



Buyers' Market

How The NBM Show helps business owners reach the next level

BY AMANDA MCGRORY



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SHOPPING FOR SIGNAGE and digital printing equipment can be an overwhelming process. With various manufacturers, wide-ranging price points and constantly evolving technology, there are plenty of buying factors to consider. Fortunately, *The NBM Show* offers the perfect venue to see products live, talk to industry suppliers and ask all your important questions. And, as you'll see, past *NBM Show* attendees agree.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY

Since 1970, Highway Safety, Chino, Calif., has been providing traffic control services, including roadway signage fabrication. From temporary construction signs to permanent street signs, Highway Safety offers a wide range of applications, president Christy Myers-King says.

In July 2009, Myers-King attended *The NBM Show* in Long Beach, Calif., to shop for a laminator but came home with more than she bargained. After speaking with Global Imaging, Myers-King learned how VUTEK's UV-curable printers could provide greater productivity. By November, Myers-King purchased a VUTEK PV200 from Global Garage, a broker of used digital printing equipment and division of Global Imaging, and is satisfied with her decision.

Previously, Myers-King used a plotter for fabrication; however, for traffic signs, the method was wasteful, inefficient and labor intensive, she says.

"With the VUTEK, we're able to put a substrate in there and print it out multicolored with one person touching it, and it takes a fraction of the time," Myers-King says.

Now Myers-King says she produces at a higher rate and takes on more projects, which ultimately improves her bottom line.

Of course, because this was a new machine, there was a learning curve, but Myers-King says she was well-supported by her supplier. Josh Marten, a sales representative for Global Imaging, spent a week training Myers-King during installation, and she says she received helpful information from the technical-support staff—free of charge.

Though Myers-King found herself with a new UV-curable printer, she also purchased that laminator she wanted from American Reliance, distributed by Graphic Protection Technologies. Myers-King says the laminator helps cut mistakes and improve efficiency.



Photo courtesy of Highway Safety.

Highway Safety bought a VUTEK PV200 from Global Garage, which Christy Myers-King says has increased the shop's efficiency.

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Photo courtesy of Bauman Engraving and Signs.

Tom Dudek shows off his new Roland VersaCAMM printer, which he learned about at *The NBM Show's* education conference.

"We would have prints, and we would go to apply them, and it would get a ripple, so it was trashed. It's eliminated that completely and increased the quality of our signage," Myers-King notes.

Myers-King also finds that attending *The NBM Show* gives her a competitive edge and better understanding of the type of equipment needed to decrease costs.

"We had seen some of our competitors fabricating certain signage, and it struck our curiosity as to how they were doing it. Once we were at the show and met with Global [Imaging], that's how we realized how they were doing certain applications," Myers-King says.

Now that Myers-King's equipment is up and running, she is optimistic about the future and believes her business will grow because she can take on larger projects and enter markets that were not feasible in the past. Real estate, political and even retail signage are all new prospects that will help Highway Safety diversify and strengthen its industry position.

EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Family-owned Bauman Engraving and Signs, Kingsford, Mich., has been providing the industrial and commercial sectors with ADA signage and custom engraving for more than 40 years. What started as a small home-based shop has

expanded into a nationwide business, and Tom Dudek, president of Bauman Engraving and Signs, isn't ready to stop company growth just yet.

In May 2009, Dudek attended *The NBM Show* in Indianapolis, but his main focus was on the education conference to boost his business in the coming years. Dudek recently took over Bauman Engraving and Signs from his father-in-law, Dean Bauman, and thought the education conference would better prepare him.

"Really, it was a desire to take the business to the next level," Dudek says. "I knew I would be taking over the business the next year, so I thought, 'Wow, this is a good opportunity to get some knowledge that I ordinarily wouldn't have received.'"

Dudek was especially impressed with the business-oriented seminars, taught by Stephen Capper and Vince DiCecco. Organizing a business plan, hiring and firing practices, customer retention—all were covered in an industry-specific way, making the content more relevant, Dudek says.

"It gives a fresh perspective from people who understand the business, instead of just getting information from a straight business textbook," Dudek notes.

As Dudek plans to grow the signage side of his business, which before focused on ADA applications, he found the wide-format printing classes gave him the information needed to make smart buying decisions. From entry-level printers to grand-format printers, Dudek says he learned the "whole, big picture" of digital printing in this seminar, and now his business can diversify from engraving and ADA signage.

In fact, after the seminar, Dudek visited Roland on the exhibit floor and purchased a 30-inch VersaCAMM printer following the show and was still offered a special show discount from wholesaler Nazdar.

Now, with even more industry knowledge than before, Dudek is ready to use those helpful business tips and continue to grow Bauman Engraving and Signs.

NEW EQUIPMENT

Before entering the signage market, Pete Presley, owner of Kings Work Graphics, Harrodsburg, Ky., was in the high-end interior design industry as a floor installer for 30 years but became interested in graphics through the sublimation process for ceramic tiles. Eventually, that led Presley to take on a new market, where he now produces signs, vehicle graphics and decals.

Presley attended *The NBM Show* in Indianapolis in 2009 to see new products and purchase a printer and cutter, where he decided on a 54-inch Mutoh ValueJet 1304 printer and the Graphtec 5000 cutter from Advantage Sign Supply.

Presley's past career didn't require much computer usage, but he has now entered an industry that's all about computers, which was a little intimidating, he says. But Presley's new cutter and printer are user friendly, he says, and Advantage Sign Supply was ready to answer any questions.

"I've been so satisfied with the ease of use and the support you have with Advantage [Sign Supply]. It's amazing how easy it is to integrate it into what we do," Presley says. "In a month, I was totally comfortable with any operation on them with no professional training, just using the owner's manual and tech support."

With his new equipment, Presley plans to print media that can be applied to windows and vehicle graphics. Though these are applications Kings Work Graphics was previously practicing, Presley says his earlier machinery gave him problems, and the new printer and cutter allow his shop to run more efficiently.

"We produce 50 percent more with this equipment, and that means 50 percent more profit," Presley notes.

With 2010 under way, this is the year to invest in your business. Don't miss the chance to catch all the latest products, meet industry leaders and network with colleagues at *The NBM Show*. Please visit www.nbmsshows.com to register for a show near you. **SDG**