

Case Study



EDGE FX™

Gerber EDGE® Artist Can't Imagine Shop Without This Essential Equipment

Says no other printer is as cost effective for many jobs.

In about twenty-four months Columbus Sign Company of Columbus, Ohio celebrates its 100th anniversary. The well-established, large-scale custom sign and graphics shop provides everything from creative address and mail box labels, to billboard-size outdoor advertisements. And equipment from Gerber Scientific such as the Gerber EDGE FX™ is playing a big role in the projects the shop takes on.

Columbus Sign is a family-owned business, managed by its principals Mike Hoy and Bill Hoy, and employs about 38 people. The hands the company maintains on deck are professionals, ranging from specialized graphic designers to operators of the high precision cutting routers - also obtained through Gerber. This shop's equipment is involved in printing on virtually every type of material one can imagine, and its managers boast a portfolio of signage printing that range from interior stone face to exterior glass, vehicle graphics, and protected wood surfaces.

EDGE = Opportunity

About ten years ago, Columbus Sign brought Barry Collier on board, who has since occupied the position of shop manager, and has been in the thick of things when it comes to the company's equipment and shop supervision. Collier is a great fan of Gerber's products, and is considered among his industry peers to be an artist who specializes in Gerber's EDGE thermal printers.

"Our shop had the previous generation EDGE® and to be honest, I can't imagine what this place would be like without it," says Collier, a veteran of signage and graphic design who also troubleshoots some of the shop's technical problems. "About three years ago, we upgraded to the EDGE FX," he says. "And as far as I am concerned, making that upgrade was a no-brainer."

As the shop manager, the owners usually consult with Collier when it comes to mission-critical decisions such as upgrades to machinery. But he says the owners didn't have to check with him before making the move to the EDGE FX. "The people at Gerber knew how satisfied we were with the original EDGE, and contacted us with a trade up offer when the FX hit the market," Collier recalls. "The upshot of the deal was a faster machine with a host of upgrades, and it cost less than the original - now that's a no-brainer for sure."



The Gerber EDGE FX is seen here printing on Gerber 3M Scotchcal 220 film, the only output film Columbus Sign chooses to use.

Outstanding Capabilities

Collier points out that there are so many advantages to the EDGE FX that he could not identify them all in one shot. "For one thing, it does spot colors, and that's huge. We do a lot of composites (combinations of images and

This EDGE artist's portfolio cover was printed on Gerber 3M Scotchcal Series 230 Translucent film and mounted onto a plastic composite.



Case Study

EDGE FX ...Continued

graphics), and those jobs wouldn't be nearly as easy or inexpensive for our customers without this machine," he notes. He also gives high marks to the EDGE FX for doing something that no other competing product can do - printing white and metallic colors.

Printers that compete with the EDGE handle white as blank media but cannot print it - giving the EDGE a distinct advantage. Printing a metallic color is a capability that opens the door to a variety of applications that would otherwise be impossible, says Collier.

One of the big uses for the EDGE FX, according to Collier, is interior signage. "The thing you want to always be aware of with interior signage is that people often get close enough to touch them, and imperfect spot colors can be a visible eyesore. Take for example, interior door signs we did for a customer. They have all-glass doors, and if you use other printers there is a major problem getting things like reverse lettering to show up clean."



Both Columbus Sign's truck and building logo imprints were produced on its EDGE FX, using Gerber 3M Scotchcal 220 protective laminated film.



Marcella's glass door sign was EDGE printed on Gerber ImageCast clear. Before being cut out, and wet-applied to Gerber Dusted Crystal film giving it an "etched" appearance.

Output from the EDGE FX works very well mounted onto clear materials such as glass, glass composites, and plastic composites, allowing a designer to use features like reverse lettering, shadows and outlines.

Collier, like the principals of Columbus Sign is especially proud of the shop's project for numbering 15,000 seats at the professional MLS Crew Stadium. There, he notes that the EDGE FX was instrumental in this project because it could output thousands of labels in a matter of a couple of hours. And says that the neat features like auto-numbering made using the EDGE ideal for the job.

Finally, the EDGE FX represents something that Collier touts as a step towards being more environmentally responsible. He points out that operators no longer have to replace the entire foil cartridge in the new EDGE FX caddy system.

"Now, when we have to replace foil, it's a matter of just opening up the caddy and replacing the roll. It is cleaner, costs less, and is environmentally responsible - I really like that," he concludes. For both Collier and Gerber the icing on the cake, as far as "going green" is concerned, is that unlike many other printers, the EDGE FX emits absolutely no fumes. ●

Contact your Gerber distributor to see a demonstration of the Gerber EDGE FX digital printing system today.

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