

The Wild Format guides are intended to expand awareness and understanding of the craziness that can be created on wide format digital printing devices, from floors to lampshades and everything in between.

These guides are made possible by a group of manufacturers working together with Digital Dots. We hope you enjoy the articles and that you put into practise what you learn. If you want to talk about it, go to our LinkedIn group at <http://linkedin/1pkeLH1>

***Enjoy and Go Wild!***

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## New Wide Format Business Opportunities

Is it 2018 already? Time to look for new opportunities to bring your business to a new level. Wide Format Digital printing is offering plenty of choices for creatives, content owners and local businesses alike.

Early each year, many are looking for new opportunities in their private and professional lives. It seems, that's just what people do. With digital printing, creatives, content owners and small or local businesses have powerful tools to turn their ideas into profitable products just at their fingertips.

As digital printing requires no printing forms, cost effective production of small runlength, highly personalised or custom made printed goods is possible for virtually anyone, anywhere. Just get in touch with a digital printing house near you to see the possibilities! Today's inks are highly versatile, so you can print digitally onto virtually any surface, even substrates like glass, aluminium or stone. The options are as inspiring as well as being virtually limitless, hence "Wild Format printing" is just the right term to illustrate the multitude of opportunities digital printing offers. While analogue printing technology will

typically take a few days at least to get your work delivered to you, a digital print may just be available literally within hours after the data has been transferred to the printing house. Some inks will come with certification for use in day care centres, hospitals and retirement homes, offering a whole new world for interior decoration professionals.

### Coming To A Shop Near You

Many small businesses struggle to compete with large multi-national corporations at a local level. Large online retailers deliver consumer goods and even food right to the customer's doorstep. Hotels and restaurants become part of chains or franchises, as a strong international brand makes it easier for them to attract a mainstream audience. For any local business there is not much of a chance to stand up against these economies of scale and attention.

Unless, of course, they can offer unique products and/or experiences not found elsewhere. Luckily, digital printing is here help them all along the way: Why sell a brand-name honey or cookies at a low margin, when you can offer a locally sourced product to an eco-conscious audience? Digitally printed labels are available even online to make the packaging



*Beautiful interior decoration at EFI / Reggiani's 2018 Heimtextil booth in Frankfurt. Photo © Sonja Angerer*

of the product just as attractive as any big-name brand. You can even print your own labels on a desktop device such as Roland DG's VersaStudio BN-20. Having established their very own niche, a local shop might decide to go international themselves and offer their unique products online. Of course, digital printing is available to provide professional stationery, catalogues and advertising media like flyers for distribution at a local fair.

Did we mention that a shopping, holiday or dining experience can be crafted to be super-local with the help of digital

printing? While franchises rely on a highly standardised environment, independent businesses can create places and products to remember, as almost any surface imaginable can be decorated with digital print, and at a reasonable cost: Why not change the look of a restaurant or hotel with the seasons? A few new cushions or curtains, a new rug, different wallpaper in the lobby... it's all readily available with your unique design at a local printing shop, custom-made at very reasonable prices. At Heimtextil show Frankfurt (Germany), the world's leading trade show for Home Décor, HP showed a wide range of skilfully curated applications, each one designed by a highly experienced designer and printed with an HP Latex or Indigo digital printing press.

Wild Format digital print may even help to create all-new local or personalised products. In an area where many tourists come to hike, why not sell a digitally printed bag or umbrella with a detailed local map right at the village's High Street or Tourist Office? While a high-volume roll-to-roll textile printer from EFI Reggiani is an investment of industrial scale, some DTG (Direct to Garment) desktop printers for decorating white and coloured garments start from app. €15,000. Mimaki has a broad range of textile and desktop UV printers available for purchase, starting from similar price-points. Trade shows and



*For their 30th birthday, Roland DG showcased a wrapped Grand Piano at their Willich (Germany) Creative Centre. A wrapped instrument could also be an iconic novelty for a local club, restaurant or band, probably gaining much attention at Social Media. Photo © Sonja Angerer*

markets also offer plenty of opportunity to sell gifts like cups, plates or wooden toys, even furniture, decorated with unique designs by local artists or patterns traditional to the area.

## All Eyes On The Creator

With options so broad with digital printing, the creator becomes the anchor point to a whole value chain. Without a unique design, there is no brand, no distinct room,

there may not even be a product at all. As their importance in product development rises, their responsibility also expands: a creator should not only be able to offer a pattern, but also help the customer with turning the design into goods, effectively embracing product design. To do this, the creator will have to educate him or herself about the latest Wild Format digital printing technology. A local digital printing house with gusto is just the ideal partner for a



*Mimaki suggests to digitally print onto handbag leathers. Photo © Sonja Angerer*

forward-thinking creator, and can initialise a mutually beneficial relationship.

While a creator usually has a unique access to the customer, he might also utilise digital printing for his or her very own projects. A photographer can provide high quality photobooks of family and local events on demand. A painter may decide to offer affordable fine art prints or limited editions of his or her paintings, instead of only selling them to just one wealthy customer. Digital technology itself frees the textile

designer of the boundaries set by the traditional rotary screen printing process: it is now possible to ditch step-and-repeat patterns for any pattern or motive you can think of. A designer might now also go out and sell a digitally printed textile or even their very own fashion line, effectively claiming a much bigger percentage of the value chain for themselves.

A poet or writer does not necessarily need a publishing house anymore, as getting works printed digitally in small runlengths



*Digital printers can work on almost any surface today, leaving designers with their own imagination as the only limit to their creativity. Photo © Sonja Angerer*

or on demand is perfectly feasible with digital printing. The same goes even for a local newspaper, which can offer readers customised versions of the printed product in line with their own preferences: an extended sports section for Mr. Smith, some local politics for Mrs. Jones, while the kids get a good overview of local cultural events.

## With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

The versatility of Wild Format printing will inevitably take all parties involved into vastly uncharted territory. Therefore, any project needs to be structured to reflect budget and milestone responsibility, but also who is in charge of data integrity and delivering the right file to the printing house.

Finally with many digitally printed products, solid knowledge of the certifications and

regulatory compliances associated with them becomes a must. In most western jurisdictions the seller is held responsible, if the product fails to live up to local health and safety regulations. A close partnership with the digital printing house will help to make sure that the appropriate technology and ink is used. Set sail for an amazing 2018 – with Wild Format digital printing!

– **Sonja Angerer**