

Add extra technology to your business

It would be fair to say that diversification in business is far more common these days than it was 20 or 30 years ago. You only have to look in your local supermarket to see one of the best examples. Once a supplier of foodstuffs and household goods, now a supplier of everything for the home and garden. They have taken business expansion to the extreme - but will something like this fit into your business? Whilst not suggesting that you should start selling groceries, it may be worth considering adding extra technology to your business allowing you to offer additional services and thereby grow your business outside of, but related to, your core business. We spoke to Roy Burton of UK based Your Embroidery Services Ltd about this very topic.

Not so many years ago adding machinery to your existing plant would not have been economically viable. Embroidery and print machinery was expensive and bulky, so even if the price didn't put you off, the size did. But we jump ahead a little, so perhaps it would be more appropriate to explain why embroidery and print. The easiest way to diversify is to find a product or service that your current customer base may be interested in. It is an added advantage if the machinery and the business strategy involved are similar to your existing set-up. In the simplest terms, trophy suppliers and engravers buy a blank product and decorate it, whether that be a glass or Perspex plaque, or the description plate for the base of a trophy; this is exactly the same in embroidery and garment printing. In both of these businesses you buy blanks (garments, pen-nants) and decorate them to the customer's specification. Naturally the product is different, but look at your customer profile and you will see that the majority of your clients may have a use for printed or embroidered garments, pen-nants etc. What makes the expansion easier now, as opposed to 20 years ago, can be summed up in two words – price and size.

Roy (Burton) has seen both of these mediums develop and change in his years in the industry and thinks that the possibilities offered now make adding this type of technology a much more viable proposition. Looking at embroidery first he points out that there is now machinery available that takes up little more space than a table-top and costs a good deal less than it did a few years ago. The learning curve is much smaller as



well with technology, both hardware and software, making life a lot easier than in the past. Roy said: "Our principal, SWF, has worked closely with us here at YES Ltd and with other distributors developing machinery specifically aimed at expanding and developing business. They have developed the Dual Function machine which allows two patterns and/or products to be embroidered at the same time. This was just not possible before, but now that it is it means that the machine is more flexible in catering with small and varied orders".

Printing traditionally presented other pitfalls which did not fit easily into the workplace. With screen printing for instance you had the problems of developing screens, the machinery was

Embroidery & Print



big and bulky and, most importantly, you would have to cater for the mess associated with inks and screen wash etc. The development of machines such as the DTG direct to garment printers though has changed all of that. Resembling a large ink jet printer these machines offer the facility to print, as the name suggests, direct to the garment. Load a cotton t-shirt, program the machine and wait for the result – a vibrant print of whatever your customer needs. No mess, no chemicals and no smell means that this type of machine would easily sit in a shop environment. Designs can be made using any graphics software, so if you already use Photoshop® or CorelDRAW® for your current business then there is no learning curve. Once the design has been created, load it into the printer's software and send it to the machine. Roy commented: "This type of technology has revolutionised printing, taking it from a factory procedure to being at home in a public environment. This is probably one of the most important technical developments involved in garment dec-

oration over the past few years. It has taken garment printing into the small order market, making it economically viable to print small quantities as low as a single garment." Of course the printing isn't confined to garments, as anything can be placed on the adapted print bed such as pennants, small flags and rosettes, but YES Ltd can now offer further expansion possibilities of the printing process with the introduction of 'Trans Slam'. This transfer based LED printing system uses specially developed paper and toner to produce vibrant transfers that can be applied to a wide variety of surfaces including cotton and polyester, as well as hard surfaces such as wood etc. With this ability Trans Slam could even be used to personalise and decorate some of the stock traditionally found in a trophy centre.

Technology works well where it fits a purpose. The advances in both embroidery and textile printing mean that this type of technology now fits much more easily into the current work environment of a trophy supplier and engraver. This type of technology gives you the ability to match a new area of supply and service to your current customer database. It will also help to develop new strands of business and introduce new clients to your core business. By adding and using technology business expansion is certainly easier than it was in the past.

We would like to thank Roy Burton and Your Embroidery Services Ltd for their assistance in the writing of this article. If you are interested in the products they offer or you have any questions relating to the subject matter, you can e-mail them at sales@yesltd.co.uk.
