



broder

N.E.S







HERITAGE Sportswear

WTs





CAROLINA MADE

ONE STOP.





# **Made in USA Trucker Hats**

That's American. That's American Apparel®





# **Blue Generation®**

# SUPER BLEND PIQUE POLOS







**PIQUES** with TEFLON® fabric protector

# MOISTURE WICKING POLOS





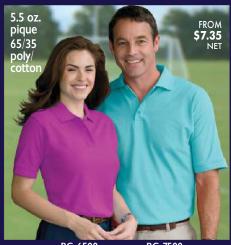


**VALUE PIQUES** 



SuperBlend is a Reg.TM of M. Rubin & Sons. TEFLON® is a Registered Trademark of DuPont used under license by Blue Generation.

# **SOFT TOUCH POLOS**



TEL: 1-888-336-4687 FAX: 1-888-744-7887

**NEWLY EXPANDED** 

# FREE FREIGHT\*

WITHIN 2 DAYS **\*VISIT WEBSITE FOR DETAILS** 

WWW.BLUEGENERATION.COM

BG-6500

**BG-7500** 

# LOGO READY APPAREL Blue Generation®





31 COLOR SELECTIONS

MEN'S SIZES UP TO 10XL & TALLS IN SELECT STYLES

LADIES S-5XL\*, YOUTH XS-XL \*In select styles & colors





Direct: Gardena, CA 90248 0:310.631.4955

# **Distributors:**



Piscataway, NJ www.evatees.com

# Bodekand Rhodes

Pennsylvania, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan www.bodekandrhodes.com



MCCREARY'S TEES

Phoenix, AZ www.mccrearystees.com



Gainesville, VA www.accinfo.com



Alabama, Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico www.tsfsportswear.com



Salt Lake City, UT www.slcactivewear.com



San Diego, CA www.mission imprintables.com



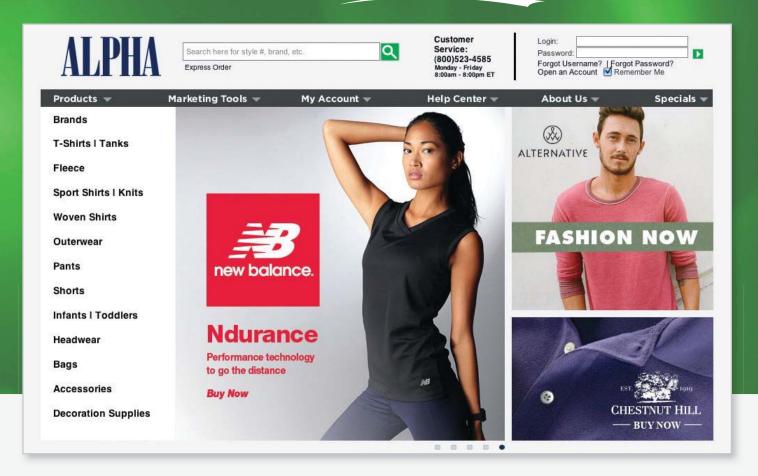
San Jose, CA www.gsactivewear.com



AMERICAN T-SHIRT COMPANY Honolulu, HI

# ALPHA broder N.E.S

# introducing our *enhanced* websites





## more search functionality

We've put more power behind our searches by increasing the number of search filters by product category, including search by price and color. We've also added the ability to sort search results by price, popularity, color availability and new styles.



## more product page enhancements

Now there's more information at your fingertips with our redesigned product pages. We've added multiple product views, easy-to-find color offerings, extensive product comparables and the ability to email product pages.



## more photography

Shot specifically for the web, our photography now shows model images with front, back and side views. Zoom in to get a close up of any feature or add a logo to the chest, back or sleeve.

# visit us to see why Version 2.0 is 2.more









SWF K 1504 Four heads, 15 Needles Standard

# Introducing Our Easy Trade-In Program For SWF Commercial Embroidery Machines.

Whether you are a new business with more work than your single head machine can handle or the biggest contract embroidery shop in town, your investment MATTERS.

Combine SWF's industry leading technology and ColDesi's high level of professional support, and you get the most cost effective way to expand and upgrade your capabilities - with HeadsUP!

Trading up from a single head embroidery machine to a 2-head or more? Need to double or quadruple your capacity? GET UP TO 100% trade-in and a minimum of 50% or your original purchase value.

Already have your multihead machine but need to work faster, smarter and increase your revenues?

Get up to 70% for your machine trade-in today!

Trading up fro	m a single-he	ad machine to	a 2-head or hi	gher machine.
	0-12 MONTHS	13-24 MONTHS	25-36 MONTHS	37-60 MONTHS
ColDesi	100%	70%	60%	50%

# SINGLE-HEAD TRADE VALUE COMPARISON



# 4 Reasons Why ColDesi's HeadsUp Is Smart For Business.

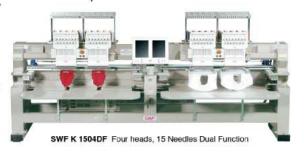
- 1. 100% trade-in on single head machines.
- 2. Option to trade at any time in the first 5-years.
- 3. SWF machines from ColDesi have the lowest inception and cost of ownership of any of the premium brands.
- 4. Five year warranty covers machine throughout HeadsUp Trade-in Program.





Call us toll-free 1-877-793-3278 to learn more about HeadsUp and SWF machines.

coldesi.com



SWF E 1501C Single head, 15 Needles

# MULTI-HEAD TRADE VALUE COMPARISON

Trading up to equal size or higher machine and equal or greater value.

	0-24 MONTHS	25-36 MONTHS	37-60 MONTHS
ColDesi	70%	60%	55%
Others	0%	0%	50%

\*Excludes Dream Machines

SWF K 1502 Two heads, 15 Needles Standard



Number One In Apparel Decorating Equipment



# CELEBRATE APPRECIATE

99 **gift** ideas—from the **best brands**—for valued colleagues and clients.

Order your 2013 Holiday Gift Guide today!







PORT **AUTHORITY** 







# S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013

v.27 n.8

# **F**EATURES

# Cover Story Bold Steps **50**

Eight designers take decorated apparel to new heights, so get ready to take a walk on the wild side.

# Fashion Best in Show 58

Score sales with this season's top apparel, accessories, color and embellishment trends.

# Operations The Shop Manager's

Special 64

Managers of top contract shops weigh in about their biggest management challenges – and how they solve them.

# INTERACT

## Stitches.com 20

Trending topics: Who decorators would pay to see speak; whether embroiderers' client retention rates have increased or decreased over the last year; and how a veteran digitizer thinks newbies should get started punching.

# Pinterest.com/stitchesmag 21

What's hot from our Digital Design and Sequins, Rhinestones & Bling, Oh My! boards.

# **Letters 22**

Readers tell us about the most fashionforward designs they've created.

# **Expert Weigh-In 23**

An expert shares his insights on why decorators should use novelty threads like moon glow or twister tweed; why buying embroidery supplies online could be a big no-no; and how to diversify.

# **Problem Solved 24**

Learn how to handle real problem clients.

# **Phil Stitch Answers 25**

Phil finds beanies that football players wear under their helmets, white kitchen towels and camo baseball jerseys.



# NEWS

# **Industry 27**

Gildan acquires decorator company New Buffalo; Leed's signs partnership agreement with Thule; Ross Stores fined over banned apparel; and more.

# World 28

Trending topics: Embroidery sweatshop rescues in Nepal; Bangladesh trade restrictions don't pertain to apparel; and more.

# **Strategy 30**

One shop makes its mark selling madein-the-USA apparel; an enterprising team creates an online store for band promotional items; and more.

About the Cover:
Design: Hillary Haught
Photography: Mark Pricskett
Model: Heather, Major Model Management
Apparel: Pamela Ptak
Hair and makeup: Mamee Simon
Stylist: Conrad Booker

# DECORATING SOLUTIONS

# **5 Steps 37**

Learn how to create a distressed embroidery logo with retail flair.

# **Decorating & Fabric Trends 38**

Hot topics: Online training from Imprintables Warehouse and ColDesi; Floriani variegated embroidery thread; military and motorcycle trends from Penn Emblem Co.

# Machine & Software Upgrades 39

Hot topics: Hotronix's new air compressor; a pneumatic automatic press package from Workhorse Products; and more.

# Saving 9 40

Quick tips: Decorate team uniforms fast with Precut Letters and Numbers in Thermo-FILM; go green with Eco-SolMAX and Eco-Sol MAX 2 digital-printing ink; and more.

# **D**OOK BOOK

# **Runway 42**

Runway trends: punk, the color moss and fur.

# **Trends 43**

Sell top color, apparel and embellishment trends inspired by top designers.

# **Showcase 46**

Infant and toddler apparel and accessories to decorate and sell.

# Niche 47

Readers' top biker patches and emblems.

# **Inspiration 48**

Be dazzled by fiber artist Sally Dutko's raw-edge abstract work that's both whimsical and compelling.

# **Coming Next Issue 70**

What to look forward to in November 2013 *Stitches*.

# Ask an Expert 71

An expert advises on how to become a certified woman-owned business enterprise.



Use our 5,000+ Art Layouts to get started at TransferExpress.com

Call or order online! asi/91804

# Process Major Credit Cards on YOUR Terms

- Swipe at Your Store
- By Phone
- Online Using a Virtual Terminal
- ALSO: Accept Electronic Checks (ACH Network)

We will beat your current program rates or you get a \$25 gift card

SPECIAL OFFER: 2013 Discover card transactions processed absolutely free\*!

Call (877) 837-7651 or visit http://www.asicentral.com/getpaidfaster



\*Offer ends July 31, 2013. For promotion details, visit http://www.asicentral.com/getpaidfaster

©2013, Advertising Specialty Institute®. All Rights Reserved. 890-828221-0613

# S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

Embroidery's Voice & Vision

Publisher, Chief Revenue Officer

Richard Fairfield, MASI

rfairfield@asicentral.com, @RichFairfield Editor In Chief. Senior Vice President

in Chief, Senior vice Presiden

Melinda Ligos, MASI mligos@asicentral.com, @ASI melinda

Editor, Executive Director Professional Development

Nicole Rollender, MASI nrollender@asicentral.com, @ASI\_Stitches

**Managing Editors** 

Joe Haley, BASI

jhaley@asicentral.com, @asi\_joehaley Joan Chaykin, BASI

jchaykin@asicentral.com, @asi\_joanchaykin

Senior Staff Writer

Dave Vagnoni, BASI dvagnoni@asicentral.com, @vagnoniASI

#### Staff Writers

Christopher Ruvo, BASI cruvo@asicentral.com, @ChrisR\_ASI Jennifer Vishnevsky, BASI jvishnevsky@asicentral.com, @Jen\_Advantages

#### Copy Editor

Patricia Cangelosi, BASI pcangelosi@asicentral.com, @patty\_cangelosi

#### **Editorial Assistant**

Carole Seymour, BASI cseymour@asicentral.com

#### Contributing Writers

Sydney Cohn, Tonia Kimbrough, Kristine Shreve, Lindsey Strawser and Alissa Tallman

#### **Editorial Interns**

Grace Bennett

gthompson@asicentral.com

Sara Lavenduski, BASI, slavenduski@asicentral.com, @SaraLav ASI

Samantha Phillipps sphillipps@asicentral.com

Art Director

Hillary Haught, BASI, @HaughtArt

Senior Editorial Designer

Glen Karpowich, @KarpoDesigner

Design Intern

Jessica Williams

JESSICA WIIIIAITIS

Editorial Photographer
Mark Pricskett, MASI, @marcOphotO

Executive Director Production & Advertising Operations

Haitham Barakat, MASI

Executive Director Audience Development & Analysis

Debra Brill, BASI



POSTMASTER: Send address changes to STITCHES

8.910 lbs.

P.O. Box 2197 • Skokie, IL 60076

16,426 lbs. of CO2

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

TREES ENERGY WATER | GREENHOUSE GASSES | SOLID WASTE

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

102 mil. BTU 53,847 gal.

# Why people Wilcom...



Here's just a few of the reasons people choose Wilcom DecoStudio and EmbroideryStudio e3:



A user-friendly wizard which automates your settings based on chosen fabric: from underlay to stitch density and pull compensation



Automatic borders and outlines on ALL fonts (make every font two color!)



Multi-file export for Appliqué, rhinestones - send to a .PLT file



Improved TrueType Font (TTF) conversion



CorelDRAW® X6 Included! - works exclusively with Corel



Visualize the design within the hoop (choose Tajima, Barudan, SWF, Happy



Over 170 keyboard embroidered fonts



Product Visualizer: image of shirts, hats, pants & more to send for approval sheets



Free support & training!

To update or enquire about new Wilcom software call toll free 877 657 7500 or email softwaresales@wilcomamerica.com

www.wilcom.com The world's favorite embroidery & apparel decoration software



# **Idea Custom Solutions**

A new name and a long history of the highest quality

We focus exclusively on your graphic production and support needs.



Learn more about our award-winning designs at **ideacustom.com** or call **847-930-3209**. Sign up to use us at **register.ideacustom.com**.





# S·T·I·T·C·H·E·S

# Embroidery's Voice & Vision

# Advertising Specialty Institute

Chairman

Norman Cohn, MASI

Vice Chairman

Matthew Cohn, MASI

President & Chief Executive Officer Timothy M. Andrews, MASI

Chief Operating Officer

Vince Bucolo, BASI

Senior Vice President/Sales

Christine Lovell, MASI

Vice President/Sales

Ron Ball, MASI

Vice President/Associate Publisher

Ed Koehler, BASI

**Account Executives** 

Vince Deissroth, BASI; Jeannine Garrison, BASI; Alan Lee; Tom Lin, BASI; Cindi Mann, BASI; Barry Melito; Phyllis Mutnick, BASI; Jim Padilla, BASI; Suzanne Rozick, BASI; Mary Sells, MASI

Chief Technology Officer

Armughan Rafat, BASI

Stitches Editorial Advisory Board

Mike Angel, Vice President of

Sales and Marketing, Melco

Jim Auclair, Owner, FixYourStitch Embroidery Machine Repair

Conrad Booker, Designer/Artist

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

Lauren Cocco, Senior Merchandiser and Embellishment Specialist, Vantage Apparel

Samanta Cortes, Owner,

Fashion Design Concepts Inc. Cory Dean, Owner, Artwork Source

Ginny Fineberg, Owner and President, Sandpiper Embroidery

Geri Finio, Embroidery Artist, Studio187.net

Jay Fishman, Owner,

Wicked Stitch of the East

Steve Freeman, Owner,

Qdigitizing.com

Joanna Grant, Director of Sales, Affinity Express

Colleen Hartigan, Vice President of Sales, Madeira USA Ltd.

Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach, The Embroidery Training Resource Center.com

Anna Johnson, Owner,

Super Embroidery & Screen Printing Inc.

Deborah Jones, Owner,

MvEmbroidervMentor.com

Jimmy Lamb, Manager of Education & Communications, Sawgrass Technologies

> Bonnie Landsberger, Owner and Digitizer, Moonlight Design

Ed Levy, President, Digitize4u Inc.

Niamh O'Connor, Art Director/Evil Genius.

Urban Threads

Howard Potter, CEO,

A&P Master Images

Michael Savoia, Owner,

Villa Savoia Inc.

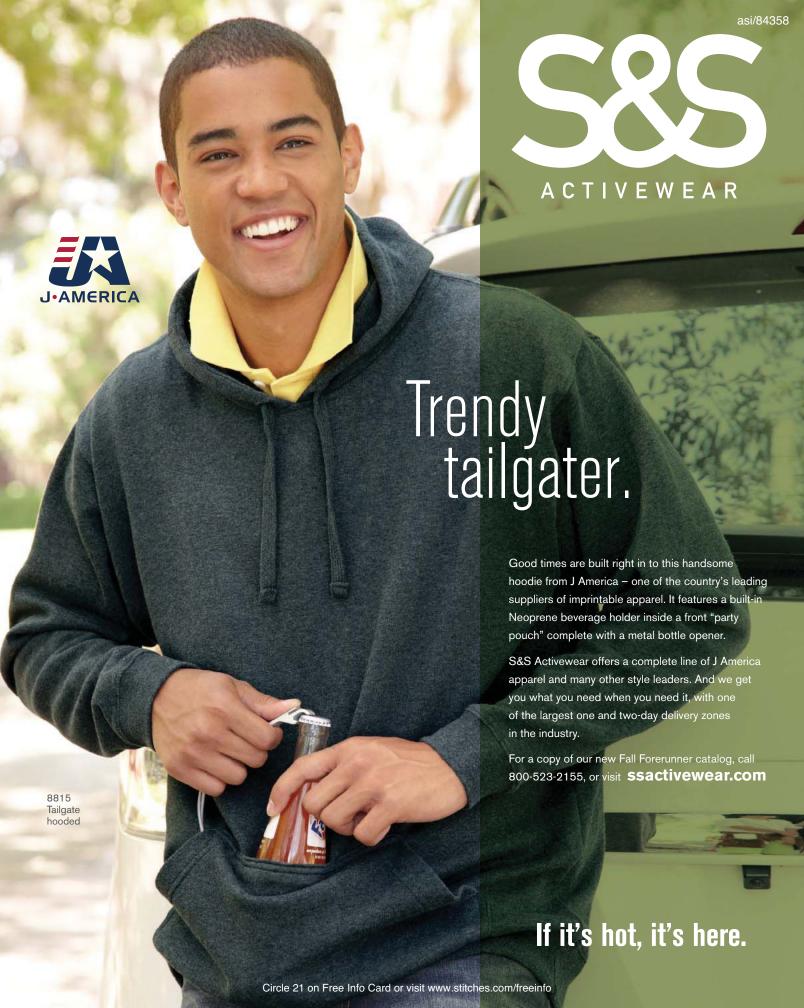
Lee Romano Sequeira, Co-owner, Sparkle-Plenty.com

Andrew Shuman, General Manager, Rockland Embroidery Inc.

Jane Swanzy, Owner,

Swan Marketing LLC

Dana Zezzo, Chief Marketing Officer, Jetline Inc. Gayle Zreliak, Founder and President, EnMart



# Introducing the Stitches Membership Package



# The NEW Stitches Membership Package makes it easy to grow your business.



 Increase sales with your own website full of T-shirts, blankets, caps, bags, plush toys and other embroidery-ready items.



 Get the most powerful eCommerce solution that is fully customizable, virtual sample-ready and social media compatible. See a preview at www.joinstitches.com/preview.



- Source products from every ASI Supplier Member with ASI®'s ESP Buyer's Guide™.
- Expand your business with FastFind® the print guide with every distributor reseller.



CALL (877) 276-0292

or visit www.joinstitches.com

# **C**ONTRIBUTORS...



In this issue's "Expert Weigh-In" in our new "Interact" department, we chat with

OWEN DUNNE, director of the Embroidery & Distributor Divisions at American & Efird, about an up-and-coming market for decorators: team uniforms. "Team uniforms are big business," he says. "There are more club/travel teams today than ever before. Kids and parents love wearing their team colors, and sports fans love to support their team colors, whether they're elementary school teams or professionals."

In this month's "Inspiration" section of our "Look Book" department, **SALLY DUTKO**, fiber artist, shares her beautiful textile artwork. "My background in painting and graphic design significantly influenced my artwork," she says. "The first art quilts that I made I actually called 'fabric paintings.' Patterns and colors were sewn with raw edges to create a paint-like surface, with the sewing machine needle as the drawing tool." Such an unconventional use of this common sewing tool caused Dutko to be pleasantly surprised by what she came up with artistically: "I found this way of working to be very intuitive and spontaneous, leading to unexpected results." Visit www.sallydutko.com to see more of her work.





In this issue's "Ask an Expert," **KRISTINE SHREVE**, director of marketing for EnMart and Ensign Emblem, advises a shop owner considering applying to be recognized as a woman-owned business enterprise about the pros and cons of doing so. "Since there are benefits to being certified as a woman-owned business, it may well be worth pursuing the certification for your business," she writes. "The first thing you need to do, before you embark on the journey toward certification, is to determine if your business would meet the criteria."

One requirement? A woman must have majority control of the business.







The 2013 SGIA Expo is the only place to see the full spectrum

- of imaging technologies and applications. • Excite your imagination with the newest DTG inkjets and heat transfer materials
- Feast your eyes on the latest imaging innovations from special effects techniques and Get your hands on cutting-edge industry applications dye sublimation technologies, to the newest 3D-printing and digital signage solutions

More exhibitors. More answers. More face time. Get face-to-face with experts and your peers from every sector of the imaging industry.

- On the Expo floor with more than 450 exhibitors
- In the any of the seven Expo-exclusive Zones
- At more than 40 classic educational sessions In the community receptions, lobby, hotels and hallways

"This Expo was the best thing I have ever done for my business, I was able to meet people that cared about me and my business... I learned more in the few days I was there than I have ever learned."









# The Print Lover's Guide to the Expo

Whether you're looking for more info about the latest digital technologies for directto-garment printing, digital textile printing or sustainability, SGIA's Zones have the free educational programming for you to get the job done.



# **Digital Apparel Production Zone**

Get a firsthand look at digital garment decoration technologies in the Zone that started it all. Identify a solution that fits your needs and learn techniques, tricks and new trends to prevent errors and improve accuracy.



# **Screen Printed Apparel Training Zone**

Industry experts will be on-hand to demonstrate the latest garment special-effect techniques, and to show you how to add a little flare to vour business.



# Digital Textile Printing Zone — **NEW!**

Get a wealth of information on digital textile printing including technical and design requirements, recommended workflows, color management tips, finishing techniques and recommended best practices for a variety of ink and fabric combinations.



# Strategic Sustainable Solutions Zone — **NEW!**

SGIA announces the first-ever SGIA educational Zone to focus on sustainable business solutions — a place to learn from industry leaders, and increase your understanding of best practices through great success stories to inspire you to share with your teams, customers and prospects.



# **Color Management & Workflow Solutions Zone**

SGIA's Color Management Zone will focus on color management tools and techniques, as well as RIP and third-party software solutions. Attendees can expand their capabilities and develop new relationships by joining any of the presentations during show hours.





# SGIA Travel — Perfected.

# **Book Your 2013 SGIA Expo Hotel Now!**

SGIA has excellent rates for Orlando hotels during the Expo — offered exclusively by our official housing partner, Travel Planners.

# We guarantee:

- Automated rate checks to make sure you're getting the lowest rate
- No prepayment you pay when you check out!
- No change or cancellation fees up to seven days prior to arrival
- · Support onsite in Orlando, if needed

# **Transportation from the Airport**

Taxicabs: The cost for a taxicab ride from the airport to the Convention Center or hotel in our block ranges between \$45.00 and \$50.00. The Convention Center is about 25–30 minutes from the airport.

SuperShuttle offers service from the Orlando Airport starting at \$16 each way for hotels in the SGIA block. Advance reservations are required.

Attendees also can use Mears Transportation: \$19 one way or \$30 roundtrip. Details available at SGIA.org, Keyword: Expo.

# **Restaurant and Entertainment**

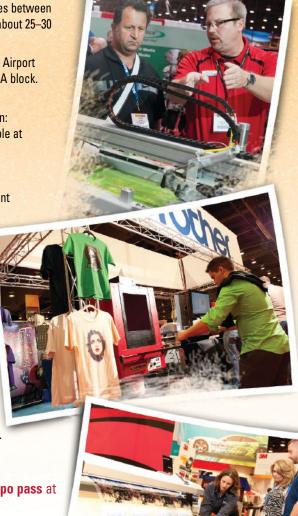
The Convention Area Dining and Entertainment District offers a diverse selection of restaurants and hot spots. Just steps from the Orange County Convention Center, Pointe Orlando is a sizeable shopping, dining and entertainment complex offering convenient 365-day access to some of Orlando's top restaurants, specialty shops and clubs.

# **Hotel Shuttles**

Shuttle service will be offered to and from the Convention Center for select hotels. All other hotels in the SGIA block are within walking distance of the Convention Center. Details available at SGIA.org, Keyword: Expo.

Register by September 20 for a free Expo pass at

SGIAO CONTROL Starting September 21 and on-site, the registration is \$35.



# **Superior Ed Sessions with SGIA**

Attend one of SGIA's 40 classic Expo education sessions our free presentations in the exciting Zones; register for the Printed Electronics Symposium or simply attend the hand-picked Keynote presentation. Whatever you choose — the Expo is the way to perfect your profession!

# **SGIA's Classic Expo Sessions**

Wednesday and Thursday, October 23-24

Get the information you need to take your company to the next level. SGIA's pro-level educational sessions offer a the perfect mix of topics to meet the needs of your business.

"WOW — mind blowing! So much to see." - 2012 SGIA Expo Attendee

# **Zone Presentations**

Wednesday-Friday, October 23-25

Our sales-free Zones with educational theaters are the perfect place to ask questions, hear about new equipment and even attempt new applications. Presentation schedules will be online at SGIA.org, Keyword: Expo

# Printed Electronics and Membrane Switch Symposium

Tuesday and Wednesday, October 22-23

SGIA's renowned Symposium is back at the Expo! Join your colleagues to catch up on the latest in this technical specialty.

Register by September 20 for a free Expo pass at

SGIA.org

Presentation schedules will be online at SGIA.org, Keyword: Expo

"The Exhibitors were so friendly and willing to share information. I definitely got an education on the show floor."

-2012 SGIA Expo Attendee

# Social Events in the Sunshine State

SGIA social events are the perfect place to mix a little business with pleasure in sunny Orlando — before you head out to dinner or activities with colleagues, friends and/ or family. Meet business contacts, get new ideas and strategize about your next big business move — all with your Expo connections.

# Sell Value, Not Price!

Keynote Breakfast with Don Hutson Thursday, October 24, 8:30-10:00 am \$35 Members/\$40 Nonmembers

In this lighthearted and essential keynote address, Don Hutson will share techniques for building trust and rapport with clients while focusing on selling value rather than cutting price. Don will discuss some of the

attributes of high-performance salespeople and how your company can achieve success over the competition.



# **Community Receptions**

Individual Receptions for Our **Diverse Community** Wednesday, October 23, 5:00-6:00 pm Price: FREE (by invitation only)

SGIA will hose seven community-building receptions at the Expo for core sectors of the specialty imaging industry. If your registration fits the demographic, you'll automatically receive a ticket in your registration materials. Otherwise, attendance is by invitation only, so please stop by the SGIA booth (2401) or contact us if you'd like to participate.

# SGIA networking events will include:

- Garment Decoration Community
- Latin American Community
- Canadian Community
- Pro Imaging Golf Championship

"Make sure you invest the three days to see the show. You need to have time to network to make those contacts. – 2012 SGIA Expo Attendee



Keyword: Expo

# Orlando, FL • October 23-25, 2013 Specialty Printing & Imaging Technology Specialty Imaging — Defined. X I I

See hundreds of exhibitors showcasing the broadest range of technology available on the market.

# Experience the latest in:

- automatic inline and carousel presses Screen printing with manual and
- featuring high-productivity flatbeds, higl Wide- and grand-format digital imaging resolution roll-to-rolls and hybrids
- Special effects solutions like all-over dye sublimation, heat transfers, embroidery,
- Finishing solutions, including seaming, grommeting, cut and sew and more
  - Pad printing
- Endless supplies and solutions, including fabrics, films, substrates and media, RIP
- Emerging technologies like 3D printing and digital signage

# To help you produce:

- Decorated Garments and Accessories
- Soft Signage

Textiles

- Advertising Specialties
  - Fine Art
- Point-of-Purchase (POP)
  - **Outdoor Advertising** 
    - Transit Advertising
- Fleet & Vehicle Graphics
  - **Environmental Graphics**



Specialty Graphic Imaging Association Fairfax, Virginia 22031 10015 Main Street



# Puzzling Over Gift Ideas?



Discount Embroidery Blanks is the perfect fit.

Timeless to trendy! Transform the blank and bland to beautiful and elegant or to fun and fancy with creative, fine quality blanks at amazingly competitive prices.



You'll love our wide selection, quick shipping, and knowledgeable, personalized customer service.



www.DiscountEmbroideryBlanks.com
Toll Free 1-866-210-0072



asi/90913

**Expect Quality** 



Robes



Polka Dot Wraps



Cosmetic Bags



Sherpa Throws



Baby Blankets



Sublimatable Towels



Kid's Wraps



Fingertip Towels



Blankets



Beach & Bath Towels



Golf Towels

# **FALL & HOLIDAY ITEMS IN STOCK AND READY TO SHIP!**

FREE GROUND SHIPPING FOR ORDERS OVER \$500

Must Mention Code FRX103

www.terrytown.com

Offer Expires 10/31/2013

# Passion for Fashion



Circle 23 on Free Info Card or visit www.stitches.com/freeinfc

he Fashion Issue is always one of my favorites because we showcase spectacular embellished apparel (that also inspires flights of creative fancy) from equally spectacular designers. This year, besides featuring pieces from former *Project Rumway* contestant Pamela Ptak and couture New York City-based designers Samanta Cortes and Mariana Leung, we also

partnered with artist/designer Conrad Booker – who acted as our on-site stylist and creative director the day of the shoot.

I met Conrad (who's based in Philadelphia near ASI) several years ago, and after witnessing his passion for fashion, interior design and all things artistic, I invited him to join *Stitches*' Editorial Advisory Board. Conrad is one of those designers who makes everything seem effortless (whether he's turning out hardware-decorated leather handbags to sell in Nordstrom or creating the rope dress on page 49) simply because of how hard he works. "What makes me successful is my willingness to take risks, think outside the box and to use adversities as a motivator," says Conrad, who was literally up at 4 a.m. the morning of the shoot finishing off the handbag and sarong he custom made to accent Cortes' textured dress on page 54.

In an annual issue we curate to share with you top designers and trends, I'm happy to offer some insights from Conrad:

- 1. Use Pinterest. "Collecting ideas is important to developing my work and keeping it fresh and unique," Conrad says. "Before, I collected images from magazines and books, but now I use Pinterest the site keeps my ideas organized and at my finger tips for quick reference. I pin every day."
- **2. Innovate.** "I keep my work innovative by researching for new ideas, details and materials," Conrad says. "Try new ways to solve old problems and continually ask 'what if' like what if I use an unusual material like straws or cardboard to create this texture and make my work fresh?"
- **3. Do more with less.** "The main challenge in the marketplace is how to do more for less," Conrad says. "Clients have smaller budgets, but want more. I balance this by developing more effective ways of working, gathering more information to eliminate future redos and offering details that save time, yet retain the high quality they request."

We hope The Fashion Issue inspires you!







Your **Easy to Use**, Custom Lettering Designer

Any Word. Any Way.™ gives you thousands of design options for customizing apparel and accessories. Create unique Distressed Appliqué looks. Use fashion-forward materials with metallic gold, silver, or glitter finishes. Designing has never been easier.

Watch Designs Come Alive — features an online preview perfect for showing customers. Easy to Order — Most orders ship same day.

# Design. Decorate. Deliver.

Go online to start your design today! StahlsID.com/AWAW Powered by CadworxLIVE

STAHLS' Defirect"

StahlsID.com • 800.4.STAHLS

asi/88984

ST1309

a GroupeSTAHL company

# **ONLINE EXCLUSIVES**



# Get Your Stitch Report

Stitches Staff Writer Christopher Ruvo discusses solutions to significant challenges faced by apparel decorating shop managers in the latest edition of *The Stitch Report*.



# Podcast: Listen In

Stitches Staff Writer Christopher Ruvo reviews a few quick tips for leveraging LinkedIn to build your business.

# Here Comes the Bride ... and Big Bucks

With countless magazines, websites and apps out there to help brides plan their big day, you're sitting on a potentially profitable goldmine – the booming wedding industry. Visit Stitches.com to find out how you can cash in.

# **SOCIAL FEEDS**



Facebook Fans React We posted:

What one person would you pay to see speak?

# You answered: ERICH CAMPBELL

Austin Kleon, author of Steal Like an Artist, or Todd Henry, author of The Accidental Creative – both of these guys have a lot to offer in helping people get over the common roadblocks to working creatively, no matter what the focus of your work actually is. Either would be extremely helpful to people

# in the industry

Peter Shankman. He has a new book called *Nice Companies Finish First*, and heir incredibly knowledgeable about social media, marketing, customer service and so much more. He's also the founder of Help A Reporter Out (HARO).

# TRUDY TOOMAN-SALINAS Napoleon Hill, if he were still alive.

#### All About SEO STITCHES MAGAZINE

SEO leads have a 15% close rate, on par with the close rate for direct traffic, and ahead of referrals (9%), paid search (7%), social media (4%), and outbound leads (2%) (Marketing Charts)

# DECONETWORK

A great website is critical for SEO. Don't forget the importance of "local search," which consists of a person searching for a product or service with a city, i.e., "T-shirt printing Denver." If your website and online presence aren't optimized for your local region, you will miss out on this majority of traffic, which is growing stronger every day thanks to mobile.

# ASI\_Stitches

#### @MASHABI F

Not Buying Into the Bitcoin Craze? Here Are 5 Top Digital Alternatives http:// on.mash.to/12daPOB

#### @MKTWRETIREMENT

Women face long-term care price hikes http://on.mktw.net/1agGPcQ

#### @GOTCHAMOBI

Should you build a mobile app or mobile website? http://ow.ly/mFWkY #mobilemarketing #gotchamobi #infographic

#### @HOOTSUITE

Does your content strategy include paid, earned and owned media? http://owl.li/mHFQN Should it?

# @ASICENTRAL

Co-worker with a personal problem? Here are 4 tips to help them through it: http://ow.ly/mKKRQ

# @FIBRE2FASHION

Committee of Bangladesh Safety Accord unveils further plan http://goo.gl/ fb/7qZrH

# @ARTWORKSERVICES

Google Doodle Marks 66th Anniversary of Roswell UFO Incident http://mashable.com/2013/07/08/ google-doodle-roswell/... http://fb.me/2TV3OMebY

# @PRO\_TOWELS

Let's ease into the week with some fun "Recycle That Towel" projects: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/06/beachtowel-diys\_n\_3528689.html ... #WhyProTowels #DIY #ReduceReuse Recycle

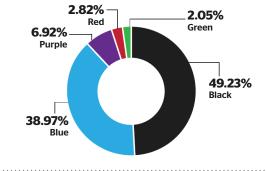
## @PROFORMA

Learning Doesn't Stop After School - For many of us, our back-to-school days are long gone or at least on hiatus ... http:// ow.ly/2ybm2p

# INDUSTRY POLL

On *ASICentral.com*, we recently asked industry professionals:

# Which pen ink color is your preference?



Scan this code to read the

entire blog entry by Erich

Campbell

# **BLOG EXCERPT**

# On Links and Needles How do I learn embroidery digitizing?



Answering this question is a regular part of most of my weeks, but no matter how many times I answer, I find myself both over-simplifying and over-complicating the answer in turns. This stems from the fact that learning to digitize for embroidery is actually made up of a study of several discrete elements, each of which is critical in its own way to the final product. Think of it like driving: When one first takes the wheel,

one is swamped with discrete tasks – checking mirrors, watching speed, manning the controls, being aware of traffic, obeying signals. With practice, however, comes proficiency, and for most of us the task has collapsed into a single activity: "driving." The same is true of digitizing for embroidery; several tasks make up the process as a whole, but in time, and with practice, we find ourselves not measuring and altering art, artistically interpreting print into stitches, drawing vector lines and manipulating shapes with our tools, carefully setting stitch parameters, and sequencing our design ... in the end we will simply be digitizing.

# Pinterest

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

# From the Board: Digital Design



Custom sublimated bikini by Bishop the Garment Co. (asi/40585; circle 163 on Free Info Card).



Burnout tee with all-over sublimation by In Your Face Apparel (asi/62494; circle 164 on Free Info Card).

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



Printed tee with supershiny Spectra Alloy metallic accents. By Imprintables Warehouse (asi/58475; circle 167 on Free Info Card).



Corporate design that includes embroidery and rhinestones by Busy Bees Embroidery, Kirkwood, MO.



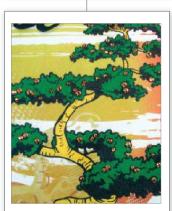
Sublimated tee by Vapor Apparel (asi/93396; circle 165 on Free Info Card), from the company's new Fashion Fit line.



Sublimated cotton tee from S&S Activewear (asi/84358; circle 166 on Free Info Card).



Red tank top embellished with metallic foil print. By Spectrum Ideas (asi/88638; circle 168 on Free Info Card).



Detail of a print embellished with rhinestuds. By ColDesi (circle 169 on Free Info Card).

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



We received these letters in response to the question: What's the most fashion-forward design you've ever created?



# Here, Fishy Fishv

Socks paired with boots can be a cool fashion item. but socks are

nearly impossible to hoop! We got around that, and added an extra bit of flair, by splitting the back, embroidering the koi tattoo design, and then adding grommets and lacing it back up. They look totally chic with a pair of ankle boots. Check out the tutorial available on our site: www.urbanthreads. com.

Niamh O'Connor Urhan Threads

# Feel the Beat

We screen printed these tees in multiple colors, including neons, for KISS FM radio station in upstate New York.



They hosted a concert featuring Sean Kingston. Hot Chelle Rae and

David Corry, and we were the apparel sponsor for the event. **Howard Potter** A&P Master Images



# **Karate Kid**

(asi/702505)

We had this shirt printed with a 24" wide imprint in regular plastisol ink. We used red. white and blue ink for the

design for Focus Martial Arts, the owner of the artwork. Bimal Thakkar

Huetone Imprints Inc.

Take Me Out to the **Ball Game** My client's son's team won his baseball league and she wanted to celebrate.

She told me she had a favorite top, a princess design shirt. I took the same format and made it into a Sandlot Dreams shirt. She loves bling and sparkle, so she added that part to the design. CSTOWN made the transfer and we applied it to orange Bella tank tops.

Debby Labrucherie Double L Designs (asi/702505)

# Birds of a Feather

I made this jacket as a gift to a friend of mine. I used a purchased pattern on three vards of 60" wide woven slub silk and ravon cut on the bias on the front so it lays nicely. The embroidery on the lapel was backed with topping/ solvy only to maintain the fluidity of



the fabric. The rayon thread was used with the embroidery design from Black Duck Inc.'s Erich Campbell's single ostrich feather repeated and layered in three different colors, and the sleeves were backed at the cuffs with medium-weight cutaway to keep their shape. The entire garment was edged with serging in the same rayon thread as the embroidered design.

# Carolyn Cagle

# Strikke Knits

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.

# The Best Piece I Ever Embroidered

I embroidered this wool jacket with all metallic thread, with patterns from Dakota Collectibles. The size of the eagle on the back is 9.5", not including the stars surrounding it. We converted all the colors to metallic silver, gold, copper and bronze. The back of the jacket has

65.071 stitches and the front has 13.725 stitches. Because I was working with metallic thread,



it took eight hours to do the back of the jacket and two hours to do the front. It's definitely a showpiece! We reproduced this same pattern on another jacket using red, white and blue, and we added the American flag to the sleeve.

Submitted by Carmen Fober, owner of Love N' Bloom in Huntington Beach, CA; lovenbloom@earthlink.net

# Expert Weigh-In



Owen Dunne, director of the Embroidery & Distributor Divisions at American & Efird in Mt. Holly, NC, talks about his start in the industry, the solutions his company offers for decorators and how shops can diversify. Contact: owen.dunne@amefird.com.

# My start in the industry came by a slim chance. In

1992, I accidentally left my résumé in a copier at a Kinkos in Dundee, IL, and the manager of the store passed it on to a headhunter, who called me. The next thing I knew, I was in the textile business working for Threads USA.

# Embroidery has played a significant part in my life.

From 1992 to 1998, I was in charge of running a thread distributor (David Kaplan Company, a division of Threads USA), and we sold all kinds of findings, such as pins, hook and loop, cording, elastic, zippers, linings, backing, ribbons, and different types of thread. In 1996, Threads USA was bought out by A&E. Today, we manufacture sewing thread, embroidery thread and technical textiles.

# **It's important to use highquality materials.** One of the biggest problems today is that customers want to pay as little

biggest problems today is that customers want to pay as little as possible and get a premium product. We offer premium embroidery products that perform well. Embroidering can be challenging enough, so why would someone want to use a product that's inconsistent and breaks? Time is money and productivity should be the name of the game, so customers should use a thread that will perform in production.

# Variations in high-quality thread make for creative, first-rate decorated items.

We do offer some novelty-type products, like moon glow, twister tweed and variegated products, but we're always trying to produce the best product possible. Embroiderers are looking for performance in a product, a product that keeps their machines running. Less down time equals more production.

# Decorators should create unique positions for themselves in the industry.

The primary challenge today is still the economy; customers are watching their spending and aren't always willing to spend a few extra dollars to get a better product. The old saying, "You get what you pay for," plays over and over in my head. Decorators should look for a niche or specialized type business.

# The team uniform market is an up-and-coming niche for

decorators. Team uniforms are big business. There are more club/travel teams today than ever before. Kids and parents love wearing their team colors, and sports fans love to support their team(s) colors, whether they're elementary school teams or professionals.

Decorators should beware of Internet shopping if they're concerned about product integrity. People still want to pay less for a product today than they did five years ago, and the Internet is wide open to all kinds of services and products. Buying over the Internet can be challenging and rewarding, because you just never know what you're going to get.

# I prefer music that was popular during the Reagan and Clinton administrations.

I've never used Pandora, but I am sure my kids have, so they always play top 40, but personally I am stuck in the '80s and '90s.

# When it's not embroidery, it's golf. I'm currently reading *Final Rounds* by James Dodson. It's an autobiographical story about an extended golf trip Dodson took to famous courses around the world with his father after the latter received a

terminal cancer diagnosis.





Most of my clients are really great, but some are very demanding. I don't want to let clients go, but some distract from my core clients. How should I handle these problem clients?



Samanta Cortes, Fashion
Design Concepts Inc.: If a
client requires too much
attention, be unfront. Make sure

he knows this time will be included in the cost of his project. As you're costing the sampling and production, estimate the time needed to pick up the project. Charge for any color, style, or look samples that ran on the mashing for approval. Believe me, this all adds up. If you ask for 50% down on a project, the client will hesitate to make any changes, since he knows that the clock is ticking and the price is rising.



Cory Dean, Artwork Source: The painful but simple answer is you have to let this type of customer move on. The time

spent dealing with exceptions and untangling messes could be better spent looking for customers that are happy with your product offering. Unhappy customers pain me more than anything. I see more of these situations when I lose focus and try to take some new sales opportunities before I'm an expert in it. When I focus like a laser on what I can do better than anyone else, I get more happy customers, less stress and a more profitable business.



Steve Freeman, Qdigitizing. com (asi/700501): The customer is always right, but not all customers are good

ones. If the cost of doing business with them consistently results in a loss, they should be released to find another vendor.



Howard Potter, A&P Master Images (asi/702505): If a customer is taking up too much of your time, charge them more

per piece. Then you have many reasons to explain why the price is more. Also, I never let one customer be more than 20% of our sales. If you depend too much on one client, you lose control. Then you'll find yourself doing things for them for next to nothing or bending over backward to keep them. It's your business and you need to be the one in control.



Joyce Jagger, The Embroidery Coach: You need to spend your time on those customers who make you money. If your

customers take up a lot of unnecessary time, you're losing money. If a customer changes his mind about a job after it's in production, he'll have to pay the consequences. If it is a design change, the customer needs to be charged a large fee for this.



Jimmy Lamb, Sawgrass
Technologies: Put the job
details into a contract and have
the customer sign it before

starting. Then, there's a paper trail. Also, focus on raising the perceived value of your products and services to a level that generates a fair profit, rather than lowering prices to the ill-conceived initial perception of the customer. Finally, present three versions of every apparel product as good/better/best choices. Let the customer make the choice after doing a touch test. They'll almost always go for the better or best product. When you reveal the price, they immediately relate it to quality.

## PROBLEM SOLVED

Have a problem you need solved? Send your question for the *Stitches* Editorial Advisory Board to *nrollender@asicentral.com*.

# Phil Stitch Answers



# Got a question for Phil?

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

www.stitches.com for the RN Database link.

Although I try my best, I can't always answer every request, so please continue your search on your own. Remember, if you contact the companies I mention, tell them you heard about them here!

PS: If you become an ASI Decorator Member with ESP, you'll have access to every item in the wearables and promotional products industry from 3,000+ reputable suppliers. Just call (800) 546-1388 to get started!

# My customer is looking for the beanies that football players wear under their helmets. I need them for a youth football league in purple if possible. - Jan

Get ready to score some major points with your client – there are quite a few items to choose from! Start with Bam-Bams (asi/38228); (866) 913-4463; www.bambams.com; for knit beanies in youth and young adult sizes, product KB-01-S. SanMar (asi/84863); (800) 426-6399; www.sanmar.com; makes a poly/spandex stretch fleece beanie, product C900, in a wide variety of colors, including purple. You can also try S & S Active-wear (asi/84358); (800) 523-2155; www.ssactivewear.com; product SP08 for a knit beanie that will fit perfectly under those helmets!

I am looking for white kitchen towels. I had a source for waffle-weave towels that were 70% polyester and 30% cotton. They were 15" x 25" and perfect for monogramming. My source dried up and now I can't find anything comparable. Everything I've been able to find is a larger waffle weave and 100% cotton. - *Terrie* 

This is a tricky one, but don't throw in the towel yet! Try Pleetoox Textile Sourcing (asi/91081); (816) 561-9511; www.pleetoox.com; this supplier makes a white waffle-weave kitchen towel in a 15"

x 22" size, product TS1522-WHT. Head over to FIEL Fairdeal Import & Export (asi/53509); (800) 851-3435; www.fiel.com; for a twill tea towel of a similar poly/cotton blend but a larger size at 17" x 30".

# Where might I find blank camo baseball jerseys? - *Bob*

You'll hit it out of the park with one of these options! Head to Teamwork Athletic Apparel (asi/90673); (800) 333-6063; www.teamworkathletic.com; for a custom baseball jersey. Also try The Americana Co. (asi/35722); (800) 473-2802; www. americanasportswear.com; for camo-colored eco-Jersey baseball tees, perfect on or off the field! You can also visit Weber's Camo Leather (asi/73777); (320) 762-2816; www.webersleather.com; they have a camo raglan tee that's easily customizable as well.

I'm in search of a 100% polyester dress shirt in men's and women's cuts, both long and short sleeves, preferably a shirt that doesn't have shoulder tabs or big pocket flaps. We'd like to try dye-sublimation on these shirts, so white or lighter colored will be needed. - Nicole

If you're looking for a unisex shirt, go to Edwards Garment Co. (asi/51752); (800) 253-9885; www.edwardsgarment. *com*; this supplier carries a short-sleeve button-down shirt, product 1225, as well as a long-sleeve one, product 1275, and they're available in tall sizes. For a men's short-sleeve shirt, make your way to Assertive Creativity (asi/37166); (347) 350-6349; www.assertivecreativity.com; this supplier carries products LS-M-2946 and LS-M-3022, which will suit your needs. For a ladies' blouse that's simple yet fashionable, head over to Executive Apparel (asi/53418); (800) 227-3932; www. executiveapparel.com; there's a design that comes in both long and short sleeves, product 2408 and 2418. Happy dyeing!





**S***B***-/7 \$2.74\***/pc (net) Jumbo Zip Tote



**S7-36** \$2.89\*/pc (net) "Cross" Sport Duffle



**9345** \$4.66\*/pc (net) "Prime" Laptop Messenger Bag





68P-05 \$4.69\*/pc (net) Mono-Strap Backpack



\*PRICING FOR **BLANK GOODS ONLY.** 

6CP-27/3 \$2.83\*/pc (net)

6-Pack Plus Sports Cooler

\*PRICING GOOD UNTIL 12/31/13



**S***B***-732 \$2.24**\*/pc (net) "Prime" Zip Tote



cmbags.com















# **Gildan Acquires Decorator Company**

ildan Activewear Inc. (asi/56842), which sells apparel through multiple industry suppliers, has worked a definitive agreement to acquire substantially all of the assets of New Buffalo Shirt Factory Inc. for approximately \$7 million. New Buffalo is a screen printer and apparel decorator that has an operating affiliate based in Honduras.

Gildan expects that the deal will help it support the business of Anvil Knitwear (asi/36350), which Gildan acquired in May 2012. "The rationale for the acquisition of New Buffalo

is to complement the further development of Anvil's business with the major consumer brands which it supplies, and this customer base is expected to fully utilize the capacity of the New Buffalo facilities," Gildan said in a statement announcing the deal. "Although the main focus of Gildan's growth strategy is the continued development of its company-owned brands sold through printwear distributors and retailers, the company believes it also has a growth opportunity to build on Anvil's business as a supplychain partner to global consumer brands."

# Mobile Services Gaining Importance

A new survey of business executives shows that mobile services are becoming critical to companies, according to data released by IT firm Cbeyond. Specifically, while 42% of respondents said operating their business without mobile services would be a major challenge, 34% said their businesses could not survive without them.

"Our salespeople do frequently use mobile versions of our order management software and product search software, and useful apps like FedEx and UPS for tracking, and LinkedIn for connecting with clients and prospects," said Robert Fiveash, co-president of Brand Fuel Inc. (asi/145025).

80%

The percentage of social media users who prefer to connect with brands through Facebook. Conclusion: Have an active Facebook page.

Source: Business2Community

Almost half (47%) of business leaders surveyed consider social media critical to their growth, with social mobile registering at 22%. "Is there a 1-to-1 correlation between social media spend and sales? I don't think so. But if your larger clients are active with social media, I guarantee you they expect you to be as well," Fiveash says.

The Cbeyond survey also shows that technology spending remains strong. Nearly 59% expect an increase in technology spending in 2013, compared to 13% expecting a decrease. Small-business leaders also expect technology to play a major role in their businesses in 2013. According to Cbeyond, serving customers (65%) and data security (66%) ranked as equally important to business leaders. While most business leaders have taken steps to ensure the security of their business computers and information, 32% are unsure or do not believe their information is adequately protected.

Cbeyond's Summer 2013 Cbeyond Business Leader Snapshot is a survey of more than 700 executives who run businesses with between one and 250 employees.

# Ross Stores Fined Over Banned Apparel

In an announcement that highlights the importance of understanding apparel safety regulations, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) revealed that retailer Ross Stores has agreed to pay a \$3.9 million fine for repeated violations regarding the sale of children's apparel with drawstrings.

Ross had previously paid a \$500,000 penalty for selling the banned items between 2006 and 2008. But from January 2009 to February last year, the CPSC says, the store "knowingly failed to report" that it sold about 23,000 kids' jackets and sweatshirts with drawstrings at the neck and waist. Deemed to pose a safety risk, sales of such items are prohibited. In a statement, CPSC Chairman Inez M. Tenenbaum wrote: "The fact that Ross did not design, manufacture, or import the

# Event Calendar

Stitches.com
See a complete industry event calendar.

Sept. 16-19, Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta, Nashville Advantages Roadshow (800) 546-3300; www.advantagesroadshow.com

Sept. 17-20, Las Vegas Las Vegas Souvenir & Resort Gift Show (678) 285-3976; www.lvsouvenirshow.com

Sept. 26-28, Fort Worth, TX ISS Shows (508) 743-0532; www.issshows.com

Sept. 30-Oct. 4, Van Nuys, Ontario, Newport Beach, San Diego, Phoenix Advantages Roadshow (800) 546-3300; www.advantagesroadshow.com

Oct. 13-15, Galveston Island, TX Galveston Gift & Resort Merchandise Show (678) 285-3976; www.galvestongiftshow.com

Oct. 14-18, Milwaukee, Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Columbus Advantages Roadshow (800) 546-3300; www.advantagesroadshow.com

Oct. 20-23, Marlboro, MA New England Apparel Club Show (781) 326-9223; www.neacshow.com

garments did not relieve it of the obligation to ensure that they comply with all applicable safety statutes and regulations."



# Russian Artist Wins Acclaim With Embroidery

young Russian artist's unique embroidered portraits, which draw on Instagramstyle online photos for inspiration, have earned her international acclaim.

Tatiana Akhmetgalieva's works use the age-old art form of embroidery to capture and shed new perspective on the type of images people routinely post online of

themselves and friends.



Through thread, Akhmet-galieva depicts things like the self-shot in the mirror or the point-of-view picture that focuses on the photographer's feet and the ground. "The shift of these ubiquitous images from pixel to thread changes our perspective, while the use of attention-grabbing neon colors reminds us of the logic of ostentatious online self-demon-

stration," reviewer Ekaterina Shcherbakova writes in The Calvert Journal.

.....

A finalist for the 2010 Kandinsky Art Prize, Akhmetgalieva's work has been exihibited around Europe and Russia. This spring, her exhibition, "Hello World!," opened at the Mimmo Scognamiglio gallery in Milan, Italy.

# **Bangladesh Trade Restrictions Don't Pertain To Apparel**

he Obama administration's decision to suspend Bangladesh's special trade privileges won't affect U.S. apparel companies' ability to import garments from the Asian country, but may exacerbate negative perceptions that could present business challenges for American manufacturers who produce clothing there, industry insiders say.

Enacted over the summer, the trade restrictions were, in part, prompted by factory fires and a building collapse that claimed the lives of more than 1,200 Bangladeshi garment industry workers within the last year. Nonetheless, the trade suspensions do not apply to Bangladesh's lucrative textile and apparel industry.

While importing apparel from Bangladesh won't be directly affected, some say

the renewed negative focus on a country with a considerable image problem when it comes to worker safety could create perception problems that impact the bottom lines of manufacturers. "It could cause some customers and prospects to say, 'Nope, we don't want anything from Bangladesh,' " says David Bebon, CEO of DBEBZ Apparel, which manufactures garments in Bangladesh.

Ira Neaman, president of Vantage Apparel (asi/93390), opined that major companies and brands may hesitate to have apparel decoration performed in Bangladesh. "If they're having their name screen printed or embroidered on a fleece, they could have significant concerns about that being done in Bangladesh," he says.

# **Embroidery Sweatshops Rescue**

epal authorities recently rescued nearly 50 boys who were being forced to work in sari embroidery factories at the village of Thankot.

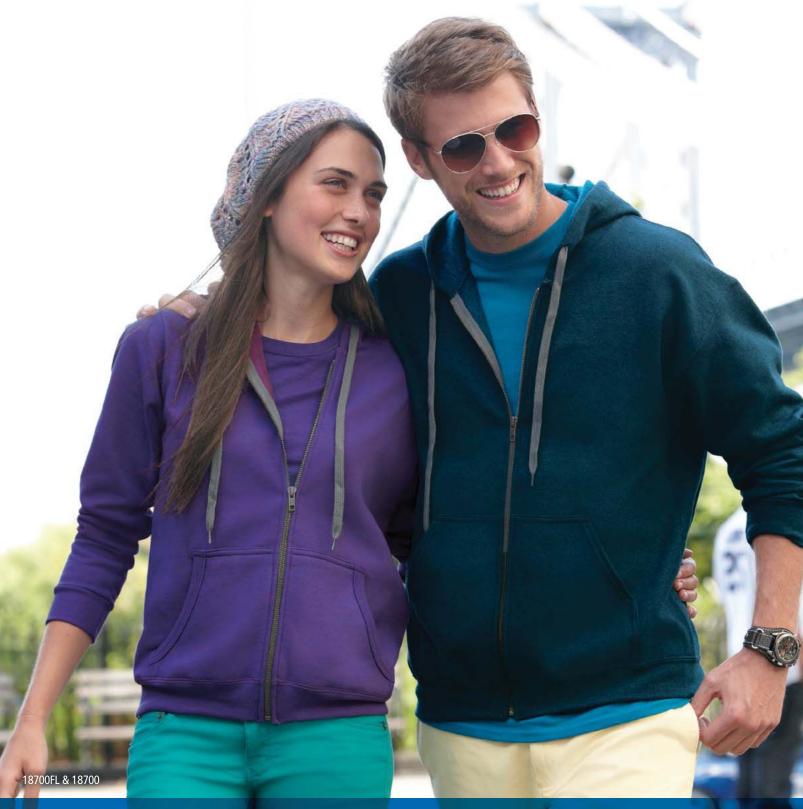
Tipped off to the exploitation, a joint team of police, child welfare workers and government labor officials in the South Asian country raided the factories this summer. Aged 10 to 17 years old, the 47 children were brought to the factories by relatives, authorities allege. Officials said the children under 16 will be sent to rehabilitation centers before being returned to their families.

In July 2012, another 47 boys were rescued from a factory in Bhaktapur, Nepal. Over 80 embroidery factories are operating in the Kathmandu Valley, and more than 500 children – mostly below 14 years of age – are employed there, child welfare workers say.

# **FESPA London 2013**

ESPA London 2013, an international trade show for the screen-, digital- and textile-printing community, was a resounding success.

FESPA, a global federation of 37 national printing industry associations, reported that the London show was its largest to date. People from more than 150 countries attended the exhibition, held in June at the Excel Centre in England's capital. The U.S., Germany and the U.K. were the countries with the highest number of attendees. For many vendors, business boomed. "The only way these shows work is if the exhibitors have success and are happy," FESPA Managing Director Neil Felton told PrintWeek. "From going around the stands and speaking to the vendors, it seems as if they have really done well."



# Vintage Style Made Doubly Cool

Two is so much better than one. Two colors that is. Like the surprise pop of complementing color inside our Vintage Classic Full Zip Hooded Sweatshirts. It's a fresh, unexpected take on your favorite fleece. The contrast drawcord and zipper pump up the energy even more, elevating the design from common to seriously cool. Yet as hip as they look, these sweatshirts feel even better. Mix it up with companion styles in 8 contemporary hues. Because more is always better.

GILDAN° part of your life™ myGildan.com



## **SALES**

# **American Stitches**

nascent made-in-the-USA resurgence is underway. A growing number of organizations that had used overseas providers to produce everything from high-tech equipment to embroidered apparel are starting to turn their attention to domestic production. Some savvy stitch shops, like Action Embroidery, are capitalizing on the demand.

By providing quality product and excellent service, the Ontario, CA-based shop won the business of the Ontario Police Air Support Unit. The law enforcement outfit was unhappy with the quality of the uniform patches it was buying from a foreign source. Looking for something better, the unit reached out to Action for help. It was the perfect opportunity for the shop, whose mainstay business is producing 80% of the U.S. military's embroidered insignias. The Action team created a high-quality sample that wowed the buyers, compelling the unit to ditch its overseas source. "We gave them something they felt was far superior," says Action's President Ira Newman.

What's more, the initial order led to repeat business and sales expansion. The Ontario unit also referred their brothersin-arms to Action. "Since then, other departments have asked us to do samples for them and manufacturer their stuff," Newman says.

Additionally, Action is hard at work pitching the benefits of buying American to groups like legislators and civic leaders, a proactive initiative that Newman and his team hope will lead to more governmental and municipal organizations turning to Action and domestic stitchers for their embroidery needs. Says Newman: "We try to show them the advantages of keeping the business here: higher employment. More people on the tax rolls. Less people on public assistance. A better-quality product."

# WEB

# **Bands on a Budget**

Bret Morgan and Danny Croak were already friends and music industry veterans when they heard the bar chords of new opportunity blaring. Morgan, a rock club owner at the time, and Croak, a promoter of large-scale concerts and festivals, got to talking one day about how often bands would ask them where to buy promotional merchandise for their groups. "We'd get asked four or five times a week," Morgan says.

Intrigued by the demand, the pair teamed up in 2006 to launch a Web-based start-up through which bands can order decorated apparel, branded stickers and more. Helped by Croak and Morgan's extensive web of connections in the music world, BandsOnABudget.com grew rapidly. Following years

of 40% to 50% annual growth, the business is poised for even greater revenue rises. "We're reaching that tipping point where we have the processes and marketing in place to start doubling our growth," says Morgan, noting the one-stop site for branded merchandise could soon feature a tool for designing apparel prints and the like online. "Our focus has always been on distinguishing ourselves with customer service."

Morgan and Croak combine their complementary talents to accomplish that feat. A computer engineer, Morgan builds the backend technological infrastructure that enables bands and others to order easily. Croak has focused on the operations side of the business, which includes building a cross-distribution



The BandsOnABudget.com team includes founders Danny Croak and Bret Morgan (back left)..

network that enables rock n' rollers in Canada, Australia, parts of Europe, and all over the U.S. to get fast and cost-effec-

tive fulfillment from BandsOn-ABudget.com. As of press time, the thriving start-up had more than 19,000 customers.





# MARKETING

# **Building a Brand**

ny apparel decorator worth their salt is adept at helping clients convey and build their brand image through embellished clothing. But when it comes to branding their own businesses, many shops either fall short or fail to do so at all. That irony cannot, however, be applied to Shockwaves Promotional Apparel (asi/87144). The Chicagobased decorator has created and marketed a definitively unique brand image that's helped it carve a niche and grow sales. Says Owner Greg Gaardbo: "We've really tried to set ourselves apart."

Shockwaves began blazing its own path by determining to be a diversified shop that offers everything from embroidery and sequins, to sublimation and standard-to-specialty screen-printing techniques. But Gaardbo didn't want to state blandly that his shop provides these things; he wanted to excite and entice clients and prospects with the branding power of these different mediums. To do that, he has cultivated an urban, fashion-fueled image for his shop.

Shockwaves Promotional Apparel (asi/87144) isn't kidding when it calls its decorated apparel "wearable art." The all-over sublimation print on this T-shirt proves that.

Perhaps nowhere is that more apparent

than on the Shockwaves website (www.shock wavesapparel.com). Upon first visiting, you'd be forgiven for thinking the decorator was actually a hip, edgy clothing brand like Affliction. A slide show with vibrant, all-over sublimated prints and multimedia designs that combine embroidery and print graphics flashes across the screen. In some cases, the threads are worn by attractive fashion models. Pop-out picture galleries of printed and stitched apparel with rock n' roll-inspired designs populate the site, as do videos of

Still, Shockwaves' brand marketing acumen extends beyond the cyber sphere. The shop captures the interest of current clients by sending them sample packages that feature the customers' logos designed in a novel way using diverse decoration methods, including evocative sublimation prints. Shockwaves also sends sample packages to prospects to introduce the breadth and stylistic capabilities of the shop, a move that has helped win new customers.

the different embellishing techniques that Shockwaves offers.





# FRESHER, DRIER PERFORMANCE FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

Excellence is what **New Balance**® is all about: from spirited, contemporary styling to the most advanced performance technology. The **9119** and **9119L** Tempo Long Sleeve Performance T-shirts have Lightning Dry® moisture management and anti-microbial properties to feel dry even in the heat of action. Choose New Balance, and run ahead of the crowd.

For more information visit NBimprint.com.





# SHOP MAKEOVER

# Cricket's List

anaging time wisely is critical to the success of every apparel decorating shop. And yet, effective time management is something decorators large and small struggle with on a daily basis. Lorelei Hancock has experienced the tug-of-war with time firsthand. As the owner of a home-based embroidery business, Hancock admits that it used to be that the hours ruled her, not the other way around. "I was always going in so many different directions at once," she says. "It was negatively affecting my business. I'd start

on something, and then jump to something else. It was very stressful to get just one thing done."

While simple, her solution has proven highly effective. Each night, Hancock makes a list of the things she'll work on the next day. The owner of Clermont, FL-based Cricket Stitches allots specific time limits for each task. She's always sure to leave a little extra time for each project to account for unforeseen complications. If Hancock (nicknamed Cricket) finishes a task ahead of a time, she

moves onto others. "I'll answer e-mails or update Facebook," she says.

Importantly, Hancock sticks to the schedule, despite the temptation to deviate. In the past, for example, she may have stopped her stitching to run and answer the phone. Now, however, she lets it ring, and then reaches out to customers later in the day during time she has set aside for callbacks. "Staying on schedule has helped me be a lot more efficient," she says. "It's also a lot less stressful."

Clearly, controlling the

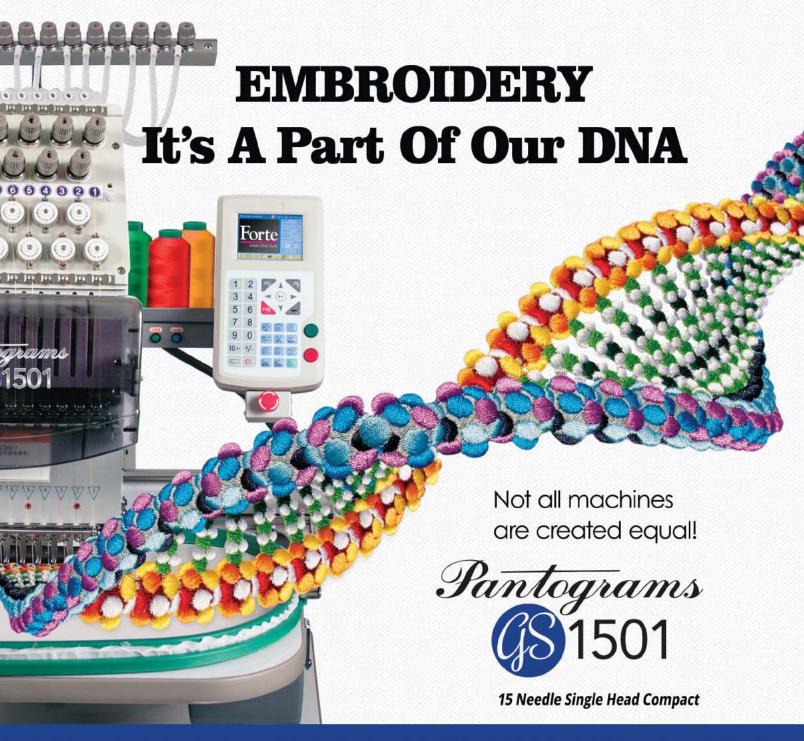
1 PM
is the best time to post on
Facebook if you want people to
share your post.

Source: Dan Zarrella, social media scientist

clock better is helping Cricket Stitches. In addition to selling her personalized gift items, Hancock is growing sales with schools and construction companies. She says, "I'm able to get everything done and keep my customers happy."







# Check out the Innovative, NEW Pantograms G\$1501

For 45 years, Pantograms has been the heart and soul of the commercial embroidery industry helping tens of thousands embroiderers start and grow their businesses. We've used our knowledge to produce a high-quality, commercial grade embroidery system that incorporates all of the necessary features for optimal performance requiring the least amount of start-up capital. Not only do you get the latest innovative equipment backed with five year warranty, you'll gain Pantograms expert advice and stability. Pantograms has built its foundation on embroidery and we extend that wisdom to our customers because we know what it takes to succeed — from your initial investment to training and support.

Built for millions of stitches — with each of our customers in mind.

Call to see how this embroidery solution can benefit you.

www.pantograms.com

1-800-872-1555

By Tonia Kimbrough

# **Distressed Embroidery**

Clients often want distressed embroidered logos and designs on apparel and accessories that have retail flair. Learn how to create a distressed logo in five easy steps.



## **EVALUATE YOUR**

ARTWORK. Decide if all the elements in the artwork will translate well into distressed embroidery; eliminate or adjust any questionable elements. Hint: The logo scale will have a major impact on how much or little detail you're able to keep in the distressed patterns.



#### DIGITIZE THE LOGO.

Maximize the logo height for a cap application. Decide which, if any, voided areas of the distressed design should be stitched. You can plan to leave some space empty so the fabric shows through. Hint: Too many gaps in the distressed pattern may cause the needles to perforate the fabric. These places might be best stitched to create effect and not left empty to potentially cut a hole in the fabric.



## **GET CREATIVE.** Use

manual digitizing to control the look you want, especially with the distressed effect, detailed angles and run patterns. Manual runs and satin patterns can be used to create the random lines, distortion, splatters and gaps in art. Digitizing software can also create distressed looks.



# SAMPLE AND

RESAMPLE. Do an initial stitch-out early, ideally on the actual item. A distressed look requires tweaking random stitches, so make adjustments and resample until you get the exact look. (The good part about running a distressed logo is that it's supposed to look rough.)



This look was created by Drew Coufal, owner of Ohio-based Sew & Sew Embroidery, for a client that wanted a "T1" logo to be distress embroidered on a selection of retail caps; circle 170 on Free Info Card or visit www.sewandsewemb.com.

24/7 Online Imprinting Training

ecorating equipment and materials suppliers are making it easier than ever for decorators to learn new techniques by offering online tutorials that support many popular decorating mediums. From proper artwork prep to equipment training that adds bling to the bottom line, there are lots of free online tools available if you know where to look.

For example, a new 11-minute, how-to video by Imprintables Warehouse (asi/58475) expert Steven Jackson shows decorators how to correctly handle outlines, contours and cutlines when designing for output to a vinyl printer/cutter. Jackson explains a common mistake that newcomers often make when learning Corel Corp.'s CorelDRAW. In the scenario he presents, a designer couldn't figure out how to put a cutline around block lettering that was originally created as an outline.

Jackson explains that in most graphics software, an outline is a property of an object (rather than its own object). This can cause issues when you're setting up a cutline around the outline, as it'll be placed on the center of the outline rather than on an outer edge. Jackson shows step by step how to convert the outline to an object; make necessary adjustments to individual letters for better cutting; and break the contour group apart so it won't cut as one piece. This free video can be viewed at <a href="https://www.myversacamm.com">www.myversacamm.com</a>. Select the "Outline and Contours and Cutlines, Oh My" tutorial.

If you want to purchase rhinestone-transfer equipment, look at options from ColDesi, which has launched a free online training program for its CAMS 1V-2P automatic rhinestone machine. The 1V-2P is a commercial-grade rhinestone-transfer producer that places up to two colors and sizes of Hotfix rhinestones directly onto transfer paper at up to 150 stones per minute.



Complimentary training for the rhinestone machine includes several sessions:

- Basic setup of the machine with accompanying YouTube videos (www.youtube.com/coldesicolman) that walk customers through initial setup tasks.
- An exam to help verify competency and that the customer has everything she needs to progress through training.
- A live webinar where a CAMS rhinestone machine trainer works with a small group, live online, in using the included rhinestone design software, creating and outputting designs to the CAMS machine. Customers also receive a link to a recording of the live session that they can review at their leisure.

These online training sessions were created for customers who are unable to attend classroom training at ColDesi's Florida, California or New Jersey training centers. Training can be scheduled at <a href="https://www.coldesi.com/coldesi-support-calendar.html">www.coldesi.com/coldesi-support-calendar.html</a>.



# Fashion-Inspired Patchwork

mbellishment experts at Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120) have their eye on what's fresh in fashion. The company recently posted a "Style Alert" on its Facebook page noting the use of patches in fall 2013 collections, such as that of 3.1 Phillip Lim. The designer look from the runway show paired a leather peplum motorcycle vest with a stretch denim patchwork racer suit.

"Military and motorcycle trends have been around for decades," says Randi Blumenthal-Joseph, president of Penn Emblem Co., which manufactures military, motorcycle and novelty patches. "Fall 2013 runways are seeing a resurfacing of this 1970s/'80s trend, and Penn Emblem is aligning itself with the fashion industry. Cool military emblems or motorcycle patches on your clients' jacket, pants or headwear really can add trendiness to their outfits." To learn more about custom patches, visit <a href="https://www.pennemblem.com">www.pennemblem.com</a>.

PENN EMBLEM CO. (ASI/77120); CIRCLE 172 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 793-7366.

# Machine & Software Updates



# Pneumatic Press Package

anual screen-printing shops looking to automate have a new convenient choice. Workhorse Products offers complete entrylevel packages to fit any budget, space constraint or production need. Its Pneumatic Package No. 1 is centered on the Freedom six-color, eight-station press. This entry-level machine is perfect for the step up to automation. Freedom's fast indexing speed, simple-to-use controls and precise micro registration ensure that setups are as easy as with a manual. The package also includes several other key components:

- •To keep up with Freedom's production rate, the Powerhouse electric quartz PQ3011 dryer is ideal. This oven can output up to 500 pieces per hour using medium-wave IR elements that transmit heat more quickly than conventional ceramic panels.
- The Point 1000 screen exposure unit provides high-resolution screens at an affordable price by bringing together a 1,000-watt halogen point light source that captures halftones and fine lines while the UV fluorescent lights speed exposure.
- The Flashback flash cure allows you to print, flash and cool all on the same head.
- •The Wash-It screen reclaiming sink is built at waist height and made of waterproof steel.

Rounding out this package are optional platens that come in adult, youth and sleeve sizes. A wide range of packages are available. Workhorse will custom-create any

package to meet your needs. Visit www. workhorseproducts.com for more information.

Machine & Software Update continued on page 41



# New Emulsion Improves Print Definition

> GRAPHIC SOLUTIONS GROUP; CIRCLE 175 ON FREE INFO CARD OR VISIT WWW.GOGSG.COM.

Graphic Solutions Group (GSG) recently added a new Kiwo diazo dual-cure emulsion called KIWOCOL Poly-Plus ER. This type of emulsion offers better resolution, reduced shrinkage, and improved print definition over a photopolymer. It has a high-solids content of 42%, so it builds up quickly on the screen, requiring fewer coats to get it to the appropriate thickness. It's an ideal choice for use with inkjet film positives because its tack-free surface doesn't pull the image off the film. It also has great peel/snap-off characteristics when the screen is on the press.

# Product Pick

A heather finish and stylish cut make this lightweight pullover hoodie a perfect fall garment for fashion-conscious collegians and teens. This junior's style SS650 from Independent Trading Co. is made of a 6.5-oz. blend of 60% cotton/40% polyester. (Gunmetal heather is 90% cotton/10% polyester.) It has a contemporary silhouette with metal eyelets, a flat draw cord, an unlined hood and 1x1 rib-knit cuffs and waistband.

There's a split-stitch doubleneedle sewing throughout and twill neck tape for added durability. The fabric's face is made of a cotton/poly blend of 24 singles yarn, which provides an ultra-smooth surface for screen-printing.

It comes in sizes XS up to 2XL in black, charcoal heather, gunmetal heather and white.



# **Quick Tips**

Decorate team
uniforms fast with
Precut Letters and
Numbers in ThermoFILM. It's an economical way to personalize jerseys with a
durable material that
will outlast the life of



STAHLS' ID DIRECT (*ASI/88984*); CIRCLE 171 ON FREE INFO CARD

the garment. Thermo-FILM is known for its superior opacity, stopping strike-through on polyester and sublimated garments. Available in 20 popular colors that heat apply in six to eight seconds at 330° Fahrenheit. For more information, visit www.StahlsID.com/thermo-film.

2

Kick off the school year with Mascot Vector Graphics Clip Ar t. This extensive collection is part of the Stahls' ID (asi/88984) CutUps series, designed and offered by Great Dane Graphics. The package offers 150 unique images



GREAT DANE GRAPH CIRCLE 177 ON FREE INFO CARD

on a CD that are specially designed to cut and weed easily. It's a great way to save time when offering heat-applied graphics created with a cutter. Go to www.greatdanegraphics. com to learn more.

3

Go green with Eco-SolMAX and Eco-Sol MAX 2 digital printing inks. Both have received GREENGUARD Gold UL 2818 certification from UL Environment, a business unit of UL (Underwriters



ROLAND DGA CORP.; CIRCLE 178 ON FREE

Laboratories). This certification provides assurance that these products meet some of the world's most rigorous and comprehensive standards for low emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into indoor air. To learn more, visit www.rolanddga.com.

# Machine & Software Updates

# **Upload Images, Prep Art Easily**

irectly upload artwork or a photograph from mobile devices with Inksoft's upgraded Image Uploader, a recent addition to its Design Studio online designer program. Another innovation is the ability to upload raster images and convert them to use as artwork for screen printing.

Choose one of three versions. The complete version is for shops offering screen printing, direct-to-garment printing and digital printing. The vector-enhanced version is formatted for vector or raster art, while allowing you to modify the raster artwork to be usable for screen printing. The third version is vector only and won't allow customers to upload raster artwork.

All improvements are designed to speed workflow from design to finished product, while allowing your customer to make many of the decisions about artwork that can take up so much time when done in person or on the phone. It also shows your client how to save money by reducing or combining colors in a design. This intuitive feature walks the customer through the art preparation process step by step. To see a demo video, go to <code>www.inksoft.com/new-inksoft-enhanced-image-uploader</code>.

# **Upgrade Your Air Compressor**

otronix now offers a competitively priced air compressor designed to power its Air Fusion, Tabletop Air Fusion and Air Swinger model heat presses. This commercialgrade unit is 3/4 horsepower and has a 6.6-gallon capacity. It requires single-phase electricity and can be plugged into any regular household 120-volt outlet. The cubic feet per minute (CFM) is 2.5, and it has a stop/start motor. It'll work with one heat press at a time. For more information, go to www.stahls.com/air-fusionheat-press.



HOTRONIX; CIRCLE 173 ON FREE INFO CARD OR CALL (800) 727-8520





# **Trend Alerts**

all/winter 2013/2014 includes an impressive assortment of dynamic and innovative apparel trends. Riffing on 1980s styles and designs, punk apparel has resurfaced with a vengeance, incorporating leather, metal and brocade embellishments into updated styles. Moss is a full-bodied, luscious dark green that's emerged this season, potentially replacing emerald for the remainder of the year. Last, but never least, is fur, an extravagant embellishment that's gracing a large proportion of designers' collections with its irresistible opulence.







#### PUNK

Sultry and eclectic, Saint Laurent's punk- and grungeinspired collection seized the runway at Paris Fashion Week. This gritty ensemble juxtaposes clubwear and military accents and has tons of Goth appeal.

#### MOSS

Céline debuted its stunning moss Mohair coat during Paris Fashion Week. Moss makes for a gorgeous pairing with neutrals, particularly black and mocha.

#### HIR

Fur made a notable appearance in Valentino's autumn lineup during Paris Fashion Week with this regal fur skirt and fur-embellished mesh top. Snow leopard fur is highly sought after due to its rarity, imbuing it with a distinctive majesty.

# Trends

# APPAREL

# Punk

Punk apparel is strutting the catwalks, from Saint Laurent's grunge-inspired take to Givenchy's Bohemian-themed rendition. Oozing with attitude and supplying clubby looks with rocker-chick appeal, this is one trend you won't be able to help but keep your eye on.

"Punk has made a glamorous comeback," says Shakira Fuchu-Parks, marketing media manager for Boxercraft (asi/41325). "It's less about being shocking and more about glamour." She notes that while punk apparel styles have definitely changed somewhat since their heyday in the 1980s, they haven't lost their edge: "Punk is still about having the right attitude. There's something strong and fearless about it."

Fuchu-Parks says punk styles are wholly applicable to promotional events. "You can easily incorporate punk into any promotional campaign," she says. "It has an instant presence, and punk styles in general stand out and make a bold statement."



# Look Book

# COLOR

# Moss

n understated shade of green with a hint of yellow, the color moss suggests fertility and growth. The latest designs by Edun, Céline and Calvin Klein feature this demure hue in a variety of fabrics ranging from leather to tweed.

"Moss is becoming a distinct color for fall/winter, continuing the green color trend into 2013 and into 2014," says Alka Ahuja, director of coordination for Sun N Sand Accessories (asi/90142). "A timeless color, moss is earthy with vibrant to neutral hues that complement the autumnal palette and spice up everything from home décor to fashion accessories."

Moss is also leading the way when it comes to makeup and accessories, Ahuja says. "Cosmetics such as nail polish and eye shadow are already flaunting this color for fall. In addition, we're seeing it pop up in everything from jewelry, particularly earrings, to fashion accessories such as gloves, hats, handbags, belts and shoes."



# Trends

# EMBELLISHMENT

# Fur

ne of this season's most delectable trends is fur – and lots of it. From Versace's plush handbags to Paul & Joe's fur collars and coats by Jean Paul Gaultier in fur patchwork, this trend combines a sense of luxury with visual simplicity.

"Fur is durable, hypoallergenic, biodegradable and warm, not to mention very attractive," says Jacky Clyman, co-owner and executive vice president of Cockpit USA Inc. (asi/43022). "One way fur is implemented into men's and women's apparel is around the hoods of winter coats to keep snow from accumulating, combining both practical and fashionforward functions." Clyman's company specializes in highend bomber jackets, many of which make considerable use of fur. "We've carried fur-trimmed garments since we started in business back in the '70s," she says.

You'll find a plethora of fur accessories this fall, too, such as stoles and scarves. Anything goes in terms of putting an outfit together – present fur sparingly or in copious amounts, depending on the occasion.



# OOK BOOK Showcase: Infant/Toddler

By repackaging trendy prints and designs using brighter colors and larger patterns and the like, designers of kids' apparel have revamped the children's clothing market and imbued it with fashion vogue.

Kristin M. Slinn, merchandising manager for LA T Sportswear (asi/65948), says bright color is the top apparel trend for this season's kids' wear. "It's exciting to see something other than the usual baby pastels being used," she says. "There's a huge array of colors available for both infants and toddlers."

As far as pattern trends for kids' wear, Slinn points to camouflage. "Camouflage is the 'it' print right now and can be found in high fashion and streetwear alike," she says. She feels camouflage's success can be primarily ascribed to the fact that it can be applied to numerous promotional opportunities. Slinn lists fundraisers, military support programs and school spirit programs as examples.

Finally, Slinn tags the tutu trend as a standout favorite among girls. "Girly-girl designs are always in style, and tutus are irresistible," she notes. Tutu shirts are not only adorable, Slinn says, but convenient for embellishing: "There are endless possibilities for printing programs that include tees and bodysuits with attached tutus. With tutus already part of the shirt, the job is much easier for the printers and designers, since all they have to worry about are the embellishments."



# Niche: Biker Patches/Emblems

■ mbroidered patches and emblems are a significant aspect of biker culture, as they assist in establishing a group's identity. Penn Emblem Co. (asi/77120) Account Manager Norma Whitford says the patch trends she's been seeing in her office's Philadelphia location involve the way a patch is assembled. "The most popular trend right now is a patch/ emblem that consists of five separate pieces: a center patch, two rocker patches placed one above and one below the main patch, and two smaller side patches placed to the right and left of the center patch," says Whitford, who adds that clients are very particular about the fonts they choose.

Nate Milhoan, owner of Tempe, AZ-based Azca Embroidery (asi/701972), points to color. "We've watched darker, dull colors move to lighter and brighter colors, such as orange, green and even cyan," says Milhoan, who recommends showing clients all of your thread colors, including glow-in-the-dark.

Another trend Milhoan notes is shape variety. "Patches have moved from more traditional shapes, such as circular or rectangular center patches and semicircular rockers, to more irregular," says Milhoan, who believes it's because of a growing interest in laser cutting. "These designs lend themselves much better to laser-cut borders, rather than merrowed."



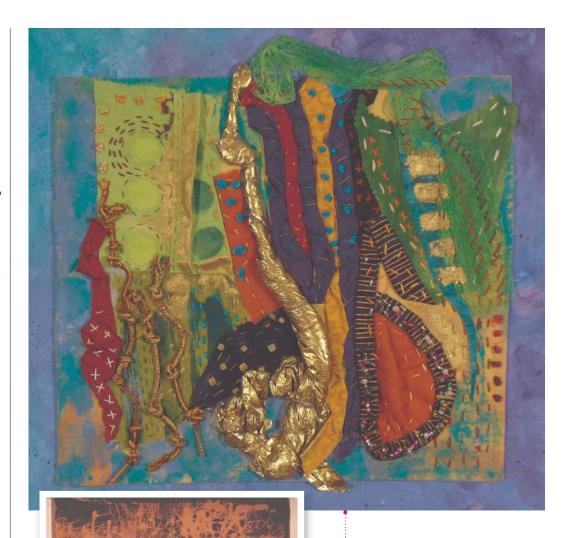
# LOOK BOOK Inspiration: Sally Dutko

**\**iber artist Sally Dutko has been enamored by fabric for a long time. "Fabric and sewing have always been a part of my life," she says. She learned how to sew at age 4; in high school and college, her wardrobe consisted primarily of clothing she had designed and made herself. Although Dutko continued to pursue her interest in garment design as well as quilting, she also earned a BFA in painting from Cooper Union, which laid the foundation for her current body of award-winning mixed-media work.

"My background in painting and graphic design significantly influenced my artwork," she says. "The first art quilts that I made I actually called 'fabric paintings.' Patterns and colors were sewn with raw edges to create a paint-like surface, with the sewing machine needle as the drawing tool. I found this way of working to be very intuitive and spontaneous, leading to unexpected results."

Besides being an active member of three art-critique groups, including the Fort Myers-based Art Quilters Unlimited, Dutko is a passionate supporter of promoting fiber arts as a valid art form and increasing its recognition. "Many fiber artists are doing magnificent work," she says. "There's no reason why they shouldn't be exhibited in regular art shows and more museums."

Visit www.sallydutko.com.



Fabric of Our Lives (16" x 16") is a collection of stitched and painted fabrics mounted on stretched canvas. Showing a multitude of fabrics and surface treatments, this piece is about the rich language of fibers that we're fortunate to have all around us, Dutko says.

## Of the Earth (14"

x 18") is a canvasmounted, hand-stitched mixed-media piece that includes discharged fabrics, silk, wool, cotton and ancient pottery shards

ALISSA TALLMAN is a contributing writer to Stitches.



Technical fabric treatment and storm flap combine to prevent moisture from entering garment for a period of time.



Fabric constructed with a touch of Lycra®spandex or stretchy material for extra comfort and flexibility.



Active-Dry® moisture management fabric that wicks perspiration away from the skin and onto the surface of the fabric for evaporation. Keeps you cool and comfortable.



Technical fabric construction that pushes moisture to the surface of the garment for evaporation.



Garment designed with fabric treatment that offers maximum wind-blocking properties.



# THE OMNI JACKET LIGHTWEIGHT SOFT-SHELL PERFORMANCE TESTED

Industry's most versatile and best value jacket
Available in 6 colors from XS-4XL

Landuay Explore new possibilities.

ASI 66238 PPAI 243349 SAGE 67239 LANDWAY.COM

# Steps

Eight designers take decorated apparel and textile art to new heights, so get ready to take a walk on the wild side.

By Sara Lavenduski, Samantha Phillips and Grace Bennett Photography: Mark Pricskett

# Conrad Booker created this "ecogeisha" dress after he saw an image of a rope coat. "I have access to paper welt cording because I do a lot of pillows," he says. The dress "looks like a sketched, scribbled dress that was lifted off the page and brought to life. I used a voga ball to form the shape and when the glue dried, the rope main-In line with the geisha-inspired sometimes very traditional and other times very boundaries," Booker says. "But it seems to work, and I fits that profile. background and wanted something that was recyclable, affordable and

THE TEA HOUSE

look, Booker made towering

# THE HARLEQUIN

"I'm most inspired by the way materials fold, move and arc into the air," says Pamela Ptak, a PA-based fashion designer. When Ptak, also founder of the Arts and Fashion Institute, set out to create the Harlequin set, she went directly to draping. "I prefer draping to sketching," she explains, "so my ideas are born as I work in 3-D." After draping and pattern making, she selected textiles. "I chose a fine four-way stretch knit for the top and cashmere lined with silk charmeuse for the skirt," she says. "Both include long bias-cut insertions of cream and tan silk chiffon."

While Ptak sewed, she inserted the dimensional chiffon into the seams, setting the ends and corners with a twist to avoid flatness. Finally, she secured the chiffon strips on the inside in the serged seam allowances. "My design aesthetic stays constant throughout each of my projects," she says, "and I focus on three major themes in my work: line, texture and fold."

Niamh O'Connor, evil genius/ art director at Urban Threads, recently debuted her new Evenfall Lace series, a collection of seven freestanding lace designs, designed to work all hoop sizes. "These pieces range from simple things like butterflies and feathers to more complex designs that make full chokers and masks," O'Connor says. "Just because there are seven lace pieces doesn't mean there are only seven things you can make. Scraps of fabric and multiples of our lace edging brought a chandelier to life, and we used a combination of our cuff design and parts of the choker to construct these delicate lace heels. A little glue and some stitches and you have a pair of one-of-a-kind shoes that could have walked straight off the runway." - SL



# THE FLORIST

Pamela Ptak's favorite French design instructor told his students, "Let the fabric tell you what it wants to become." Years later, in a small New York City textile store, Ptak stood among rolls of textured fabrics and couldn't help but be drawn to three particular rolls of laser-cut organza, in off-white, neutral and translucent black.

"This textile was extremely delicate in off-white," Ptak says. "But, in black and white, it spoke to me about layered texture and heightened contrast." Ptak hand-cut the organza into tiny flower-shaped pieces, until magnificent heaps of delicate flowers filled her studio. Eventually, she created a floral overdress that cascades over a black silk/satin corset and mini wrap skirt.

Adding to this look are bold '60s-inspired accessories and shoes designed by artist/designer Conrad Booker, including circular ash-colored earrings that lend to the architectural feel of the black wrap skirt and corset. – Samantha Phillips

# How the Floral Overdress Was Made

Ptak's floral overdress required several intricate steps.

- 1. White silk was hand-cut into 1,000 white flower petals. Black organza was also hand-cut to contrast the white flower petals.
- 2. The edges of the black flower shapes were burned over a candle to create a curling effect that more accurately represents a natural flower.
- 3. The flower shapes, in contrasting black and white, were pinned in position on top of the black satin silk wrap skirt and corset.
- 4. The front and back of the overdress were cut free to create kimonoinspired sleeves; tiny stitches were sewn in welt-style to prevent inside seam allowances.
- 5. Sheer, white organza ribbons were added as shoulder straps under the hand-stitched flowers to support the dress weight.
- 6. The flowers were then handstitched on a mannequin.



# Cover Story

# THE LIFE AQUATIC

This sublimated and sequined dress was created and decorated by Greg Gaardbo, founder and creative director of Shockwaves Promotional Apparel (asi/87144). Gaardbo imprinted the dress with an image of the Kraken, a fictional sea monster sprung from Norwegian legends, and a large anchor. "I was inspired by old fashioneddepictions of the octopus," says Gaardbo, who added long tassels to the dress to act as tentacles, giving the dress wave-like movement. -SP

# How It Was Made

Gaardbo took a blank maxi dress made of jersey fabric and used sublimation, rhinestones and sequins to create a one-ofa-kind piece.

- 1. First, the blank jersey dress was sublimated with the Kraken image.
- 2. Slits were cut into the bottom of the dress to form tentacle-like tassels.
- 3. Blue rhinestones were sewn into the bottom of each tassel to add shimmer.
- 4. Silver and black sequins were arranged in the shape of a ship anchor and sewn onto the front of the dress.



# THE GREAT GATSBY

Mariana Leung, who entered the fashion world after watching an Alfred Sung fashion show in Toronto, designed this sheer, flapper-style dress. Made of soft tulle with added antique silverlined glass beads and hand-set crystals along the neckline, this dress reads very modern. Leung, owner of New York City-based WengMeng Design and MSFabulous.com, married a 1920s dropped waist silhouette with contemporary flutter sleeves and a drawstring.

Tulle is a difficult material to machine-sew, so "I decided to work with the problem and make it a feature," she says. Stretching out the tulle as she stitched gave the sleeves an appealing, wavy edge.

The dress is accessorized with an Evenfall accessories series mask, created by Urban Threads' Niamh O'Connor. The mask was designed and colored with black Rit dye to mimic light at dusk. "It was designed and digitized to be stitched out in cotton thread," O'Connor says. "This allows it to hold up some of its unique lace shapes and stunningly absorb the dye to create a dusky ombre transition." – *Grace Bennett* 













# **Premium Quality Blanks** www.monag.com

877 - 99 - MONAG

# Bestin Show

Score sales with this season's top apparel, accessories, color and embellishment trends.

By Sydney Cohn and Alissa Tallman

# **Grunge Apparel**

Worn by rock stars for decades, grunge is making a big comeback. With dark colors and lots of leather, grunge is hot for fall and winter. You'll see lots of hardware such as zippers and buttons by way of embellishment. Tell your clients to accessorize when pitching this style: Large necklaces and bracelets are where it's at.



**Taylor Momsen** is totally grunge as she arrives in Japan.



A red plaid button-down like this cotton shirt (100122) from Broberry Mfg. Inc. (asi/42057; circle 179 on Free Info Card) is standard to the grunge "uniform" - think Niryana and Pearl Jam fans



During **Paris Fashion Week**, this Valentino shift dress in Oxblood Red gave this dress a luxurious look with a rocker edge.



(FJ342) is available from Dickies Occupational Wear (asi/49675; circle 180 on Free Info Card).

### Oxblood red

is a darker twist
on a classic, bright,
confident color. With blue
and purple undertones, this
striking color is all over
the runways, including
Valentino and Tory
Burch.

# **COLOR CRASH COURSE**

# Oxblood Red

- Why we love it: Oxblood is dramatic and vibrant without being too showy. "Oxblood red portrays passion, fashion and power," says Mary Ellen Nichols, director of marketing and communications at Bodek and Rhodes (asi/40788). "It exudes confidence and stability."
- **How to wear it:** Oxblood leather is a hot item, also featured by Burberry Prorsum and Chanel. You can also find pumps, boots and skinny jeans in this enterprising hue.
- Plays well with: Black, navy, gray, cobalt and prints (try leopard)
- How to decorate it: Black and white are your go-to neutrals for this standout shade. Logos and embellishments in either or both colors can be executed without losing the overall visual power Oxblood provides.





One of the most ubiquitous prints of fall/winter 2013 is leopard. **Diane Von Furstenberg** unleashed her large-scale rendition of the print at New York Fashion Week with this dynamic two-piece suit.



**LEOPARD:** Assertive Creativity LLC (*asi/37166*; circle 152 on Free Info Card) carries this fringed and festive leopard scarf

(SU-MX7-1).

At Paris Fashion Week, herringbone was everywhere, especially in Haider Ackermann's autumn lineup. This genteel herringbone drape coat makes for a splendid pairing with fur accents, offering both a variety of textures and neutral hues.



Stripes are a familiar favorite, and **Max Mara** pulled out all the stops when he designed this form-flattering striped dress, which was showcased during Milan Fashion Week.



STRIPES: This attractive 100% cotton Puma sweater (562661-02) can be found at Pro Golf Premiums Inc. (asi/79680; circle 183 on Free Info Card).



# **Textured Handbags**

Textured handbags are fantastic accessories for lending an outfit some extra relish. "Textured handbags are always on trend," says Michelle Davidson, sales and merchandise manager for A M C Special Markets (asi/30198). "It can be as simple as a timeless pebbled-leather pattern, a classic quilt design or an eye-catching snake print."



# **Bag Trends**

Cloth handbags with a handmade look correspond with ever-popular boho fashions. Owner of LBD Promos (asi/67735) Sharon Tennyson suggests that purses in this category "keep it simple and let the bags themselves do the talking." These items make a perfect match with jeans or vintageinspired boho styles.

2 Handbags sporting extra "hardware" like studs, buckles and chains are ubiquitous this season; take a look at the recent offerings by Chloe and Loewe. Davidson stresses the versatility of these bags. "You can easily carry them wearing blue jeans, a tank top and flip-flops, or you can pair them with a flirty blouse and trousers for an instant edge," she says.

**Quilted handbags** fall in line with the popular geometric-print apparel trend. Designs by Alexander McQueen and Chanel feature this style with zest. Carry these purses with smart-looking casual outfits or formal wear to accommodate their elegance.



Taylor handbag (VHCAFP) with a

handcrafted look.

# At Milan Fashion Week, this gorgeous Bottega Veneta dress' bold color on a monochrome background was a showstopper.

# Painted Apparel

Shown on the runway by Tsumori Chisato and Bottega Veneta, the "painted" details bring the garments to life.

> In Your Face Apparel (asi/62494; circle 164 on Free Info Card) carries this V-neck tee featuring dolman sleeves and a custom multimedia design.



## Organic

cotton is one of the most popular "green" fabrics. Not only is it more environmentally friendly than synthetic types, but it's also higher in quality, meaning it's more comfortable to wear and stronger in terms of durability

# A Healthier Wardrobe

Tencel, similar to rayon in texture and weight, hails from eucalyptus trees, which generate cellulose naturally in large amounts, thereby lowering the need for synthetic cellulose and requiring less manufacturing energy. It's also biodegradable as a result.





circle 189 on Free Info Card) distributes

several Tencel items, including this long-

sleeve button-down work shirt (FRK009-LGY).

# The Real Scoop on Bamboo

Only the production of 100% natural bamboo or bamboo manufactured through the lyocell process - like Tencel - generates minimal toxic waste and is genuinely ecological.

Although some viscose and rayon is made with bamboo pulp, both require considerable synthetic processing and are thus not actually "green" fabrics. In addition, neither viscose nor rayon bamboo feature the kind of antimicrobial properties that pure bamboo textiles possess. Clothing manufacturers must now state on the labels of all bamboo garments whether they consist of viscose or rayon.



www.zskusa.com

or call Toll Free: 800 525 2366

#### **ZSK USA INC.**

Office Franklin 70 Industrial Park Drive, Unit 1 Franklin - New Hampshire 03235 E-Mail: jthibodeau@zskusa.com

#### **ZSK USA INC.**

**NEW** Office Schaumburg 518 Pratt Avenue Schaumburg - Illinois 60193 E-Mail: dsmith@zskusa.com

#### **ZSK ONLINE**

www.zskusa.com www.zsk.de www.braille-embroidery.com www.youtube.com/user/zskfilm

r Car

Leather

Leather jackets are staple items right now – and they go with almost everything, from jeans to skirts to dress pants. They're also a cinch to embellish with embroidery, patches or logos and present multiple areas for featuring these designs, such as the sleeves, the back of the neck, the rear of the jacket or



Take a look at Redline (asi/81/33; circle 192 on Free Info Card) for numerous leather products such as this genuine leather baseball cap (RGF616).

Leather Care
Guide

Always store leather items on hangers to maintain their shape. Avoid wrapping leather products in any kind of synthetic material, which can dry out leather and harvest mildew. Garment bags that are especially made for leather products are best; unbleached natural cotton bags are ideal.

Selling

Tip: Print out this list on logoembossed stationery and include it with any decorated leather

goods sent to

customers.

Apply a high-quality leather conditioner to the exterior of your leather products to protect them from potential damage, but only two or three times a year - make sure not to overtreat them.

Protect leather from moisture as much as possible. Spray treatments can effectively safeguard it from minimal exposure. In the event a product's surface gets wet, let it air dry as opposed to applying heat, which could cause the leather to crack.

If soiled lightly, leather surfaces can be cleaned gently with a damp cloth. For more serious stains, it's best to head to a professional.

**ALISSA TALLMAN** and **SYDNEY COHN** are contributors to *Stitches*.





## THE STELLAR 2014 LINE UP...

## ORLANDO

January 5-7 (Sunday-Tuesday)

ASI's Shark Tank starring Barbara Corcoran and Kevin O'Leary

Co-sponsored by Hanes/Champion, asi/59528 & Showdown Displays, asi/87188





## DALLAS

February 4-6 (Tuesday-Thursday)

President George W. Bush

Co-sponsored by Express-A-Button, asi/35408; American Zebra Line, asi/35745; Pepco Poms, asi/77280 & Showdown Displays, asi/87188

## LONG BEACH

March 25-27 (Tuesday-Thursday)

**Erik Wahl - The Picasso of Creativity** 

Sponsored by Showdown Displays, asi/87188





## NEW YORK

April 3-4 (Thursday-Friday)

Daymond J<del>ohn</del> Shark Tank's Branding Expert

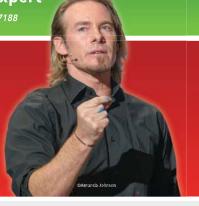
Sponsored by Showdown Displays, asi/87188

## CHICAGO

July 15-17 (Tuesday-Thursday)

Erik Wahl - The Renoir of ROI

Sponsored by Showdown Displays, asi/87188



Register today at www.asishow.com.

ASI distributor/decorator members can attend for FREE!



# THE SHOP MANA SPECIAL

Managers of top contract shops weigh in about their biggest management challenges – and how they solve them.

By Christopher Ruvo





a sist of the company of the company

anaging an apparel-decorating shop is a bit like being a quarterback. You're both the brains of the team and a primary participant in the action. It's up to you to call the play – to give direction – and to make sure everyone is on the same page, working as a unit to achieve a common goal. Success is contingent on you. Each play starts in your hands, and if you drop the ball, everything

breaks down. When, despite your best efforts, something goes awry, the pressure of finding a solution sits on your shoulders. You have to think fast but not panic – that is, react with grace under pressure or risk getting sacked.

It's a lot to handle. There's no shortage of long- and short-term challenges. But managers of thriving decorating businesses are leaping these hurdles with aplomb, leading their shops to success. To help shop managers everywhere mirror that performance, we've got insights into curing common managerial headaches from some of the nation's best managers of medium to large embroidery businesses. From hiring right to communication and organizational strategies, these stitch shop pros provide the wherewithal managers need to consistently lead their teams to touchdowns. "Managing well is essential to maintaining and increasing profitability," says Andy Shuman, general manager of Topton, PA-based Rockland Embroidery (asi/734150).

#### **Hire the Right People**

One of the most pressing concerns that managers face is hiring quality employees. "Everything starts with having the right people," says Jeff Taxdahl, owner/manager of Jordan, MN-based Thread Logic, a 23-head shop with nine employees. "Without that, it's hard to get off the ground."

Beyond looking for people with the requisite skills, managers who hire well seek candidates with the right attitude. Even if the person lacks experience, aptitude and a genuine can-do spirit may make him or her a valuable addition. To identify such a person, it's critical during the interview process to ask meaningful questions that delve beyond a candidate's work experience and into their personality. So often, finding a candidate whose disposition and attributes match your shop's values makes the difference. "If you've got a good person who takes responsibility and who can function autonomously, it goes a long way," says Shuman, who oversees a staff of about 50, including embroidery operators, screen printers,

## Be a Better Manager

Even the best managers have room for improvement. Here are a few tips for increasing your managerial acumen.

- Spread Positivity: Praise and reward your team members individually and collectively when they do a quality job. If the positive reinforcement is genuine, it helps energize and enthuse employees, which leads to better performance. If you only focus on where staffers fall short, you'll take the wind out of your team's sails.
- Ask Your Team for Ideas: By asking employees things like how they might make improvements to the shop or how to proceed on a certain challenging project, you build trust, show you value them, engender a real team spirit and gain insights that may well lead to more effective solutions than you would have conceived on your own.
- Practice What You Preach: Want staff to act and perform a certain way? Then set the standard by acting and performing that way yourself. The good example can be contagious.
- Take Hold of the Reins: For some, setting parameters and goals, providing staff with feedback, and making the big decisions can seem daunting. But that's a manager's job. Be specific about objectives, clearly communicate expectations, and make decisions based on sound, considered rationales that can be explained. Being wishy-washy, vague and retiring will only complicate things.
- Lend an Ear: When staff comes to you with questions, concerns or ideas, be sure to listen. You may end up gaining valuable insight that helps the shop run better or heads off a problem before it becomes a major issue. Even if none of that occurs, you show the employee that you value his or her input, reinforcing a positive atmosphere that can help spur efficiency and quality performance.

shippers, customer service personnel and more.

While advertising and walk-in applicants may help a shop find ideal workers, many savvy shop managers prefer to rely on referrals from trusted employees. Thread Logic has leveraged referrals to bring excellent new staffers on board. "Our employees understand our company - what we stand for, our culture," Taxdahl says. "They refer people who they know will fit in well and who are capable of doing the job." In addition to referrals, Rockland uses a human resources company to help find quality candidates. The firm has had particular success linking Rockland to exemplary customer service personnel. "They've done phenomenally well for us," Shuman says.

#### **Communicate Proactively**

Another sizable obstacle that managers continually contend with is communication. Breakdowns in communication can quickly lead to breakdowns in business, and it's often incumbent on managers to convey everything from company goals and vision, to specific employee responsibilities and important details on individual orders. "Communication is the number-one problem in any organization," says Nathan Milhoan, owner/manager of Tempe, AZ-based AzCa Embroidery (asi/701972), a 42-head shop with 14 employees.

The crux of effective communication lies in relaying information clearly and often. To keep the static at bay, AzCa "over-communicates," Milhoan says. Daily, weekly and monthly production goals are posted in the shop for all to see. Progress is recorded there, too. Additionally, Milhoan provides employees with individual goals that are checked and monitored on a quarterly basis. In person, Milhoan communicates collections, sales orders and invoicing goals to staff responsible for those activities, which are monitored daily and weekly. "From communicating jobs to the operators," says Milhoan, "to communicating to the rest

of the staff that you are leaving for lunch – everything is communicated so that we work as one cohesive unit with no misunderstandings."

Keeping such open lines has proved pivotal in helping AzCa pass difficult tests with flying colors. Recently, Milhoan decided to add more embroidery machines, a move that resulted in scheduling changes and new roles for some employees. Rather than just shake up the shop, however, Milhoan extensively explained everything ahead of time. Believing that communication is a twoway street, Milhoan also invited input and advice from staffers on how best to proceed. "When the day of the change came, it went very smoothly," he says. "I know that if we had just made the change without asking for input and without informing everyone of the change and how it would affect them, this would have been a completely different outcome."

#### **Plan Efficient Workflow**

The old saying – "Time is money" – is especially true in the decorating industry. The more efficient and mistake-free a shop is, the more profitable it can be. Not surprisingly, then, a significant challenge managers face is establishing a workflow process and deploying personnel as strategically as possible to maximize efficiency.

Generally speaking, top managers seek to create a logical layout in which blank apparel moves with as few steps as possible from receiving, to staging, to prep, and then onto the embroidery machines before heading to finishing and shipping. When it comes to specifics, however, each shop is different. Managers say it's crucial to analyze your shop's situation to determine how best to get orders swiftly and accurately out the door, especially since rush orders have become so prevalent.

At Eagan, MN-based Team Mates Inc. (asi/90674), the 67-head shop's 11 employees are divided into two production departments, each overseen by a

## 66 Managing well is essential to maintaining and increasing profitability. 99

Andy Shuman, Rockland Embroidery (asi/734150)

manager. Every morning, Department Managers Katie Mirick and Linda Zuther meet to discuss the day's workload. If one department is swamped or up against an immovable rush order deadline, the other team swoops in to help. "We have a lot of customers who ask for things same-day or next-day, so coordinating orders and being flexible is important," Mirick says.

So is cross-training employees. Good managers ensure that staffers know how to do multiple jobs, so if a machine operator or trimmer is out, then another staffer can step in and do the work. At Thread Logic, for instance, one person handles shipping, but three people are trained on shipping procedures. "If our shipper isn't in," says Taxdahl, "the orders still get out the door." This helps negate disruption to order flow, keeping the efficiency bar set high.

#### **Motivate Staff**

Even the best, most well-trained staffers aren't robots. They're not going to wake up every day enthused to run an embroidery machine or field calls from difficult customers. "It's sometimes tough," Milhoan says, "to stay upbeat and do the job to the best of your abilities day after day."

Good managers recognize this, and provide incentives that re-energize employees. If, for example, an employee meets a yearly goal, AzCa sends the achiever on an all-expenses-paid trip. Furthermore, AzCa offers weekly bonuses if objectives are met, as well as other awards for jobs well done. "Sometimes it's a trip to play laser tag; other times it's as simple as pizza for everyone," Milhoan says. Some shops offer monetary benefits, time off, gifts and more when collective and/or individual objectives are surpassed. "The trick is to keep everyone highly motivated," Milhoan says.

#### Be Fair to All

As with motivation, managers must also account for the complexities of human psychology when it comes to employees' perceptions of fairness. Few things can upset the harmony – and thus the workflow – of a shop quicker than the sense among some that certain staffers receive preferential treatment.

To keep a level playing field, many shops institute a clear set of standards. Shops like Rockland and Thread Logic have an employee handbook that lays out rules, expectations and various procedures. "It's across the board and fair for everyone," Taxdahl says.

While written standards are a start, they're worthless unless managers ensure the standards are applied equitably, whether it regards pay and vacation time or something else, like scheduling. Indeed, the subject of fairness can become a sticky one when it comes to work schedule, a complication born, in part, because order loads can ebb and flow substantially through the course of a year. During slower times, shops sometimes are compelled to have a staffer stay home for a day or two. To prevent that, Team Mates' Mirick and Zuther juggle jobs around in an effort to keep everyone busy. If there just isn't enough work to stretch, a staffer may be given a day off. Still, where the fairness factor comes into play is that the managers always rotate who stays home. The upshot is that no single employee feels his or her hours are always being cut. "We do everything we can to make sure everyone has an even number of hours," Mirick says.

#### **Control Purse Strings**

While mastering manpower management is essential, shop overseers must also

grapple with an equally daunting task: financials. Striking the balance between keeping costs down and profit-producing efficiency up occupies managers daily. To succeed here, managers must be organized and tuned into the fine print. Strategic purchasing and assiduous tracking of expenses and the true profitability of each order is key.

At Rockland, Shuman has intelligent purchasing down to a near science. He routinely analyzes and renegotiates contracts for sizable expenditures like health insurance and shipping. In so doing, he helps ensure Rockland gets as much bang for its buck as market conditions will allow. Shuman is also attuned to the littler things. Rather than buy smaller volumes of thread a few times a week, for example, he strives to order a larger quantity once every couple of weeks. Rockland saves money as a result. "As a manager, you have to pay close attention to your spending or things can get out of control quickly," he says.

To help rein things in, managers are increasingly relying on technology solutions like quality business management software. St. Cloud, MN-based Dubow Textile (asi/700107) built its own propriety management system that handles everything from preliminary quotes through to accounting, allowing Owner Rob Dubow and his management team to track order volumes and the bottom line on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis. "It's all at our fingertips," Dubow says. "History goes by really quickly, and you need to know where you are today to build for a successful tomorrow."

**CHRISTOPHER RUVO** is a staff writer for *Stitches*. Contact him at cruvo@asicentral.com; follow him on Twitter @*ChrisR\_ASI*.

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

Reader service number on reply card or visit *stitches.com/freeinfo* 

#### **Apparel**



RS No. 46



As low as \$3.00\* • As low as \$3.00\*



Cool-T Interlock • Lined Mesh Shorts
\*Call for details • Get Made In USA

(877) 503-6723 • www.hooraysport.com

RS No. 08



RS No. 19

#### **Contract Screen Printing**



RS No. 44

#### **Custom Patches & Pins**







RS No. 41



RS No. 29

#### Digitizing



RS No. 36



RS No. 37



RS No. 42

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

Reader service number on reply card or visit stitches.com/freeinfo

#### Digitizing



RS No. 43

#### **Employment**

#### **JOBS. PEOPLE. OPPORTUNITIES. TALENT**

At Culver and Associates all we do is **RECRUITING AND PLACEMENT** for the **SCREEN PRINT & EMBROIDERY INDUSTRIES.** 

> Whether you are looking for new employees or a better job.

Call 800-411-0804 or visit our website www.culverjobs.com and we will help you with all of your employment needs.

#### PATRICK CULVER, CPC Culver and Associates, Inc.

708-385-3984 800-411-0804

pculver@culverjobs.com www.culverjobs.com

RS No. 53

#### Merchandise



CUSTOMERSERVICE@PROMOTRIM.COM

973-595-5200

RS No. 49



RS No. 55

#### **Equipment**



USED EMBROIDERY MACHINES VARIOUS MAKES AND MODELS

#### TAJIMAS WANTED

SINGLE HEADS **MULTIHEADS** 

. . . . . . . . . . . .

CHL, INC. 3229 Cherry Lane FT. WORTH, TX 76116 TEL: (817) 366-5629 WEB: www.chlinc.net E-MAIL: chlinc@att.net

RS No. 48



RS No. 24



RS No. 25



RS No. 56

#### **Equipment Repairs**

#### **EMBROIDERY LASERS**

866-BITOUSA

info@bitousa.com www.bitousa.com

RS No. 38



Overseas!! Give Us a Call, We're Easy to Work With; Easy to Understand

Toll Free: 888 827 7074 651 773 7027 Phone: 651 777 7087 Fax: designs@shamrockthread.com

www.shamrockthread.com Located in St. Paul, MN

Serving From 1 To 10,000 Heads

#### **Labels & Emblems**

#### **DJSLABELS.COM**

Printed Labels. Woven Labels. Hang Tags, Stickers

(800) 967-2323

RS No. 52

#### Transfers



### ADVERTISER INDEX

ADVERTISERS/SUPPLIERS	RS#	PG#
ZSK USA Inc. asi/18320	64	61
A-B Emblem asi/30102	1	68
Affinity Express asi/33149	63	12
American & Efird		
American & Efird	32	25
American Apparel asi/35297	2	1
Anvil asi/36350	3	35
Applied Pressure INC	44	68
Bito	38	69
Blazers R Us	46	68
Blue Generation asi/40653	4	2,3
Broder Bros., Co asi/42090	5	5
Brother International Corporation asi/12600	59	30
Chl Inc		
Coldesi		
Coldesi		
Coldesi		
Continental Mkting Svc Inc asi/46420 .		
Cotton Love, LLC asi/46756		
Culver And Associates Inc		
Djs Labels Inc		
Express Digitizing.com		
Express Digitizing.com		
Force 2000 Athletic Apparel asi/55056		
Fruit of the Loom	45	CV4
Gildan asi/56842	10	29
Gildan asi/56842	11	31
Hanes/Champion asi/59528	14	CV2
Ideas Plus Inc	42	68
Ideas Plus Inc	43	69
Illini asi/62190	15	62
Imprintables Warehouse asi/58475	13	41
Landway asi/66238	16	49

Leading Developments, Ltd	55	69
MONAG Apparel asi/72010	57	57
New Balance asi/56842	12	33
Next Level Apparel asi/73867	17	4
Outdoor Cap Co asi/75420	18	32
Pacific Sportswear & Emblems	41	68
Pizzazz asi/78230	19	68
PromoPayment	59	10
Promotrim International	49	69
S & K Manufacturing Inc asi/84325	20	69
S & S Activewear asi/84358	21	13
SanMar asi/84863	22	8
SGI International (Pvt) Limited	56	69
Shamrock Design	39	69
Specialty Graphic Imaging Association		
Stahls' ID Direct asi/88984	23	19
Stouse Inc asi/89910	24	69
Stouse Inc asi/89910	25	69
Sunstar Usa.Inc	50	CV3
Terry Town asi/90913	27	18
The Sewphisticated Stitcher & Discount		
Emb Blanks asi/323872		
Toyota/Pantograms		
Transfer Express asi/91804		
TSC Apparel asi/90518		
Wilcom America		
World Emblem asi/98264	29	68

Stitches August 2013; Vol. 27, No. 8 (ISSN 099-5893) (USPS 2387) is published monthly, except bi-monthly in MAY and September/October, by Advertising Specialty Institute, 4800 Street Road, Trevose, PA 19053. Periodical postage paid at Langhorne, PA and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: free and controlled circulation to qualified puscribers. Non-qualified persons may subscribe at the following rates: USA, 1 year, \$35, 2 years, \$69. Canada, 1 year, \$39. Outside USA and Canada, 1 year, \$59 (\$95 airmail delivery). POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Stitches*, PO Box 2197 Skokie, IL 60076.

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

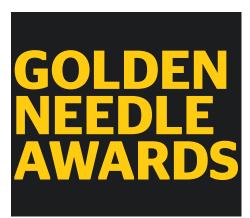
#### **STITCHES READER SERVICE NUMBERS**

COMPANY	RSN	PAGE#
AMC Special Markets (asi/30198)	185	60
American Apparel (asi/35297)	159	46
Apparelstar Inc. (asi/36539)	151	43
Assertive Creativity LLC (asi/37166)	152	43, 45, 59
Bishop The Garment Co. (asi/40585)	163	21
Brobbery Mfg. Inc. (asi/42057)	179	58
Clava American (asi/45335)	184	60
Cockpit USA Inc. (asi/43022)	157	45
ColDesi	169	21, 38
Corporate Image Outfitters LLC (asi/46741)	154	44
Dickies Occupational wear (asi/42057)	180	58
Graphic Solutions Group	175	40
Great Dane Graphics	177	40
Hotronix	173	41
Imprintables Warehouse (asi/58475)	167	21
In Your Face Apparel (asi/62494)	164	21, 60
Independent Trading Co.	176	40
LAT Sportswear (asi/65948)	160	46
LBD Promos	186	60
MLF Sales (asi/68264)	155	44
Mobile Edge (asi/71854)	182	59
Nucom/Burk's Bay (asi/74600)	191	62
One Stop Inc. (asi/75085) Penn Emblem (asi/77120)	161 172	46 38, 47
Pro Golf Premiums Inc. (asi/79680)	183	59, 47
Redline (asi/81133)	192	62
,,		62
Remarkable Innovations (asi/81809)	190 178	40
Roland DGA Corp.	188	61
Royal Apparel (asi/83731) Rugged Outfitters Inc. (asi/84143)	188	61
-	166	21
S & S Activewear (asi/84358) SanMar (asi/84863)	162	46
		37
Sew & Sew Embroidery	170	• ,
Spectrum Ideas (asi/88638)	168	21, 43
Stahls' ID Direct (asi/88984)	171	40 44
Sun N Sand Accessories (asi/90142)	156	l
Symphony Designs (asi/90452)	158	45 21
Vapor Apparel (asi/93396)	165	l
Workhorse Products	174	l 39

## Coming Next Issue

What's coming up in November Stitches

by Nicole Rollender



#### Golden Needle Award Winners

• The results are in for our sixth-annual Stitches Golden Needle Awards for excellence in embroidery and digitizing. The competition was fierce again this year – we had entries ranging from framed wall art to multimedia fashion jacket backs.

#### Rock On

• We've got a collection of fun printed band and concert promo tees. Prepare to be inspired.

## Must-Have Vendors

• What five types of vendors should you work with to take your business to the next level? An industry expert lays it out next issue. Sneak peek: Contract with a really good graphic designer.

And much, much more!

#### **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 September/October 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 September/October needle are due by October 25, 2013. From the correct responses, we'll randomly select one winner who'll receive a \$100 gift certificate, courtesy of Madeira USA, Laconia, NH. Please submit only one entry per drawing. We'll announce the winner in the December issue.

#### Slick's a Wing Man

In the July issue, Slick hid on page 23 in the "Expert Weigh-In" section in our new "Interact" department, right next to a "Silver Wings" embroidery design by **Greg Gaardbo**, president/founder and creative director of **Shockwaves Promotional Apparel** (asi/87144). Judy Lind of Livingston, NJ-based Almost Unique Designs was chosen at random from a grand total of 41 responses. As this issue's winner, Judy will receive Madeira USA's gift certificate. Keep your eyes peeled for the industry's favorite game of hide and seek!





### Discover the best ways to create a positive and inspiring work environment.

Our fun-filled agenda includes interactive sessions and entertaining activities on the following topics:

- Keys to a High-Performing Culture
- Using Creativity to Win Fortune 500 Clients
- Communicating at Warp Speed
- · Benefits of a Dog Culture
- Firing Up Sales Reps

Other activities include dining in Santa Barbara in the evening and golfing and surfing the next day!

Motivate employees and increase sales. Register now and save!

Call (800) 546-1350, option 1 and lock in an exclusive rate of \$399.



Thursday, November 21, 2013 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Bacara Resort & Spa, Santa Barbara, CA

# ASK AN EXPERT. By Kristine Shreve

#### LOOKING FORWARD

In the next issue, you'll discover which vendors should be on your company's "I-want-to-work-with-them" short list. See you next issue!

Q

I'm a woman and I own an embroidery business. Recently I've been looking at applying to become a woman-owned business enterprise. Can you tell me a little bit about what's involved and the benefits of doing so?

ecoming certified as a woman-owned business can be a laborious process, but there are advantages to obtaining such certification. Many larger companies or government departments will set aside a certain portion of contracts for businesses that are certified women-owned. There are also grants and other funding available for women-owned businesses. Female business owners have created some powerful organizations that advocate for the rights of all women business owners. Three of those, which can also help with the womenowned business certification process, are listed here.

- Women's Business Enterprise National Council: www. wbenc.org
- National Women Business Owners Corporation: www. nwboc.org
- National Association of Women Business Owners: http://nawbo.org/index.cfm

Since there are benefits to being certified as a womanowned business, it may well be worth pursuing the certification for your business. The first thing you need to do,

#### **GOT A DECORATOR DILEMMA?**

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

before you embark on the journey toward certification, is to determine if your business would meet the criteria. To be eligible to be certified as a woman-owned business, your company must meet the following requirements:

- 1. A woman must have majority control of the business. This means not only must a woman own 51% of the business, but she must also hold the highest position in the company and be active in both day-to-day management and the strategic planning for the company. This leadership must be proven through documentation.
- 2. A woman business owner applying for certification must also be a U.S. citizen.
- 3. The company must have existed and been doing business for at least six months.

Women who meet these three criteria are eligible to begin the process for being certified on the local, state or national level. The level of certification necessary will vary based on your target market and the sort of business you want to attract and may also depend on state regulations. Make sure you do your homework before you choose your certification level. There's no use going through the process of obtaining a level of certification that will be of no use to you.

## 66 Female business owners have created some powerful organizations that advocate for the rights of all women business owners.

Once you've determined what level of certification you want to pursue, you can start gathering documents for the certification process. There's a long list of documentation that's required for submission. The documents required range from proof of citizenship to tax records to documentation of the company management structure. You can find a list of the necessary documentation here: www.wbenc.org/documentation-required.

If you think certification is something you want to do, start organizing your paperwork toward that goal from the moment your business opens, or as early as possible. The more organized you are from the start, the easier it'll be to find the necessary documents.

Once you have all the necessary documents, present them to the agency that will make the certification determination in an organized manner. There are no hard-and-fast rules for how the documents should be presented, but putting them in a binder with tabs for appropriate sections is recommended. Also, keep a

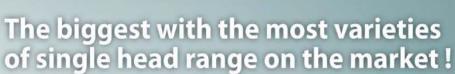
copy of everything you send to the certification agency.

Your company will also most likely have to undergo a site visit. The purpose of this visit is to verify that the company is indeed owned and run by a woman. Businesses that are women-owned have access to grants and contracts that aren't generally available, so the agencies want to be sure they're only awarding certification to eligible businesses.

Once you're certified, contact local, state and national certification agencies and ask to be added to their mailing lists. There are benefits to being certified, but those benefits only accrue if your company takes advantage of the opportunities for and resources available to certified women-owned businesses.

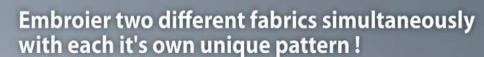
KRISTINE SHREVE is director of marketing for EnMart and Ensign Emblem, and regularly writes about embroidery, sublimation, decoration, social media and business. Besides her DecQuorum blog on Stitches.com, she also writes for the EmbroideryTalk Blog at http://blog.myenmart.com and the SubliStuff blog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





### **SINGLE HEAD**

- ① High speed up to 1200spm
- Expanded on-board memory
- \( \) Limitless storage via use of USB memory
- Quick change cap frame available
- User friendly LCD screen and control
- Compact size yet large embroidery field



## **DUAL FUNCTION**

- Only available in SWF, Dual Function series gives the double benefit.
- Pump auto lubrication
- (S) Color change memory & Design to machine connection system "SENS"
- Advanced design transfer system allows more flexible work
- ( ) Larger HD color touch screen / OP Box with USB for easy design input
- Uniquely designs high speed color change system
- New thread handling increases productivity





SunStar USA Inc. 2384 E. Walnut Ave. Fullerton, CA 92831

Tel: (714) 871-3995 www.swfusa.com

Call Us for More Info & Quote! marketing@sunstarusa.net



## Our revolutionary high-density fabric offers more than meets the eye.

More of everything you need—available from the Fruit of the Loom® brand. In addition to greater detail retention with our new 5 ounce, Heavy Cotton HD™ and 6 ounce, Lofteez HD® collections, we're introducing expanded colors, sizes and styles across the board. And with the fine gauge yarns of our HD fabric knit tighter than ever, you'll get a more consistent, smooth surface for maximum ink coverage and image sharpness. It means a variety of colors and incredible printability to bring your creative vision to life—only from Fruit of the Loom HD™.



MORE COLORS • MORE STYLES • MORE CHOICES



888.378.4829 • FruitActivewear.com/FruitHD