

S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

Embroidery's Voice & Vision

August 2014

EXTREME SHOP MAKEOVER

**THE EMBROIDERY
COACH OVERHAULS
A SHOP IN TWO DAYS.**

P. 46

Craig Wold, Point Embroidery & Screen

Ask an Expert: Back Up Your Shop's Data 🌸 Outerwear Showcase



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Shine On Profitably With Fashionable Decoration From ColDesi

Any decorator looking to add trendy and profitable decoration will benefit from a relationship with ColDesi.

Spiff up your sales with sparkling decoration. ColDesi, a national distributor of apparel decorating equipment and materials based in Tampa, FL, makes it easy to cash in on demand for bling such as rhinestones, studs, sequins and spangles. ColDesi sells and services some of the most recognized brands in apparel decorating systems, including: SWF Embroidery Machines, CAMS Automatic Rhinestone Machines, DTG digital garment printers, and the ProSpangle spangle transfer machine. All of these machines are sold to small and large custom apparel companies that produce items like embroidered polos for businesses, printed custom T-shirts and bling-enhanced wear for schools, charities and online retailers.

In fact, when it comes to bling, ColDesi is on the forefront. For example, this year the ProSpangle joined ColDesi's decorative line-up. This commercial quality Hotfix spangle machine represents a real breakthrough in technology that can have a huge impact on your business. "This industry is always trending, even with equipment," say Scott and Theresa Mullins of MyRhinestoneTransfers.com. "Now we think spangles are the big trend. ... The spangle will be that next profitable niche."

"Spangles," Hotfix spangles specifically, are made from the same material as sequins, but with three important differences.

No Holes – sequins are designed to be sewn on, so there is always a hole in the middle that breaks up your design. Spangles give you just that much more shine and impact with every pattern.

Heat applied – spangles are truly "Hotfix," meaning they have heat-activated adhesive on every one, just like rhinestones. Therefore absolutely no sewing or embroidery is necessary. It works just like a rhinestone transfer.

Long Lasting – because there are no threads, there's nothing to get cut or damaged when worn or in the wash. The Hotfix adhesive binds to the fabric giving your designs many years of life.

Because the ProSpangle produces a "transfer" just like a rhinestone transfer, it's simple to store and to ship. Since you're cutting shapes out of continuous ribbons of material, the end result is much less expensive than a comparable rhinestone transfer.

The ProSpangle machine from ColDesi comes with Hoftix Era from Sierra, an easy to use but powerful application that, with the right drivers, will also run your professional embroidery machine, plotter/cutter or CAMS Automatic Rhinestone Machine. Apply spangles at a speed of 800 to 1,000 per minute, which is up to six times faster than a



rhinestone machine. Get more mileage from a spangle; they're three times the size of an SS10 rhinestone. Reassure customers that spangle designs have zero lead content and a soft hand, making them safe for children's apparel.

You'll find the addition to your decorating arsenal profitable. A recent search online for a "cheer mom" T-shirt with bling showed just how profitable a spangle t-shirt business can be. The average price for a finished "cheer mom" T-shirt tee was \$18.85. Here's how your costs would break down:

The estimated T-shirt cost is \$3.46 each. If you produce 17 shirts per hour, that's \$58.82 in material cost/hour.

Seventeen spangle-finished shirts sold for \$18.85 each equal \$320.45 in revenues per hour.

Your profits equal \$320.45/hour in revenues minus \$58.82/hour in hard costs equals \$261.63 in profit per hour. Just subtract your labor cost for that hour for your net profit.

Of course, this is a very simplified cost and profit model we're using to help you evaluate the ProSpangle transfer business, but it's a great place to start!

During the writing of this article the company also announced that they would be offering live online product demonstrations. Now, if you can't make it to their offices or a trade show, you can meet with one of their training account managers and technicians and see the product live from the comfort of your home or office. Just visit ColDesi.com for scheduling.

In addition to best in class products, like the ProSpangle highlighted here, ColDesi offers the best in training and support as well. Of course ColDesi offers training in several locations around the country, but their new online support Website, <http://support.coldesi.com>, includes live online training for every ColDesi product and self-paced training offerings as well.

For more information on the ProSpangle go to <http://www.prospangle.com> or call ColDesi at 1-877-793-3278.

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A man and a woman are running outdoors in winter gear. The woman on the left is wearing a bright red zip-up jacket, black pants, black gloves, and a grey knit beanie. Her blonde hair is blowing in the wind. The man on the right is wearing a grey zip-up jacket with a 'COOPERSTOWN RUNNING CLUB' logo on the chest, black pants, and black gloves. They are running on a light-colored surface, possibly a path or road, with a dark background.

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FEATURES

Cover Story 46

Can This Shop Be Saved?

Point Embroidery & Screen in central Wisconsin operated at a loss last year, with nice-guy owner Craig Wold too worried about losing business to raise prices – or even to insist on payment in full. The shop itself was a hoarder's paradise, and getting organized seemed a Sisyphean struggle. *Stitches* sent The Embroidery Coach, Joyce Jagger, to whip Wold's business into shape.

Hot Niche Markets 56

We're With the Band

Screen printers have long created the iconic band T-shirt. You'll meet some of these successful shop owners and learn how to start selling decorated apparel to bands and others in the music industry.

INTERACT

Stitches.com 18

Trending topics: How embroiderers have improved productivity in their shops this year; the biggest crises shops have ever survived; and more.

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What's hot from our Appliqué and Multimedia and Screen-Printed Design Boards.

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Readers talk about how they approach employee training, increase productivity in their shops and more.

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Insight from Dave Barrett, sales and marketing manager at RiCOMA International Corp. (asi/18200).

Problem Solved 23

The Advisory Board talks about how decorators can protect their digital assets.

Phil Stitch Answers 24

Phil finds director chairs and caps for newborns.



NEWS

Industry 26

Beloved Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120) chairman passes away; Cintas Corp. (asi/162167) starts sustainability effort; and American Apparel (asi/35297) ousts CEO Charney.

World 27

Trending topics: Mexican designer Sally Azar launched Hilando México project with Ichmul women; Haiti raises minimum wage for garment workers; and more.

Strategy 28

A 15-person shop prints a record 51,000 souvenir T-shirts and scores big; screen-printing shop Rags of Honor is a veteran-run operation that helps homeless vets; and more.

About the Cover
Design: Hillary Glen
Photography: Glenn Sanderson

DECORATING SOLUTIONS

5 Steps 33

Learn how to create an intricate emblem with a refined finish.

Decorating & Fabric Trends 34

Hot topics: The Wild Side offers a collection of specialty skull images for all of your clients' needs; Transfer Express (asi/91804) released a video that teaches you how to create custom school-oriented heat transfers; and more.

Machine & Software Updates 35

Hot topics: Hirsch International (asi/14982) released the next-generation oval automatic MHM iQ-Oval presses; Imprintables Warehouse (asi/58475) now offers an entry-level 16" x 20" clamshell Red Press; and more.

Saving 9 36

Hot topics: InkSoft's software provides a secure connection with Intuit/Quickbooks; ClipArtBoom offers fresh, looks for athletic artwork; and World Emblem International (asi/98265) makes it easy to add high-visibility striping to uniforms.

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Runway trends to sell: print leggings, bright cobalt and metallic accents.

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The coolest back-to-school apparel and accessories.

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What to look forward to in September/October 2014 *Stitches*.

Ask an Expert 64

An expert offers smart strategies on backing up your shop's client data and designs.

OVER

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New!

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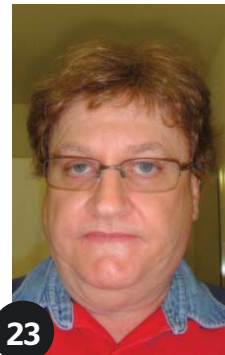


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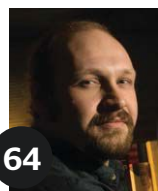
In this month's "Problem Solved" section of our "Inter-act" department, **STEVE FREEMAN**, owner of

Qdigitizing.com, talks about why having business interruption insurance is so critical. "When I first started my original shop, my next-door neighbor had a fire and burned to the ground," he writes. "My facility suffered smoke damage and I was completely closed for two weeks. Afterwards, we saw drastically reduced business in the two months that followed while they rebuilt the shop next door because of restricted access to our shop, so we looked closed."

In this month's "Expert Weigh-In" section of our "Decorating Solutions" department, **DAVE BARRETT**, sales and marketing manager at RiCOMA International Corp. (asi/18200), talks about hiring great employees. "First, make sure the position is well-defined," he writes. "Offer a competitive compensation and benefits package. Make sure your incentive package is carefully aligned with your long- and short-term goals for that position. This increases your employee's chance of success and your chances of keeping them long-term. When hiring, personality is always important, but obviously for a machine tech or IT position, measurable skills might be more important than personality. Meanwhile, in a sales or customer service rep position, personality plays a greater role. Unless you're hiring at entry level, industry knowledge and experience must also be considered in finding the correct candidate to fill the position."



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In this issue's "Ask an Expert," **ERICH CAMPBELL**, e-commerce manager/digitizer for Albuquerque, NM-based Black Duck Inc., schools a shop owner in how to successfully back up her designs and other sensitive client data. "For business, I choose a hybrid of local hardware and proper cloud backups," he writes. "Swap local drives make for easy retrieval of large amounts of data when necessary and require no Internet connection. Add the immediacy of the constantly synchronized cloud backup and tools for easy restoration of files when you do have connectivity for the best of both worlds." Learn the best ways for your shop to safeguard its data.

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Serious Shop Makeover



Everyone, me included, loves the wave of reality shows like *Salon Takeover*, *Hotel Impossible* and *Bar Rescue* that send experts storming in to a struggling business – and in 60 minutes, they perform a total overhaul of the company's operations to help its owners succeed. Well, this month, *Stitches* brings you our very own embroidery shop makeover in our cover story by Senior Staff

Writer Theresa Hegel, "Can This Shop Be Saved?" (pg. 46).

We asked readers to tell us about their shops' biggest challenges and to send us videos of their problem areas. Enter Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach, our tough-love expert. She reviewed all of the submissions and chose Wisconsin-based Point Embroidery & Screen, owned by Craig Wold, as the shop she most wanted to make over. Wold, who had purchased the shop several years ago from a friend, definitely had organizational, workflow, pricing and marketing challenges (in addition to other areas) – but he also had a strong desire to succeed that Jagger loved. "I could see this shop going from \$200,000 a year to over \$1 million," she told me when she selected the shop.



Visit Stitches.com to read about the *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board's top 10 reasons why businesses fail.

We flew Jagger out to Point Embroidery where she spent two full days reviewing the shop's weaknesses and bringing her no-nonsense approach to revamping a shop full force. In our cover story, we'll show you how Jagger provided solutions to the shop's problems – and the staff's reactions to her candid "You have got to be kidding me" moments. In addition, Jagger worked with the shop long-distance for two additional months after her visit to make sure they were staying the course and improving their business. (You can watch videos from Jagger's onsite training at Stitches.com.)

What you'll learn from this powerful story is that many shops struggle with similar issues, and seemingly small things like overstocked inventory or lack of a data backup system can seriously sink a shop. You'll root for Wold and his crew, and you'll benefit from Jagger's tips from a 30-plus career in the decorating industry. In addition, you'll see that revamping a shop isn't something that happens in two days, a week or even a month. It's a continuous process that requires commitment – and passion for what you do. We hope that this special cover story inspires and motivates you!

Nicole M. Rollender

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The Stitch Report

Stitches Senior Writer Theresa Hegel talks about a few proven ways to keep your shop's inventory costs low. Watch the video on *Stitches.com*.



Podcast: Making Changes

Stitches Senior Staff Writer Theresa Hegel checks in with Craig Wold, owner of Point Embroidery & Screen in Stevens Point, WI, to talk about what he's accomplished in the time since Embroidery Coach Joyce Jagger's visit to help him save his shop. Listen to the interview on *Stitches.com*.



Flock on Garments

Learn everything you need to know about flock from Charlie Taublieb, veteran screen printer and founder of Taublieb Consulting. Read more on *Stitches.com*.

SOCIAL FEEDS



Facebook.com/stitchesmag

We posted: What's one way that you've improved productivity in your shop this year?

YOU ANSWERED
MARY ANN SHIRLEY
ROMERO-SOTO

We've purchased more designs and also demo shirts to show sizing. I also created some embroidered fonts and framed them and have my clients choose from them.

JEANNE FITZSIMONS

The way I keep on track is to do something very much against my nature: I actually put things where they belong as soon as I've used them. It sounds so simple, but it isn't. However, the rewards are worth it in time saved and peace of mind.

HOWARD POTTER

In the apparel world, if your design matches your customizing quality, you will go a lot further in this business more quickly than most, but you have to have the customer service and turnaround time to keep up.

We posted:
STITCHES MAGAZINE

The USDA is predicting that the world cotton trade will drop this year, with China expected to rely more on domestic cotton, rather than imported: <http://bit.ly/SXZZxq>

Garment factory owners in Bangladesh are threatening to pursue legal action over the cost of closures due to alleged safety violations: <http://bit.ly/SXXuev>



ASI_Stitches

@ADAGE

Six marketing career tips from Spencer Stuart's Greg Welch <http://bit.ly/1pEIOYw>

@BUSINESSINSIDER

Apple actually has a decent sense of humor. Check out the funny T-shirts it sells at its gift shop in Cupertino. <http://read.bi/1tWPPu8>

@KORNITDIGITAL

Break down everything you ever thought you knew about printing on #textiles <http://bit.ly/RKNLaj> #RollToRoll #digitalprinting

@LUCKYMAGAZINE

Because evil never looked so good, the most stylish screen villains in honor of #Maleficent: <http://lcky.mg/1myUVIt> pic.twitter.com/VJl3Q9Qumb

@ASICENTRAL

Is your company's Career Page ready for mobile? If you're not sure, read this <http://ow.ly/xqTv1>

@CNNVIDEO

Iranian hackers master cyber-espionage with fake social media accounts. Here's how: <http://cnn.it/1kblntg> pic.twitter.com/bkFCL0IUI

@KELLEYVARGO

Don't let the fear of failure keep you from making your #dreams reality. Work hard toward them every day. #dedication #commitment #faith

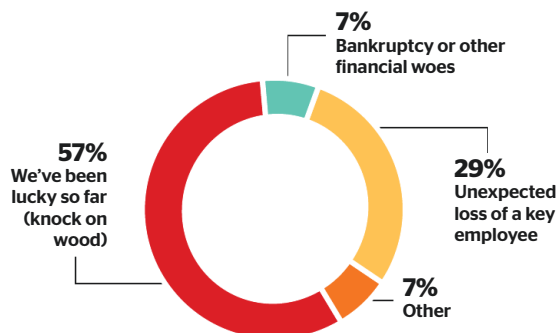
@FORBES

Does Samsung's new stress monitoring app actually work? <http://on-forbes.es/1UDi40> pic.twitter.com/9mElw9aOA8

INDUSTRY POLL

At *Stitches.com*, we recently asked:

What's the biggest crisis your shop has ever survived?



BLOG EXCERPT

Stitchwork Coming Back from the Brink



Eleven years ago, Bob and Lorri Dandurand bought a figure-skating and hobby shop, what would eventually become Elite Screen Printing and Embroidery in Warwick, RI. In 2007, they purchased a single-head embroidery machine to supplement the business, but didn't think much about it until the economy collapsed.

Struggling families were pulling their children out of pricey figure-skating programs. Plus, the companies that had once supplied the Dandurands with skating gear and apparel were bought out by larger suppliers, who wouldn't sell to the couple.

With dwindling stock and no way to replenish it, the Dandurands' livelihood was collapsing. They had two options: either declare bankruptcy and pay off their debt, or try to make their business self-sufficient somehow. They chose the latter.

Scan this code to read the entire blog entry by Theresa Hegel, senior writer, *Stitches*



Pinterest

Check out the following designs that we pinned on Stitches' Pinterest page – [Pinterest.com/stitchesmag](https://www.pinterest.com/stitchesmag) from the *Appliqué & Multimedia* and *Screen-Printed Designs* boards.

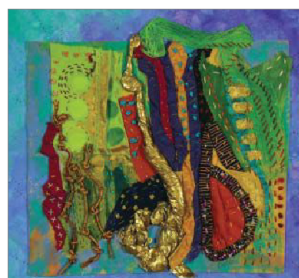
From the Board: Appliqué & Multimedia



"Tumble" precut sublimated appliqué design includes scroll-laced crest studded with rhinestones from Dalco Athletic, www.dalcoathletic.com.



This multimedia creation features embroidery in metallic thread, appliqué and screen printing from Shockwaves Promotional Apparel (asi/87144; circle 113 on Free Info Card), www.shockwavesapparel.com.



"Fabric of Our Lives" – a 16" x 16" collection of stitched and painted fabrics mounted on stretched canvas by Ithaca, NY-based fiber artist Sally Dutko, www.sallydutko.com.



Appli-Stitch Appliqué Design Collection includes 12 ready-to-use designs and instructions from Appli-Stitch, www.applistitch.com.

From the Board: Screen-Printed Designs



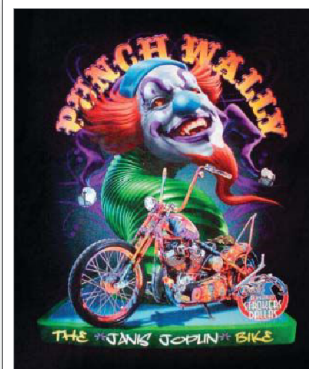
This Pontoon Life T-shirt Cotton tee embellished with subtle one-color, all-over print by Florida-based Relik Apparel Inc., www.relikapparel.com.



Charity tee designed for Haley Bellows, college student and cancer survivor by Ramalama Enterprises in Newberg, OR.



Screen-printed tee embellished for Cowboy Militia brand by Pony Xpress Printing (asi/78964; circle 114 on Free Info Card), www.pxpsolutions.com



Simulated process screen printing on a black tee by Nashville-based Anderson Studio Inc., www.andersonstudioinc.com.

Visit Stitches' Pinterest page – and all of our great boards – at [Pinterest.com/stitchesmag](https://www.pinterest.com/stitchesmag).

INTERACT

Letters

We received these letters in response to the question: What's one way that you've improved productivity in your shop this year?

Across the Board

We've been doing more cross training with our embroidery and screen-printing operations. It helps with maintaining employee hours, which helps improve employee morale, and with adjusting for spikes in production needs.

Brent Wright

Digital Threads/Appaloosa Image, Ferndale, WA

Keep It Simple

My old standard is a dry erase board with every job and its current stage on the wall so I can see where things are at a glance. I also use Google Calendar so I can access this from every device if I'm not in the shop. A huge improvement has been QuickBooks online billing. This has saved me a lot of time, because now, rather than waiting for customer pickup

to make and accept payments, I create the invoice at the sale and e-mail it directly to them with a link for online paying. Many choose to just pay right away. Cash flow is so much better now and this results in faster ordering and job completion for my small shop.

Carolyn Cagle

Strikke Knits LLC, Stacy, MN

Stitches readers sound off.

Keeping It Local

AlmostUnique Designs is a home-based business serving our local community. I've learned so much from your magazine; I read each issue cover to cover!

Judith Lind

AlmostUnique Designs, Livingston, NJ

10 Years and Going Strong

I own a home-based business and we're celebrating our 10th anniversary this year!

Mildred Burke

GEM Embroidery, Ledyard, CT

Special Gifts

I run a small embroidery and heat-press business from my home, where I create team items and logowear, as well as baby and special occasion gifts.

Jeanne Fitzsimons

Farmington Hills, MI

Learning Something New

I began an embroidery business out of my home in 2006 with a used Toyota 850. Since that time, I've learned so much and continue to learn every day. I'm now using two

Toyota 9100s and a Tajima TMEX C1201. I love seeing what I can create! It's the best job I ever had. Thanks for the great magazine! I truly look forward to it each month. So much useful information!

Doreen Bjerknæs

Designs by Doreen, Grand Forks, ND

What's in a Name?

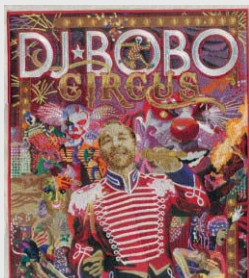
I have a home-based, part-time business. I do more work for my family than others. I've never really named my business, although I may be doing some team shirts for a friend's volleyball team and she tells me I should get a name and create an invoice for billing. I've done aprons for the chefs at the assisted living facility where my mother resided, as well as warm-up pants for a friend's daughter. I work at a not-for-profit Performing Arts center and I've embroidered their logos on aprons for the ushers and a tablecloth to be used at Chamber events.

Jeanne Slater

Cary, IL

VOILA!

The Best Piece I Ever Embroidered



The most complex design my team has ever digitized is this one for a customer who wanted it for a jacket back. When we received it, we were stunned. We had to capture all the details in thread and make it machine-friendly. We couldn't leave anything out. The design was going on an expensive leather jacket and it had to be perfect the first time around. It took the talents of two of our digitizers, AJ Ahmed and Habib Noor, and Wilcom and Embird software to complete the digitizing, and four days to punch. For sewing out, which took six hours, we used Tajima and Madeira USA thread in 16 colors. Artistically, color blends were done on most

parts of the design. Technically, we had to make sure the densities, underlays, color changes and trim stops were as optimal as possible, especially for leather, which is a tricky fabric to work on. But when the sewout was finally finished, we loved the final result.

Submitted by Karen Habe, co-owner of Quality Punch (asi/700018), Torrance, CA; karen@qualitypunch.net

TALK TO US!

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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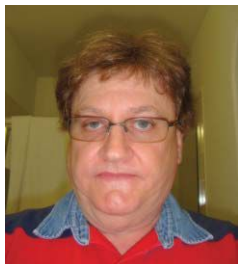


asi/40788

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INTERACT

Expert Weigh-In



Dave Barrett, sales & marketing manager at RiCOMA International Corp. (asi/18200), discusses the importance of diversifying, capitalizing on decoration trends and RiCOMA's new agreement with Wilcom.

The economy is still affecting the decorating industry. Capital is really tight right now. Because of the economic circumstances and competition, it's hard to raise prices and decorators have to do more with less. Some smaller shops have really found their spots in retail, but for the larger ones, competition is fierce. No one wants to spend what they did before. We're seeing a very anemic economic recovery, about 2% to 3% growth, and that's not enough for large-scale expansion.

It's important that shops diversify to stay competitive. Decorators should try to offer additional decoration capabilities to create something different. There are so many processes that have popped up in the past several years that complement embroidery. But it can be difficult, because owners hesitate to expand because of business regulation and the health-care law. Decorators have to be smart about their investments.

Retaining good employees is just as important as knowing how to find them in the first place. First, make sure the position is well defined. Also, offer a competitive compensation and benefits package. Finally, make sure your incentive package is carefully aligned with your long- and short-term goals for that position. This increases your employee's chance of success and your chances of keeping them long-term. Retaining top-notch people is as important as finding them. Otherwise, you may be training your future competition. When hiring, personality is always important, but obviously for a machine tech or IT position,

measurable skills might be more important than personality. Meanwhile, in a sales or customer service rep position, personality plays a greater role. Unless you're hiring at entry level, industry knowledge and experience must also be considered in finding the correct candidate to fill the position.

The crossover market is doing well in this economy. Some embroiderers are expanding into trophies and signs, and doing their own production. They're established in one business and then when they cross over, they're selling more products to the same customer base.

Trends from the past are on their way back in. A lot of past trends are coming back. Sequins and rhinestones are really popular, and 3-D puff embroidery is gaining traction again. When you combine these with other capabilities, the result is eye-popping. The same technology is still around, but decorators are using it more innovatively. Leverage what's out there and make it your own before everyone is doing it.

Decorators and digitizers have to distinguish from overseas companies through excellent customer service, reliability and quality work, in order to compete. When people order from U.S. decorators, it's a lot faster and more reliable. Meanwhile, the Internet has turned digitizing into the Wild West. You can order 10 digitizing pieces from overseas, and only one will even approach good quality. But things are definitely moving back here.

Customers just can't wait anymore, and they want quality work. There will always be those people who want the lowest price, and decorators just have to know that that's not their market.

Every shop is going to have difficult customers. The best way to handle difficult customers is through excellent customer service and communication, while setting the customer's expectations properly from the very beginning. If you set them incorrectly, you may be dooming the relationship. Be honest and direct, and deliver what you promise. But even if you do everything right, you'll occasionally have that customer who's just impossible. I recommend ending the relationship when the customer becomes abusive and overly demanding to the point that it's disrupting your business, and/or when the relationship becomes unprofitable. When this happens, closely evaluate what happened and try to prevent it from happening again.

RiCOMA has just signed a groundbreaking new agreement with Wilcom.

Decorators are bringing digitizing back in-house for more control and to compete with the low-quality, slow-turnaround work from overseas. We'll now be distributing Wilcom software, and Wilcom DecoStudio Lite will be bundled with our embroidery machines. The ease of use and high-quality output will help our customers succeed faster and, in turn, please their customers more than would a low-quality, late order from overseas.

Problem Solved

Q *As a new shop, I haven't really started to back up my designs and other electronic assets. What do I need to know and what's the easiest way to get started?*



Cory Dean, Artwork Source: Sign up for a free version of Dropbox or Box and move all of your customer files there. It's great for backing up and sharing.



Steve Freeman, Qdigitizing (asi/700501): There are many cloud-based options for storing digital assets off-site. Store your backup in a location other than your physical one. Carbonite is inexpensive and automated; the only problem is that it's difficult for non-computer savvy people to set up and restoring is not as straightforward as you might expect. Dropbox is also very inexpensive and easy to use, and its advantage over Carbonite is that you can set up and manage the directory structure for your backup any way you like. The disadvantage is that the Dropbox process isn't automated, so if you fail to back up your files, you're out of luck. There are a lot of services like Dropbox and Carbonite, and they all work (and charge) essentially the same.

Finally, get insurance and include a business interruption rider! When I first started my original shop, my next-door neighbor had a fire and burned to the ground. My facility suffered smoke damage and I was completely closed for two weeks. Afterwards, we saw drastically reduced business in the two months that followed while they rebuilt the shop next door because of restricted access to our shop, so we looked closed. If I didn't have business interruption insurance, I would've been out of business for sure!



Andy Shuman, Rockland Embroidery Inc. (asi/734150): If you're versed in the technol-

“There are many cloud-based options for storing digital assets off-site. Store your backup in a location other than your physical one.”

Steve Freeman, Qdigitizing (asi/700501)

ogy and cloud-based applications that are available for backup, do your due diligence in finding the method that best suits your business. If you're like me (a bit technologically challenged), there's a price to pay for having to learn the ropes prior to making your decision. Unfortunately, that price will be at the expense of your other business responsibilities, such as managing your shop, selling, paying bills. But once you've measured these costs, you may want to find a reputable professional to direct you through an image-based backup process.



Jane Swanzy, Swan Marketing LLC: I've used Carbonite and Dropbox for the past three or so years. Carbonite has saved my rear a couple of times when I've had to replace computers. It can be a little daunting and time-consuming to restore your files from Carbonite, but it's better than losing your files. Carbonite does have an option, for an additional fee, where they will overnight all your files to you so all you have to do is load them on your computer. I use Dropbox mostly to share files that are too large to e-mail to a client. Start a filing system to keep track of designs, both stock and client designs. There's nothing like spending hours trying to remember where you saved something, or buying a duplicate stock

design because you didn't remember you already had it.



Erich Campbell, Black Duck Inc.: Carbonite is the simplest to install and the most widely known backup system. But I've found that sometimes it misses a week of backups and I have to reinstall the client to reinitialize. It has, however, taught me an important lesson: You shouldn't treat your backups as a “set it and forget it” utility. You need to check on their health regularly. If possible, combine regular physical local backups, preferably swapped off-site, with these automatic cloud solutions. Everyone should keep in mind that there are sources other than Carbonite for total backups. CrashPlan is one that many of my friends have also used, for instance, and those of us who are a little more technically-minded will find tons of great software that allow you to inexpensively achieve cloud backup – we can “roll our own” by using cloud storage from Amazon S3 and said software. Here's the real trick: Just get started. (Read Erich Campbell's “Ask an Expert” column on page 64 for more data backup tips.)

HAVE A PROBLEM YOU NEED SOLVED?
Send your question for the *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board to nrollender@asicentral.com.

INTERACT

Phil Stitch Answers



Got a question for Phil?

If you can't find what you're looking for in the 2014 Sourcing Guide, write to: *Stitches*, Attn: Phil Stitch, 4800 Street Rd., Trevoze, PA 19053. Or fax your question to (215) 953-3107. For the quickest response, e-mail askphil@asicentral.com. For RN inquiries, visit www.stitches.com for the RN Database link.

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

I'm looking for wholesale director's chairs that I can embroider. I'd like ones with a small tray attached to the side. Any sources? - Katie

Lights, camera ... start with the Director Chair with Side Table (463) from Picnic at Ascot, Inc. (asi/78060); (866) 226-3102;

www.ascotpromotional.com. It's lightweight, portable and available in red, blue or black. I would also direct you to 4 Sizzle Inc. (asi/55213); (866) 496-9465; www.4sizzle.com; for the Director Chair that folds, features a tray on the side and comes in a bright range of colors.

Finally, you can find the furniture you fancy at Picnic Plus by Spectrum (asi/88675); (866) 634-2628; www.picnicpromo.com. The Director's Sport Chair (PSM-110) has a lightweight aluminum frame, durable polyester, reinforced seat, a folding side table and side storage pockets.

I have a customer looking for high-end polo shirts. They mentioned Calvin Klein, Tommy Bahama, Ping, Callaway, etc. Is there a wholesale outlet for these brands? - Peggy

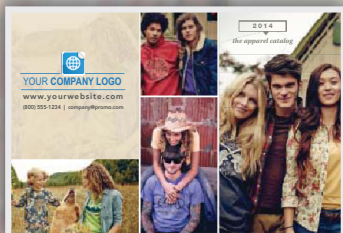
Get your brands on with these suppliers! Calvin Klein is available from PVH Career Apparel (asi/75634); (800) 999-0146; www.pvhcorporateoutfitters.ca; and RMK Worldwide (asi/80289); (800) 648-0913; www.rmkmworldwide.com. In addition, find the elusive Ping brand from Logosport (asi/67865); (800) 662-5622; www.logosport.com; and River's End Trading Co. (asi/82588); (800) 488-4800; www.riversendtrading.com. And for your Callaway enthusiasts, tee off with Pro Golf Premiums (asi/79680); (800) 890-6068; www.progolfpremiums.com.

Can you recommend a supplier for hats with sunglasses holders? They're built-in fabric loops on the sides that the wearer can tuck the sunglasses into. Thanks! - Mike

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I need to find a youth-sized T-shirt in safety pink. - Monica

Keep them safe with Delta Apparel (asi/49172); (678) 775-6900; www.deltaapparel.com; the Youth Short Sleeve Tee (11736) comes in dozens of colors and five youth sizes. The safety pink option is also available in the polyester, moisture-dispersing Youth T-Shirt (42000B) from Gildan Activewear SRL (asi/56842); (877) 445-3265; www.mygildan.com.

Your final stop should be at One Stop Inc. (asi/75085); (616) 784-5400; www.onestopinc.com; for the Ultra Cotton Youth Short Sleeve T-Shirt (GD219), a cotton jersey top in many hues and youth sizes.

Can you point me in the direction of a crewneck sweatshirt that comes in sizes up to 6XLT? My customer and I would really appreciate your help! - Lee
No sweat! Outfit the crew with the help of

White Bear Clothing Co. (asi/97049); (800) 884-4275; www.whitebearclothing.com; the Heavyweight Crew (WB-1500) is a poly/cotton blend sweatshirt available in five colors, and there are no upcharges for big and tall sizes.

You can also warm up end-users with Tri-Mountain (asi/92125); (800) 824-6464; www.trimountain.com. Aspect (680) is a men's poly/cotton crew neck available in 10 colors with rib-knit collar, cuffs and waistband. It comes in sizes up to 6XLT. To cap it off, visit Caplee Corporation (asi/43798); (800) 772-4716; www.capleecorp.com. Product 11651 features cotton/fleece/poly construction, big and tall sizing and double-needle stitching throughout.

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By Theresa Hegel

Obituary: Herb Lotman

Herb Lotman, chairman of the board of Philadelphia-based Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120), died this spring from complications of heart failure. He was 80.

Lotman was most well-known as the founder of Keystone Foods, which developed the mass-production system for making McDonald's frozen hamburgers. Over four decades, Lotman built Keystone into a massive operation that generated annual sales



of \$5 billion. A noted philanthropist, Lotman co-founded the McDonald's LPGA Championship, which has raised nearly \$50 million for Ronald McDonald charities since its inception. Lotman was also an active board member of the Children's Cancer Research Foundation and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Lotman is survived by his wife, Karen, children Shelly and Jeff, several grandchildren and a sister.

Cintas Starts Sustainability Effort

Uniform maker Cintas Corp. (asi/162167) has partnered with Know Hope, a Cincinnati-based nonprofit dedicated to ending poverty in third-world countries. Cintas will provide Know Hope with material leftover from its uniform production process to line reusable burlap bags sold by the charity. Funds from the sales will go toward products and services for families in Mexico, Africa, Haiti and Guatemala.

Cintas is hoping to help stem the tide of textiles clogging landfills; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that roughly 21 billion pounds of post-consumer textile waste goes to landfills each year. "The average U.S. citizen throws away 70 pounds of textiles each year, but corporations also have a responsibility to help divert this waste from landfills," says Melanie Boyle, manager of sustainability for Cintas. "This partnership is a win-win because we're supporting a local

nonprofit in their mission to make the world a better place."

Each day, more than 5 million employees go to work in a Cintas uniform. The material from one work uniform can be used to line each Know Hope bag. Know Hope produced about 4,300 bags and 2,500 smaller accessories last year.

American Apparel CEO Charney Ousted

The board of directors of apparel supplier American Apparel (asi/35297) voted in June to oust CEO Dov Charney from the clothing company he founded, citing multiple instances of alleged misconduct. Charney is accused of using company funds to pay for flights for his parents, as well as providing corporate apartments for friends and staying in them himself when he wasn't on business, according to news reports.

Reports suggest Charney is purported to have known about – but done nothing to prevent – a blog put together by an employee that skewered

American Apparel's culture, while including nude photos of Irene Morales, who sued Charney over alleged sexual misconduct in 2012. Charney is alleged to have used company funds to provide undeserved severance payments, salary increases, bonuses and commissions to induce employees to sign release agreements aimed at protecting him from personal liability for alleged misconduct. The board says quality employees left American Apparel because of Charney, adding that some financing sources have refused to become involved with the supplier as long as he was involved with the company.

Charney is threatening to sue American Apparel unless he is reinstated. His attorney, Patricia Glaser, said her client was illegally fired, without giving him time to consider a proposed \$4 million severance package.

American Apparel's board named John Luttrell, formerly, CFO, interim CEO, and Allan Mayer and David Danziger as co-chairmen.

Event Calendar

Aug. 3-5, Las Vegas
ISS Shows
(508) 743-0532;
www.issshows.com

Aug. 6-7, Long Beach, CA
The SAAC Show
(805) 484-7393;
www.saac.net

Aug. 15-16, Nashville
Embroidery Mart
www.EmbroideryMart.com

Aug. 13, Nashville
PPAMS MidSouth PromoShow
(615) 465-8109;
www.ppams.com

Aug. 14, Knoxville, TN
PPAMS Knoxville Road Show
(615) 465-8109; www.ppams.com

Aug. 22, Bloomington, MN
UMAPP Selling Solutions Showcase Room Show
(651) 734-9767;
www.umapp.org

Aug. 23-26, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Fort Lauderdale Gift Show
(678) 285-3976; www.ftlauderdalegiftshow.com

Aug. 24-27, Marlboro, MA
New England Apparel Club Show
(781) 326-9223;
www.neacshow.com

Sept. 8-11, Milwaukee; Chicago; Indianapolis; Louisville, KY
Advantages Roadshow
(800) 546-3300; www.advantagesroadshow.com

Embroidery Reinterpreted Through Furniture

A rich heritage of folk embroidery meets modern furniture design in Hilando México, a two-year-old social and artistic project conceived by Mexican designer Sally Azar. After visiting Ichnul, a small town in Mexico's Yucatán state, Azar fell in love with the intricate floral hand-embroidery the indigenous women had been creating for generations. "I decided to make this my life project, to weave my dreams with them and to start bridging worlds," she says.

Azar first worked with the women to digitize and reinterpret the original designs of their huipiles, traditional decorated tunics, to create a more modern look. Now, she and other furniture designers come up with an idea – whether for an embellished chair, pillow, table, sofa or other piece – and Azar brings the concept drawing, fabric and threads to the Ichnul women to sew the design. A pillow takes about two weeks to complete, whereas big-



ger pieces, like sofas, require closer to two months of labor, Azar says.

The Hilando México project has provided the Ichnul women a steady and substantial income, plus Azar says she feels a "huge responsibility" and uses the

project's resources to help improve the Ichnul community as a whole.

Another one of the project's goals has been to promote Mexican craftsmanship on a national and international level. After New York Design Week, *The Wall Street Journal* featured a piece created in collaboration between Hilando and Mexican design team Rococo: a gray sofa with a bold blue-and-white floral motif across the backrest. The publication pointed to the stylish settee as a noteworthy example of the embroidered furniture trend. Azar says the nod from the media was gratifying: "I felt that suddenly all the effort behind it was worth it, and this recognition keeps us motivated to continue," she says.

Haiti Raises Minimum Wage for Garment Workers

Haiti raised the minimum wage by 12.5% for the country's approximately 29,000 apparel workers earlier this year, according to the Associated Press. Under the law, workers who sew together T-shirts and other clothing will earn about \$5.11 per eight-hour workday, falling short of the equivalent of \$11.36 a day protesting garment workers have been demanding.

The last time Haiti's parliament approved a minimum wage raise was in 2009, increasing the daily rate from about \$1.50 to \$4.50 over three years. It also established a separate minimum wage for garment workers who could earn as much as \$6.81 daily if they met production quotas. Labor groups have said those quotas weren't realistic.

The U.S.-based Worker Rights Consortium reported that Haitian workers receive an average of 32% less than they should. The organization says the latest increase is a small step in the right direction. "It means a modest increase, but it was a lot less than what workers were asking for," Scott Nova, executive director of the consortium, told the AP.

Fashion Line Focuses on 'Tribal Chic'

A Palestinian designer with a focus on vibrant chain-stitched embroidery and "tribal chic" is getting a lot of attention in the fashion world. Ayah Tabari's Mochi line was featured in *British Vogue*, her pieces coveted by across-the-pond notables like Rita Ora and Poppy Delevingne.

For each collection, the Dubai-based brand travels to different countries to gain inspiration. Mochi's one-of-a-kind clothes and accessories are hand-embroidered by artisans from those locations, according to Mochi's website.

"For me, what's important is when wearing the clothes you get a sense of the country in terms of production and in terms of workmanship. Quality is very important to me," Tabari told *British Vogue*. "I'm so happy to see women appreciating embroidery and artisan work."

Tabari was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and studied in London before settling in Dubai, UAE. Her fashion line's name comes from a Hindu caste in the Gujarat region of India. The Mochis were known for both shoemaking and intricate embroidery.

53%

The percentage
of small businesses with
websites in 2014

source: Statisticbrain.com

SALES

A Secret Success



The 15 employees of Atomic Screen Printing and Embroidery in Kennewick, WA, once thought an order to decorate 500 shirts was a pretty big deal.

Then, they had the opportunity to print souvenir shirts for finishers of the 2014 Lilac Bloomsday 15K, a popular annual race in Spokane. The team had five months to print 51,000 T-shirts. (Because the shirt featured designs on both the chest and the sleeve, it was more like a 100,000-shirt order, notes Greg Walden, Atomic's owner.)

"When the shirts first showed up, I was unsure what I got myself into," Walden admits. But completing the massive order "definitely added confidence to all our crew," he adds.

Atomic had been bidding for the chance to print the coveted race finisher shirts

for a dozen years, before finally getting the nod from organizers. It helped that two years ago, the shop printed 5,000 shirts for race volunteers. "They liked our work well enough to trust us to do the order," Walden says. "This is the first time they had somebody outside of their area do it." Kennewick is about two-and-a-half hours southwest of Spokane.

Working on such a large order presented Atomic Screen Printing with a number of challenges – chiefly, finding a spot to store all of the inventory; 51,000 shirts nearly filled up a semi-trailer, Walden says. Also, dealing with the same design day in and day out quickly became dull. "We were going to do it all at once, but after about the third day, you can't stand looking at it anymore," he says. So, Atomic workers broke the order into manageable chunks, spending a week each month printing 10,000 of the shirts. Staggering the job also helped the shop keep busy during winter-time lulls in business, Walden says.

One challenge unique to the Bloomsday race was the element of secrecy. The design of the souvenir shirt is kept under tight wraps until it is passed out at the finish line, so Atomic employees weren't allowed to have cameras or cell phones in the production area when they worked on the job. "We couldn't divulge the design we were doing until the race was over," Walden says.

WEB

Tech Top-Up

With the pace of the business world always increasing, fast turnaround times of decorated-apparel orders have become inextricably linked with quality customer service. To compete, shops must deliver expertly embroidered wearables within super-slim deadlines. Having reliable employees and a production space optimized for easy order flow are essential to coming through in the clutch, but that's often not enough anymore. To speed production and maintain quality, decorating shops like Blue Heron Industries are bolstering their backend technology systems to streamline orders. "We've really gotten a lot more in-depth with our technology," says President Kevin Kelly. "It's helping us run more efficiently."

Recently, Blue Heron leveraged software investments and in-house IT talent to invigorate its order production process. The upgrades focused on providing the tech infrastructure necessary to improve how orders are received and tracked internally. "We wanted to tighten the reins on the whole process to make it run better," Kelly says. The work has proved profitable, significantly improving communication among staffers and reducing unnecessary downtime. "We're making more of every minute," Kelly says. "Things come together quicker."

Thanks to the improvements, for example, New Jersey-based Blue Heron has been able to quicken its e-commerce fulfillment, especially on single-piece orders that comprise a chunk of the shop's business. With these more rapid turns helping to make customers happy and providing the ability to complete more orders, Kelly is optimistic about sales for 2014. "With what we're seeing, the numbers are trending toward a bigger increase than last year," he says. — *Christopher Ruvo*

12.5 billion

The number of Google searches performed in April

Source: ComScore





10 new vintage colors » 5 new silhouettes » nano collection

Hanes[®]

SHOP MAKEOVER

Doubling Up

Wall of Fame in Sioux City, IA, was able to double its order volume overnight – when the custom screen-printing, embroidery and trophy shop purchased another business half an hour away. “We’re just now getting our feet on the ground,” says Brad Graff, co-owner of Wall of Fame, about a year and a half after the expansion.

Brothers Reid and Brad Graff bought Silk Screen Ink in Storm Lake, IA, to get a bigger piece of Internet business. Silk Screen Ink did a lot of contract work online, with a particular focus on one-off digital printing, says Brad Graff. The previous owner of Silk Screen Ink, Graff says, taught the brothers everything they knew about printing, and they made sure to take care of his employees when they acquired the business, retaining the original Silk Screen Ink office and show room, in addition to their Sioux City shop.

Wall of Fame doesn’t worry much about marketing or social media, relying instead on word of mouth to bring them new



customers, a strategy that has helped the shop grow 15% to 20% year after year. “We earn a lot of new business just by people talking about how we approach and handle our customers every day,” Graff says. “Our tagline is that we offer the best quality at the best price and stand by that with great customer service.”

The Graff brothers have been in the custom decoration business for about eight years, with each year so far bringing continued success. “It’s been a good ride,” Brad Graff says. “I hope the road doesn’t get bumpy.”

MARKETING

Helping Homeless Vets

Mark Doyle isn’t a military veteran, and he didn’t know anything about the decorated apparel industry. But that didn’t stop him from creating Chicago-based Rags of Honor, a screen-printing shop that employs homeless and unemployed veterans. The company’s tagline explains the concept: “They had our backs, now let’s keep the shirt on theirs.”

Rags of Honor currently employs nine veterans, who are trained in every aspect of the business. Hiring the homeless presents some logistical difficulties, Doyle says. In the beginning, he had to pick up employees from the shelter and shuttle them to the office. Several didn’t have bank accounts when they started, so he had to drive them somewhere to cash their paychecks.

The rewards outweigh any inconveniences. “We’ve built a little company where people feel they’ve got brothers and

sisters who understand them,” Doyle says.

Doyle has even had employees turn down other jobs that offer higher pay because they feel so connected to Rags of Honor. His ultimate goal, however, is to train the veterans in how to run a small business, giving them the tools they need to gain economic independence and fulfilling careers, he says.

Though Rags of Honor has only been operating for about nine months, it’s already been licensed by the Big 10 conference and completed orders for five ESPN bowl games last year. The company made more than \$150,000 in its first nine months, and Doyle says it’s on pace to double that



number by year’s end.

Doyle would like to expand the Rags of Honor concept to other cities, to help employ homeless vets across the country. The statistics are staggering: There are 48,000 homeless veterans of the war in Afghanistan, he says. “We’re going to fix it one T-shirt at a time,” Doyle says.

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DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Five Steps

By Tonia Kimbrough

Create an Intricate Emblem With a Refined Finish

Learn how Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120) creates a “high-resolution” PennDuo embroidered/woven logo from vector artwork.

1

SUBMIT PREPARED ARTWORK.

Indicate which design elements will be woven (that means given a high-resolution look) and which elements will be embroidered. Use any standard design file format, such as a .jpeg, .tif, .ai and so on. Penn Emblem will digitize the stitch and woven files accordingly.

2

SELECT YOUR FABRIC.

Choose a color from Penn Emblem's custom color charts for your base fabric onto which the woven part will be placed. Then, the embroidery will be stitched per your requirements. In this example, “Newark Police,” the center circle (text and picture) are woven in 100% twill polyester. The areas around it are stitched. In addition, select the final backing that will be used on the finished PennDuo emblem (for example: heat-seal, low-melt, industrial or pressure sensitive).

3

GET READY FOR PRODUCTION.

The woven part of this emblem has to be made first. Then, these pieces will be laser-cut and manually placed onto multi-head embroidery machines for completing the PennDuo emblem.

4

EVALUATE DETAIL.

You have the option to choose which method (by laser or by hand) to cut the woven and the embroidered emblem. Laser-cut produces much cleaner, sharper cuts and is also faster than hand-cut.

TIP:

If high visibility is a concern for your clients' employees, choose a base fabric that's reflective. PennDuo can meet any special safety or material requirements.



PENN EMBLEM CO. (ASI/77120);
CIRCLE 101 ON FREE INFO CARD
OR CALL (800) 793-7366.

5

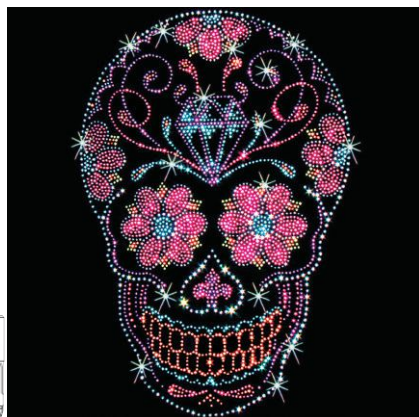
PLACE THE EMBLEM

Position the patch onto the garment and sew it or heat-seal it as per your chosen backing option.

DECORATING SOLUTIONS

Decorating & Fabric Trends

Specialty Skulls



THE WILD SIDE; CIRCLE 102 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (881) 837-5000.

Look no further than The Wild Side for any specialty skull designs you might need. This specialty transfer supplier has an impressive collection of ornately decorated sugar skull designs, which originally were used to celebrate the Mexican holiday known

as the Day of the Dead.

Sugar skulls, as well as skull designs in general, are big in fashion and at retail. Numerous Pinterest boards are dedicated to the trend, highlighting everything from bracelets with skull charms to blouses, even with delicately crocheted skull adornments. You'll find myriad renditions on the internet and at retail to inspire you.

The Wild Side offers one of the largest transfer collections of the sugar skull design, with more on the way. Styles include plastisol heat transfers, rhinestones, rhinestuds and even puff. These designs can be further enhanced with the addition of foil in a total of 30 colors and patterns. In addition to sugar skulls, other skull designs include traditional, Day of the Dead, gothic, biker, pirates and heraldic images. To view the full collection, go to www.thewildside.com and type in keywords "sugar skulls."

Ready-to-Embellish Camouflage Apparel



PANTHER VISION (ASI/75825); CIRCLE 103 ON FREE INFO CARD.

Cash in on the camouflage trend with a variety of promotional apparel choices ready for your embellishment. T-shirt choices include authentic camo patterns like Realtree AP and Mossy Oak (try subdued, traditional embellishment like a tone-on-tone embroidered logo

or personalized name) to fashion-ready renditions that come in stand-out colors like hot pink. For these retail camo styles, consider a custom rhinestone design made easy by Transfer Express (asi/91804), which uses clear, high-quality Korean crystals and vibrantly colored metal stones to turn your original artwork into a sparkling heat-applied transfer.

Top off a promotional gift with a camouflage designed cap by Panther Vision (asi/75825). The new POWERCAP Stealth

#2575 True Timber combines LED lights with a Conceal pattern camouflage perfect for hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. The high-resolution composition of bark, leaves, twigs and limbs expand the patterns' effectiveness to provide cover in most any wooded setting. If you want to embroider a logo onto the cap, choose a thread color that will contrast with the brown and green background. An orange, for example, will be sure that the logo or personalization pops.



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

A Personalized Transfer for Every Grade

Every school year initiates a new class of students, from freshmen to seniors. One of the most enduring forms of memorabilia is a class yearbook. Now it's easy to create a new tradition: signed T-shirts. Transfer Express (asi/91804) has released a video that walks you through simple steps to create and order a template for a transfer that incorporates the signatures of class or team members.

You'll see how easy the user-friendly navigation system makes it to get just the look you want with the personalization that makes a difference with minimal steps and hassle. Simply choose the signature layout you like from the dozens of great options provided in the Idea Book. Select the background and ink colors, and tailor the words and clip art to your client's needs.

To order, change the transfer type to "template," verify the size and make the quantity "one." The template, scaled to the correct size, will be mailed to you for the addition of signatures in felt-tip pen. Your custom heat transfers will be created from the returned completed template and shipped to you.

To see how simple it is to add this stand-out product to your lineup, view the video at: <http://blog.transferexpress.com/blog/ordering-a-signature-template>.

Machine & Software Updates

New MHM Oval Automatic Screen-Printing Press



HIRSCH INTERNATIONAL (ASI/14982); CIRCLE 105 ON FREE INFO CARD.

The next generation of screen-printing presses arrives with the new MHM iQ-Oval from Hirsch International. The press incorporates a host of innovations designed to bring speed, performance, flexibility and safety in textile screen printing to another level. One of these innovations is the new iDS Intelligent Drive System, which features a small drive motor on each pallet arm, allowing independent operation of each arm; smooth motion in both directions; and single, double or triple indexing.

Besides making the iQ one of the fastest oval automatics, this unique system boosts reliability and operator safety by making non-issues of problems such as stretched belts or loose chains to cause pallet arms to fight against each other.

When an obstacle is sensed, the independent drive motors stop immediately.

Individual blocks on each arm ensure optimal registration. In addition to a user-friendly M-Touch Pro tablet/pad main command unit control and full Wi-Fi capability for instant and real-time technical support, every station has a digital control keypad for primary printing functions.

The iQ-Oval's modular design allows for a wide variety of configurations to meet changing job needs easily and economically by increasing the number of stations and colors from a minimum of 12 stations/eight colors up to 60 stations/eight colors. The iQ also is designed to conserve space by permitting loading and unloading from the ends/corners.

New Clamshell Heat Presses

If you want to add heat printing to your repertoire of decorating services, there are two new entry-level machines on the market worth your consideration. The Hotronix MAXX Clam is economical and easy to use, making it an ideal option for first-timers. The press features digital controls and a patented over-the-center pressure adjustment for even, edge-to-edge pressure and heating and eliminating cold spots.

The MAXX includes quick-change platens that allow decorators the ability to change the lower platen without any tools. Simply flip open the quick-change latch, remove the platen, replace it with another size, and flip the latch closed. Platens are interchangeable between all MAXX and Hotronix clamshell heat press models. Select from three different MAXX clamshell sizes: the portable 11" x 15", the standard 15" x 15" or the 16" x 20" for heat-pressing large transfers, each available in 120 or 220 volts.

Consider too, the Imprintables Warehouse (asi/58475) 16" x 20" Red Press. This economical start-up clamshell heat press is designed for producing light- to medium-volume jobs, home use or as a backup press in case of emergency. The Red Press offers similar features as the Maxx heat-press series with digital time and temperature controls to make operation easy. The over-the-center pressure adjustment and upper floating platen provide an even, flat surface for pressing. The laser-cut steel construction and block rails keep the press stable on work platforms, and its compact size allows for a more open work area.



HOTRONIX; CIRCLE 106 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 727-8520.

IMPRINTABLES WAREHOUSE (ASI/58475); CIRCLE 107 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 347-0068.

Nix Costly Interest With Special Financing

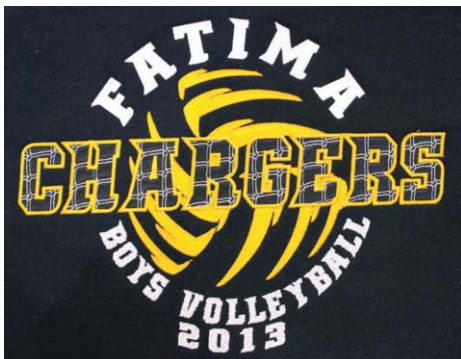


Colman and Co., which sells apparel decorating supplies for direct-to-garment printers, embroidery machines and rhinestone machines, now offers Bill Me Later as a form of purchasing its products. Bill Me Later is a product offered by PayPal that allows people to

purchase items without any payments or interest for a given period of time. Currently, Bill Me Later is offering Colman and Co. customers six months no payment, no interest on purchases of \$99 or more.

Michael Georgevich, operations manager at Colman and Co., says, "Our customers have asked us many times if we offer financing and we're proud to finally be able to say we do." Now when customers purchase decorating supplies, Bill Me Later allows them to save money by making bulk purchases, even when cash is short. This is a great way for customers to avoid paying high credit card interest fees when purchasing supplies. Learn more by following the Bill Me Later links on www.billmelater.com or www.colmanandcompany.com.

✓ Product Pick



BITO; CIRCLE 112 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (866) 248-6872 TO LEARN MORE.

Step up your creativity with Proel's upgraded Laser Bridge, which can be built to span as far as 120 feet across any make or model of embroidery machines or other work stations. With the teaming up of BITO and Tohoku

Seiki Industries (TSI) in Japan to purchase Proel, TSI's extensive research and development department improved the laser's drive and shuttle speed. The new units feature the latest in PLC logic controller technology for improved stability, faster processing time and faster cutting.

The Laser Bridge can cut, engrave, etch or mark hooped embroidery garments allowing the user to create appliqué, reverse appliqué and multilayer appliqué that can be further personalized with laser etching on the fabric's surface. Multiple layers of fabric can be kiss-cut simultaneously to create intricate and detailed designs only possible with a laser. Visit www.bitousa.com for more information.

Quick Tips

1

Combine invoices and orders directly into QuickBooks. In

a simple procedure authorizing communication, InkSoft's new software feature provides a secure connection with Intuit/QuickBooks; you'll be able to send a confirmed invoice and order data that's generated inside InkSoft directly to your QuickBooks online account.



INKSOFT; CIRCLE 109 ON FREE INFO CARD.

2

Create fresh, cool looks for athletic artwork. When decorating team uniforms for your customers

this year, don't offer the same old athletic designs. Choose The Player Pack, offered by ClipArtBoom. The pack includes 16 interactive athletic tails and 14 collegiate name and number designs in CorelDRAW (.cdr), Adobe Illustrator (.ai) and .eps file formats. Files come in one- and two-color versions and include 23 fonts. There also are five high-resolution digital textures. Go to www.clipartboom.com/the-player-pack.



CLIPARTBOOM; CIRCLE 110 ON FREE INFO CARD.

3

Add high visibility to existing uniforms. World Emblem International (asi/98265)

makes it simple to add high-visibility striping to existing uniforms with other branded forms of apparel decorations. Its online catalog streamlines the process for customers in need of safety garments that must adhere to governmental and/or industry-required regulations and mandates.



WORLD EMBLEM INTERNATIONAL (ASI/98265); CIRCLE 111 ON FREE INFO CARD.



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Lovie Babies™



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Look Book

Runway

By Alissa Tallman

Trend Alerts

Brand-new fall/winter trends fresh off the runway are gearing up for prime time. It's no secret that prints and patterns have taken over the fashion industry, leaving no garment untouched by their whimsy – especially leggings, which can be found sporting all sorts of unexpected designs. Taking the lead in the color arena right now is bright cobalt, a brilliant and elegant hue ushered forth by Pantone. And when it comes to embellishments, metallic accents are in no short supply, whether they're gracing handbags or T-shirts with their shimmer and sheen.

Dimitri



PHOTO: FRAZER HARRISON

Apparel: Print Leggings

This gorgeously candy-hued outfit from Italian fashion house Dimitri, which debuted during spring/summer 2014 Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Berlin, spotlights glossy lavender leggings with a banded print. With their unique sheen and precise laser-etched imagery, leggings like these are relinquishing their supporting role as accessories and vying for the pants category.

Léonard



PHOTO: RICHARD BORD

Color: Bright Cobalt

This spectacular hue made a major splash when Léonard showcased its recent 2014 runway collection during Paris Fashion Week. Cobalt solids make for a splendidly eye-catching match with equally bright prints anchored against a neutral background.

Blumarine



PHOTO: TULLIO M. PUGLIA

Embellishment: Metallic Accents

Metal accents played a major role in Philipp Plein's fall/winter 2014/2015 lineup during Milan Fashion Week. Adorning everything from handbags to neck scarves and even fur coats, this was the "little embellishment that could" – and did – in Plein's collection.

Trends

APPAREL

Print Leggings

This season, your clients can have their leggings any way they want them. Offering tons of dramatic flair during the spring and summer fashion shows were innovative legging styles by the likes of Just Cavalli and Dimitri, proving this as a potentially enduring trend.

Liz Lovejoy, office manager at Assertive Creativity LLC (asi/37166; circle 77 on Free Info Card), says leggings have remained in vogue since the 1980s, especially in the promotional arena, because they're economical and convenient. "You can buy several pairs of leggings for a fraction of the cost of one pair of pants," she says. "Plus they're incredibly versatile – a plethora of outfits can be generated with just a few pairs. And buyers don't need to worry about precise sizing or hip-to-thigh ratios, because leggings are stretchy and hug the curves easily."

"The popularity of printed leggings has been on the rise for a couple of years now, as has the number of prints," says Yvette Corona, customer service representative for American Apparel (asi/35297). "With so many different designs being offered, the market for printed leggings is growing."

Alternative Apparel (asi/34850; circle 76 on Free Info Card) carries these unique print stretch leggings (31073NE); decorated by Flemington, NJ-based AMBRO Manufacturing (asi/35201; circle 87 on Free Info Card).

Assertive Creativity LLC (asi/37166; circle 77 on Free Info Card) distributes these fiercely patriotic footless leggings (ASYL-8012011), which are also available in a variety of other sublimated prints; decorated by Flemington, NJ-based AMBRO Manufacturing (asi/35201; circle 87 on Free Info Card). They're a great item for parade performers, color guard teams and more.



Take a look at American Apparel (asi/35297; circle 78 on Free Info Card) for numerous legging styles, including this stunning pair (8328st) in black-and-white stripes; decorated by Flemington, NJ-based AMBRO Manufacturing (asi/35201; circle 87 on Free Info Card).

Just Vision It LLC (asi/63669; circle 79 on Free Info Card) offers polyester/cotton leggings (L) with a custom-made sublimated image. Clients can have any image printed onto the leggings.

Look Book

Trends

COLOR

Cobalt

Wonderfully rich, intense and refined, cobalt remains a dazzling fashion showstopper. The latest runway designs from Haider Ackermann, L  onard and Sacai display this gorgeously incandescent hue.

Michael O'Leary, account executive for McKlein Co. LLC (asi/70053), says cobalt is a fresh and dramatic color choice, no matter what the occasion. "Cobalt is a fresh and upbeat color that adds a touch of glamour to the office environment, while at the same time keeps yellow and red business casuals in step," he says. "There's something about this special hue that speaks of sophistication. Cobalt-blue accents in particular make a significant departure from the usual blues we're used to seeing in the industry."

Monika Rene, customer service representative at Bishop Garment Co. (asi/40585), is also a fan. "Cobalt blue is a striking hue that can add style and class to any outfit," she says. "When worn with white, the vibrancy and liveliness of this hue is beautifully accentuated."

This stylish men's cobalt polo (4004) is available from Bishop Garment Co. (asi/40585; circle 80 on Free Info Card).



You can find this cobalt patent-leather crossbody bag (11198) at McKlein Co. LLC (asi/70053; circle 81 on Free Info Card); decorated by Pam Augspurger, owner of Easley, SC-based Dream Maker Embroidery & More LLC (asi/183368; circle 83 on Free Info Card).



Gemline (asi/56070; circle 82 on Free Info Card) carries this attractive and roomy vintage cobalt duffel (4053 OR 4052); decorated by Pam Augspurger, owner of Easley, SC-based Dream Maker Embroidery & More LLC (asi/183368; circle 83 on Free Info Card). Augspurger added a sublimated luggage tag.

Trends

EMBELLISHMENT

Metallic Accents

Metallic studs, buckles and other adornments continue to bedeck the runways, gracing cowboy-inspired cropped leather jackets designed by Philipp Plein or luxurious A-line leather cocktail dresses by Gucci.

These embellishments are wonderful attention-getters when it comes to accessories such as handbags and jewelry, something that Natalie De Picciotto, owner of Steel Threads Inc. (asi/89475), loves. “A little metal adds commodity value to any kind of promotional product and ensures that the end-user will be much more likely to use and keep it,” she says. In terms of jewelry, especially ID bracelets, metal accents play a considerable role in keeping products on-trend. “An ID bracelet is something that never goes out of style, and the metal/leather combination has endured as a hip, urban-esque trend for years,” she says.

De Picciotto adds that, because metal-accented items are associated with a certain standard of quality, she feels they’re worth the investment in the long run.



Leed's (asi/66887; circle 85 on Free Info Card) distributes this highly fashionable, delicately studded weekend bag (3006-80).



Mega Cap Inc. (asi/70434; circle 84 on Free Info Card) carries several edgy stud-embellished denim hats like this one (6856).



This chic snap ID bracelet (N74) can be found at Steel Threads Inc. (asi/89475; circle 86 on Free Info Card).



Gemline (asi/56070; circle 82 on Free Info Card) offers this simulated leather metallic tote (1486), perfect as a high-end giveaway; decorated by Jane Swanzy, owner of Houston-based Swan Marketing LLC (asi/700627; circle 88 on Free Info Card).

Look Book

Showcase: Fall Outerwear and Fleecewear

One of the best things about cooler fall weather is reestablishing clients' bond with comfy fleece hoodies, sweatshirts and smart-looking jackets. There are several notable trends to keep an eye on this season.

Ashley Nielsen, marketing manager for S & S Activewear (asi/84358), puts quarter-zip outerwear items at the top of the trend list. "There are so many different types of quarter-zips to choose from, athletic to business casual, which fits a number of markets," she says. She says fleece apparel has recently emerged as a sweater substitute: "Many people are using quarter-zip fleece items as an alternative to sweaters and dressing them up a bit, and young adults and teens are beginning to lean toward the quarter-zip options too," she says. Nielsen also points to hoodies and guarantees their continued success. "Full-zip hooded sweatshirts continue to hold their own within the fleece and outerwear market, as they, too, are available in a large variety," she says.

Jennifer Bailey, marketing representative for Dickies Occupational Wear (asi/49675), stresses versatility as a key design trend. "It allows for just one garment to be worn both on and off the job." Other popular features she says include lightweight and upgraded technological materials and fabrics.

The varsity jacket (5000) from GAME Sportswear (asi/55752; circle 90 on Free Info Card) features a Melton wool body, quilted lining and set-in leather sleeves. It's available in almost 30 color combinations; decorated by Howard Potter, CEO of Utica, NY-based A&P Master Images (asi/702505; circle 91 on Free Info Card).

Vantage Apparel Canada (asi/93391; circle 92 on Free Info Card) distributes this comfy men's quarter-zip microfleece pullover (3270); decorated by Vantage Apparel Canada.

This futuristic men's fleece jacket (TNF_AMYN), ideal for cool to cold weather, is available from Corporate Image Outfitters LLC (asi/46741; circle 93 on Free Info Card).

GAME Sportswear (asi/55752; circle 90 on Free Info Card) offers the Equinox polar fleece zip-up (6290); decorated by Howard Potter, CEO of Utica, NY-based A&P Master Images (asi/702505; circle 91 on Free Info Card).

This durable quilted jacket (1221-J) from GAME Sportswear (asi/55752; circle 90 on Free Info Card) features a wind-resistant nylon taffeta shell, polyknit collar and cuffs, and poly-fill lining; decorated by Howard Potter, CEO of Utica, NY-based A&P Master Images (asi/702505; circle 91 on Free Info Card).





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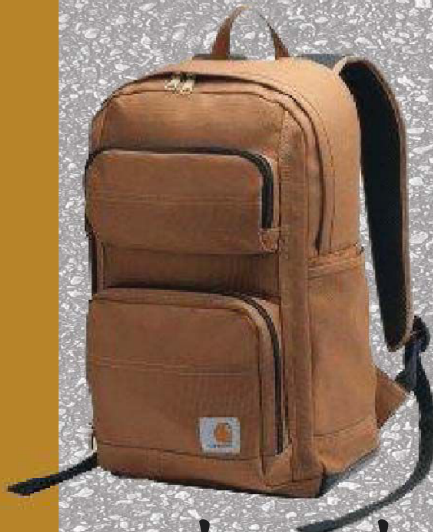
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Look Book

Niche: School Apparel and Accessory Trends

It's crucial to be well-versed in school-related apparel trends, as kids and teens are supremely fashion conscious and want to wear and own the latest when it comes to clothing and accessories. For this school year, it's all about bright colors and sporty apparel pieces.

Melissa McCauley, business development representative for Numo (asi/74710), emphasizes "the brights" as a superb way for kids to stand out from the crowd. "With so many schools now requiring uniforms, retailers are finding unique ways for kids to express themselves – to show their personality and their 'true colors' – all while wearing a navy polo," she says. "That's where accessories come in."

Shakira Parks of Boxercraft (asi/41325) says another fad embraced by young women is "sporty chic." "This is a major trend right now, and it effectively combines comfort with style," Parks says. Parks explains it as a mish-mash of various styles. "It's all about mixing and matching sporty pieces like baseball caps, varsity jackets and sneakers with chic and luxe pieces such as high heels, leather jackets and little black dresses." When implementing this trend – one that adults enjoy too – Parks suggests veering more toward the fashion-forward end than the sporty: "It's important to wear more chic pieces than sporty ones to pull off the trend the right way," she says.

Blossom Fashion Tower (asi/40681; circle 94 on Free Info Card) distributes this cute quilted cotton backpack (Q061BA) with a bird print; decorated by Janelle Bolt, owner of Dundee, OR-based Busy Hands Embroidery (asi/702525; circle 95 on Free Info Card).

Numo (asi/74710; circle 97 on Free Info Card) carries this trendy neoprene-lined messenger bag (1069); choose from several colors, including blaze orange, jungle green and violet.

You can find these gym-ready Olympian pants (4985) at Charles River Apparel (asi/44620; circle 96 on Free Info Card).

SanMar (asi/84863; circle 98 on Free Info Card) carries this superb women's letterman jacket (LST270) in several color combinations, including maroon-white, pink raspberry-white and graphite heather-vintage heather; decorated by Jane Swanzy, owner of Houston-based Swan Marketing LLC (asi/700627; circle 88 on Free Info Card).

This retro-styled sporty tee (T651081) is available from Boxercraft (asi/41325; circle 99 on Free Info Card). Choose from several color combinations, such as royal, fuchsia and lime; decorated by Plymouth, MN-based VSA Custom Apparel (asi/700739; circle 100 on Free Info Card).

Leed's (asi/66887; circle 85 on Free Info Card) carries this rucksack (7950-45) made of sturdy cotton canvas. It has a large main compartment with pull-cord closure, fold-over side pockets with Velcro and distressed silver hardware; decorated by Nina Sheets, owner of Anderson, IN-based All-Star Embroidery & Awards (asi/515834; circle 89 on Free Info Card).

This super-sporty women's varsity jacket (2177) is available from Bishop Garment Co. (asi/40585; circle 80 on Free Info Card); decorated by Nina Sheets, owner of Anderson, IN-based All-Star Embroidery & Awards (asi/515834; circle 89 on Free Info Card).

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CAN THIS SAVE

Point Embroidery & Screen in central Wisconsin operated at a loss last year, with nice-guy owner Craig Wold too worried about losing business to raise prices – or even to insist on payment in full. The shop itself was a hoarder’s paradise, and getting organized seemed a Sisyphean struggle. Stitches sent The Embroidery Coach, Joyce Jagger, to whip Wold’s business into shape.

By Theresa Hegel
Photography: Glenn Sanderson

Stevens Point, WI, in late March is cold and nearly colorless – just the flat, grayish tinge of lingering winter. Tucked behind a line of snow-dusted shrubs and spindly trees, the squat building that houses Point Embroidery & Screen blends into the landscape, as if wearing a layer of camouflage. Inside, however, it’s a riot of clashing color: a neon-yellow jacket with reflective

stripes is wedged between dark tops; stacks of folded shirts – bright green and orange and pink – skim the ceiling, abutting piles of plastic-wrapped caps; cone after cone of thread create a rayon rainbow against the far wall; papers and folders litter a long computer desk.

The mess spills into production, with owner Craig Wold and his three employees struggling to bring order to the chaos. “A lot

of times a job will come in, and we can’t find the product. Sometimes, we can’t even find the invoice,” Wold says. “It’s stuff that slows you down. It’s frustrating.”

Eager to escape cubicle life and tap into his creative side, Wold bought the decorating business three years ago from a friend. At the time, he didn’t even know how to turn on an embroidery machine. He learned the ropes from the previous owner, but also



SHOP BE D?

picked up some bad habits along the way – not to mention inheriting a basement bursting with decades' worth of obsolete artwork, screens and just plain junk. "A lot of the old stuff, I don't even know what it is," Wold says. "We'll literally just kick boxes down there."

An amiable man in his early 40s with a stocky build, styled hair and a ready smile, Wold always has a minute – or 20 – to spare for the people who stop by his shop. Quick to point out that he's not a "complete push-over," Wold admits, when pressed, that many customers still owe him a pretty penny for completed work. The shop doesn't require a down payment before accepting orders, doesn't insist on payment at pickup and has no system for collecting outstanding debts. Wold doesn't have a business plan, a marketing strategy or a documented production process. His employees have complained that his tendency to keep "everything in



Craig Wold and his wife, Kim (left), were thrilled to meet Embroidery Coach Joyce Jagger.

his head" leads to confusion and delays. Though Point Embroidery does steady business, posting \$213,000 in sales last year, the shop was operating at a loss of more than \$10,000, and Wold hasn't given himself a salary since he bought the business.

Something needed to change.

Enter Joyce Jagger, a 6-foot-tall column of calm and efficiency, clipboard in one hand, protein shake in the other. *Stitches* sent the 75-year-old industry veteran and renowned trainer known as The Embroidery Coach to Wisconsin for two whirlwind days to lend her expertise and determine whether Point Embroidery & Screen can be saved. Jagger's initial assessment: "Two days isn't enough. I'd like to come in and stay a month."

SPRING CLEANING

On the morning of her arrival, Wold takes Jagger on a tour of the business, guiding her across a faded navy and gray carpet bearing stylized M's, a relic of the building's previous life as a Maytag repair shop. Jagger immediately zeroes in on the thousands of dollars in blank inventory stuffed into what could be an attractive showroom.

"You really have no reason to have this much inventory," she says, explaining that all Wold needs are a few samples and some examples of his work on display. Everything else can be shipped in two days or less.

On to the production area: Two embroidery machines, a six-head and a four-head, are set up in a line, but face opposite directions, unable to be overseen efficiently by the same operator. Green plastic hoops of varying sizes hang haphazardly from nearly every wall. A computer sits a few feet away

from the embroidery machines. Propped nearby is a dry-erase board crowded with cryptic messages in red and purple marker – phrases like "BUGS BUNNY CERAL" and "Drunk fisherman – design final version." Some words are circled or have stars sketched beside them. Organized into columns for printing, artwork and embroidery, the whiteboard is Wold's attempt to keep track of his orders, though employees admit to confusion over some of the hastily scrawled, smudged notations.

Jagger looks around, snapping photos with her smartphone. She asks Wold if his team steams a garment before it goes out the door. They don't. And how do they remove the topping after a garment is embroidered? Wold says they spray it with water to dissolve the stabilizing solution. "Sometimes, we'll have stuff laid out all over everything to dry," he says.

The Embroidery Coach shakes her head sharply. "That's very unprofessional," she says, and recommends wetting a wad of excess topping and dabbing it like a ball of glue to pick up what remains on the garment. "You need to have someone who just does finishing: taking out the backing, cutting threads, steaming, packing," she says.

Wold discloses later that he used to have an older woman on staff to help with finishing, but it didn't work out. "She couldn't trim, but she needed the money, so I wanted to help her out," he says.

Another corner of the shop is filled with unused equipment: a single-head embroidery machine with missing software and an old copier. Behind the bulky machines is a small office that houses the shop's computer servers. "What do you do with this area?"

HOW THE WINNING SHOP WAS SELECTED

Stitches asked readers with struggling shops to submit a summary of their obstacles and challenges for a chance to make over their businesses with the help of Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach. Jagger reviewed videos and other information about vital stats and pain points provided by each shop, and chose the business she felt had the most potential for improvement. Point Embroidery & Screen won a prize package worth over \$5,000, which included two days of personalized onsite training, plus six months of follow-up calls including planned action steps with Jagger. For details about all of Jagger's personal coaching services and her subscription-based online embroidery business tutorials, visit her website, www.theembroiderycoach.com.

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We've been supplying customers for over a century. A&E lives by a commitment to our customers, creating exceptional products by embracing contemporary quality principles and practices. The result is an environment that stimulates individual empowerment and initiative, all of which enables us to be a consistent innovator and a creator of consistently high-quality products delivered to customers on time throughout the world.

That's quite a mouthful. And promise. But it's all part of our mission and vision. The tenets that bind us say a lot about the products we make that help bind the world's garments.

Read on to learn about how we can help you innovate, create and deliver exciting embroidery of the highest quality.

With 33 manufacturing centers and 78 distribution points in 44 countries A&E delivers exact color, superior quality and the most innovative products right where they are needed.





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A&E is Robison-Anton. We make the Robison-Anton brand of threads start to finish, ensuring consistent product quality that lives up to the respected Robison-Anton reputation.

3 EMBROIDERY THREAD SPECIALISTS

A&E employees are knowledgeable and experienced, ready to help embroiderers. We offer

resources online and in person, including a tech services group to help you overcome common sewing issues or to suggest the right thread for your project. Your local R-A embroidery distributor is also available for additional assistance and as a full-service supplier of everything necessary for embroidery.

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A&E has 33 manufacturing facilities around the world, each outfitted with cutting-edge technology and staffed with skilled workers dedicated to product development, production and delivery.

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Find a distributor near you that will be a one-stop shop for all your embroidery supply needs. A&E has many embroidery distributor partners across the United States and abroad. To locate an embroidery distributor near you, visit www.amefird.com then simply click "Embroidery Thread" under the "Products and Brands" tab, then "Distributors."



A&E THREADS PUT EASE IN EMBROIDERY

American & Efird offers a rainbow of colors and finishes in its line of embroidery threads. Let your imagination guide you.

The search is over for the thread you need. A&E has many innovative embroidery threads designed to optimize your embroidery images. Using the right thread definitely minimizes quality issues both while sewing and over time with general wash and wear. Whether you seek a particular fiber, special effect or specific thread construction, A&E's extensive embroidery collection delivers.

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With 12 choices of embroidery threads, including exclusive options from our Robison-Anton brand, you can find the right fiber and finish for your decorative project.

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distinctive topstitching appearance in other applications. Made from high tenacity bright tri-lobal polyester, the thread comes in many brilliant colors with a high sheen.

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SIGNATURE®

has a unique embroidery thread construction that can be used for a variety of embroidery applications. It sews with

minimum sewing interruptions, resulting in superior coverage, high luster and excellent color-fastness.

R-A SUPER SAFE™ NOMEX®

is for embroidery applications on protective clothing that require a fire-retardant embroidery thread.

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offers a superior long-term resistance to heat compared to other fibers and is ideal for using in fire service, protective workwear or racing apparel.

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works well for fashion items thanks to its unique two-tone, high-sheen stitch appearance. It's made from high tenacity rayon for brilliant colors and a smooth hand.

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is a rayon embroidery thread that features a unique variegated color pattern available in multiple color-ways. This specialty product creates a multicolored stitch from a single thread.

THE TOP 3 GO-TO THREADS FOR EVERYDAY EMBROIDERY



1 R-A J METALLIC™ is the highest grade of metallic thread available. Designed for embroidery, embellishment and all other decorative applications. Runs exceptionally well with all embroidery threads on all embroidery machines.



2 R-A SUPER BRITE POLYESTER® is a premium twisted polyester embroidery thread in brilliant colors with a high-sheen stitch appearance. Made from high-tenacity tri-lobal polyester, Super Brite Polyester® has excellent sew ability and color fastness and is available in a wide range of colors.



3 R-A SUPER STRENGTH RAYON® is our premium twisted rayon embroidery thread. It has brilliant color with a silky, lustrous appearance and a soft, smooth feel. It is available in variegated color combinations and recommended for embroidery applications on a wide range of products.

A World Of Color

As a leader in color technology, A&E is always developing new thread colors for customers in the U.S. and world-wide. Trained color professionals use the latest technology to accurately match colors for a wide range of applications and communicate these shades between A&E's global network of dyehouses. A&E helps some of the world's leading brands and designers realize their seasonal color palettes in thread. In fact, A&E, working with the U.S. Institute of Heraldry, has even been a part of establishing the color guidelines used to enforce color selection in military patches, emblems and other embroidered insignia. These investments allow A&E to offer true color confidence for embroiderers and textile decorators.

If there's one perfect shade you can't match to a thread on the market, we can help. At a required minimum, A&E offers a quick response for dye-to-match thread color reproduction, always consistent with your sewing needs. As A&E has worked to satisfy customer requirements, A&E has developed tens-of-thousands of different shades, requiring over 68,000 unique formulas for dyeing.

To learn more about A&E's Color Library of more than 38,000 shades, visit www.amefird.com and click the "Color" tab.

QUICK TIP

Create interest in your embroidery design by selecting a specialty thread such as Metallic, Moonglow™ or Variegated. If safety is an issue, particularly for a garment classified as protective clothing, choose the fire retardant Super Safe™ Nomex® for personalization. Want to add elegance to a special design? Consider a high sheen thread to produce a lustrous effect.

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Increasingly, buyers care about the pedigree of the products they source. If they've purchased an organic T-shirt to be decorated with their logo, they may also seek an embroidery solution from a socially conscious vendor. Satisfying that request is easy when you choose threads from A&E.

As one of the world's leading manufacturers of embroidery thread, industrial sewing thread and technical textiles, American and Efirid is positioned to make a difference. The company is driven by the belief that sustainable global citizenship creates a better world through responsible corporate actions and an environmentally protective stance. In fact, A&E's most recent sustainability report shows just how much of a difference commitment makes.



- 20% reduction in A&E's global carbon footprint vs. 2006
- 3.02 kg of greenhouse gas per kg of thread produced
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- First in thread industry to develop and operate a Zero Liquid Discharge Dyehouse Facility
- Zero-waste-to-landfill goal reached in certain A&E facilities
- 11 is the number of different languages in which the A&E Global Code of Conduct is available

The way in which we do business doesn't just reflect on our brand; it reflects your reputation with each of your customers.

These accomplishments affect every A&E customer because the way in which we do business doesn't just reflect on our brand; it reflects your reputation with each of your customers. A&E is completely transparent and makes it easy to assure your customers that their embroidered garments or textiles were decorated with threads from a sustainably minded vendor with high ethical standards.

A&E'S CUSTOMER COMMITMENT



With our global customer commitment, we fully realize that our customers provide us our jobs, wages and benefits. These customers have the option to buy from many sources, so we are honored when they choose us. Our customers' needs are simple. They want goods shipped as promised and the product to perform. An A&E customer is our partner, and as our customer prospers, so do we, wherever in the world they may be. Customers provide our jobs. They, and only they, pay our wages and benefits.

Options to buy from many sources are available to our customers. We are honored when they choose us.

Many customers place their trust in us by purchasing our products. Their needs are simple. They want goods shipped as promised and the product to perform.

Mistakes are sometimes made. It is our responsibility to be professional, correct the problem and cheerfully serve them.

If we make a mistake, we will admit it

and try to correct it at once.

Total customer satisfaction is A&E's goal. When we fail, everyone in A&E shares the blame. We will not blame a supplier, a computer or another department. We are responsible.

Modern equipment, excellent technology, competent people and materials of the finest quality are necessary to fulfill the needs of our customers. We believe in charging a fair price, including profit, to sustain these services.

Excellence in every aspect is our objective. Our customers deserve it. We believe "good" is the greatest enemy of excellence.

No product is always perfect. When customers complain, they are doing us a favor. Right or wrong, the customers are informing us of their perception of a problem. They have the option to buy elsewhere and never tell us why. We treat each complaint as an opportunity to improve.

The customer is our partner. As our customers prospers, so do we. It all adds up to ... Customer COMMITMENT!



WHY YOUR THREAD SOURCE MATTERS

Choosing A&E embroidery thread products means you never compromise quality, color, availability, performance or your reputation. Every thread you purchase has a pedigree that reflects how it was made and from what raw materials. A&E offers the highest in quality and consistency with a commitment to on-time delivery to customers wherever and whenever they need product to be delivered. Our dedication to sustainability and social responsibility reflects our focus on doing things the right way. As a U.S. manufacturer with multiple manufacturing and distribution points at home and abroad, A&E assures quality, which has been controlled throughout products' production, as well as available inventory and quick delivery when you need it.



PICK THE RIGHT EMBROIDERY THREAD FOR THE JOB

10 IS THE BEST A&E / RA Brand Name	<div> <div>Color Availability</div> <div>Hi-Sheen</div> <div>Matte Finish</div> <div>Soft Hand</div> <div>Good Elasticity</div> <div>Color Fastness</div> <div>Chemical Resistance</div> <div>Abrasion Resistance</div> <div>Sewability</div> <div>Heat Resistance</div> </div>										Application
<i>Super Brite Polyester®</i>	453	7	-	7	10	10	10	10	9	4	All Embroidery applications.
<i>Signature®</i>	372	7	-	4	9	10	10	10	10	4	For embroidery applications where sewing performance is critical. Sews with minimum interruptions.
<i>Perma Spun®</i>	1024	-	8	8	9	10	10	7	7	4	For sewing apparel where a matte stitch appearance is desired.
<i>Perma Core®</i>	1024	-	7	7	9	10	10	9	9	4	For sewing apparel where a matte stitch appearance is desired and performance is critical.
<i>Super Strength Rayon®</i>	450	9	-	10	8	7	5	4	7	5	For Fashion Items, Lingerie, Schiffli.
<i>Super Strength Rayon® Variegated</i>	29	9	-	10	8	7	5	4	7	5	For Fashion Items, Lingerie, Schiffli.
<i>Twister Tweed Rayon®</i>	21	9	-	10	8	7	5	4	7	5	For Fashion Items, Lingerie, Schiffli - Special two-tone stitch appearance.
<i>Moonglow®</i>	8	5	-	7	9	9	7	6	7	4	Glow in the dark thread for Adding a Special Effect on Childrenswear, Athletic Shoes, etc.
<i>J-Metallic®</i>	24	10	-	2	3	9	9	3	4	4	For providing a very high sheen metallic appearance. Not recommended where the garment will be subjected to a harsh laundry process.
<i>Super Safe™</i>	20		7	8	8	7	5	7	6	10	Made from a meta-aramid fiber that is resistant to high temperatures. For Military and NASCAR protective clothing.

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The Point Embroidery crew in March (from left): Karolina Romanowska, Craig Wold, Kim Wold, Michelle Swatek (seated), Joyce Jagger and Jennifer G.





Joyce Jagger gives Craig Wold and Michelle Swatek some pointers to improve their embroidery.

QUICK TIPS TO MARKET YOUR SHOP

It's a mistake to think you're too busy to market your shop. Marketing is crucial, but it doesn't have to dominate your day. Here are a few easy ways to generate positive buzz for your business.

1. WEAR YOUR LOGO WHEREVER YOU GO.

Put it on product samples. When that apparel is discontinued, you can give the clothing away, freeing up space in your shop and spreading your company name at the same time, according to Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach.

2. CO-SPONSOR A COMMUNITY EVENT.

Whether it's a youth sports league, a fundraising 5K run or a spaghetti dinner at the local firehouse, sponsorship will get your business name to the public in a positive way.

3. GET ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

Show off your best work on sites like Facebook or Pinterest. Consumers these days want to check you out online before they'll call or visit your shop. Having a strong online presence will help with that. Plus, previous customers appreciate the free publicity.

4. REWARD GOOD CUSTOMERS.

Throw in a lightweight logoed jacket when a customer puts in a large order of shirts. You're creating goodwill, while also subtly suggesting a new product line. Freebies like that are a great way to promote word-of-mouth marketing, Jagger says.

5. START AN AUTO-RESPONDER EMAIL LIST.

Encourage customers to receive your regular marketing emails by offering them a discount or giveaway if they opt in.

Jagger asks, pointing to the enclosed nook.

"Mostly, it's just a dump," Wold says. However, Jagger envisions it as the accounting office, a place to meet privately with customers, or even just a space for Wold to get some management work done without distractions.

"You need a place where you can get away," Jagger says. "Don't you ever feel like you want to get away?"

Wold sighs, "All the time."

"I said get away, not run away," Jagger says.

After a quick stop in the screen-printing room, it's time to descend into the shadowy basement, which Wold describes as his "biggest nightmare." A dumpster he and the staff filled up last summer barely made a dent in the accumulated clutter. Wold and Jagger head over to a cluster of waist-high cardboard boxes overflowing with old unfiled artwork.

"Lots of people will say, 'You did my logo 10 years ago; do you still have it?'" Wold says. "Believe it or not, we still do."

Jagger isn't impressed, wanting to know how often he actually pulls from the old artwork. The answer? Hardly ever.

"Throw it all out. Literally," she says. "It costs you money to store it."

Once the basement is purged, she says, Wold can catalog his inventory, stowing the blanks in sealed tubs downstairs, thus freeing up space for a needed showroom and a more streamlined, efficient workflow upstairs. To ramp up production, she recommends flipping one of the embroidery machines, setting aside a spot for hooping and finishing, and an area to process deliveries. She also recommends hiring a part-time bookkeeper, designating one employee to handle hooping and another to do finishing so that the embroidery machine operator can better focus on output. "If you had separate hooping, you could keep those machines singing," Jagger says. "They need to run 45 minutes of every hour."

THE PRICE ISN'T RIGHT

Later in the day, Jagger and Wold settle down in front of his computer to go over

pricing. Wold tells Jagger that he doesn't have a standard price list for embroidery, with different customers receiving different prices – quotes that he sometimes forgets since the shop's record-keeping is inconsistent at best.

"We have to create a price sheet," Jagger says. The statement draws immediate and effusive gratitude from Michelle Swatek, one of Wold's employees: "Thank you. God bless you," she gushes, leaning over to give Jagger a quick hug. Swatek is a no-nonsense woman with a knack for baked goods and a tendency to bring up anecdotes from her previous gig at a much larger embroidery outfit – "They probably get tired of hearing me say, 'This is how we did it at Land's End,' " she says with a laugh.

Jagger calls up her subscription-based website, The Embroidery Training Resource Center, her manicured fingers poised to crunch some numbers. "How much does it cost you to run per hour?" she asks Wold.

"I have no idea," he says.

This gives her pause. "You should know that down to the second," she says. "It'll be a real eye-opener."

Jagger grabs a nearby sew-out of one of the shop's designs: a simple green and white logo, consisting of about 6,500 stitches. It's for PSOL, the local IT security firm that installed Wold's backup servers. She asks how much he'd charge for the design.

"That one's a \$5.95er," Wold says. "It probably takes me about 10 to 15 minutes to finish."

Wold says he'll sometimes knock off 50 cents for larger orders or for frequent customers. He hasn't been charging for setup or cleanup of the artwork, nor does he charge enough for digitizing. Sometimes, he says, he'll try to come up with the true cost of his work, estimating in his head the stitch count and how much time an order will take, what that will mean for the bottom line. "But then I don't really change my price," he says. "Nothing really happens. I just chalk it up to a break-even, or sometimes a loss."

"You need to be making something on every job," Jagger admonishes. "I can almost guarantee you're losing more money than you think you are on every job." She glances down at the PSOL logo again. "I'd charge a lot more than \$5.95."

A week after her visit, Jagger e-mails Wold a detailed spreadsheet, pricing his embroidery based on stitch count and shop expenses. For a 6,000-stitch embroidery design, Wold should be charging about \$8.61 each on an order of six, to ensure a 40% profit margin, according to Jagger's calculations.

While still in Wisconsin, however, Jagger takes Wold and his staff on a virtual tour of her website, showing off some of the other forms available to her paying clients: customer design approval forms, an embroidery production worksheet and much more. She recommends keeping paperwork simple, but complete, creating a folder for each order that contains copies of the design, invoice, packing slips and anything else relevant. With everything clearly organized, handling reorders (not to mention getting the original order out) is a breeze, she says.

Midway through the conversation, a customer comes in, and Wold jumps up to greet him. They discuss his order for a few minutes, and then move onto small talk. When Wold saunters back to Joyce some 15 minutes later, she says: "That probably cost you at least \$20."

LOGO A NO GO

Before flying out to Wisconsin, Jagger did some rudimentary online digging of Point Embroidery & Screen. The shop has no presence on social media, and its website is little more than a placeholder. It wasn't until she arrived in the shop, however, that she discovered how little effort Wold had put into marketing. Jagger is in the midst of explaining how she'll give away a sample shirt once the supplier no longer offers that style: "It's got my logo embroidered on it."

"Yeah, I don't even think I have my logo digitized," Wold muses.

BETTER CASH FLOW

Too many embroidery shops are running on slim margins and charging too little to build up a cash reserve, and without that cushion are vulnerable to bankruptcy, according to Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach. To help improve cash flow, she recommends:

1. REQUIRE AT LEAST 50% DOWN ON ALL ORDERS.

"Don't work with your money," Jagger says. "You need to be working with the customer's money."

2. PRICE ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN EXPENSES, NOT TO UNDERCUT YOUR COMPETITION.

Don't be afraid to raise your prices to ensure you're making a profit. You may lose the customers who want the cheapest deal, but those are customers you can do without, Jagger says. "The ones who want quality and good service will come back," she says.

3. CLEAR OUT YOUR ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE.

If you don't receive payment in full after 30 days, start charging 1% interest every month after.

4. IF YOU HAVE A CLIENT WHO HASN'T PAID, DON'T ACCEPT ANOTHER JOB FROM THEM UNTIL THEY HAVE.

"Acting as a bank for that person doesn't help grow your business at all," Jagger says.

Jagger stares at him, momentarily shocked, and then utters a phrase, repeated so often during her short visit to the heart of the Badger State that it's like a mantra: "You have got to be kidding."

"No," Wold says.

"You should have a logo on everything you wear out of here," she says, tapping the discreet gold and white letters spelling out "The Embroidery Coach" on the left chest



Joyce Jagger shows Craig Wold an easier way to cut out tackle twill lettering.

RAMP UP PRODUCTION

Having a streamlined and efficient workflow is essential to your bottom line. Shaving off a few seconds here and there can really add up, and will save you a lot of money in the long run. Follow these suggestions to keep your business running smoothly.

1. DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR ART.

Spend the extra time up front making sure everything, from the color and size of the garment to the placement and stitch order of the design, is correct. Fixing mistakes down the road is time-consuming and expensive.

2. BE DETAIL-ORIENTED.

Keep track of everything a job entails to ensure you don't have to reinvent the wheel with a reorder. Make sure your job files are organized for easy retrieval.

3. TIME YOURSELF.

Record how long each step in the production process takes, and chart the reasons for production delays. Regularly gathering and reviewing such data will help you spot trends and fix problem areas.

4. CROSS-TRAIN.

Though it's a good idea to have designated staff for each step of the production process, from hooping to finishing, employees need to be able to fill in for each other at a moment's notice or you risk costly delays.

of her black V-neck sweater.

"I don't have the time to put my logo on," Wold begins, before registering Jagger's stern expression. "I need to make time."

"It's a cheap, cheap way of marketing," Jagger says, turning to Wold's employees who lean against the front counter, watching the exchange. "Get his logo done. Pick out some clothes that you think he's going to wear and get his logo on them."

The interchange illustrates one of Wold's key issues, in Jagger's estimation. He doesn't understand his role as shop owner, preferring to be in the thick of every job, no matter how mundane. Because he can't delegate or set priorities, he hasn't had time to create a business plan or get organized. He doesn't seek out chamber of commerce meetings or other networking events to entice potential new customers. "You need to direct the whole business," Jagger says. "You, as the owner, need to focus on the numbers and selling."

STAYING SHARP

On her second day at Point Embroidery & Screen, Jagger focuses on the quality of the shop's embroidery. She shows Wold and Swatek how to use a pin oiler every four hours to keep the machines running smoothly: "All you need is a drop." Every six months, the embroidery machines need to be "thoroughly, totally cleaned," using a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol, she says.

Jagger explains that ballpoint needles should be used for knits because they split the fibers rather than making a hole; sharp needles are better for piercing woven fabrics. Jagger recommends switching to 75/11-size needles, rather than 70/10s, a trick she says she discovered by accident years ago. "Just changing your needle will give you a sharper, finer detail."

After examining a box full of the shop's old sew-outs, Jagger determines that the team's thread tensions have been running too loose. Many designs have no bobbin showing, leaving the thread loopy and in danger of being pulled out, she says. Jagger whips out a small plastic wand with a hook on the end, and shows them how to

use the tension gauge to fix the problem. "This is kind of cool," Wold says. "I never even knew something like this existed."

Jagger also tells them to stop using polyester and rayon thread interchangeably, noting that rayon bleaches out over time, and that they require different tensions to run properly. Stick to polyester, and store it in covered plastic tubs to protect it from dirt and rot, she advises. "If you're getting thread breaks, it's costing you money," she says.

She demonstrates the use of her hooping grade, a plastic template that helps standardize logo placement on a garment. Jagger had learned the day before that Wold does his hooping freehand, "by eye and feel," a statement that elicited a slow head shake and a muttered, "Oh, jeez," from Jagger. Using the hooping grade and fabric-marking pens, she says, "is much more precise than just eyeballing."

WHAT'S THE VERDICT?

As Jagger's visit draws to a close, Wold is exhausted and more than a little daunted by the tasks that lie ahead. "Do you see potential?" he asks uncertainly. Without missing a beat, Jagger answers: "Oh, absolutely."

It's not the technical, organizational or financial flaws Jagger enumerated in detail over the last two days that inhibit Point Embroidery & Screen's success. Though they're contributing factors, the crux of the matter is Wold's attitude – toward his work, his time and his staff. "Your time is extremely valuable; you're not valuing it at all," Jagger says. "You've got to change your total mindset. People will pay, especially for quality work and quick turnout."

Wold nods. "I want to take the business to the next level," he says. "I know it's not going to be overnight."

If Wold follows Jagger's advice, annual sales could easily shoot from \$200,000 to \$800,000, Jagger says. "I want to see sales go up here," she adds, flinging her arm to the aging drop ceiling. "There's no reason they can't. It would be nice if one of those checks that you're writing goes to Craig Wold. That's a nice reward."

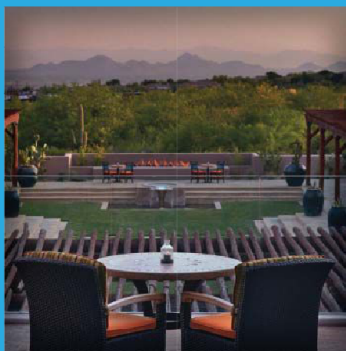
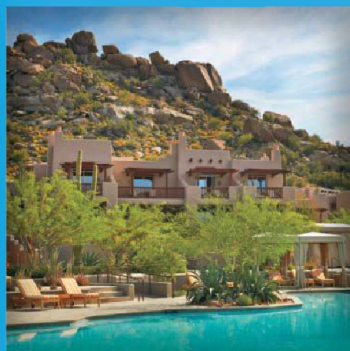
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WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Joyce Jagger's two-day visit to Wisconsin was only the beginning of her involvement with Point Embroidery & Screen. The Embroidery Coach says she has been treating owner Craig Wold like one of her \$5,000 clients, following up weekly to ensure he's changing his ways. Here are some highlights of Wold's progress:

WEEK ONE

Wold and his employees filled up a dumpster with old artwork and other junk from the basement. Wold believes he can fill at least two more over the next few months.

He implemented a logging-in system, a first step toward keeping track of his jobs and smart paperwork flow.

WEEK TWO

The shop started requiring a 50% down payment on orders.

Wold raised prices midway between what he'd previously been charging and the pricing structure Jagger created. Wold says he's been pleasantly surprised that the increases haven't caused customers to balk.

WEEK THREE

Wold attended a meeting for a business networking group and has started the process of becoming a member.

He moved into the back office, but struggles with giving up control of production.

WEEK FOUR

With the help of his employees, Wold set up a Facebook page for Point Embroidery & Screen ([Facebook.com/pointembroideryandscreen](https://www.facebook.com/pointembroideryandscreen)).

The staff also rearranged the production area, with an area set up for package delivery and another for finishing garments.

WEEK FIVE

Wold purchased an additional computer meant for digitizing only. Prior to that, employees had been using the same machine for embroidery and screen-printing artwork, often delaying production.

WEEK SIX

Point Embroidery & Screen has more than 160 likes on its Facebook page, with Wold posting photos of completed jobs.

WEEK SEVEN

Now, stickers asking customers to "like" Point Embroidery on Facebook are slapped onto every box sent out of the shop.

The shop did a record \$12,000 in sales as it wound down a busy two-week period.

WEEK EIGHT

Michelle Swatek, the shop's embroidery operator, quit without notice, leaving a big job undone. Wold's other two employees are also moving on, though his screen printer found him a replacement. Jagger

advised Wold to put an ad on Craig's List to find a new embroidery machine operator.

Wold and his wife continue to organize the shop, moving inventory into the basement.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A few months after her trip to Wisconsin, Jagger is pleased with the changes Wold has made: cleaning out his basement, raising prices, requiring down payments, signing up for her training website and exploring networking opportunities. "He's made a ton of progress," she says. "He's bringing in money faster and [in larger amounts] than he did before."

But, Jagger adds, Wold still has a way to go until his shop reaches its full potential. Though his prices are higher than they were in March, they're not at the level Jagger recommended. His de-cluttered showroom is showing sample apparel to better effect, but Wold still isn't displaying examples of his embroidery and screen printing to wow customers.

Jagger says she'll continue working with Wold over the next few months, holding his hand as he baby-steps toward success. "I'm not going to let this drop," she says. "I want to see him go much farther than this."

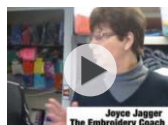
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ONLINE EXTRAS



TWO DAYS AT POINT EMBROIDERY & SCREEN

Over two intensive days, Joyce Jagger examined every aspect of how Craig Wold runs Point Embroidery & Screen. Check out some pictorial highlights of Jagger's visit. Visit [Stitches.com](https://www.stitches.com) to view the whole slideshow.



JOYCE JAGGER SHARES HER WISDOM

See Jagger in action as she instructs the crew at Point Embroidery & Screen. Visit [Stitches.com](https://www.stitches.com) to watch the video.



CRAIG WOLD REFLECTS ON THE EMBROIDERY COACH'S ADVICE

Wold reflects on the recommendations Jagger made during her visit and discusses how he'll organize his messy shop after she leaves. Visit [Stitches.com](https://www.stitches.com) to watch the video.



GETTING TO WORK AT POINT EMBROIDERY & SCREEN

Wold takes a break from Jagger's tutelage to get some work done, fulfilling an appliqué order for a local pub. Visit [Stitches.com](https://www.stitches.com) to watch the video.



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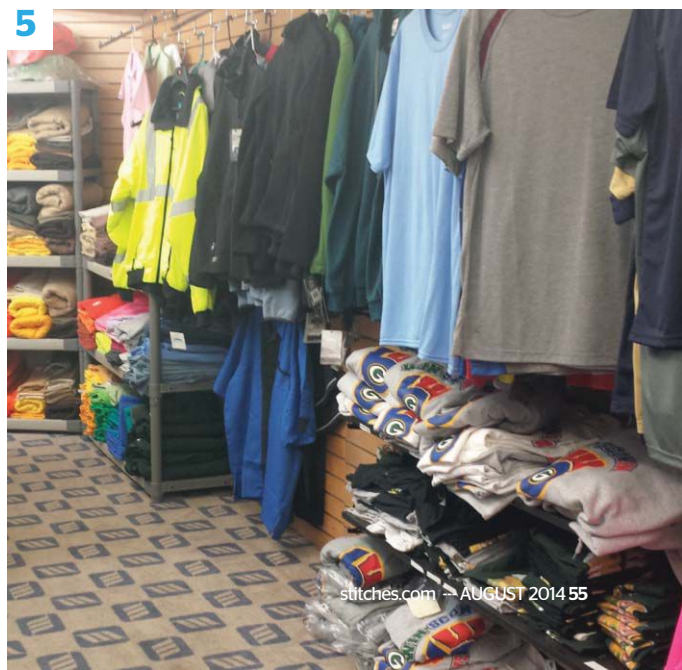


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1. Craig Wold filled five dumpsters with the two decades of old artwork and paperwork that had accumulated in the basement of Point Embroidery & Screen. The shelves now hold plastic tubs full of excess T-shirts and other inventory. 2. Wold cleaned out the office area, removing unused wire shelving, old computer equipment and the noisy computer server. Now, the desk is set up so Wold can update his paperwork without clogging up the production area. 3. Now that Point Embroidery has a designated pickup area, employees don't have to waste time hunting for a customer's order, Wold says. 4. Wold removed unused equipment and cleared off a table, which is now used exclusively for hooping garments. Another area in the shop is set aside for finishing them. Other updates to the production area include designated graphic and embroidery design stations with upgraded computers. 5. Wold cleared out a lot of the inventory in his showroom and is working to display samples to their best advantage. "For me, it was really hard to change things, visually and policy-wise," Wold says. "I know I'm a work in progress. ... I have to keep reminding myself: baby steps, baby steps."



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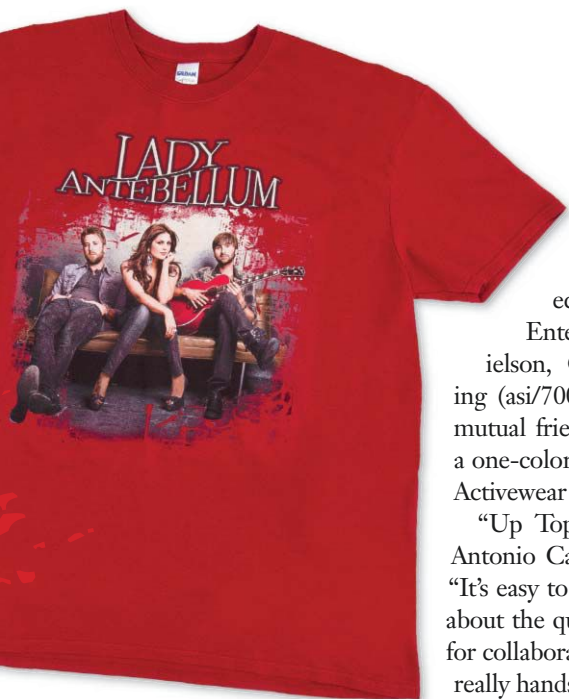


**WE'RE
WITH
THE**

DANDY

Screen printers have long created the iconic band T-shirt. You'll meet some of these successful shop owners and also learn how to sell decorated apparel to bands and other buyers in the music industry.

by Sara Lavenduski



Gildan Activewear SRL (asi/56842; circle 117 on Free Info Card) supplied this SoftStyle T-shirt for country music trio Lady Antebellum. It's embellished with a full-color simulated-process print by Anderson Studio Inc.

now," he says, "so we have to shoot for the stars."

As groups like We Were Astronauts build an increasingly loyal fan base and subsequently carry a greater variety of promotional items, one piece hasn't budged from the offerings: the screen-printed tee. They're still one of the most prominently displayed products at merchandise booths and e-commerce stores, and continue to play a significant role in marketing efforts.

Although not every band can offer a vast lineup of branded gear, a few screen-printed apparel items can do wonders for both marketing and musicians' wallets. Screen printers' designs have appeared at concerts and local gigs alike for decades, and for good reason: They're a cost-effective medium for advertising, building a following and ultimately increasing music and ticket sales.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Screen-printed tees are a staple at merchandise booths, and many screen printers count bands among some of their steadiest business. "We do mostly band merchandise and their independent clothing lines," says Garrett Kaule, owner of Kaules Screen Works in Pittsburgh. Likewise, Bill Farnan, owner of Colors Incorporated Screen Printing in Santa Ana, CA, says band tees make up about 80% of his business; he keeps them coming by offering standout treatments like foil, glitter, high-density ink and discharge ink.

While some sell direct, others work through brokers to make sure musicians have enough merchandise. "We work with merchandisers that specifically handle music tours and acts," says Andy Anderson, co-owner of Anderson Studio Inc. (asi/121990), in Nashville, a shop he has operated with his wife for almost 40 years. His long history of screen printing just a few miles from the center of Music City includes orders fulfilled for superstars like Neil Young, Garth Brooks, Lady Antebellum, Taylor Swift and Scotty McCreery.

Screen printing is undeniably the preferred method of embellishing band merchandise and it shows no signs of relinquishing its top dog status. One primary benefit is the inherently fast production time. When an order comes in, oftentimes

Two years ago, indie rock band We Were Astronauts recorded its first album down in Nashville – and wanted screen-printed tees as an economical way to self-promote.

Enter John Hansson, owner of Danielson, CT-based Up Top Screen Printing (asi/700799), who met the band through mutual friends and produced an initial run of a one-color reduced plastisol design on Gildan Activewear SRL (asi/56842) T-shirts

"Up Top gives us the best product," says Antonio Casasanta, lead vocalist and guitarist. "It's easy to order online, but you can't be sure about the quality." The band travels to Up Top for collaboration sessions because "we like to be really hands-on," he says.

Recently, after the group finished producing an album in Los Angeles, they wanted T-shirts for the release party. Hansson designed a full-front print in both CCI D-white and pink discharge inks on a Next Level Apparel (asi/73867) tee. "People are paying attention

BAND MERCHANDISE IN ACTION

She's one of the most popular singer-songwriters of our age, successfully garnering legions of fiercely loyal followers, winning tons of awards and appearing in front of sold-out crowds all over the world.

And she's only 24. Taylor Swift and her throng of marketing pros know the importance of charisma, personality and showmanship, combined with personal stories put to infectiously catchy tunes, in selling her image and, in turn, her music. But they also recognize that it's a new era, one in which music and ticket sales are no longer enough to guarantee musicians' futures. According to *Rolling Stone* magazine, a primary force in the shift comes from the advent of highly accessible music files: Because fans are now no longer compelled to shell out for a complete album, the revenue from music sales has fallen precipitously. As a result, it's no longer enough to simply release music and go on tour to promote it; musicians must now turn to a variety of mediums to market themselves constantly.

According to The Black Key Group, a marketing management company for up-and-coming musicians, one of the most popular methods of promotion is branded merchandise, and the Taylor Swift enterprise is no exception: It offers endless options from posters, songbooks and guitars, to outerwear, sleepwear and jewelry, available at the official e-commerce store and tour stops. While the items that artists offer may vary, screen-printed tees are still at the top of the list. Merchandise booths and e-commerce stores sell thousands of styles and designs each year, promoting countless performers in the process.

"Bands can sell screen-printed T-shirts for \$25 to \$40 each, sometimes even more," says Bruce Jolesch, president/owner of Pony Xpress Printing (asi/78964) in Garland, TX. "The cost of screen printing is much less than other methods, so the bands do really well on the mark-ups, and they're easy to travel with and ship."

Screen-printed T-shirts are an economical way to advertise and market, making them the reigning king of promotional apparel for music groups. And if superstar Taylor Swift is getting in on the act, there's room for everyone.

This 100% cotton tee from Tultex Apparel features a simulated-process print for Taylor Swift's Red Tour, decorated by Anderson Studio Inc. (asi/121990; circle 116 on Free Info Card) in Nashville.



there's very little notice and a lot riding on its fulfillment.

"We once printed an order for our broker on a Monday," Farnan recalls, "and on Thursday we printed the same number again for a same-night show, or the band was out of \$100,000. It's that quick, and there's that much on the line. You have to get it done. Otherwise, someone else will do it faster and for less."

In this environment of super-quick turnarounds, the ability to print swiftly is of the utmost importance. "Screen printing is very versatile that way," Anderson says. "You can produce a bunch of shirts very quickly, so I don't see it being replaced by any other method in the music niche."

Bands can also take advantage of screen printing's affordability, and the plethora of options it offers in terms of designs, apparel and ink. "Producing merch can get costly," says Michelle Zarella, sales and marketing director at Asbury Park, NJ-based Bands On A Budget, which specializes in gearing up bands for less. "We keep groups within their budgets while giving them retail-quality merchandise."

Finally, because screen-printed tees offer a

retail style, they give clients the opportunity to ask for a good price. "They're cheap to buy and easy to sell at a markup," Kaule says. "Some bands with larger followings develop clothing lines, and during the tour they'll gradually introduce them. To make money, they have to promote themselves."

HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

Establishing a reputation as a quality, reliable screen printer means striking a balance between meeting clients' demands and operating within the boundaries of viability. Designs depend on budget, culture, demographic and what groups want to express, says Jeff Lapierre, partner/owner of Class-Sick Custom (asi/162832) in Pawtucket, RI. "Sometimes one color makes the most sense," he says. "It's straightforward and inexpensive. For a higher price point, we offer simulated-process prints. They're colorful and detailed, and you can give the ink a lightweight feel."

To keep fans coming back for more, bands often look to printing that parallels retail trends. "One popular look is vintage, usually a faded center-front," says Bruce Jolesch, president/owner of Pony Xpress Printing

(asi/78964) in Garland, TX. "Bands also go for lightweight discharge prints, and oversized prints over the collar and sleeves, or wrapped from front to back."

Kaule says the popularity of oversized printing stems in part from the eye-catching displays they create at merchandise booths. However, when done poorly, it risks disappointing fans. "With large prints, we stay away from plastisol," he says. "It makes shirts almost bulletproof and uncomfortable. Lightweight prints increase the perceived value tremendously."

To complement the soft prints, bands flock to lightweight styles from Gildan (asi/56842), Next Level Apparel (asi/73867) and Bella-Alo (asi/39590), according to Kaule. Some bands still go with boxy-cut tees, says Farnan, in order to cater to a range of sizes and tastes.

"We've been getting a lot of requests for soft-hand fabrics from suppliers like Next Level and Alternative Apparel (asi/34850)," Zarella says. "They're comfortable and fashionable, and they don't swallow up the budget. Bands are also sticking with simple ink colors while getting creative with shirt colors. That avoids high print costs."

GALLERY OF BAND TEES



This T-shirt from Gildan Activewear SRL (asi/56842; circle 117 on Free Info Card) was printed by Pittsburgh-based Kaules Screen Works for a local metal band. It features two colors on the front and one color on the sleeves, all in water-based discharge ink from Magna Colours.



This privately labeled soft cotton jersey T-shirt features a lightweight distressed print for the Lubbock, TX-based Josh Abbott Band. It was decorated by Pony Xpress Printing (asi/78964; circle 114 on Free Info Card) in Garland, TX.



Next Level Apparel (asi/73867; circle 115 on Free Info Card) carries this cotton T-shirt that Up Top Screen Printing (asi/700799) printed with CCI D-white discharge and pink discharge inks.

ROCKIN' ART

When it comes to developing art, some shops are full graphic artists from start to finish; others use production-ready graphics supplied by the band; and others do a little of both. "Sometimes, we come up with ideas to present," Zarella says, "and we prepare pre-made artwork for printing." Zarella's team will also simplify a multi-color design for more cost-effective production.

As a contract screen printer, Anderson often works with brokers to come up with the perfect design. "We'll think of some concepts, and designers may send in ideas," he says. But a word of caution: Prepare suggestions for clients unfamiliar with screen printing. "They may ask for a size or design that's too cost-prohibitive to produce," he says.

Kaule and his team are always ready to offer advice to make the process run more smoothly. "Bands know what they want most of the time, but we also offer our opinion," he says. "They want an oversized plastisol print, and we say, 'That'll make this shirt uncomfortable. We suggest discharge or water-based.' Once they see what we mean, they'll usually go with our advice."

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

A local group has some sizable shows lined up, and they want screen-printed tees to optimize marketing and cash flow. Screen printers can look like rockstars themselves first by researching popular styles and being open to designing for a slew of genres, like R&B, hip hop, rap, jazz, reggae, electronic/dance and more. Merch tees aren't just for rock groups or supersized, international acts. Pittsburgh, for example, has an extensive hip hop and rap community, and Kaule takes full advantage of its close proximity.

"They want to go all out with bling, gold foil, and silver and gold ink," he says. "This differs from a standard rock shirt, with its dark, Gothic look." For some, oversized neon rules the day; for others, distressed tone-on-tone prints and smaller graphics are the name of the game. Being versatile across genres lets screen-printers look like experts when a client wants to bring a design to fruition.

To keep the reorders coming, establish quality, reliability and affordability from the get-go. Once screen printers have forged strong relationships, satisfied customers will spread the word. "Most new clients come

to us after fellow groups recommend us," Lapierre says. "They produce similar music and concerts." And this, the "scene" of a given music community, is an integral part of the relationship between screen printers and clients. "You have to be familiar with their scene, including their music, shows and attendees, to establish rapport," he says. "Larger groups usually focus on merch solely as a source of revenue, but smaller groups with more intimate followings have a certain art and expression to put forth. We have to understand what they represent. That's really big."

Producing quality screen prints for music groups is hard work and a lot of fun, and no one knows that better than the screen printers themselves. "We work with passionate and creative people, and it doesn't get much better than that," says Zarella. "This is a very important aspect of their lives, and by helping them create the T-shirt of their dreams, we get to live out our own rockstar dreams vicariously."

SARA LAVENDUSKI is an assistant editor for *Stitches*. Contact: slavenduski@asicentral.com; follow her on Twitter at [@SaraLav_ASI](https://twitter.com/SaraLav_ASI).



This 100% cotton T-shirt from American Apparel (asi/35297; circle 78 on Free Info Card) features a simulated-process screen print by Anderson Studio Inc. for a Keith Urban merchandise booth. The shirt's tighter weave holds a smoother print.



This lightweight cotton T-shirt from Alternative Apparel (asi/34850; circle 76 on Free Info Card) was printed by Pony Xpress Printing for The Yellow Bird Project (www.yellowbirdproject.com), which sells T-shirts by indie musicians.



This 100% cotton T-shirt from Gildan Activewear SRL (asi/56842; circle 117 on Free Info Card) was printed by Anderson Studio Inc. with a simulated-process screen print for *American Idol* winner Scotty McCreery's Weekend Roadtrip Tour.

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

What's coming up in September/October *Stitches*

by Nicole Rollender



Big Fashion Issue

Get inspired by ready-to-wear and haute couture decorated apparel in our annual fashion shoot – and get up-to-speed on the next big apparel, embellishment and colors trends to sell to your clients.



Perfect Punchers

What makes a digitizer really great? We talk to some of the best punchers in the field to find out what makes them tick. Learn what you need to know if you want to become a digitizer – or find a stellar punching partner.



Plus ...

• *Artwork best practices for embroidery shops*

• *Hot niche embellishments: on-trend bags*

• *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 August 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 August needle are due by August 29, 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 November issue.



Slick Likes Movie Stars

In the June issue, Slick hid in the Pinterest board section of our "Interact" department right next to an embroidered painting of Marilyn Monroe by Bulgaria-based embroidery artist Zhanna Plaksina on page 23. **Janice Coble** of Jamestown, NC-based **Hoppie Toad Creations** was chosen at random from a grand total of 26 responses. As this issue's winner, Janice 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 Erich Campbell

LOOKING FORWARD

In the next issue, you'll learn about artwork best practices you should be using in your shop. See you next issue!

Q *A friend's business suffered a fire, destroying his office. Nobody was hurt, but it got me thinking – what would happen if my shop experienced a disaster? Equipment is covered by insurance, but it's our data we'd miss the most if our office burned. The designs for our core customers would be costly to replace. I know I should back up my files, but where do I start?*

I have first-hand experience here, having lost my own digitizing station to a flood last year. Luckily, my files were backed up and I managed to salvage my hard drive to boot. With so much on the line, however, don't rely on luck.

Before discussing your options, I'd stress that it's more than your designs that need protection. You have a host of customer and job data to secure. Locally stored e-mail, customer resource management systems and shop management software all carry databases and files critical to your operation. Safeguard all valuable data when setting up your backup solution. Three popular solutions include:

1. Local backup: This is as low-tech as it gets. Copy files to a drive, take it home with you, swap drives every other day and sync them up (one should always be off-site). This can save most of your files (except those created the day of a crash), but it's not convenient and easy to let lapse. If you experience a rare problem at your home and work, all may be lost. Find solid software (I use Cobian) to automate the process.

2. Cloud storage services: Not necessarily designed for backups, services like Owncloud, Google Drive, Microsoft's Skydrive and Dropbox do provide tiered amounts of

free and paid online storage. These services are meant for hosting shared folders rather than for mass backups. Simple file collections are easily synced between machines and their cloud-based nature means that your files are available via the Internet and stored off-site. They include file versioning, which helps you avoid that accidental overwrite of a good file with a damaged/compromised version. That said, they don't have tools geared for backup and the easy path to restoration you'd find in a backup service. If you're only concerned with having an always Internet-available collection of your designs and art, this may be enough.

3. Cloud backup services: Services like Carbonite and Crashplan fall into this category. They have constantly updated offsite storage, with easy automation tools for backup and restoration. Their full-featured software and services like hardware drives that can be shipped to your destination make them the most complete of the user-friendly solutions. They're the most expensive, but they offer the best tools and highest reliability. Like their cloud-storage cousins, most allow for Internet-based access of your files and versioning.

So, which should you use? For business I choose a hybrid

“Take as much of the responsibility of backing up off of yourself as possible.”

of local hardware and proper cloud backups. Swapped local drives make for easy retrieval of large amounts of data when necessary and require no Internet connection. Add the immediacy of the constantly synchronized cloud backup and tools for easy restoration of files when you do have connectivity for the best of both worlds. You can get by with a rigged combination of cloud e-mail services and client files in cloud storage folders, but after a certain amount of data has been reached, the plans from proper backup services become more analogous in cost, and the features they provide make them the best choice for businesses.

There are three steps to any good backup routine:

1. Stay organized. Keeping files organized makes them easier to find on a daily basis, and easier to recover in an emergency, especially when individual files have been deleted/corrupted and a full recovery isn't needed.

2. Automate. Take as much of the responsibility of backing up off of yourself; you don't want to miss a critical backup

because you had rush jobs.

3. Check in. Though automated, be certain that the process is working. Regularly check your backup drives, log into your accounts and make sure your backups are current.

There's the possibility a service will falter, your backup drives fail or that you'll do something to accidentally compromise your backup, but any solution is more likely to pay off than a wait-and-see approach. If price is an issue, start with what you can afford, but start today.

ERICH CAMPBELL, an industry veteran, is an award-winning embroidery digitizer with experience in designing, implementing and maintaining e-commerce websites. A longtime technology fan, ad-hoc IT staffer and constantly-connected Internet dweller, Campbell is adding social media to the marketing arsenal of Albuquerque, NM-based Black Duck Inc. Contact: ecampbell@blackduckinc.com.

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