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Exploring the Intersection of Design and Marketing

Amy Conover, Content Manager, *HOW Design Live*

Design and Marketing Should "Play" Together, Focus on Connecting with the Audience.

Paul Foulkes-Arellano, head of client programs at Precipice Design, recently noted that “In the 21st century, design directors and marketing directors need to put their heads together, align their objectives, and collaborate in the pursuit of common commercial goals.” He pointed out that marketers need to have an intimate understanding of design, and designers need to master the fine art of marketing. Indeed, it’s key for businesses of all kinds—including in the print space—to strengthen collaboration between marketers and designers.

“This is no small task,” said Foulkes-Arellano, “given that the natural instincts of the designer are often wildly different to those of the marketer. Schooling also has a part to play in this. Business schools pore over data, processes, and statistics, whilst a design education is altogether different.”

Can These Two Factions “Play” Together?

When Vanessa B. Dewey, senior product marketing manager, Adobe Creative Jam Enterprise team, thinks of design and marketing, she pictures images of battling warriors ruled by layers of hierarchy. “From my experience, it feels impossible for these two factions to work together harmoniously,” she said. “However, as my career evolved, one word that started to appear in my work vernacular was the word ‘play.’ But how can this term, one that equates to childhood, possibly be applicable to in-house design and marketing?”

Before design and marketing can play together, two things are needed, according to Dewey: trust and the elimination of un-meaningful procedures. “Trust in collaboration can be generated first,” she said, “if everyone checks their egos at the door and, secondly, if everyone is playing their ‘A’ game. Elimination of un-meaningful procedures helps to better achieve efficient product development by not slowing down or compromising the design process.”

Designers Should Also Speak Business

Fe Amarante, manager of global design at The Hershey Company, said the best designers she’s worked with speak business while being wildly talented and inspiring creatives. “After starting my career as a designer, I pursued several business graduate degrees because I felt it was as important to be fluent in creative language as it was to be fluent in business language.”

Amarante noted that it doesn’t mean every designer needs an MBA to be successful, but “...truly understanding the whys and hows behind your marketing partners’ challenges is often as important as being the most gifted creative.” She explained, “This balance can be the difference between bringing your marketing partners onboard with your design recommendation—or going back to the drawing board yet one more time.”

Connect with the Audience

Douglas Spencer, president of Spencer Brenneman, LLC, suggested that a team look at the intersection of design and marketing through the lens of the brand strategy. When

doing so, one can boil down design's role to one crucial, but nuanced, goal: Connect with the audience emotionally. "Now, a non-designer naysayer somewhere is saying: 'Design in marketing is to move product! Make sales! Earn money!' Those assertions aren't wrong, necessarily, but they are not the point."

Spencer believes that a brand is the emotional connection we have with the products and companies that are most important to us, so design and marketing should focus on that. "As humans, we make decisions with two different types of input: analytical and emotional. The facts and figures about a product, the ROI, the specifications, etc., they all speak to our analytical side. It's the brand that speaks to our emotional side. Brand comes to life through creative,

both in visual design and copywriting. Those elements in the most successful marketing executions connect, on some level, emotionally with the customer. Whether it is the use of shape and color in a print ad to excite, subdued lighting in a video to calm and center, or the nearly all-white canvas of a website to promise endless possibilities, all of those require an emotion—or our natural cravings for emotion—to really work."

FOR MORE INFO

HOW Design Live, April 30–May 3, 2018 in Boston, MA.

<http://howdesignlive.com>. To download the *HOW Design Live* white paper, *The Intersection of Design and Marketing*, featuring Printing Industries of America, visit

<http://howdesignlive.com/white-paper>.



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Help Customers Create a Printed Piece that Wows

Ashley Maydak, Brand Marketing Manager, Domtar

● **One of my favorite things about my job is the regular opportunities I have to engage in conversations with marketers and creatives at various tradeshows and events.**

● While looking through our promotions, I often hear the comment: “I’d love to create an amazing printed piece, but my budget just doesn’t allow for it.” It’s no secret that most paper promotions aren’t cheap print production feats, and the best ones aren’t great simply because they incorporate budget-busting techniques or are created by a rock star designer. Every incredible printed piece has solid roots in collaboration between the printer and the designer.

● While it might not seem obvious from your client’s standpoint, the best way for your customer to get what they want—which is of course, a stellar, award-winning printed piece that generates a return—is through collaboration with you. By working together, early and often, the end result is bound to generate a buzz. But, how do you get there?

● In most cases, the answer to these questions depends on how a printer goes about interacting with clients from the start and how the printer/client relationship is viewed. If you spend the time to really know your client’s business and educate your client on the advantages of print and the printing process, then your status gets elevated from vendor to invaluable partner.

● I’ve worked with a lot of printers over the years, yet there are a few that I continually return to for my most important projects. Here are the three things those printers did at the

beginning of my career to help me take notice of their value and create a printed piece that wows.

Do Your Research

Make sure you understand your customer’s goals and the audience they are trying to reach. In marketing and graphic design, everything begins with an understanding of the audience. As an invaluable partner in the process, your job is to understand your customer’s target audience(s) so you can provide suggestions that help your customer reach their goals. Make sure you have an understanding of what your customer’s target audience wants to achieve and their pain points. With this understanding, you will be able to suggest printed solutions that are ROI-generating, eye-catching, and relevant to what your customer is trying to accomplish.

Make sure you stay up-to-date on trends and challenges facing the target audience your customer is trying to reach. If your customer is communicating to a group of existing customers, they may already have a well-defined persona built for this audience, but you could still benefit by staying up-to-date on trends and challenges facing the intended group. If they’re trying to reach a new audience, you may need to do more in-depth research and study the demographics.

It may sound like I’m telling you to spend hours researching a customer’s target audience, but this level of research really doesn’t have to be incredibly complicated or time-consuming. Start making a point to review your client’s digital marketing tools (websites, blog, social media outlets) on a regular basis. Staying up-to-date on a customer’s target



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market could be as easy as setting Google alerts or joining a LinkedIn group. If your customer is speaking to specific zip codes, one fun tool I love is the My Best Segment Zip Code Look-up by Claritas, which defines the people in specific zip codes by demographics and lifestyle.

The goal here is simple: make sure you're delivering ideas to your customer that will captivate the intended target audience and are relevant to your client's goals. That being said, major bonus points if you uncover a target market need your client wasn't aware of or didn't consider.

Educate Your Customer

Here's a secret about marketing budgets: the most money is allocated to projects that deliver an ROI and are expected to produce results. Unfortunately, for those of us that work in the print and paper industries, there's a perception that print is a luxury and doesn't produce a trackable return. This perception is due to the vast majority of marketing resources that focus on digital means of communication. The good news is Domtar and several other paper mills provide resources that educate print buyers in a manner that's relevant and exciting. By subscribing to Domtar's *BlueLine Magazine* yourself (and encouraging your customers to do the same), you will both receive regular stories of how print is being used by brands to build awareness, remain memorable, and build loyalty with a variety of audiences within every generation.

And here's another secret: most of your customers actually want to print! This is especially true when working with graphic designers. In fact, 65% of senior level creatives cited "getting clients to spend more on print" as their top challenge in a *BlueLine Magazine* survey. Remember that often times your client is the messenger, not the final decision maker. Arm your client with the resources, stats, and articles they need to convince their boss or client that spending more on print is a wise investment.

Perhaps most importantly, share tips and case studies on how to track the ROI of a printed piece. Encourage your customer to have a clear call-to-action on every piece they print. From there, the ROI on the printed piece can be measured in a variety of ways, from the use of QR codes or augmented reality, to unique links and landing pages, to a mail order form, or even a coupon or voucher. Whatever

tactic your customer chooses, make sure it's unique to that specific printed piece.

Also, educate your client on how the tactile experience of print not only makes their brand and message memorable but also elevates the quality of the customer experience. Print can play a crucial role in each phase of the customer journey and often times is the vehicle that provides a platform for digital technologies such as augmented reality. In other words, print is the communication that links together an omni-channel experience.

Be the Guide

Most of you reading this article will not be surprised to hear that there are many print buyers in high positions for major brands that know very little about print. You can either think of this as a burden or use it to your advantage. Make an effort to guide your client through the printing process and explain the multitude of options in a fashion that's relevant to their goals and specific project. For example, instead of telling them about your newest digital press, show up with samples created for similar industries as theirs and educate them on the wide array of options available with today's digital

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equipment—such as variable imaging, variable foil, and white ink, just to name a few. Another example: many creatives assume a post-press technique—like a foil or emboss—is out of their budget without even asking about it. Educate your client about how these processes work and let them know that many design-based factors, like size of foil and type of emboss, play a role in the cost of the technique. By educating your customer on these processes, the end result can be a printed piece that makes both of you look like rock stars—in both the awards circuit and to your customer’s boss or client.

Sometimes, guiding your client in the direction of an accompanying technology can help you sell print. For example, many print buyers assume the use of an augmented reality tool is a budget-busting endeavor. Make your client aware of the wide array of options available for this sort of technology and point them in the right direction. Show examples of how other companies have used this technology in a way that’s affordable, easy to utilize, and uses print to better sync their omni-channel experience together.

As the landscape of marketing continues to change, exceptional print will continue to stand out and command attention. Make sure you’re the person guiding your customer through the process and making them aware of the value print.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a brand marketing manager at Domtar, Ashley Maydak manages a variety of trusted commercial paper brands, including Cougar®, Lynx® Opaque Ultra, and Husky® Opaque Offset. As the managing editor for Domtar’s *Blueline Magazine*, Ashley also produces a vast array of content that touts the benefits of print and paper in the creative, print, and paper communities. To sign up for your complimentary subscription to *Blueline Magazine* or view more articles written by Ashley, visit domtarblueline.com



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2018 PREMIER PRINT AWARDS

The Premier Print Awards competition recognizes the highest-quality printed pieces in various categories from around the world. Each year, only the worthiest pieces receive Awards of Recognition, Certificates of Merit, and the highest honor—the Benny statue. The Benny has become a universally recognized symbol for excellence in the printing industry. For more than 60 years, winners of the largest, most prestigious print competition in the world have leveraged this honor to gain a competitive advantage. Ashley Maydak, brand marketing manager of Domtar, serves on the judging committee and shares what makes a winning entry:

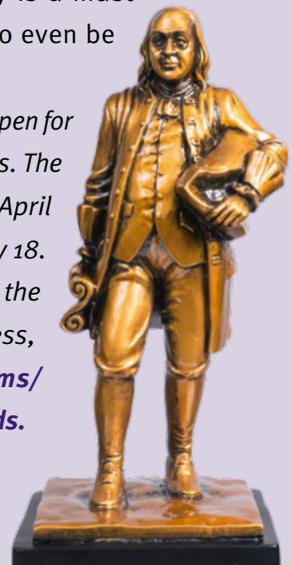
As a judge, what makes an entry stand out?

Flawless printing, attention to detail, and overall craftsmanship. It’s obvious a printer was able to guide their client in creating an outstanding printed piece that pushes the boundaries of what print can do, while also demonstrating the expertise of the printer who created it.

Beyond the "wow factor," how important is the quality of the printing to the judges?

Print quality is really what sets the standard for judging in each category. The importance of “wow factor” can vary from category to category, but excellent print quality is a must for a Premier Print Award to even be considered.

The nomination period is open for the 2018 Premier Print Awards. The early-bird entry deadline is April 20 and final entry is due May 18. For more information about the awards and the entry process, visit printing.org/programs/awards/premier-print-awards.



Interactive Print: A Printer's New Frontier

Erica Aitken, Co-founder and President, Rods and Cones, Inc.

Why will print live forever?

If printed phone books no longer land on your doorstep once a year, it's because online phone books are much more practical. And if print depended on phone books, there would be no printing.

It's a good thing that many of us read printed newspapers, magazines, and books because we choose to. And then there are the millions of times when printing is indispensable. Packaging comes to mind, collateral for stores and offices, brochures, real estate flyers. The list goes on. If there was ever a time when it's change or be gone, the emergence of interactive print is the case that will change the game. Connecting print to digital is growing in acceptance and will eventually be the only way complete information can be shared. And printers, if they are ready, can take part in that new opportunity.

Pictured above: AR coloring books give even very young children a lot of joy.

VR, AR, and Interactive Print

While interactive print is, in some ways, augmented reality, virtual reality is a completely different concept and technology. Virtual reality essentially replaces the world with another world. By donning a headset, one is immersed in a new environment that is fluid and responsive. This is achieved by creating 3D environments that are viewed through goggles. By tracking eye and head movement, the environment appears to move in harmony with the person.





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Spotlight

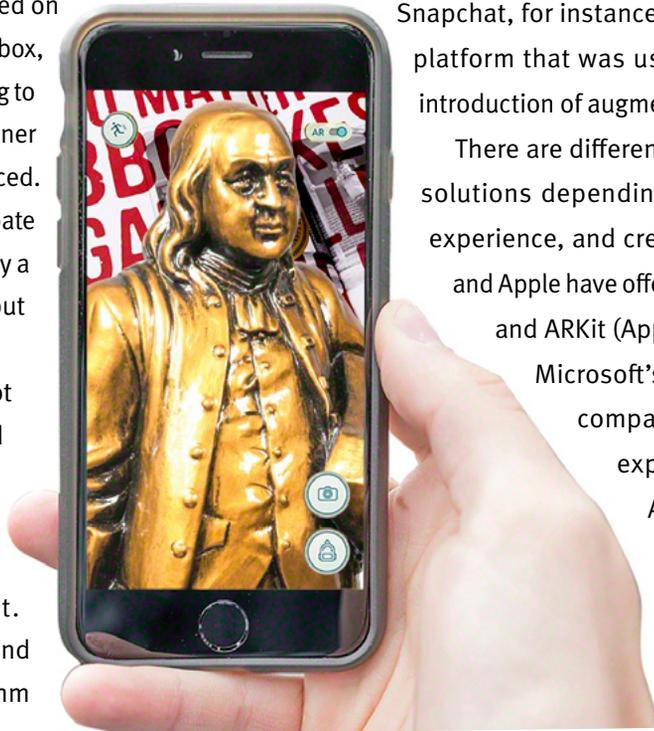
You can imagine that it's going to be very difficult to make any kind of connection between print, packaging, and virtual reality, especially for as long as goggles are unwieldy. One creative example of using VR with a package was executed in Sweden for McDonald's (pictured on previous page). The Happy Meal box, taken apart and folded according to instructions, became the container in which a smartphone was placed. Children would view and participate in an immersive game. Not really a direct print-to-VR experience but it's worth mentioning.

Augmented reality does not place you in an alternate world but rather adds to your world. When your phone or tablet points at something, 3D objects populate that environment. These are stored in the cloud and chosen based on an algorithm

that predicts where to place the next 3D object. The best examples are Pokémon Go and Snapchat filters, which are both responsible for the wide acceptance of augmented reality, particularly in apps downloaded for other purposes.

Snapchat, for instance, is a popular social media platform that was used a long time before the introduction of augmented reality.

There are different kinds of do-it-yourself AR solutions depending on developer resources, experience, and creativity. Since 2017, Google and Apple have offered SDKs to ARCore (Google) and ARKit (Apple); they were preceded by Microsoft's HoloLens. Then there are companies that offer simpler AR experience à la carte such as Aurasma and Layar. There are agencies that develop custom apps and others



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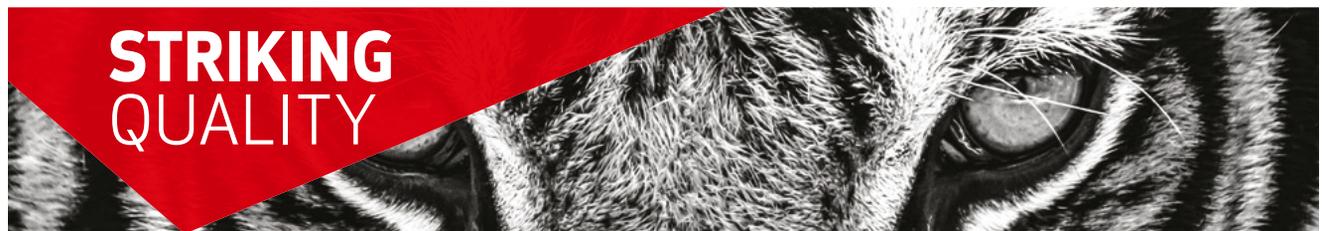
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who are industry-specific, like Ikea. Is there an opportunity for printers to jump in? Some have. Quad Graphics, for example, offers augmented reality services. SGSco does as well, with a remarkable AR campaign created for Treasury Wines Estate. 19 Crimes is a wine whose name refers to the worst crimes in Australia. Each variety has a label featuring a criminal who lived in Britain and was exiled to Australia for having committed one of the 19 crimes (pictured below). By downloading the 19 Crimes app, wine drinkers could scan the label and watch it come alive with commentaries from the criminal in person. The campaign caught on, and people were actively looking for the different bottles so they could listen to all of the testimonies.



Is there a way to enter this market at a reasonable price? And why would you?

There is and you should. The simplest solution to offer digital content from print is with connected print, or interactive print. It differs from virtual reality and augmented reality because when an image, QR code, or barcode is scanned, content appears on the phone or tablet and is read without needing to stay with the image. There are no 3D objects stored in the Cloud overlaying the environment. The content can be uploaded to a server or content can be linked to the Internet.

For printers, this is an accessible addition to their services. There are several business models. One is to offer the service to customers and buy it from a provider. Almost all watermarks are created by Digimarc, which sells direct. Other companies provide a service that manages watermarks, campaigns, and analytics through a portal available by subscription. Printers who anticipate good

When you pee on a page to find out if you're pregnant, is that AR?

Some of you may have seen a daring ad by IKEA Sweden targeting potentially pregnant women. They are invited to pour their urine on the page to see if they are pregnant. If they are, a lower price appears under the picture of a crib—a gift to the new mother to be.

Is it AR? Well yes, if you want to be literal. It certainly adds to reality to find out that you're pregnant. But no, it's not AR because there is no digital content associated with this project and nothing to scan. Here is how they did it:

When Swedish agency Åkestam Holst received the OK to produce this ad, they chose the pregnancy test strip as the starting point. The difficulty was to make sure that the urine didn't soak the whole page, only the strip and the emerging price break for the crib. They made a new paper combining several layers. One of them had large pores so the urine could spread. It contained the antibodies that indicate pregnancy. That sheet was sandwiched between two sheets of a material that directed the urine to the right place: the strip and the price.

It was an expensive campaign in line with IKEA's often fun and controversial ads.

Ikea is a great user of AR, allowing shoppers to place virtual furniture in their home to see how well it fits. But the pee ad? Just old-fashioned tinkering by incredibly creative advertisers.



results from this service should have their own portal and deliver the service directly. A watermark can cost about \$150, and a subscription has several models based on volume.

If interactive print was used for marketing campaigns and customer engagement, it would be a hard row to hoe. These campaigns are developed over time, and many are waiting to see how well other campaigns are received. But there are two other important reasons to offer interactive print. The first is to eliminate the need to print inserts for packages that either have how-to instructions or translated copy. These can be created either with video (how-to) or with files as simple as PDFs. When an insert is there to provide translations, only the user's language is displayed on the phone.

Piracy detection is another (potentially huge) reason to consider interactive print. Counterfeiting is a serious problem for many industries, including liquor and wine, pharma, electronics, and things as mundane as lightbulbs or car oil. When whole shipments of legitimate products are replaced by counterfeits, not only do companies incur debilitating losses, but customers are paying for inferior products. By serializing each package or label and giving it a unique code, shipments can be tracked and fraud detected.

Who is going to provide these codes or the watermarks that will take a customer to exciting content? That's up for grabs. Printers should jump on this because everything that is watermarked leads to content that won't be printed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a production manager and a designer, Erica Aitken was mortified that she could never properly explain (bad) colors to her customers. A bit of reading, a talk with her co-founder, and a few seminars convinced her that she would better serve her fellow designers by starting a business that would bring beautiful, predictable, and accurate proofs. The rest, since the beginning of Rods and Cones in 1996, is history. She is the publisher and designer of *Out of Chaos* magazine.

Contact her at erica@rodsandcones.com.



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Member Spotlight: Heritage Printing

Sarah Sudar, Copywriter, Printing Industries of America

Heritage Printing & Graphics was started in 1977 in Joe Gass's family garage in Leonardtown, Maryland by his parents Allen and Margaret as Gass Printing Service. Allen taught his three sons (Joe, Steve, and Dean) the printing ropes, and the business slowly took over the house. The company finally moved to its first commercial location in 1984 in their hometown.

After serving six years in the United States Navy, Joe joined the family business in 1988 and, along with his brother, Steve, purchased the company from their dad, rebranding it as Heritage Printing & Graphics.

"Dad liked the technical aspect of things and didn't enjoy working directly with customers and handling the finances, so it was very easy for him to hand over the keys to me when I got out of the Navy," said Joe. "I was happy to take on his headache as it was something I truly enjoy doing."

During Joe's last six months in the Navy, while serving on the *USS Hermitage* working with Seal Team Two/Small Boat Unit 20, he wrote a business plan with an ambitious

goal to increase business from \$150,000 in sales annually to \$500,000 over a five-year period, with plans to expand to three locations in southern Maryland.

Joe and Steve accomplished their five-year goal the following year. During Joe's first six months out of the Navy, Heritage opened two additional locations in Maryland: Prince Frederick and Lexington Park. By 1993, as technology continued to streamline channels of communication with clients, the decision was made to operate much more efficiently and profitably by reducing overhead in consolidating back down to one larger location. Despite closing the other two locations, sales continued to grow.

"It's all about not getting comfortable," said Joe. "Getting comfortable is not a profitable thing."

In 2004, after 16 years in the business, Joe decided that he needed to make a change in life. In looking at what he was doing and where he wanted to focus his energies, he recognized that he could not continue to be actively involved in politics, community service, and ministry without negatively impacting his family. While making the



Joe Gass, president and CEO of Heritage Printing & Graphics, is a proud Navy veteran.

decision to keep the business in Maryland, he relocated his family to Charlotte, North Carolina, to work with a local ministry in the community for almost three years while telecommuting with Heritage. At the time, the company had grown to more than \$1 million in sales. Although his employees originally thought

he was going through a midlife crisis and was putting the company at risk by moving 400 miles away, it turned out to be a great decision for both his family and for Heritage.

“In your 20s and 30s, it’s so easy to motor through things with energy and passion, but I began to rethink my priorities” said Joe. “I realized I needed to get out of my comfort zone and pursue a life with real meaning and purpose.”

Heritage Printing & Graphics in Charlotte was launched in 2008 with the renting of an empty office in the Printing Industries of the Carolinas office building. Joe started out selling commercial printing produced in their Maryland facility, but quickly recognized that he needed to have production capability in Charlotte as well. As Joe started to think about how to dynamically grow the business, he quickly realized that it didn’t make sense to replicate the same capabilities in Charlotte and began to consider other types of products that were growing in demand.

Through the course of time and relationships, Joe became familiar with wide-format printing. He met a couple of guys that were in the custom signs industry and they kept telling him he needed to get into wall graphics and the growth of wide-format printing. One afternoon, one of them took Joe to Concord Mills Mall and walked him around for four hours to look at all of the signage—vinyl on windows, point-of-purchase displays, and a variety of other visual communications products.

Joe chose to acquire a wide-format printing company in Charlotte, and with the growing demand for high-quality fabric and vinyl event signage, storefront graphics, and interior wall and window graphics, Heritage began its journey as a commercial printer with wide-format printing capabilities.

Production work in Charlotte primarily focuses on commercial interior projects such as wallpapers, interior lobby signage, and interior branding for retailers, manufacturers, distributors, and financial institutions. This is much different than the current portfolio of business in the metro D.C. area, which has primarily been to service federal agencies, trade associations, and large national non-profits with predominantly printing needs.

In the past three and a half years, Heritage has seen significant growth, with wide-format and grand format being the prime revenue drivers. During this time, Heritage has begun to market Heritage Custom Signs & Displays as a division that is contributing to more than 40 percent of the company’s overall revenue.

In 2015, Heritage acquired a friendly competitor, Beacon Printing in Waldorf, Maryland, and moved its

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operation from Leonardtown. The move to this larger space has allowed Heritage to expand its commercial and wide-format printing capabilities in the mid-Atlantic and gives Heritage closer proximity to the downtown D.C. metro area to deliver to and install for clients who are typically in a tight production and install schedule. With recently expanded production facilities in Maryland and Charlotte and a team of more than 20 people, Heritage is positioned well to grow in the coming years.

With all his four children out of the house, Joe is focused on growing the business, both in sales and leadership. Since he started with the company, Heritage had been without a sales force. Joe focused on business development and has relied on Internet marketing for much of the company's growth. As he looks to the future of Heritage, Joe is projecting growth to \$10 million in sales and has begun to add sales staff, pairing these hunters with internal, creative project coordinators at Heritage to form a great team for the company's growing list of clients.

Joe attributes his time coaching high school football to where he learned to be a better leader. He's taking what he's learned on the football field to Heritage, where he's looking at hiring the next generation of leadership in the company. All three Gass brothers are still working in the organization, and there's even a third generation: Steve's son, Eric, has a production role in Maryland.

"As we bring in younger talent to do the heavy lifting and drive innovation, my goal is to be a great coach and push things forward," said Joe. "I recognize that my greatest value is in leadership development and mentoring the next generation."

But, he's quick to say that even though he's been in the business for 30 years, he's more passionate than ever about what he does and sees doing it for the next 20 or more years.

"I don't see any end in sight for me and Heritage," said Joe. "I feel like I'm just getting started."

Find more information at heritageprinting.com and heritagecustomsigns.com.



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