directly with Mac OS computers. With an advanced, user-friendly interface, it's compatible with most popular embroidery machine brands and allows users the ability to quickly edit and customize.

Key features:

- Template-based text and design arrangements
- 100 built-in pre-digitized fonts
- Recipes of predefined styles for a variety of fabrics
- Garment templates to preview designs and fonts.

Buyer's note: This software is designed for embroiderers at all levels who own a Mac. This advanced software is easy to

use and produces high-quality results in a short time.

StockStitch 6.2

Dalco Athletic, Dallas; (800) 288-3252; www.dalcoatbletic.com

Cost: Contact manufacturer for price.

What it is: StockStitch is a stand-alone program designed for automated sewing of stock letters, numbers and appliqué shapes. Users with digitizing or editing software can add embroidery drop-ins to the appliqué created in StockStitch. Once the design is created, customers can order the pre-cut pieces that are ready to sew from Dalco.

What's new:

- Users can sew six dye-sublimated twill number fonts in one, two and three colors.
- Number fonts include Pro Team, Dagger, Shock, Team Shadow, Digital Camo and Camo
- Windows 8 compatible.



Dalco Stock Stitch 6.2

Key features:

- Over 40 fonts as well as banners, ribbons, states and more
- Compatible with twill; designer fabrics like polka dots; pebble grain; and Dal-Chenille
- Select multiple sizes of each font and multiple stitch types (bean, satin, zigzag)
- Full control of stitch width and density
- Compatibility with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8.

Buyer's note: StockStitch is specifically designed for appliqué work, so it's ideal for shops that fulfill orders for team uniforms, spiritwear or fashion appliqué. It doesn't require any cutting of lettering; all the component parts are pre-cut to fit the StockStitch predigitized program.

User review: *Cathy Shepard, owner of 3 Sisters Embroidery in Durham, NC, services mainly fraternities and sororities with embroidery and heat-applied embellishments. She has been*

a proud user of StockStitch for over 12 years. "I started with the free version and we've upgraded consistently," she says. "There's no significant design work necessary. You literally just type in the letters and go, and it's so affordable." Shepard says she and her team have determined how they want certain designs to appear, and have preset the software to fit those standards. "Whether it's zigzag or satin stitch, or the thickness of the item, that's all preset," she says. "So all we have to do is type in the letters, select the presets and we're off. It's so easy to use."

ONLINE TOOLS

CadworxLive.com

GroupeSTAHL, St. Clair Shores, MI; www.cadworxlive.com

Cost: Free membership for all qualified GroupeSTAHL Sales Alliance customers.

What it is: CadworxLive is a Web-based graphic design service for garment decorators and sign makers with tools for design, production and promotion.

What's new:

- Improved Web portal
- Mode-based designer built from the ground up to work with the Roland VersaCMM, the new Epson direct-to-garment printer and a host of digital cutters
- Membership includes new and improved VectorCut 2.0 cut driver and offers premium artwork created by industry expert Dane Clement.

Key features:

- Large text effects library and unique split-front process
- Robust set of design tools

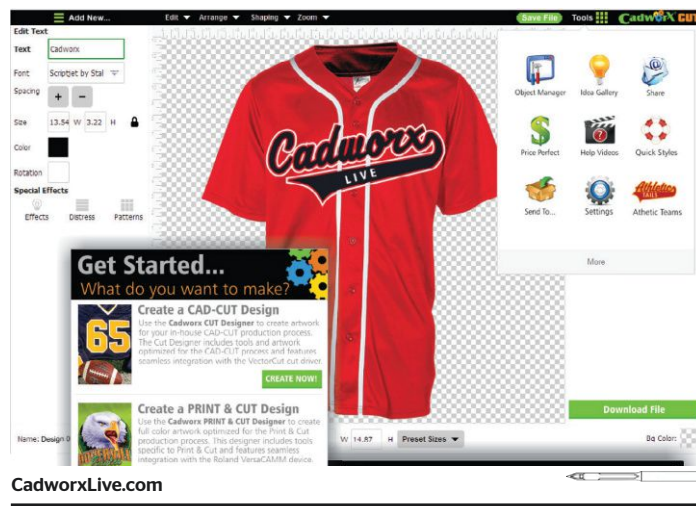
and short learning curve

- Ability to output to a variety of production methods, including CAD-CUT, digital print heat transfers, digital print and cut, screen printing and direct-to-garment printing
- Creates files for appliqué when used in conjunction with Twill Stitch Pro or Ioline 301
- Membership includes: Design Studio, CAD-CUT Easy Teams, thousands of pieces of clipart, hundreds of design layouts, a huge font selection, Cadworx Creations Gallery and VectorCut, a powerful cut driver developed exclusively for CadworxLive 196.

User review: *Jamie Witt, owner of Witty Wear in Falls City, NE, offers heat press, screen printing, embroidery and rhinestones, and is a satisfied CadworxLive user. "I've had nothing but the best experience with CadworxLive," she says. "The Design Studio has so many clip-art graphics to choose. You can add effects to your text, and there are smart sizing options and an import/export option right to VectorCut." Witt says one of her favorite features is the Easy Teams program, which allows users to insert rosters, team names and numbers, and to save the list for repeat orders. "This software is very easy to use and it's free, which is great," Witt says. "The vendor does offer Premium Clip Art, but you can view the designs before you purchase them and they're sent directly to your CadworxLive software."*

DecoNetwork

DecoNetwork Inc., Whittier, CA; (855) 332-6638; www.deconetwork.com



Cost: Contact manufacturer for price.

What it is: DecoNetwork is a business and e-commerce platform for decorators that supports embroidery, screen printing and sublimation. With a custom Web store backed by quote, order and production management tools, DecoNetwork is a complete business solution.

What's new: As a subscription platform, all DecoNetwork updates are ongoing and free.

Key features:

- Online designer to create custom products online
- Over 9,000 catalog products from suppliers like SanMar (asi/84863), alphabroder (asi/34063) and S&S Active-wear (asi/84358)
- Unlimited number of affiliate stores to grow online presence
- Powerful quote and order management tools
- CoreIDRAW-powered template editing on user's site.

Buyer's note: DecoNetwork is a designer for decorators who want to grow a business via online sales and improve

back-end efficiency with smart business tools.

User review: *David Simpson, COO and co-founder of ROK-biz Solutions in Caldwell, NJ, focuses on music merchandising, providing bulk merchandise and on-demand e-commerce stores for bands and record labels, including some internationally recognized rock stars. "DecoNetwork provides a feature-rich set of functions for a broad range of business needs," he says. "The skillsets required depend on which features you need to operate. A small company or independent operator with a modicum of IT savvy should be able to create and manage their own template-based store with few difficulties." While the learning curve for most of DecoNetwork's features is minimal, Simpson says, creating automated systems that implement DecoNetwork is more challenging. "DecoNetwork provides a comprehensive application programming interface that allows a skilled programmer to access and manipulate the data contained in a DecoNetwork store to do virtually anything they want," he says. "We use a software system that automates the pipeline*

from customer purchase through shipping. It uses the DecoNetwork API to reach into the dozens of stores we operate, convert orders into print-ready XML and track each order. DecoNetwork's great API and support staff helped us develop what we believe to be one of the only fully automated direct-to-garment printing systems."

Delta e-Commerce Integration Module (eCIM)
Veristitch LLC, Boulder, CO;
(828) 478-9238; www.veristitch.com

Cost: Contact vendor for price.

What it is: E-commerce Integration Module automates embroidery personalization and connects user's website directly to production.

Key features:

- Fully automated embroidery and direct-to-garment printing solution
- Ability to plug into existing website using built-in API; optional built-in storefront solution features integrated catalogs, including SanMar (asi/84863), alphabroder (asi/34063) and other suppliers
- Customers can design orders on user's website with instant visual feedback on font style, proper kerning and thread color
- Processes and delivers production-ready orders; stores them in built-in database to be scanned by barcode at embroidery machine
- Not reliant on Flash technology; supports all browser types
- Logo and personalization mixing and name drop
- Needle mapping with a



Proel Millennium III



R-Wear Studio Software

touch-screen menu

- eLaser appliqué integration
- Full back-end database support, including productivity reporting tools
- Supports all popular commercial machines, including Barudan, Tajima, Melco, Brother, SWF, Toyota, ZSK and original Meistergram.

Buyer's note: eCIM is ideal for businesses looking to expand personalized products out to the Internet. The front end of the system is directly tied to the production back end.

InkSoft Design Studio
InkSoft, Inc., Tempe, AZ;
(800) 410-3048; www.inksoft.com

Cost: InkSoft offers flexible options. Contact InkSoft for details, or visit www.inksoft.com.

What it is: Design Studio is a custom interactive online designer made for screen printers by screen printers.

What's new:

- Redesigned and re-engineered using HTML5 technology. This allows your customers to design from the Web, tablet or mobile device
- New user interface
- 1,000 new premium design templates and clip art.

Key features:

- Clients can design online from user's website
- Embeddable, allowing the user to add Design Studio to an existing website
- More than 8,000 designs and clip art
- Player names and numbers feature
- Quoting and shopping cart
- Save and share feature
- Distress vintage effects.

Buyer's note: Design Studio is designed for screen printers who want to leverage the power and potential of online marketing.

SPECIALTY DECORATION

Auto Laser Lettering (ALL)

Bitou USA, Deer Park, NY;
(866) BITO-USA; www.bitouusa.com

What it is: ALL automates the process of designing number and letter appliqué designs that are sent to the laser for cutting and embroidering. The program makes it easy and time-effective to even create single pieces.

What's new:

- New capabilities allow users to design more sophisticated, decorative lettering using a galvanometric laser
- Can do multiple sizes in different fonts at the same time
- Once a combination of fonts and sizes are determined, a template can be created and saved.

Key features:

- Works with True Type fonts to create top typeface styles
- Offers finishing stitches such as zigzag, column, bean (triple) and a single running stitch. Characters may be created for single or multiple lay-

ers of fabrics, for kiss cut and multicolored appliqués.

Buyer's note: The program offers full control of cutting and stitching line placements, enabling the user to create a variety of appliqués, including reverse, multi-layer and fashion trim appliqués where a running stitch is sewn in the middle of the fabric and then cut on both sides of the stitch to create a fat-looking column. It also can be used for vector shapes and images other than letters and numbers, making it an automatic appliqué digitizing system as well. The same capabilities used for letters and numbers may be applied to any True Type image, making ALL a program that automates and combines stitching and cutting simultaneously.

Focus Cut III

Bito USA, Deer Park, NY; (866) BITO-USA; www.bitousa.com

Cost: Contact vendor.

What it is: Designed to be used with Proel embroidery laser machines, Focus Cut III is a vector-based graphic software designed for creating geometric figures from different materials. It can be used to create texts, shapes, ornaments, boring-work, labels and edgings.

Key features:

- Uses .dst embroidery data files and other vector files created by other systems
- User-friendly interface
- File management tools
- Allows for importation of many file formats
- Many drawing tools and automatic outline
- Modification/editing tools.

Proel Millennium III

Bito USA, Deer Park, NY; (866) BITO-USA; www.bitousa.com

What it is: A comprehensive embroidery software/digitizing program with laser-cutting capabilities that allows you to purchase the amount of capabilities and features you need with the option to add advanced tools later. Basic functions include lettering, editing, basic digitizing, advanced digitizing and automatic digitizing.

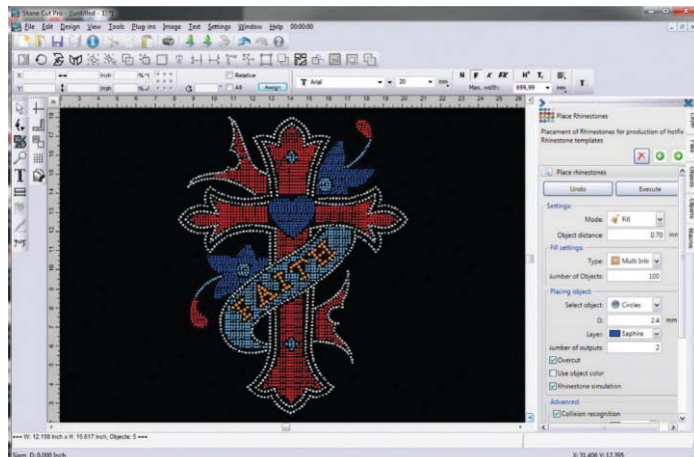
What's new:

- Automatically digitizes vectors and deposit stitches to vector-defined artwork; the user can create complex fills with void areas
- Send an image to customers for approval of digitized embroidery designs without the customer needing an embroidery program to view it
- Output machine data in multiple machine formats and produce detailed work sheets for production departments.

Key features:

- Creates specialty stitch motifs such as hearts
- Allows you to do lines, curves and arcs
- User can control entry and exit points and the types of stitches created.

Buyer's note: This program works with Auto Laser Lettering (ALL) to integrate embroidery with laser cutting. Programming necessary for an embroidery machine to sew out a digitized design and to automatically cut out an appliqué shape using a laser bridge machine or a single-head laser attached to an embroidery machine is included.



StoneCut Pro Rhinestone

R-Wear Studio Software

Graphic Solutions Group, Dallas; (214) 712-6200; www.gogsg.com

Cost: \$499

What it is: Roland R-Wear Studio software can be used to create custom rhinestone transfers to decorate apparel and accessories. It's included with Roland's EGX series of desktop engravers, and is ideal for decorating T-shirts, hats, jeans and bags.

Key features:

- Ability to create templates for hot-fix rhinestones to be applied with a heat press
- Accepts graphic formats like .bmp, .jpg, .gif and .png. Adobe Illustrator 7 and 8 can be used for .ai and .eps files
- Generate stroke fonts for customized inscriptions
- Digital library of more than 500 styles of Swarovski rhinestones

StoneCut Pro Rhinestone

Multi-Decoration Software Digital Art Solutions (DAS), Tempe, AZ; (800) 959-7267; www.digitalartsolutions.com

Cost: \$999

What it is: An application for converting scanned or vector artwork into rhinestone patterns for production of rhinestone apparel and decals.

What's new: Compatibility with CorelDRAW X6 and Windows 8.

Key features:

- Key software component of DAS Multi-Decoration System
- Multi-decoration capabilities for producing apparel graphics that combine rhinestones, cuttable heat transfers, direct-to-garment prints and screen-printed graphics
- Assists with workflow of creating multi-decoration graphics with automated functions for converting scanned or vector graphics into complex rhinestone patterns; directly output transfers to over 600 supported vinyl cutters
- Supports exclusive TrueType rhinestone fonts from DAS, allowing users to create rhinestone text
- Name-dropping function can import text from a spreadsheet and create a list of names in rhinestone text.

CLASSIFIEDS

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

What's coming up in August *Stitches*

by Nicole Rollender



Stitches Shop Makeover

We sent industry veteran Joyce Jagger to an embroidery and screen-printing shop to help the owners make it over and set it on a course to be a million-dollar firm. In this very special feature, we'll show you the shop's 90-day journey to success.



Punk's Not Dead

Lots of bands start screen printing their own fan T-shirts – and then some of these entrepreneurs actually go on to start and run multimillion-dollar decorating shops. You'll meet some of these successful shop owners and also learn how to start selling decorated apparel to bands and others in the music industry.



Plus ...

- *How to design the website of your dreams*
- *Hot apparel showcase: outerwear*
- *The latest from Stitches' Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest sites*
- *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 June needle on page XX," along with your name, company, address and phone number (or e-mail address) so we can contact you if you're the winner. Mail or fax it to us at *Stitches*, **Attn: Needle Patrol**, 4800 Street Rd., Trevose, PA 19053; fax: (215) 953-3107. Also, tell us a little about your business. No phone calls please; you must respond in writing. Hurry! Responses for the June needle are due by June 30, 2014. From the correct responses, we'll randomly select one winner who'll receive a \$100 gift certificate, courtesy of Madeira USA, Laconia, NH. Please submit only one entry per drawing. We'll announce the winner in the August issue.



Slick Likes Top Shops

In the March/April issue, Slick hid in the "Stitches Top Shops" cover story in "The Customer Service Star" profile about Topton, PA-based Rockland Embroidery (asi/734150) on page 47. **Mary Gray** of Golconda, IL-based **The Barn Loft** was chosen at random from a grand total of 37 responses. As this issue's winner, Mary will receive Madeira USA's gift certificate. Keep your eyes peeled for the industry's favorite game of hide and seek!

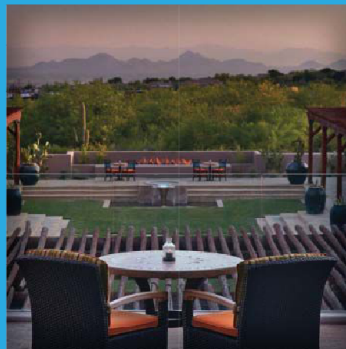
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ASK AN EXPERT

By Kristine Shreve

LOOKING FORWARD

In the next issue, you'll learn how to effectively back up your shop's customer data and designs. See you next issue!

Q *While I've been an embroiderer for a long time, I just recently started my decorating business. I'm not sure whether I should handle my accounting on an Excel spreadsheet, which is what some other sole proprietors I know do. What's your advice for handling my financials, especially as my business grows?*

In an effort to save money and keep expenses low, many decoration business owners may decide to handle basic accounting tasks in-house. Keeping track of income and outgo may seem to be as simple as entering numbers into an Excel spreadsheet, but if you really want to make sure your profits outweigh your losses, you may find some of these tips on managing your finances helpful.

Tip 1. Watch your invoices. If you offer customers terms, then you need a system to ensure invoices get paid in a timely fashion. Set up some sort of monitoring so you'll be alerted if an invoice isn't paid on time, and then have a plan for what happens in that situation. Do late-paying customers get a phone call? How long past their stated terms can they go before you'll refuse to do additional work for them? Having a plan in place will help you avoid confusion when you encounter this situation.

Tip 2. Keep good records. Track all of your expenses and keep notes and logs to back up what you record. A simple notation in your day planner when you have lunch with a client or travel for work could be enough of a record should

you need to prove a deduction or support an expense claim. It's also a good idea to make sure that your sources of income are accurately recorded. A business can get an infusion of cash from several different sources, and not all of those cash infusions are taxable. Keeping accurate records regarding where the money is from will keep you from paying more than you need to come tax day.

Tip 3. Separate personal finances from business finances. When you own a business, it can be tempting to lump all the financial work into one pile and treat everything the same. Make sure you avoid this temptation. There are tax breaks and tax requirements for businesses that personal accounts and expenses don't have to consider. Separating finances also protects you if your business is a corporate entity. Blurring the lines could lead to problems should your corporate finances ever come under scrutiny.

Tip 4. Find a decoration-specific software package to help you run your business, including accounting and financial functions. Here are some options, all designed for embroidery, screen-printing

“If you offer customers terms, then you need a system to ensure invoices get paid in a timely fashion.”

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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.mymenmart.com> and the SubliStuff blog at www.sublistuff.com. **Contact:** kristine.shreve@mymenmart.com.

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