

REPRO REPORT weekly

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Up Next in RR Magazine ...

Readers of REPRO REPORT can look forward to another great year from the imaging industry's leading magazine. Here's a sample of what's in store for the March/April issue:



In the world of **small-format color printing**, it looks to be a buyer's market. Your job is to discern your market and its output demands, pick the right machine, and start cashing in.

Generating cash, this two-part article emphasizes the importance of tracking the dollars your company brings in: Does it become usable cash, or do you put that dollar right back into your balance sheet in the form of inventory, receivables or equipment?

IRgA 2003

May 7-10, 2003

IRgA 2003: Your
Financial Success

Vancouver, BC Canada

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A Closer Look Maintaining Momentum

Staying afloat in today's economy takes some real business smarts, especially in competitive markets like Boise, ID. One of the five fastest growing cities in the country, Boise may be known for potatoes, but it does a lot of printing as well. It makes sense considering this urban area is home to one-tenth of Idaho's population, and there's been a steady increase in residential construction over the last few years.

However, according to [Idaho Blueprint & Supply Co.'s](#) general manager, Christian Cummins, even the burgeoning state capital is showing signs of slowing down in today's recession. The question he and other reprographers like him are asking is this: How do I continue our growth when the economy has temporarily stopped?

As one might expect, there's no one answer. But when Cummins says that "It's important for a repro shop to have many capabilities," some may be surprised to know that nearly 40 percent of Idaho Blueprint's production work is mounting and laminating.

"We feel we're one of the area leaders in this service, because we've been very involved in it for three or four years now. We know what to do with different media and substrates, so we get a wide variety of customers. In downtown Boise, we're surrounded by lawyers who need a lot of enlargements and exhibit work.

"We also went after all the architects here who were coloring by hand and showed them what our color department can do and the adhesives we could use to make a nice display. Our color and mounting and laminating departments work hand in hand."

Sometimes business comes from customers who simply walk through Idaho Blueprint's doors and see maps on display

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Link to IRgA.com



News

Drytac Canada Names New GM

[Drytac Canada Inc.](#) has appointed Hayden Kelley its general manager. In his new position, Kelley will play a key role in developing the Drytac product brand image by overseeing the company's sales, technical and marketing organizations. Kelley has been a member of the Drytac team for over six years, most recently serving as the company's West Coast regional sales manager in the United States.

In other company news, Drytac has opened a new facility in Chicago. Minutes from O'Hare Airport and 20 minutes from downtown, the new location will include a showroom for the company's extensive line of banner stands and portable displays. Strategically, it will provide faster shipping, sales and technical support for the Midwest states. In addition, the Chicago office is equipped with a state-of-the-art training center. It is located at 808 N. Central Avenue Unit "A", Wood Dale IL, 60191.

More News *continued from first page...*

Silverman New ICS President, CEO

[Integrated Color Solutions Inc. \(ICS\)](#) has named Jeffrey Silverman the company's president and CEO. Silverman brings over 15 years of sales and marketing experience in the media, technology and data industries to ICS, and most recently with the management team of DoubleClick Inc.

Tips from the Real World

How to Avoid Three Common Errors in Cost Budgeting

When it comes to budgeting – a vital part of any business's growth and cash flow – it's important to estimate your spending as realistically as possible. Here are three budget-related errors commonly made by small businesses, and some tips for avoiding them. These errors tend to throw budget estimates out of line with reality, thereby taking away from a budget's usefulness.

Not Setting Goals: It's almost impossible to set spending priorities without clear goals for the coming year. It's important to know, in detail, what you want or need to achieve in your business.

Cost Underestimation: Every business has ancillary or incidental costs that often don't get budgeted. For example, each time you buy a new piece of equipment or software, you must budget for staff training and for maintenance of the equipment, as well as the actual cost of the equipment.

Lack of Flexibility: Don't be afraid to update your forecasted expenditures either several times per year or whenever new circumstances affect your business.

In addition to using these tips, consider reviewing your budget with your financial advisor to help ensure accuracy and completeness.

This week's Tips from the Real World was furnished by the certified public accounting firm of [F. L. Sasseti & Co.](#)

Site for Sore Eyes

Technological Turnover

According to the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, a staggering 315 million computers are expected to become obsolete by the year 2004. That represents not only machines already on the junk pile, but also those on their way out six months to a year later when top of the line becomes bottom of the barrel. If you'd like your business to avoid contributing to this waste, you might want to check out a program that HP is conducting on www.hp.com/recycle.

Through its Planet Partners e-Coupon program, HP is encouraging and rewarding those seeking to recycle their unwanted computer equipment. The program offers consumers with up to \$50 toward the purchase of a new product on www.hpshopping.com when recycling computer hardware from any manufacturer through HP's recycling service. The program will run through April 30 in the United States only.



Keynote Address: Debbi Fields

From Idea to Financial Success

*Thursday, May 9, Noon – 1:30
p.m.*

Literally a household name across North America, keynote speaker Debbi Fields has much to say about transforming the idea of success to a reality. Fields is renowned not only for growing her single chocolate chipper into a 1,600 location empire, but also for revolutionizing the food industry by using emerging computer technology to streamline operations and creating a model of efficiency in the process.



A great storyteller with a great story to tell, Fields inspires audiences to reach for their dreams, and offers tried-and-true methods that lead to bottom-line success. Please note that the trade show will close at 11:30 a.m. for this special presentation and reopen at 1:30 p.m. This afternoon's keynote engagement is sponsored by leading industry vendors [KIP](#) and [Océ](#).

For more information on IRgA 2003 educational programming, log onto www.irga.com or call 800/833-4742.

Association News

Participate in Operating Ratio Study

By completing and submitting the IRgA Operating Ratio Study questionnaire, due to arrive in the mail this coming week, reprographers will be eligible to receive a free copy of an independent study designed to dramatically improve business practices.

The IRgA Operating Ratio Study is conducted by independent consultant John Stewart, a veteran speaker, consultant and author in the quick printing and copying industries. The result of his data gathering and analysis will afford members the ability to track important trends in their company and understand where they stand in terms of cost of goods, labor expenses, overhead and other important financial components. Don't miss this chance to see your company's big picture and position yourself for even greater profit.

To receive a free copy, respondents must answer all questions without exception, include a business card with email address, return the questionnaire in a No. 9 envelope and postmark it no later than March 20, 2003. Confidentiality is absolutely guaranteed. Call 407/727-2444 for more information.

A Closer Look *continued from first page...*

or through what Cummins calls "residuals." There are several frame shops in town that outsource the actual mounting of a piece and take it back to matte and frame it.

Cornering the market is one approach, but Idaho Blueprint also places a premium on internal efficiency and cost savings. Here are just a few ways the firm has made life easier for itself and its customers:

- Hiring an on-site service technician: "We save a lot on parts and avoid the click charge that we'd normally incur. We also send people to school to learn about new technology, because it saves us the time and disruption of on-site training. Once you're trained on the mechanics of a machine and really understand it, you're going to have a much easier time when a new model comes out. Often the computer board on a printer changes, but the rest stays relatively the same."
- Cross-training employees: "When I first started working full-time in 1992, we would sometimes have three people to a blueline machine, but technology has become much more automated and employees have an opportunity to perform other tasks while the machine is running prints. Cross-training is simply a way of harnessing the capabilities of your staff."
- Investing in an attractive web site: "We're still investigating the merits of plan rooms, but we see the immediate benefit of having a web site where clients can download files to us or send a quotation request to our sales department."
- Providing equipment alternatives: "For a long time, we didn't get involved in selling equipment, because there are Océ and Xerox dealers already in the area. But we realized that by becoming a KIP dealer, we were offering something no one else was, and there's always a value in doing that."



Family Business from the Start

Over the last 90-plus years, Idaho Blueprint has been a family-owned establishment, starting with the Millers in 1909. Christian Cummins' grandfather started working for the company as a youngster and worked all the way to purchasing it in 1942. The shop started out with blueprinting and photostat the old-fashioned way, and daughter and current company owner Linda Zabala has photos (you can see the old open-flame method) to prove it.

Linda took over the business in 1986, and son Christian joined six years later. Since then, the two have added a substantial number of new machines and services to the business. Where there were once six blue line machines, wide-format digital has taken over, as well as offset printing with full binding and shrink wrapping and large-format color printing and scanning up to 50" wide.

Presently, the business is staffed with eight employees and does 50 percent of its business in production printing, 35-40 percent in mounting and laminating, 10 percent in color and the remainder in offset and binding.

One area the family has been investigating is facilities management, since it's become clear that more and more businesses are buying their own equipment. Idaho Blueprint can still sell them supplies, but it wants more of a foot in the door.

"Printing is becoming more decentralized now, where some businesses do their own color covers for books and proposals," Cummins says. "We realize that we might not make a lot off leasing the equipment itself, but it could be a way of feeling out what other needs they might have and remaining visible to them."