



## The 2016 SGIA Expo Show Report

The 2016 SGIA Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada met expectations, attracting 24,000 pre-registered attendees. A total of 562 exhibitors — 18 more than last year — showcased their newest technologies and applications, as well as a variety of impressive imaging innovations.

The SGIA show is special for a number of reasons. It is one of the largest industrial digital imaging shows, catering to all technology facets of the industry (e.g., digital scanning, single-pass wide format printing, conventional screen printing, and ink/supply/sundry production). The markets served include commercial print, sign graphics, industrial digital printers, industrial electronics, and the original mainstay: screen printing. It showcases some of the industry's best products, methodologies, and applications, and continually exceeds expectations in showcasing new technologies and energizing sales. The atmosphere was charged and upbeat throughout the exhibit hall, and a number of informative educational sessions were held throughout the enormous Las Vegas Convention Center.

### Key Highlights

A total of 562 exhibitors covered a comprehensive scope of applications for imaging professionals at this year's SGIA event.

Outdoor applications continue to expand. Aqueous, latex - durable, and UV-curable inks; outdoor-rated UV inks; and polyester media products are continually expanding and improving.

Canon's new UV gel inks, which were first announced at drupa 2016, were highlighted at this year's SGIA Expo. While the battle between latex, UV, and sublimation continues, Canon prepares to disrupt the war. No actual products will be shown until Spring 2017.

According to InfoTrends Wide Format Forecast 2016, total print volumes for wide format production graphics in North America are expected to rise, from about 458 million square meters (over 4.9 billion square feet) in 2016, to nearly 751 million square meters (almost 8.1 billion square feet) by 2020.

SGIA continued its industry expansion role by offering an "All Access" education

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By Steve Urmano, Director of Wide Format, InfoTrends





2016 SGIA Expo



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pass at this year's event. Pass holders from different markets, such as vehicle customizers, commercial printers, custom apparel and sportswear, and interior and exterior decorators, were allowed entry into 40 different educational sessions.

Although hardware is always the star of a show like SGIA, and digital production never fails to make its mark, workflow applications were also present at every corner of the Las Vegas event. Automation is in its early stages in this market. That said, media loading and unloading systems, conveyor belts on cutters, and a visual demonstration of robotic loading and unloading were shown.

### Recommendations

Trade shows like SGIA are a great way to investigate the competitive landscape and new/emerging market segments. Attendees should consider areas that their companies might be overlooking, and analyze their current business approach accordingly.

Events like SGIA offer a rich array of strategic educational sessions that can be of great value to end users looking to extend into different markets. End-users should identify sessions of interest, prior to attending, so they can make the most of their trade show experience. Areas such as POP and short run packaging, as well as custom décor applications like wallpaper and furnishing fabrics, are a couple of new venues for PSPs and digital printing companies to explore.

SGIA is a great way for vendors to showcase their most recent advancements of featured technologies. Get attendees excited about the latest developments and capabilities!

The show floor is intimidating to cover, even for those who attend all three days of the event. All visitors should establish a plan beforehand, so they can spend a sufficient amount of time learning about the companies and products of interest.

A key workflow takeaway is that all printers in this space, regardless of size, should be evaluating their current solutions for accepting, onboarding, and tracking jobs — as well as evaluating the ROI on those jobs.

### Technologies Continue to Advance

During the 2016 SGIA Expo, some of the industry's largest vendors hosted worldwide debuts of new printer lines, state-of-the-art ink technologies — such as the new to be seen gel inks, and never-before-seen applications. Throughout the event, wide format printers were busy

producing soft signage graphics at record speeds. Other exhibitors were displaying how quickly their machines could finish a garment, or highlighting the newest techniques in dye sublimation. Vendors were working to make deals and close out 2016 as another record year. The show floor was buzzing with interest and activity. Nevertheless, a few key trends emerged as we concluded our exploration of the show. These include:

1. The key workflow takeaway is that all printers in this space, regardless of size, should be evaluating their current solutions for accepting, onboarding, and tracking jobs, as well as evaluating the ROI on these jobs.
2. Automation is just beginning, as the market shifts from low yield to higher yield manufacturing-driven applications. This will continue to expand, as convergence of different digital applications reach across once separate market segments.
3. Prototyping and proofing applications were the introduction points to manufacturing. That said, the market accepts digital image qualities — so ramping up production is the next logical transition.
4. Once separate markets: textile printing, décor, and packaging design are now being offered by multiple media decorators and design-driven industrial printing companies.

### **The Wide Format Market is Growing**

According to InfoTrends' most recent forecast data, the wide format printing market is experiencing healthy growth. The growth in latex, UV, aqueous single-pass, and sublimation volumes is expected to more than offset the decline in solvent and conventional aqueous graphics volumes. Digital printing technologies continue to exhibit strong growth, due to the discovery of new markets and the development of new business areas. InfoTrends believes that the diversity of the sign and graphics industry will keep it on an upward growth trajectory. Total print volumes for wide format production graphics in North America are expected to rise, from about 458 million square meters (over 4.9 billion square feet) in 2016, to nearly 751 million square meters (almost 8.1 billion square feet) by 2020.

InfoTrends predicts solid growth and movement within a number of sectors

in the wide format industry, due to the many different ink types that are available. Despite the strong growth that is occurring in the market, there is still a great deal of untapped potential in the wide format market. Businesses that can leverage this opportunity will be well-positioned for future success.

### **Product of the Year Awards**

For about ten years now, SGIA has been conducting its Product of The Year Awards. This allows various manufacturers to compete against one another in a number of categories. The selection of winners is based largely on print quality. The vendors that participate in this competition usually go to great lengths to create a stellar image of an SGIA test chart that will show off their capabilities. Industry vendors take great pride in winning these awards, and will often prominently feature their offerings as "Product of the Year" winners.

### **Supporting the Leaders of the Digital and Screen Printing Communities**

The term "specialty imaging" encompasses digital imaging, screen printing, and a number of other imaging technologies. Imaging processes and technologies that are employed to create new products and enhance existing ones include point-of-purchase displays, printed electronics, membrane switches, signs, advertisements, garments, industrial textiles, décor, packaging containers, and vehicles wraps/enhancements.

### **The Widening World of Workflow at SGIA**

Exactly 20 of the exhibiting companies identified themselves as purveyors of web-to-print software, and many of these vendors listed themselves in the production workflow, color management, prepress, and RIP categories. Savvy visitors were attending demonstrations, asking questions, and walking away from the booths with lots of notes and brochures.

All of the major hardware players had software solutions, especially when it came to web-to-print and production management. Many of them had established partnerships to bring their customers an integrated solution. Firms like Caldera, EFI, Ergosoft, Esko, Media One Digital Imaging Solutions, ONYX, and Tucanna enjoyed healthy foot traffic in their booths as the event progressed.

Judging by the crowds in these booths, the key workflow takeaway is that all

printers in this space, regardless of size, should be evaluating their current solutions for accepting, onboarding, and tracking jobs, as well as evaluating the ROI on these jobs. From quoting and estimating to integrating with business dashboards, the software landscape has matured a great deal over the past few years. Businesses in the commercial printing, specialty graphics, and industrial printing spaces now have many options for streamlining and optimizing their production workflow.

### SGIA Expo 2016: Vendor Highlights

#### Agfa

Agfa Graphics had another successful year at SGIA, winning the “triple crown” of specialty graphics by taking home three Product of the Year awards for the second year in a row. The award-winning products included:

- The new Anapurna H3200i Air-Cooled LED (UV Hybrid category) (\$100–500k)
- Jeti Mira (UV Flatbed category) (\$200–500k)
- Jeti Tauro (UV Hybrid High-Volume Production Class category)

The Anapurna H3200i LED 3.2m hybrid device offers air-cooled LED UV curing, and enables printing on a broader range of media than ever before. The system features a solid frame construction, user-friendly RTR media loading, quick system uptime, energy savings, and overall reduced operational expenses.

Agfa Graphics’ Jeti Tauro H2500 made its SGIA award-winning debut in 2015, and won another Product of the Year award for 2016. The 2.5-meter-wide Jeti Tauro with  $\frac{3}{4}$  automation is a six color + white UV hybrid system. With print speeds of up to 275 m<sup>2</sup>/hour, it is positioned for the higher end of the sign and display market. Its scissor-stacker offloading system provides continuous feeding of rigid or roll-fed media up to 2.5 meters wide. This system is designed for today’s Internet-driven economy, withstanding extreme workloads with 24/7 operations and multiple shifts. It comes standard with manual media loading tables that are ideal for smaller runs, and an optional semi-automated board feeder and stacker for increased production efficiency

#### Canon

Canon’s new UV gel inks were showcased. Although no actual products will be shown until spring 2017, Canon’s new inks still created quite a buzz, since they will likely

pose a potential threat to latex’s dominance in the roll-to-roll market. Canon presented a compelling position, showing presentations that promised 40 percent lower running costs and 50 percent faster print speeds. Images that are printed using LED-cured UV gel inks tend to be very flat in contour, while vibrant in terms of color gamut. Only time will tell how this announcement plays out, but InfoTrends’ Wide Format Service will provide further analysis as more details become available.

Canon is also making traction with its textile products. Made possible due to a partnership with Media One, Canon’s DGen Telios GT direct-to-textile printer is now one of the most established offerings for soft signage and décor applications. The Telios prints directly on coated or uncoated polyester fabrics and in-line sublimates the printed images. With a maximum production rate of 1,100 square feet/hour, and a reputation for high reliability, this 3.2-meter-wide device is already making waves.

When printing on textiles, the Telios GT requires no paper and no water. Its highly saturated ink penetration enables vibrant, lifelike colors that are suitable for double-sided flags and banners. Heat-setting is required to set the ink for maximum vibrancy and colorfastness.

In addition to its impressive offerings, Canon Solutions America brings financing, service, and marketing muscle to the table. Thanks to its Telios GT, Canon has established a foothold in the textile printing market.

#### Durst

Durst Image Technology U.S. is a manufacturer of professional wide and grand format digital UV inkjet printers that are designed for today’s imaging industry. Durst’s technology is oriented toward production customers’ needs. Its products are designed for performance, reliability, longevity, high print quality, productivity, and efficiency.

The Rhotex 322 is one of the highest volume soft signage wide format inkjet printers in the textile printing market. It is designed for heavy industrial use, with a print speed of up to 1,506 sq.ft./hour. This is due to a three level grayscale printhead, with a drop size of only seven to 21 picoliters. This provides maximum productivity without compromising the quality, with a print resolution up to 1200 dpi at seven picoliters.

The 1.8 meter Rhotex 180 TR is a multifunctional printing system for



2016 SGIA Expo

textile production that has been scaled to a smaller width. The 1.8-meter size works well for exhibit graphics and apparel manufacturing.

#### *EFI*

EFI Armor is a new line of UV roll and water-based coatings that provide three- to five- year weather and chemical protection on customers' high-value rigid, flexible, and thermo-formable inkjet graphics. EFI is broadening its product line with branded inks and media, providing a more complete solutions portfolio to support its user base.

The EFI VUTEk HS125 Pro inkjet press a 3.2m, hybrid roll/flatbed product offering true analog replacement capabilities. It provides near-offset quality, production speeds of up to 125 boards per hour, and a variety of automated material handling options (including one for corrugated board). This product is based on the earlier HS-120, and it provides evidence that EFI is embracing LED UV across a major component of its product line. This can be attributed to the benefits of cool curing, including lower running costs and increased uptime.

The soft signage segment continues to evolve, and one of the more recent developments in this area has been

EFI's acquisition of Reggiani in July 2015. Reggiani's grand and wide format printers have historically been focused on volume dye sublimation printing of textiles – to replace or augment rotary screen printing systems. Much of this output has been focused on custom sports apparel and personalized textile products. The FabriVU product line is designed for digital print shops that are handling production-level exhibit and soft signage applications. The device is available in 1.8 and 3.4 meter widths.

#### *Epson*

The 44-inch SureColor F6200 wide format printer is an entry-level device that joins Epson's SureColor F-Series line. The device integrates roll-to-roll capability with its newly- improved take-up reel and media supply system, which delivers accurate winding for improved performance levels. The SureColor F6200 is designed for use in the dye- sublimation transfer textile printing market.

The SureColor F6200 features Epson's Precision Core TFP, a new one-inch-wide printhead with 720 nozzles per color that is designed to work exclusively with Epson's UltraChrome inks. The F7170 is capable of producing a photographic quality image with a resolution up to 720 x 1,440 dpi. With a production print speed



2016 SGIA Expo

up to 60 sq. meters/hour (634 sq. ft./hr.) and high reliability, this printhead was developed to run continuously.

The quality output from the Precision Core printhead is suitable for small shops that need to efficiently produce high-quality soft signage, sportswear, apparel, accessories, and customized promotional items. Using an Epson PrecisionCore printhead and UltraChrome DS ink with a new high-density Black ink, the F-Series delivers improved ink efficiency and black density — with better tonal transitions and grayscale for high-quality results. Now with an easily refillable, high-capacity three-liter bulk ink system and an improved post-platen heater, the SureColor F6200 offers faster drying times for continuous media handling and improved productivity.

#### Fujifilm

Fujifilm introduced a new 3.2-meter wide UV printer at SGIA 2016. Designed to produce high-quality, sellable output at speeds up to 2,100 sq. ft./hr., it incorporates grayscale small drop technology, delivered by Fujifilm Dimatix Q-Class printheads.

The device features unique and innovative material handling capabilities to enhance throughput and reduce mis-feeds. Uvijet inks provide a wide gamut

of vibrant colors from Fujifilm UV inks, which offer excellent adhesion to a broad range of substrates.

The Inca Onset X3 was shown at SGIA 2016 for the second year in a row, and it was easily one of the fastest and largest machines on the floor. The X3 is the latest addition to Fujifilm's Inca Onset range of full-bed array wide-format inkjet UV flatbed printers. It offers high throughput with 14 channels, featuring three sets of CMYK inks — with the option of adding two white channels of ink (14-picoliter drop size).

The Onset X3 is capable of achieving production output, with speeds in excess of 100 sq. meters/hr. (9,600 sq. ft./hr.), which equates to 180 5' x 10' beds per hour. New features in the Onset X series include an automatic vacuum table design and a graphical user interface that provides a powerful yet simple-to-use printer and job management tool. As a result, the Onset X3 is capable of economically producing superb POP-quality display graphics up to 1.97" (50mm) thick.

Some of the key features of Onset X3 include:

- 3x CMYK = 84 printheads per color
- Capable of producing 9,900 sq. ft./hr. (180 beds/hr.)
- 7,200m<sup>2</sup> of print a day, which is over 1,200 boards across an eight-hour shift

#### HP

HP's latex offerings are continuing their upward sales trend, and the model 500 series was launched at drupa 2016 earlier this year. The company's product line includes a wide range of roll-to-roll latex devices, including the entry-level 100 series, the popular 300 series, and now the higher end 500 series. According to InfoTrends' most recent wide format forecast data, latex technologies are expected to achieve a CAGR of about 13% between 2015 and 2020.

Since HP introduced its latex printing technology in 2008, over 30,000 HP Latex printers have been installed at customer sites on a global basis. The fourth-generation HP Latex devices are currently achieving industry-leading growth within the digital wide format market. Sales for the Latex 300 series grew 46% year-over-year, and the HP Latex 360 Printer was ranked as the top-selling printer in its category in the United States during that same timeframe.

The new 500 series offers incremental features and improvements for unattended operation. Bulk ink, remote control operation through HP Latex Mobile tablet, and SAI's Flexi RIP round out the offering, making it easier for print service providers to go remote.

With HP's enhanced latex printing features, users can choose from a variety of decorative media types to enhance their back-lit printing options. Textile applications are limited to decorative (not apparel), but latex has enhanced durability for outdoor applications.

These features enable print service providers to participate in the exhibit graphics and home/industrial décor markets.

### *Kornit*

Challenging the industry status quo is the Kornit Vulcan, a single-step digital textile inkjet pigment printing solution. Kornit Digital's NeoPigment in line pre-coating/printing process offers the benefits of textile pigment printing to streamline the process. The Vulcan can handle a variable print run of 200 shirts in one hour, which is a real attraction for mass-market retailers. It should be remembered, however, that the binders used in the pigmented ink still require a calendar heat press to fuse the ink to the fabric.

Kornit's Neo Pigment inks have a broad color gamut, as well as the ability to print highly detailed designs. The ability to print multiple short runs on one roll or multiple fabric types provides flexibility with no minimum run quantity requirements.

### *Mimaki*

Mimaki showcased its new UJV55-320 LED UV wide format printer at SGIA 2016, earning itself a Product of the Year Award. The device produces vibrant colors with a high degree of opacity, and the color consistency enables optimal results in day/night usage applications - showing a more vibrant image in maximum daylight and during backlit nighttime use. Instant-curing UV inks enable multi-layer printing that reproduces designs with two-layer or three-layer printing. This new model is also equipped with an LED light for checking backlit signage during printing, enabling operators to immediately verify density. This reduces waste and improves production efficiency.

Large indoor backlit signs are commonly used at airports, transit stations, and commercial facilities. This method of visual communication is gaining favor, due to the use of long-lifetime and energy-efficient LEDs, as well as a shift toward environmentally conscious advertisements.

With grand-format 3.2-meter or dual-roll 1.6-meter capacity, the UJV55-320 printer supports media sizes of up to 127.9

inches (3.2 m) for oversized graphics and panels. It can also print simultaneously onto two rolls up to 60 inches (1.52 m) wide each. This dual-roll capability has the potential to double an ad specialty or industrial shop's productivity. The same set of graphics could be printed on both rolls, or the two rolls could be handling completely different jobs.

The UJF-3042 MII and UJF-6042 MkII printers are the next-generation models for Mimaki's MI Series. The upgraded UJF-3042 MII can print on media up to 11.8" wide x 16.5" deep x 6" thick using standard CMYK inks plus available white, clear, and jettable primer. The UJF-6042 MkII printer can handle media up to 24" wide x 16.5" deep x 6" thick using standard CMYK inks - plus available light cyan, light magenta, white, clear, and jettable primer. Both devices can print on smooth surfaces such as metal and glass. One-liter bottles have replaced the smaller cartridges of previous models, making ink delivery more efficient. The switch to one-liter bulk ink system bottles also ensures that customers running other Mimaki UV-LED printers can better manage their overall inventory when using compatible Mimaki original inks.

On the connectivity and DFE side, Mimaki introduced a new RIP (Raster Image Processor) that features workflow enhancements to streamline production. The new RIP is made more efficient, with an automated hot folder-based workflow and gigabit Ethernet connection. Users can take advantage of new design features in the RasterLink6

RIP software, including the ability to build a template and auto-populate the data using variable components. Users can also work with the Adobe InDesign data merge function, or third-party VDP plug-ins, to create a multitude of personalized items.

These enhancements will be of particular importance to companies that are relying on small format UV tabletop and benchtop printing to augment or replace silk screening. Mimaki's series now includes features that enable a greater range of users to enjoy the benefits of digital printing, including commercial print service providers, promotional and personalization item printers, membrane switch makers, and specialty printers.

### *Mutoh*

Mutoh America, Inc. received an SGIA Product of the Year award for its ValueJet 1938TX Textile Wide Format Printer. This wide format textile printer 1.8 meter

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or 75" wide direct-to-textile printer is designed to operate without transfer paper. Users may create customized fashion apparel, upholstery, interior décor, scarves, swimsuits, trade show graphics, soft signage, flags, and sportswear without the cost of transfer paper.

Advanced media handling makes it easier to print directly onto a variety of fabrics, including closed and open two-way stretch and face-in/face-out roll media. Smart Printing Technologies eliminate banding. The device also features a wide print area and faster print speeds. The VJ1938TX is priced at \$31,995, and it will likely prove valuable to any print shop that is looking to enter the textile printing market or expand capabilities.

#### *Novus Imaging*

The Novus Synergia H/UV is a combination flatbed and roll-to-roll printer, with production speeds of up to 3,000 square feet per hour. Manufactured by Novus Imaging and distributed exclusively in North America by Global Imaging Inc., the Novus Synergia H/UV is a 3.2 meter combination flatbed and roll-to-roll printer with a patented "Warp Engine."

The Warp Engine is a new proprietary design and print processing method. The method provides four bit CMYK printing with a possible 65,536 color shades, per pixel, creating at up to twice the speed of a non-accelerated printer.

It is a true hybrid device that can operate unattended when printing roll-to-roll. Its belt design, full grayscale print engine, and variable drop technology produce high print quality and unbroken tones. The machine also features faster throughput times, with an inline white ink that requires no ink switching between four color printing - with or without white.

#### *OKI Data*

OKI Data introduced its entry-level ColorPainter W-64s wide format printer, which produces rich, glossy colors at an efficient rate. This device is flexible, reliable, affordable, and easy to use and maintain. The industrial printheads are designed for longevity, which saves users time and money in the long-run.

The OKI/SII ColorPainter wide format printers have a reputation for being rugged and well-built machines for high-volume signage printers. Newly developed low odor, high-performance eco-solvent printers have been designed for sensitive print environments and applications on media products up to 104 inches wide. The

eco-solvent SX inks offer specialty colors and a wide gamut for vivid signage. The ColorPainter M64S is priced at \$14,995.

#### *Ricoh*

Ricoh USA had an impressive lineup of innovations on display at SGIA 2016; including hardware, software, and services that are designed to help sign shops improve their operations. These offerings make it easier for cut-sheet printers to expand into the revenue-rich signage field. The wide format printing market continues to expand, and sign printers and cut-sheet shops value quality, creativity, and quick turns. Ricoh's approach to business transforms these values into eye-catching, business-building applications at affordable price points for shop owners and managers. The barrier to entry for signage capabilities has never been lower, and SGIA attendees were able to see how a holistic approach to helping customers achieve their goals can fuel business growth. As new shops continue to enter the signage space, they will need guidance in terms of getting off the ground. Meanwhile, established shops are always seeking new and exciting ways to stand out, drive down costs, increase efficiency, boost profits, and improve their market position.

The Ricoh Pro L4160 introduces second-generation latex inks in for its wide format line. The device's eco-friendly, aqueous latex ink and seven-color printing have improved cure times. This enables faster turn times, and allows users to print on a wider range of substrates — such as clear, plastic, vinyl, textile, and backlit media.

Ricoh plans to resell Mimaki flatbed printers in the U.S., offering a wide format LED UV flatbed printer line that provides high-quality color and larger output at an affordable price. This printer, which is capable of handling substrates up to 1.97" thick, uses abrasion-resistant UV inks that are suitable for indoor and outdoor conditions. Mimaki's wide format flatbed printers feature a long-life, energy-saving UV-LED curing unit. This unit can help printers save time and energy costs, due to shorter warm-up and cool-down periods.

#### *Roland DGA*

Roland DGA Corporation, a manufacturer of large format printers, printer/cutters, and other advanced digital devices, has introduced the new SOLJET EJ-640. This 64-inch eco-solvent inkjet printer is designed to optimize productivity and quality, while minimizing operating costs.

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Meanwhile, the Benchtop LEF-300 LED UV printer is the latest in Roland's VersaUV LEF series of flatbed printers. It offers the same colors and direct printing capabilities on a broad range of materials, including three-dimensional items up to 3.94" thick. The newest model also makes it possible to print larger items in higher quantities. Featuring a 30" print width, four print heads, and two UV LED lamps for faster curing, the LEF-300 significantly increases productivity and delivers superior results than previous models.

ECO-UV inks were developed for high performance and flexibility. Conforming around the complex corners and curves, they enable users to customize a range of applications; such as gifts and novelties, as well as industrial parts and product prototypes.

Roland's ECO-UV ink options include high-density white ink for greater brilliance on clear or dark-colored materials, and clear ink for gloss and matte finishes. Multiple layers of clear ink can be applied to simulate embossing and 3D textures. In addition, the Versa Works RIP software (included with the LEF-300) comes with 72 ready-to-use texture patterns.

The LEF-300 enables users to print on and around contours of objects of all sizes, making it suitable for promotional

items. Low-heat curing makes it possible to personalize sensitive electronic devices like smartphones, tablets, wedding gifts, and delicate earthenware. Additional items, such as leather belts and purses, are also printable using its flexible UV inks. The printer enables printing on a broad array of substrates, including PET, ABS, and polycarbonate, as well as soft materials like leather and fabrics. A built-in vacuum table helps hold thin and soft materials in place, enabling easier job setup and shorter make-ready. An included BOFA air filtration system ensures proper machine ventilation, while also serving as a stand and storage unit.

Roland's new Versa Works dual-software RIP supports native PostScript and PDF files for improved file processing, including files with transparencies. Automatic creation of white and clear ink effects can be handled directly in the RIP, without the need to rely on design software. The VersaUV LEF-300 carries an MSRP of \$37,995.

#### Summa

Summa, Inc. offers a unique array of products that are designed for high productivity and quality output. The company's devices are capable of printing onto metallic foil for excellent reproduction

of high-quality labels, presentation graphics, and applications requiring special effects. Summa has partnered with wide format printer vendors that do not make contour or flatbed table cutters (e.g., HP). Summa is based in Belgium, and generally sells its equipment direct. That said, partnerships with U.S. vendors also fit well with its distribution and sales mode

#### **InfoTrends' Opinion**

SGIA Expo caters to all aspects of the wide format and digital imaging industry. Although the commercial printing sector has undergone a radical down-sizing in the past 20 years, the specialty graphics and industrial imaging segments are enjoying a new vitality. This new energy stems from the addition of new inks, printers, and finishing equipment, as well as greater acceptance of these technologies in just about every display and decorative market. Print service providers, and printing companies that previously concentrated on the paper space, are beginning to discover the benefits of selling high-value print vs. low-cost impressions.

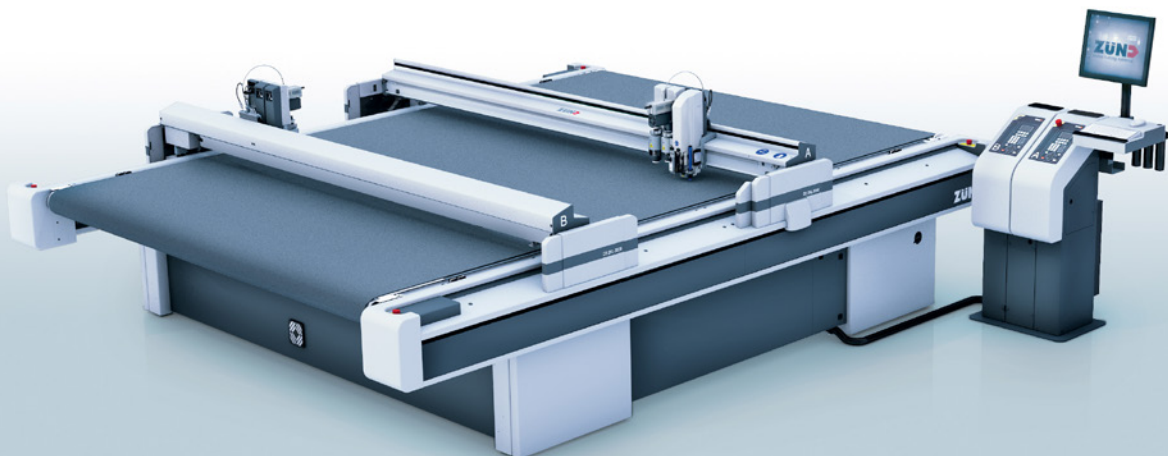
Many shops that have decided to take on wide format printing have had to undergo a transformation of sorts, shifting to a very personalized and customized business approach. Regardless of industry, it is always a smart idea for executives to analyze their current business approach, and consider any market segments that might be worth exploring.

Although many of today's trade shows are experiencing a decline in recent years, the 2016 Expo saw record attendance levels — with attendance growing at about 5 percent. Veteran vendors surpassed previous years' showings by introducing faster, more capable, and even more impressive offerings. SGIA 2017 (scheduled for October 10–12 in New Orleans) promises to impress once again, so stay tuned!

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