


WINTER 2022

Leading **PRINT**



THE COLLABORATOR

HOW KARY RADESTOCK AND HER COLLECTIVE
ARE REACHING NEW HEIGHTS IN
THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY

*Supply chain and raw materials management • Attracting and retaining print staff
Rethinking innovation • Creative agency leaders share advice*

A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a brown hat and a red sweater, is playing a red acoustic guitar. He has his eyes closed and a peaceful expression. The background is a blurred natural setting.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

SUCCESS DOESN'T WAIT

What are we waiting for? The landscape has changed. Buying behavior has changed. Engagement rules have changed. Commerce, however, continues and customers still need help with print and marketing services. It follows that we need additional offerings, services and amazing people that can build honest relationships. And we will need new strategies for understanding customers.

Thayer Long
President, Association for
PRINTTechnologies

Printers have not been “just printers” in a long time. Even the staunchest printer could be described

as a marketing service provider in today's climate. In turn, the most progressive print companies succeed by managing their finances well, absorbing others, and developing a fantastic culture. But, I would venture to guess that most of them are also providing very different services than ever before.

Great businesses simply do not procrastinate. They continue to morph and add offerings that satisfy their client base because they have an in-depth understanding of their communities. So, as the world continues to change, it is time for us to hurry up and change too. Procrastination dominates our lives and with the pandemic it's probably even greater than ever before.

Great businesses simply do not procrastinate.

The sad truth is that most people spend the majority of their lives putting things off. If you procrastinate, it diminishes the wellbeing of you and your business. By ignoring the things you know you should do, you limit your potential for achieving your goals. As a result, you miss the continuous uptick in confidence that comes from making progress. And confidence within your business and your team comes from making strides towards goals that are far bigger than your present capabilities.

We wish you nothing but happiness in 2022. But we believe that joy will be born from the confidence you gain from taking action on some of the things we have put off. Please note, however, that while procrastination is detrimental to achievement, it can also be the foundation of imagination. So, get inspired, take some action and let your confidence and your business grow.

Enjoy our winter edition of LeadingPRINT. We are proud to bring you some wonderful ideas including our cover story on Kary Radestock, who waits for nobody. As a great collaborator, she demonstrates what it means to take initiative and make things happen. She knows that success doesn't wait.

Happy New Year and warmest regards,

PS

LeadingPRINT was recently presented with another honor, winning a Platinum MarCom Award for the Summer 2021 issue.



2

REGISTRATION MARKS

Facts, figures and data that matters

4

THE COLLABORATOR

How Kary Radestock and her collective are reaching new heights in the cannabis industry

8

PAYING THE TOLL

Supply chain and raw materials management

12

CREATIVE VIBES

Agency leaders share advice

16

A STAR AMONG STARS

Skandacor is helping printers shine

18

SEEKING HELP

Thoughts on print staffing

22

RETHINKING INNOVATION

A deep dive on the creative thinking process

24

TO THE POINT

Top reasons for reading direct mail

WINTER 2022

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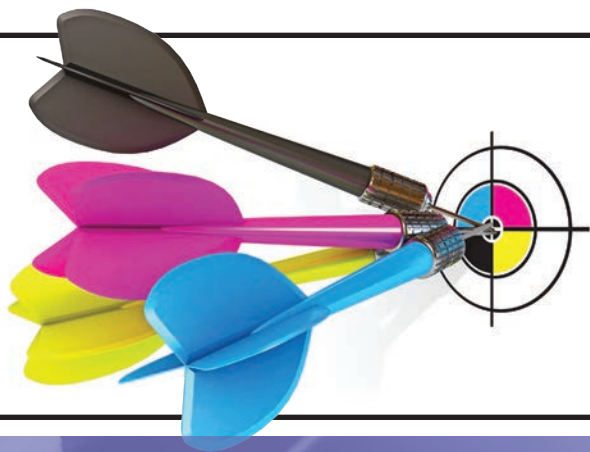
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REGISTRATION MARKS

A VERY PERI NEW YEAR

Announcing Pantone's Color of the Year 2022

It's out with the old and in with the blue. Pantone's color of the year for 2022, Very Peri, is a new blue hue with a violet-red undertone. The periwinkle-like shade brings a joyous, confident attitude and encourages creativity and imaginative expression—a much needed mindset for the transformative times. "As society continues to recognize color as a way to express ideas and engage, the complexity of this new red violet infused blue hue highlights the expansive possibilities that lay before us," says Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Color Institute.

Expect to see PANTONE 17-3938 Very Peri blazing through the designscape in what will undoubtedly be another unpredictable year.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Research shows more personalization is needed

Adobe's "Future of Marketing Research Series: U.S. Highlights" found that about two-thirds of customers value personalization, but more than 30% don't value it at all. Part of the reason may lie in the execution—brands are virtually unanimous in saying that personalized experiences are essential, but only a fraction of their content lives up to expectations. Here's what Adobe's research found:

94%

of brands say delivering personalized experiences at scale is a top priority

50%
TO
75%

of marketing content brands target to be personalized

25% TO 50%

of marketing content actually gets personalized



4 WAYS PRINTERS CAN COMBAT SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES

With essentials from ink and paper, to packaging and technology, out of reach, many printers are struggling with delays and shortages. Consider ways to combat these supply chain disruptions:

1. HONESTY & TRANSPARENCY

Blatant honesty about the situation is one of the best strategies to lead through any kind of disruption. Let customers know ahead of time that there could be delays in their orders so they are prepared.

2. ADDITIONAL COSTS

One way to combat supply shortages is raising rates to account for the climbing overhead costs. It is necessary to keep a profit and ordering ahead of time can help avoid backorders and be cost effective in the long term.

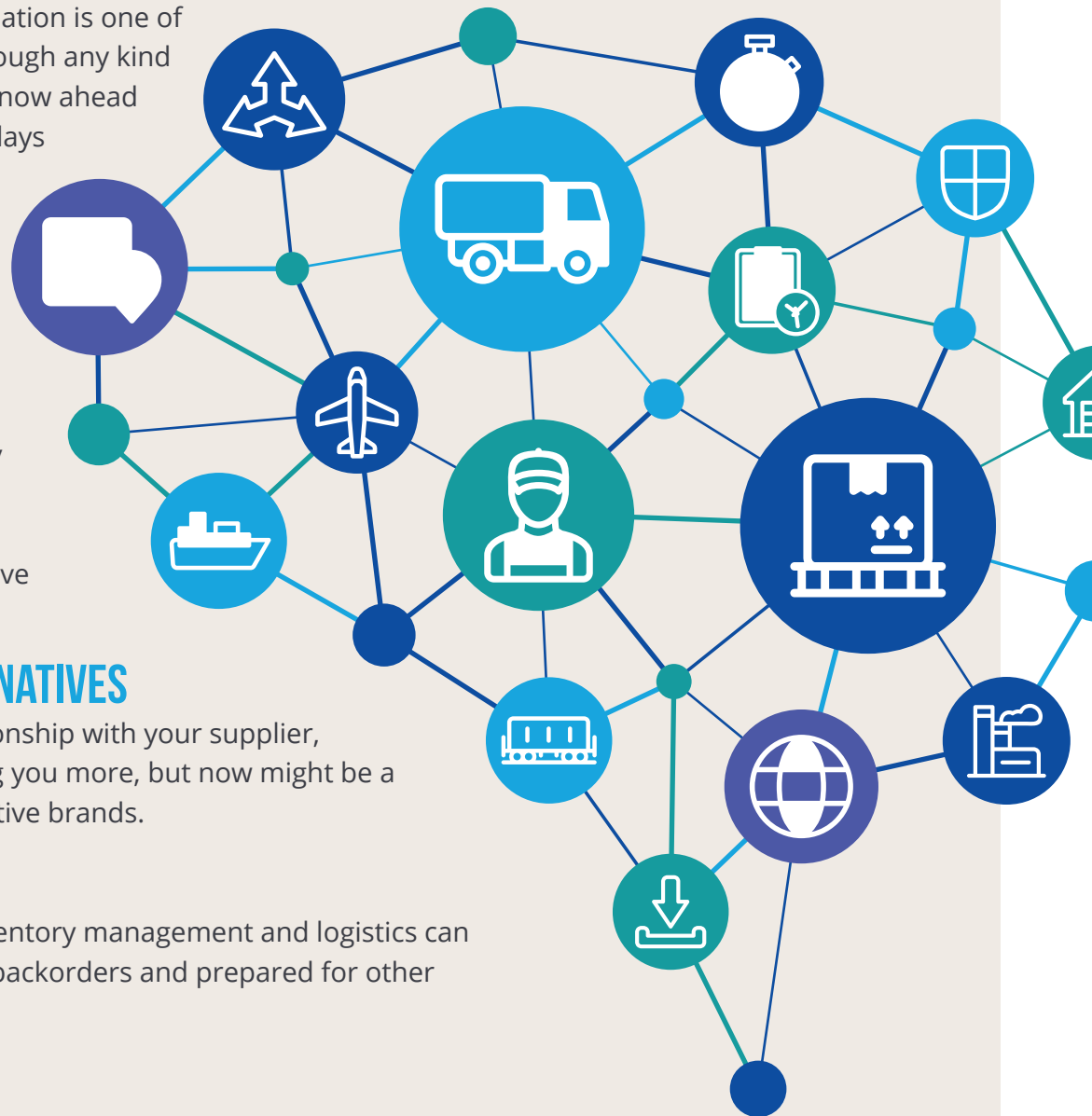
3. RESEARCHING ALTERNATIVES

If you have an excellent relationship with your supplier, changing could end up costing you more, but now might be a good time to look into alternative brands.

4. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Training employees about inventory management and logistics can keep your business ahead of backorders and prepared for other unforeseen issues.

Source: Leapin' Lizard Labels





THE COLLABORATOR

HOW KARY RADESTOCK AND HER COLLECTIVE ARE REACHING
NEW HEIGHTS IN THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY

By Kary Radestock

“COME BACK WHEN YOU HAVE BETTER PACKAGING.”

THOSE ARE NOT THE WORDS YOU WANT TO HEAR FROM ONE OF THE BIGGEST DOMESTIC MERCHANDISE RETAIL CHAINS IN THE COUNTRY. AND YET, THAT'S WHAT BED BATH & BEYOND TOLD CANNA BATH AFTER THE MANUFACTURER PRESENTED ITS LINE OF NATURAL BATH AND BODY PRODUCTS FEATURING CANNABIS-FUSED, HOLISTIC HEALING BENEFITS.

Love the product, hate the packaging.

While the truth behind a problem can be painful, it is how you approach finding the solution that tests your mettle. So, when Canna Bath came to us and asked for help redesigning the entire scope of its brand and packaging, we stepped up. We are problem solvers. Hippo Premium Packaging was created for moments like this—to take a client's problem and turn it into a success story.

When we finished working with the Canna Bath team, they went back to the Bed Bath & Beyond buyers to show off their new packaging. Not only were the products immediately accepted and put into the Bed Bath & Beyond store network,

but nearly one year to the day after they were rejected, Canna Bath reported that its sales had doubled.

Pride. Passion. Professionalism. When I draw up the tenets that define who we are as a company, those are the characteristics every member of our team possesses. It takes exercising every one of those principles, every day, to thrive in today's extraordinarily competitive cannabis landscape. We at Hippo Premium Packaging are the premium child-resistant cannabis packaging experts—a collective of award-winning in-house designers, compliance experts, and printing and production professionals committed to being “the” choice for today's growing cannabis or CBD brands.

How committed are we? After six years in business, we already are one of the senior packaging companies in the marketplace, offering a wide variety of packaging options, including folding cartons, rigid and flexible containers, glass jars and labels. We also handle graphic design, branding and production.

Hippo was formed to serve only the cannabis industry—an ever-evolving, complex legal landscape that continues to grow dramatically in response to expanding legalization, and a flood of capital from venture capital firms and other investors. An industry that as of Dec. 2021, still only has 18 out of 50 states fully legalized for marijuana use. A segment that sports global sales expected to reach \$33.6 billion by 2025.

To stake a claim in this community, we have continued to acquire the breadth of knowledge it takes to navigate the landscape. Unlike other consumer packaged goods, the cannabis industry is regulated by numerous federal, state and

local entities, each with their own layers of rules that affect packaging. We have become experts in these regulations, providing the kind of expertise our clients need to succeed.

**“TO STAKE A CLAIM
IN THIS COMMUNITY,
WE HAVE CONTINUED TO
ACQUIRE THE BREADTH OF
KNOWLEDGE IT TAKES TO
NAVIGATE THE LANDSCAPE.”**

Interestingly, as ripe as the cannabis industry is with opportunities, it is not for everyone. Many print companies working in mainstream printing and packaging too often find that their methods do not work well in the cannabis industry. Coming

from a mainstream packaging background, I was raised on the idea that we needed to sell the solutions we had available in-house or with a few strategic partners. But in the cannabis industry, you must sell what your client needs, not necessarily what’s in your product portfolio.

Our success is a direct result of the virtual agency team we have strategically placed at every stop in the process. We have curated the “best of the best”—including our award-winning lead designer, our Southern California production team, and our dedicated sales team sprinkled throughout regions with large numbers of cannabis companies. I am incredibly proud of each of them and how they have learned to become experts in the nuances of child-resistant packaging, state-specific regulations and local ordinances. It isn’t easy, but they did it—and continue to do so.





“OUR SUCCESS IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE VIRTUAL AGENCY TEAM WE HAVE STRATEGICALLY PLACED AT EVERY STOP IN THE PROCESS.”

More than anything else, Hippo Premium Packaging will continue to serve an industry we love, which not only means giving our clients what they need, but also giving something back to the industry at large. You cannot really be in an industry if you are watching from the outside. Get involved. Make your voice heard.

As we say every day, our success is when we can help our clients succeed.

PIVOTING AMID THE CHAOS

In the spirit of our company's pride, passion and professionalism, perhaps nowhere is their dedication more evident than in how they handled the past two-plus years. Among the hardest our company has faced since we opened for business, the pandemic challenged each of us individually—and collectively.

From securing the safety of our staff, partners and clients, to dealing with supply chain issues that forced everyone to plan ahead, we found the strength and perseverance to push on. Amid this crazy environment, we were blessed enough to see some really good things happen. I was elected to chair the Marketing and Advertising Committee at the National Cannabis Industry Association (NCIA), working alongside some of the industry's greatest minds to develop fantastic educational programs that will benefit the entire industry.

And, for the second year in a row, I was able to serve as a judge for the PAC Global Awards, where Hippo, in conjunction with Duallok, was the first cannabis packaging system to win this coveted award. I also recently served as a juror for the Cannabis Clio Awards, where I was privy to some of the industry's most incredible displays of creativity. It all makes me so very optimistic about the future of the cannabis industry.

The lessons—all of them—have been inspiring. I learned the importance of doing what's best for your clients. I learned that retreating or worrying too much about your own issues takes your eyes off the ball. The key to success is always to remain steadfast in helping your clients succeed.

When they succeed, you succeed. Heading into a new year means exploring new strategic partnerships—ones that will allow us to bring even more products and services to our clients in a timely and affordable manner. It means continuing to build our domestic sourcing, and evaluating new technologies that can enhance our productivity, lower our costs and provide our clients with greater value.

Kary Radestock is founder and CEO of Hippo Premium Packaging, a boutique agency focusing on the unique needs of the emerging cannabis market. With more than 25 years of award-winning print and packaging experience, she has worked with some of the top brands in the world. She launched Hippo to bring a higher level of craftsmanship along with professional-level packaging and brand-building solutions to the emerging cannabis industry. Recently, Radestock was named Chair of the NCIA Marketing & Advertising Committee, and selected as a judge for both the PAC Global Awards and Clio Cannabis Awards.





PAYING THE TOLL

Supply chain and
raw materials management

Volodymyr Babich cannot make it any clearer: Today's supply chain issues are not fundamentally different from supply chain issues in the past. In its simplest context, the art of supply chain management—our greatest engine of global economic value creation—is always the same. How do you connect raw materials with final consumers in a series of transactions and transformations? How do you coordinate physical, financial and informational flows? Where do you position resources? How do you align incentives? Manage uncertainty in demand, in supply? How do you align supply chains with the strategic objectives of companies? Should supply chains be focused on efficiency or responsiveness? On efficiency or resiliency?

Simple context? That depends. Babich, a professor of Operations and Information Management at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University, says that when supply chains operate smoothly, we do not pay attention to them. But in today's pandemically defined landscape, the supply chain is marred by disruptions—issues that remain at front and center of our everyday lives.

"Today, we learn that operations really mean 'supply chains,' and you can't delegate its role, even if you don't own its multiple tiers of services and partners."

— **John Thorbeck, Chairman, Chainge Capital**

So, what happened? Babich says it is some combination of disruption to supply, the change in demand patterns, the disruption to logistics lines, and the change in investments by supply chain participants in response to changing demand patterns. Fixing it depends on the product, the company and the specific supply chain issue.

"The best way to respond to the disruption is to execute a response plan that every company should have developed in collaboration with their suppliers and their customers," says Babich, an acclaimed academic thought leader with expertise in areas such as supply chain and supply risk management, and operations management.

While there is no silver bullet or magic pill that can somehow solve all the world's supply chain problems without an immense and collaborative effort, there are steps companies (and industries) can take, including:

- Prepare resources and create a multifunctional team across different organizational levels to govern the supply chain risk management effort and coordinate with supply chain partners
- Identify risks in your supply chains
- Assess and prioritize these risks
- Develop a response plan—which risks to hedge, which to accept, which to avoid, and which to respond to when they happen
- When crisis strikes, execute your crisis response
- Review lessons learned and update your resources, your risk registry, and your plans

"If you do not have a plan, not everything is lost," Babich says. "There are still good practices. You are 'building an airplane as you are flying it,' but there are

better and worse ways of doing it. Details must be adjusted for a particular product and for a particular supply chain. The best advice is to hire supply chain professionals and do supply chain management, not only when you are in crisis, but before a crisis happens. Supply chain crises happen constantly—just different kinds—so it is essential you hire supply chain professionals to help you plan for the next one."

In the thick of it

Last year, when the pandemic hit at full force, everything turned upside down. Demand was low, which caused supply chains to be empty. Today, the reverse is true. Trying to figure out what will be the new normal is futile, as anything resembling normal changes on a dime.

This is where John Thorbeck, Chairman of Chainge Capital LLC—a firm focused on fashion industry transformation and sustainability, believes we are today: trying to figure out the next move while staying flexible and ready. Thorbeck—who spent stints as CEO of GH Bass & Co (PVH) and Rockport (Adidas), and worked in marketing for Timberland Co. and Nike—says operations have been managed for reliability, quality and cost—mostly the latter.

"Today, we learn that operations really mean 'supply chains,' and you can't delegate its role, even if you don't own its multiple tiers of services and partners," he says. "We also learned that the supply chain is not just a function of the company, but a core strategy. In 2021, supply chain leadership landed in the C-Suite. In fact, I would say that the CEO became the chief supply chain officer to customers and investors."

Anyone who has worked in business long enough has heard terms like just-in-time, lean manufacturing, outsourcing, compliance and enterprise systems. Thorbeck says each betrays embedded bias to control, reduce and enforce costs. Lean management, for all of its claims to virtues of efficiency, is at its heart about producing and moving goods at the lowest possible cost.

But in today's COVID landscape, the limits of lean are evident, as shipping costs have spiked amid scarce capacity, material prices and rising wages abroad. "I think companies have been forced to take more of an end-to-end view of their supply chains," Thorbeck says. "That means Tier 1 partners and perhaps hidden suppliers and subcontractors. No one can defend disruption by claiming it is not their responsibility."

If there is a strategy to embrace, Thorbeck says it is to accept uncertainty and prepare for it. Inventory should be managed to minimize risk and to focus on total profitability. Lowest cost sourcing is not necessarily the most profitable. A meaningful phrase is now “shared risk,” meaning the relationship is less transactional (and seasonal), and elevates a joint and longer view of how to manage inevitable disruptions.

The five questions Thorbeck believes every company should ask itself if—and/or when—things get back to some sense of normalcy include the following:

1. Can you quantify risk and trade off its benefit with cost? Do you measure and manage the accuracy of your forecasts and lead times?
2. Do you measure and manage the accuracy of your forecasts and lead times? Do you understand the end-to-end economics of your supply chain, meaning the upstream impacts of raw materials and manufacturing? What are the upstream levers for speed and flexibility that determine downstream profit and service?
3. What are metrics across all tiers of your supply chain, aside from incoming cost?
4. How is sustainability integrated into your operations? These are challenges to achieve zero waste, zero friction and zero working capital.
5. Do you consider supplier contracts as transactional, or relational? What are mutual incentives and tools needed to invest for long-term performance, transparency and trust?

"Supply chain crises happen constantly—just different kinds— so it is essential you hire supply chain professionals to help you plan for the next one."

— Volodymyr Babich, Professor, McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University

“The best advice is to bring supply chain thinking and talent into the core strategy of the C-Suite,” Thorbeck says. “The supply chain is no longer operations or procurement, requiring both responsibility and responsiveness to be relevant. It is existential to the corporation.”

In a time of continued change, and changes to those changes, your plan of action may be the most important one you make.

SHARED RISK = SHARED PURPOSE

3 ways to create value in your supply chain

With limits of lean management as a system now evident, declarations for partnership have a new and more meaningful two-way dimension. John Thorbeck, Chairman of Change Capital LLC, says the formula for supplier/buyer productivity is Shared Risk = Shared Purpose. The shared purpose is to reduce and share risk over cost alone. It is collaboration to create value beyond transactional, seasonal negotiations, beginning in these ways:

1

1. Levers to reduce excess production and inventory are upstream. Supply flexibility is joint management of raw materials, capacity, production and transportation. Together, these components of the first mile reduce risks of finished goods inventory, long lead times and high volumes. This transfer of risk, time and cost across all tiers of the supply chain is substantial.

2

2. Inventory and sustainability compete for scarce capital. With 96% of a brand's footprint in its manufacturing supply chain, according to the World Resource Institute, suppliers must have incentives and access to capital for mutual investment in sustainability. Internal capital, via productivity, is the most accessible and promising source to accelerate investment where product and social impact is greatest.

3

3. Inventory can be considered a lack of prediction; it is uncertainty of demand. The capability to quantify risk projects new metrics for end-to-end performance: production closer to and in season (lead times), forecast accuracy, lower finished goods levels, neutral or negative working capital and lower markdowns and lost sales. Data science is the advanced technology that captures and links options for profitability to both retailer and supplier.

CREATIVE VIBES

AGENCY LEADERS SHARE ADVICE

No business is immune to the confusion of the past couple of years. Creative agencies are eager to navigate the current climate in a positive way and will be looking to dedicated partners to lean on. We sat down with three thoughtful agency leaders and asked them how they see things and what advice they have for anyone serving them. Andi Counts, founder and president of Veridian Design Group in Atlanta; Justin Ahrens, founder and principal of Rule29 outside of Chicago; and Terry Marks, principal of tmarks design in Seattle were gracious enough to share their current views.

What matters most to agencies in the current environment?

Justin Ahrens: We see the greatest success and satisfaction when there are transparent conversations on budget, timing, expectations and approval. With today's timing and budgets being squeezed, the greatest results come with trusted transparency.





"In many cases, a well-crafted print piece delivered to the right person can cut through the noise like nothing else."

— Terry Marks, Principal, tmarks design

Andi Counts: Authentic connections to clients, employees and partners are always important, but even more so during the past two years of limited face-to-face contact and Zoom fatigue. Ongoing relationships with trust and respect on both sides—and the ability to communicate on a personal level—have become more common with existing clients when we get to glimpse into their home offices, and occasionally see and hear their kids and dogs, but the forced lack of in-person contact has made forming new relationships more difficult.

Terry Marks: What matters most is having a viable marketing and sales program that connects with clients. We want to understand why clients select our firm and lean into that—as long as that is the work we desire.

How has the role of agencies changed over the past few years?

Ahrens: We have seen a steep increase in collaboration and stepping in more from a consultative perspective. We are working more as a part of the team versus an outside vendor. This has included early in-depth conversations about a project's viability, to help form the proper budget and timing. The increase in virtual availability has enabled deeper connections and better communication.

Counts: More clients are bringing creative in house to take advantage of closer connections to their customers and own the total brand experience. Some in-house agencies are able to partner well with outside agencies, but others are more territorial. These partnered relationships can work well for specialized agencies who can navigate the company politics well. Smaller agencies are becoming hyper-specialized while medium and larger agencies are often forced to take on more roles as technology and channels expand. It remains difficult to be all things to all clients, so agencies who know their core strengths and competencies are thriving best.

Marks: While we're being told that the economy is great, I find that it might be a bit more varied across the board. Many client firms are subjected to what is considered hot at the moment while others understand why their clients buy and are addressing what matters to them regardless of the trends. As an agency, we have to cut through guesswork and deliver real answers that address the specific challenges for the client themselves.

What are the biggest challenges your clients face in creating empathy for their target markets?

Ahrens: The biggest challenges are truly being open to look at the validity of defined personas (or even having them defined). Are they being looked at from a dollars and cents perspective only or are they being viewed more holistically? Who is at the center of the story: the company or the client? Most often, when there is a lack of empathy the focus of the brand story is on the company and not their customer and what they ideally need.

Counts: Getting facetime with their audiences to determine true needs and wants. Cutting through the digital clutter to connect authentically.

Marks: Speaking directly to decision-makers rather than gatekeepers. If we're not talking with people who have authority and power, we're just talking.

What do you see as the role of print in engagement?

Ahrens: I see print becoming more valuable and with a more relevant main purpose, especially since there is less print and we get most of our communication from our phones. I see it as a more refined, and possibly interactive, gateway to a new type of online experience while having a tangible "leave behind" quality as well. The scale of print can go from the simple to a more complex VR type experience. Some really amazing things in print are available.

Counts: Print is always a key component in building trust, creating focus, and excels in cutting through the clutter. It's a more important piece of the total picture in certain market sectors than others such as luxury goods and nonprofit direct mail and communications, but equally important in large ticket purchases. Holding a print piece in one's hand engages more senses than any other media, and when combined with personalization, it can truly make an impact. As an example, packaging is an important growth market for print due to its unmatched sustainability.

Marks: I see print as vital. We are more isolated than ever and we are bombarded constantly with digital via email or social. Some industries rely on social media metrics to make engagement decisions. In many cases, a well-crafted print piece delivered to the right person can cut through the noise like nothing else.

Can you share your thoughts on what you need from partners these days?

Ahrens: We have worked so much harder for less and we only have so much time. So, you must find partners you trust and be a good client by respecting the agency just as you want your clients to respect you.

Counts: Quick and thorough thought processes and good communication skills. Ask questions, then ask more questions, and restate your understanding of the tasks at hand. It's basic, but double-check your work and don't waste anyone's time with video calls when a phone call or email will do. Everyone is overloaded and wearing more hats than usual, with more distractions than ever before as work and home life run together.


Marks: Trust and honesty are obvious. But, taking time to discuss what is really at stake and what is necessary to evolve what is on the table. A text or email message doesn't cut it. Each of us can only do so much in a vacuum. But together, we can do amazing things.

Do you have any advice for trying to build a relationship with agencies?

Ahrens: Find an agency that fits you culturally and trust them to do their thing. Have clear goals, detailed creative briefs, and accountability of course, but then let them push you to new heights!

Counts: Be focused, know your strengths and be able to deliver on them. Learn to be flexible as agencies will need you to fit into their workflow rather than you attempting to drive the process.

Marks: My advice is to be authentic, understand what is of concern, and prove your integrity with consistency.



We have seen a steep increase in collaboration and stepping in more from a consultative perspective."

— Justin Ahrens,
Founder/Principal, Rule29

AMPLIFY^{PRINT}

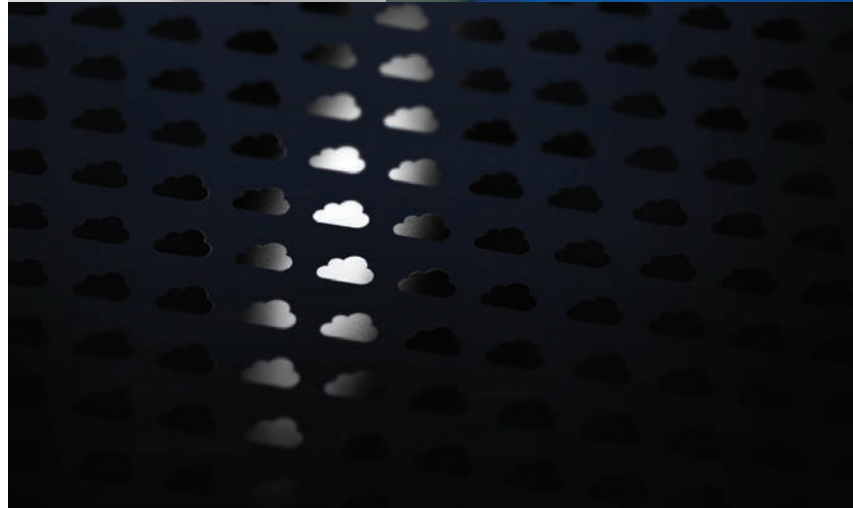
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SCAN TO LEARN MORE



A STAR AMONG STARS

HOW SKANDACOR'S PRINT EMBELLISHMENTS HELP PRINTERS SHINE

Print finishing and embellishing mean different things to different people, but everyone agrees that they increase the value of print. The ROI of print is significant in this day and age. According to Bob Rowden, Head of Strategic Alliances at Skandacor, "Print finishing is anything post press that takes ink/toner on paper, and converts it to a usable product, whether that be a book, a business card, or just a folded letter. Embellishing fits into broader print finishing as the magical process that focuses less on function and more on impact."

Skandacor has become a pioneer in print finishing and embellishment, and makes adding value to print easy and accessible. They have found that the most progressive printers have adopted embellishment technology because print consumers are spending more on print and demanding a high quality feel to their projects.

These thoughtful print providers have discovered that they can differentiate themselves from the competition by providing more than just print on paper. Unlike traditional finishing equipment (i.e. folding), embellishing equipment generates new revenue streams while demonstrating versatility.

Embellishments can have functional use, such as increased durability with lamination films or



unique die-cuts, but they aim to engage the print consumer's senses with aesthetic and tangible finishes beyond standard finishing. Shiny metallic holographic foils, tactile soft touch finishes, deep textured films and raised Spot UV are all examples of embellishments that create impact.

"Printers are missing the opportunity to exponentially grow profits with minimal added costs," Rowden says. "They also underestimate the customer attrition where customers have gone elsewhere due to their lack of embellishing capability. A small investment in a low-volume embellishing solution can recapture that market share and then be used to springboard into new markets, as well as convert existing customers to add embellishment to their work."

"A small investment in a low-volume embellishing solution can recapture market share and be used to springboard into new markets, as well as convert existing customers to add embellishment to their work."

— Bob Rowden, Head of Strategic Alliances, Skandacor

Rowden believes that the SLEEKpro digital foil technology and specialty laminates are star players within their print embellishment offering. Also referred to as Sleeking, SLEEKpro is the application of embellishments to a digitally printed piece using films and foils that adhere to toner and spot polymer under heat and pressure.

The foil is applied with a thermal laminator where it bonds to the printed areas, then is stripped away, leaving only the printed areas foiled. One of the most compelling attributes is that no dies are required for this process. In turn, there is a tremendous economic advantage combined with the freedom that results from not using a static die.

When asked about the uses of SLEEKpro, Rowden beams with enthusiasm. "There is an idea that embellishment is very costly to get into, when the reality is that there are entry level machines that can allow printers to explore the market without taking great risk," he says. "Also, there is the myth that the processes are difficult and slow down production. Skandacor has worked hard to streamline processes, and equipment advances have reduced set-up times and increased run speeds. While there is merit to the longer production times, when profits are weighed against time, embellishing processes prove a higher return on time spent every time."



Skandacor reminds us that printers can print not only using variable data, they can now foil with it too! This allows the printers to present a kind of hyper-personalization to their clients. The application of these incredible embellishments include projects like greeting cards, business cards, menus, corporate literature, books, labels, and all types of packaging. Nearly all print is a candidate for embellishment, and SLEEKpro is an easy way to add value.

"SLEEKpro is fantastic by itself, but the impact grows exponentially when combined with Skandacor specialty laminates from the SPECIALTYpro and DECOpro lines," Rowden says.

Laminating has been part of print finishing for a long time; however the introduction of specialty finishes has launched it from a standard process to an exciting brand-building tool. As many printers remember, Soft Touch laminates started a revolution 10 years ago and led to the discovery that tactile finishes influence consumer behavior and greatly impact the perceived value of goods.

Skandacor's SOFTpro is a key part of their SPECIALTYpro line, and has been refined so that it is now over-printable with most digital toner presses—allowing for the addition of SLEEKpro on top of the laminate film. This creates unique layered finishes, while the adhesive is continually being updated to ensure an excellent bond to digital print.

Rowden says, "By far the most exciting product category for our client's design clients is the DECOpro laminates. Building off the haptic nature of print, we set out to create dimensional films to provide an aesthetic and tangible element to the finished product far beyond what print alone can offer." Textures like leather, linen and wood can now be combined with SLEEKpro for truly remarkable, high impact print.

It is clear that Skandacor is a star among stars and has the equipment and products to help any print provider become a star in their own right.

For more ways to make your print products shine, contact Skandacor today at 1-888-820-9020 or email sales@skandacor.com.

Seeking

THOUGHTS ON
PRINT STAFFING

help



This past fall, during a Washington Post Live webcast, Anthony Klotz, an associate professor of management at Texas A&M University, uttered a phrase that would become synonymous with the onslaught of workers leaving their jobs in droves amid the ongoing pandemic. Klotz called the movement the “Great Resignation.” In September 2021 alone, more than 4.4 million flat out quit. To try and describe the seemingly unthinkable rash of departures, Klotz outlined four main causes, including a backlog of workers who wanted to resign before the pandemic, but held on a bit longer; burnout, particularly among frontline workers in healthcare, food service and retail; “pandemic epiphanies,” where people experienced major shifts in identity and purpose that led them to pursue new careers and start their own businesses; and an aversion to returning to offices after a year or more of working remotely.



The bottom line is this: across the board, no matter the industry, it is becoming harder and harder to attract and retain top talent, which in turn puts immense pressure on industries like commercial printing to focus on employee experience. While this is not a new trend, it is one that author, speaker and futurist Jacob Morgan says is definitely accelerating. Morgan, who also is the founder of The Future of Work, defines employee experience as changing the core workplace practices of your organization by focusing on three environments: culture, technology and physical space.

“I feel like we are spending too much time trying to find the ‘perfect’ candidate,” says Morgan, a four-time best-selling author whose books include “The Future Leader,” “The Employee Experience Advantage,” “The Future of Work” and “The Collaborative Organization.” “It takes months to hire a single person because we make them jump through countless assessments and quizzes.”

Morgan does not believe that practice is scalable or practical anymore. Instead, he recommends companies bring back the human side of hiring. Let people see a face and talk to a human being instead of just using technology for everything. "Expanding the talent pool is going to be crucial by looking across geographies and locations instead of focusing on specific areas. As we move toward a more hybrid way of working, organizations must look at attracting and retaining talent all over the world."

When it comes to industries like print, Morgan says it is important that leaders understand they also are part of the HR process, meaning every single C-suite professional is responsible for the people who work with them. Second, teams must do a better job of working across functions to create better employee experiences. For example, HR should build closer relationships with IT, customer experience and employee experience teams.

"Candidates are smart. They will be looking to work at an organization that embraces those things they feel are important."

— Sharlyn Lauby, President, ITM Group Inc.

Even more important, Morgan believes companies must get back to the basics, i.e., ask big questions like, "What does it mean to be an employee, a leader and to work?" "What is the future we want to create at this company and how are we going to do it?" and "Do we need to keep doing things the same way we have always been doing them? Where are the areas where we can challenge our assumptions?"

"It's like dating," Morgan says. "When you go out on a first date, you tend to have some high-level conversations with people and you get to know what they care about, what they value and what their world outlook is. Then, after the date, you usually have a pretty good sense if you're compatible or not. Interviews are the same thing. Ask questions that help you understand what the candidates care about and what they value, and make sure there is alignment with what the organization stands for and hopes to achieve."

All about the plan

An author, writer, speaker and consultant, Sharlyn Lauby is best known for her work on HR Bartender, a friendly place to talk about workplace issues. The site has been recognized as one of the "Top 5 Blogs HR Pros Love to Read" by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). As president of consulting firm ITM Group Inc., she spends her days helping companies focus on developing training solutions that engage and retain workplace talent.

The top recommendation on her list is the one she says more companies need to really emphasize—implement a workforce plan to guide their hiring process. In short, a workforce plan is a roadmap to identify the knowledge, skills and abilities (Lauby calls this, KSAs)—one that keeps the organization focused on hiring individuals who will help them achieve their short- and long-term goals.

"In a highly competitive labor market, organizations run the risk of being short-sighted when it comes to hiring," Lauby says. "For example, they hire someone because they need a job filled right now. They don't include interview questions about self-learning, which might be valuable when it comes to acquiring future skills. What they need to do is have candidates take an assessment on cognitive ability, which could provide insights about a candidate's trainability for future roles. They need to think about how they're going to train that new employee for the KSAs that they will need in the future."



While Lauby understands the need to fill jobs, it is more critical—and sustainable—to think about the future in the hiring process. The end goal should always be to hire people who want to stay and grow with the organization. “When candidates understand the upsides and challenges of the role, they can make good decisions about their career. That’s what it takes to bring the right people into the organization. Everyone makes the right decisions for the right reasons.”

Nothing speaks to the right decision better than culture. Having the right presentation and conversation about your work environment is a critical step in finding and hiring good people. “Candidates are smart,” Lauby says. “They will be looking to work at an organization that embraces those things they feel are important. If the organization tries to hide aspects of their culture, an employee will eventually find out and they will feel deceived. And that will not create the foundation of trust it takes to retain employees.”

Heading into 2022—with the concept of the Great Resignation dancing in everyone’s head—finding, attracting and retaining talent is going to be “tough,” as Morgan calls it. But by having a plan, putting people first and knowing your offer, the sky really may be the limit.



3 ways you can hire the right person

- **1 Be honest with candidates about the organization, the job, and the work environment.** Candidates are smart. They know every company and job has a downside. Don’t be afraid to talk about those things. It reduces the number of surprises a new hire will face.
- **2 Know the job you’re hiring for.** Be able to explain why the job exists and what it contributes to overall goals—not just the tasks of the job. Make the connection between the work and the bottom line. Employee engagement is a key factor in employee retention. Organizations want new hires to feel connected to their work.
- **3 Share what it’s like to work with the manager and the team.** Let candidates know what their working relationships will be like. There’s Gallup research that says employees stay when they have friends at work. Start that process during the interview. Candidates want to know that they will enjoy working with their manager and co-workers.

Source: ITM Group Inc.

"I feel like we are spending too much time trying to find the ‘perfect’ candidate."

**— Jacob Morgan, Founder,
The Future of Work**

Q&A

CARLA JOHNSON, GLOBAL KEYNOTE SPEAKER & AUTHOR OF "RE:THINK INNOVATION"

RETHINKING INNOVATION: A DEEP DIVE ON THE CREATIVE THINKING PROCESS

As a marketing and innovation strategist, Carla Johnson has partnered with brands and conferences globally to train thousands of people on how to rethink the work they do and the impact they can have. Her new book, "RE:Think Innovation," explains why finding opportunities through innovative thinking must be everyone's business in a hyper-competitive world. We asked her to share a bit with us.

What prompted you to dive deep into the complexity of innovation?

My seventh book, "Experiences: The 7th Era of Marketing," taught people how to create story-driven experiences. In working with teams following that book, people said, "I love the process, but we struggle to come up with ideas that are truly original." It sent me down a rabbit hole to research the work of some of the world's most prolific innovators. Could consistently coming up with great ideas that have a bottom-line impact be something anyone could learn?

I examined all types of people in all types of businesses—Fortune 500 companies to small startups. The commonality was that they all followed the same process, which "RE:Think Innovation" breaks down so that anyone can learn how to consistently generate great ideas.

Speak to the gap that exists between individual competence with innovation techniques and company objectives.

Companies that declare innovation as a core value often tell people, "Go innovate." But they cannot figure out why it never really materializes. The gap between individual competence and contributing to company objectives exists for several reasons.

First, there isn't a common definition of innovation. If leadership charges employees to innovate, yet they don't know what that behavior looks like, there's a risk. With risk comes consequences, so people play it safe. Hands aren't raised, ideas aren't shared and boundaries don't get pushed.

Secondly, managers don't know how to give feedback for ideas being shared. It's what I call the "Gladiator Effect"—an idea either lives or dies. But, ideas take iteration, evolution and support from many people. The more employees hear "no," the less likely they are to make suggestions.

Finally, the lack of tracking ideas widens the gap. When companies set up a system that tracks how many ideas are submitted, how many are put into progress and how many are completed, it exposes interesting cultural dynamics. Where are ideas being held up? Who kills them? And what variables contribute to slowing them down? All this indicates how open your culture is to innovation.

How do we expand the limited thinking that prevents innovation?

The word innovation itself is heavy and can feel overwhelming. When leaders tell me that they don't have time for innovation, I remind them that people need to be able to take advantage of opportunities or become better problem solvers. Those are the foundation of innovation.

If talking about innovation turns people off, change your language. Talk about testing new approaches, creating trials and researching what other industries are doing. The more you can put simple science around it, the less intimidating it feels.

What are the limits of the corporation that keep us from creative innovation?

Seeing innovation as something that only select people have earned the privilege to be a part of. They give specific job titles, put them on specific teams and have them work together in specific parts of the office. They generally focus on product

innovation, not how business is done. But, 90% of innovation happens outside of traditional product development groups. So, if companies limit innovation to only 10% of the business, they're investing in areas with the lowest ROI. Innovation must be everybody's business.

What are five steps that can help instill innovation across teams?

Observe — Innovators start by observing the world around them. When you make time for that, you can see the world from a different perspective.

Distill — Innovators look at their observations and begin to notice patterns. These patterns distill into a broader theme.

Relate — The ability to relate outside ideas into your own world is almost second nature. This is key in connecting the dots between the world around you and the work you do.

Generate — Ideas generated from inspiration are powerful. Come to the table with realistic ideas and draw on the experiences that have meaning to you.

Pitch — Bad pitches kill great ideas. Every great idea needs support. Great pitches paint a picture—they tell the story of an idea and how to realize its potential.



Printers live in constant change. How can they succeed in the short- and long-term?

Look at industries, brands and experiences that have captivated you. This helps draw on the details of what worked in other industries and situations. Connect these dots to your own work and how you may apply them.



"IF YOU WANT TO REMOVE ALL LIMITS AND TRULY THRIVE, NOT JUST SURVIVE, MAKE INNOVATION EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS."

TO THE POINT

It's Monday morning and you sit down at your desk, ignoring the beep of your phone. You open your laptop to 200+ unopened emails, reply to a few and delete the rest. Ping—another text.

The truth is that we are all overwhelmed by digital communications. Nobody is—nor do they have any desire to be—constantly reachable. To reach consumers today, you must cut through the digital clutter and get to the point. Even those who were raised on computers and smartphones are more open to print, with 31% of consumers under 35 believing that companies that sent printed marketing pieces were more serious about winning and keeping their business, compared to under 14% of those aged 35+. The numbers come from Keypoint Intelligence's recent "Annual State of Marketing Communications" survey. Check out the top reasons consumers of all ages cite for reading direct mail:

19% I'm more likely to see and save printed promotions

15% Providers who send printed pieces are more serious about winning/keeping my business

14% It can be difficult to determine if digital promotions are real or fake

12% Printed pieces are easier to read/understand





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