



R Take News & Views

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COMMENTS PLEASE

Are there topics that you would like covered in future newsletters? We welcome your suggestions. Please send your comments to newsletter@rtape.com.

R TAPE & FDC IMPROVE THEIR SUPPLY PROGRAM

Getting RTape products just got easier! R Tape and FDC Graphic Films recently announced their supply program expansion. What does that mean to our distributors? FDC now stocks more R Tape products in more sizes at more competitive prices.

Even if you purchase most of your application tape and Vinylefx® films from R Tape, you can realize significant benefits, by using FDC as your secondary source. Here's how:

- FDC has no minimum order, so you incur no additional charges for less-than-minimum orders;
- FDC will drop ship to your customer at no additional cost to you;
- FDC stocks a full range of Vinylefx® films and Conform Series® application tapes, 90% of which ships the same day as you place your order.

The improved R Tape/FDC program includes Conform Series® standard weight and premium weight application tapes, "EZ Tear" clear film tapes, screen print pre-masks, Vinylefx metalized vinyl films. For more information, call your R Tape representative or FDC at 800-634-7523.



Pictured behind the shorn Tim McKenzie is the victorious Marco Moya.

A CLOSE SHAVE

Shift Supervisor Tim McKenzie thought the Patriots were a sure thing in the Super Bowl. Who didn't? So he bet Marco Moya in our Quality Assurance department against his beloved Giants. Traitor! Instead of wagering money, the loser would have his head shaved. In a fair bet Marco should have gotten points. He didn't. In the end, Tim got what he deserved – a buzz cut witnessed by all in R Tape's South Plainfield plant.

UPCOMING TRADESHOWS

Global Shop,
Chicago, IL (McCormick Place West)
March 18- 20
Visit us at Booth #2303

ISA International Sign Association Show,
Orlando, FL
March 26- 29
Visit us at Booth #1014

R GANG

Phelps Joins R Tape

Paul Phelps has joined R Tape as Sales Manager for the Rocky Mountain Region, which includes the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Colorado and Montana. He comes to R Tape with an extensive background in the graphic arts industry. Phelps previously owned two successful sign companies and held sales positions with Ameriban (Fellers) and Royal Sign Supply.



Phelps attended Emerson College in Boston, MA and Washburn University in Topeka, KS graduating with degrees in English/Creative

Writing and Theatre. Phelps resides in Lawrence, Kansas with his wife and two children.

TIPS & TRICKS

No Room for Error

According to Bill Barnes, VP of Production for Falcon Enterprises in Pinellas Park, FL, there is no room for error, when printing polycarbonate overlay panels and nameplates for uncompromising OEM customers. Barnes offers his advice on printing on polycarbonate films in the latest issue of *Specialist Printing* magazine.

Barnes says that polycarbonate films are much easier to print than other plastics, such as polyesters. Still print failures can occur. Incompatibility of materials is a major cause. "Our first steps in quality control are to qualify the raw materials: the inks, the film and the transfer adhesive," Barnes says. "All three components have to work together."

In selecting materials, Barnes suggests contacting distributors and manufacturers for recommendations. The manufacturer's conduct extensive tests of the compatibility of the primary components of graphic panels: the ink, the polycarbonate film and the transfer adhesive. Barnes believes in keeping the lines of communications with his vendors wide open. That way he stays up to date with technical developments.

The ink manufacturers can provide you with ink recommendations and instructions on processing. "That doesn't mean that you should take another's recommendations at face value," Barnes cautions. To ensure compatibility of the ink with the film and the transfer adhesive, the screen printer must conduct his own testing. For your in-house testing, your distributor can supply you with sample sheets of film.



According to Bill Barnes, maintaining high standards is not an impossible dream, if you have the quality structure in place and the discipline to unfailingly follow established procedures.

After printing some sample sheets of polycarbonate, Barnes suggests allowing the ink to cool before performing ink adhesion test. "Any type of testing conducted prior to production, should closely approximate shop conditions," he says. "Screen printing is process of many different variables, any of which can affect the quality of finished product. If you alter any of these variables, any you can affect the finished product."

Tests at Falcon Enterprises include checking the adhesion of the ink to the substrate; intercoat adhesion (the bond of one layer of ink to another) and compatibility of the tape with the ink. "In testing the adhesion of the ink to the film, we generally run a cross hatch test," Barnes says. "Testing doesn't stop there. After transfer adhesive is laminated to a part, we also run peel tests using an Instron tester. Not everybody has this equipment in their shop. This gives us a big advantage."

Barnes believes that testing doesn't end when you first qualify the raw materials. "Testing the compatibility of the components is just the first step in a quality program," says Barnes. "Testing throughout the manufacturing process is critical."

Barnes believes that it is better to sacrifice a few parts in testing so he can discover a problem in his plant, rather than hear about it later when the product is out in the field. Typically, 3% of the parts products are tested. This percentage, of course, is factored into the job. It's a small price to pay for high quality work.

Barnes also advises that once you find a combination that works for you, that you stick with that winning formula. Details of every job are well documented so that nothing is left to chance when duplicating a reorder. Repeatability of results depends largely on reproducing all of the variables involved in printing. (For a reprint of the complete article e-mail John Porpora at jporpora@rtape.com).