



The Gerber Solara ion™ - Up and Running and Making Money for a FASTSIGNS® Shop in Record Time

FASTSIGNS sign making shop in Nashville, Tennessee is making money with its newly purchased Gerber Solara ion faster than they thought possible. The Solara ion is a cationic UV flatbed printer with roll-to-roll capabilities. Production Manager Mark Collins relates, “We put the Solara ion into production on Wednesday morning, and completed jobs were going out the door that afternoon—the learning curve was that easy.”

When Nashville’s FASTSIGNS got into the market for a UV inkjet printer with true flatbed capabilities, they did their research. Though they looked at other brands, he settled on the Gerber Solara ion because they had experience with Gerber. “We had a GERBER EDGE® and a couple of plotters from GSP®, and they have worked very well. They are very dependable, and We’ve been very happy with them.”

But it wasn’t just the Gerber name that attracted FASTSIGNS to the Solara ion, it was also the cutting edge technology. The size of the flatbed and the Solara ion’s ability to print directly on the substrate was what he was looking for, not to mention the great price point. Collins was worried the color gamut wouldn’t be broad enough, but when he saw samples at a sign convention, he was very impressed.



*FASTSIGNS of Nashville’s General Manager,
Walker Henley, with their Solara ion™*



The color was just one of the things he liked about the Solara ion’s cationic UV inks. As Collins notes, “The bond the cationic inks create with the substrate was very impressive when compared to others printers we looked at.” The Solara ion’s GerberCAT™ inks cure at approximately room temperature. Unlike solvent inks that create a chemical bond by eroding the surface of the substrate, GerberCAT inks cure into a strong, yet flexible mechanical bond that produces a product that is immediately usable. Cold Fire Cure™ is the Solara ion’s UV curing process that

uses low energy and lower temperatures to cure the GerberCAT cationic inks. This dramatically expands the range of materials the Solara ion can print including heat-sensitive plastic, vinyl, fabric, and paper-based materials without concern for ink adhesion or material damage.

Collins loves the Solara ion's flatbed capabilities. "It cuts out so much time and labor," he notes. "We can do ten double-sided 18x24 signs in twenty minutes, start to finish, and they're ready to go out the door. And we do jobs like that every day. It used to take twice as long. We'd have to print on adhesive vinyl, apply the vinyl to the substrate, and then trim it. The Solara ion cuts out a lot of steps."

The Solara ion's true flatbed technology is bolstered by its roll-to-roll capabilities. FASTSIGNS is printing 90% of its banners on the Solara ion right now. He asserts, "Our Solara ion has turned into a workhorse. It runs every day, almost all day. We're pushing to have it running eight hours a day, except for cleaning time. I use my Solara ion for the meat and potatoes money-making jobs, and that frees up my other printers for specialty production."

The speed in which the Gerber Solara ion started making money for FASTSIGNS doesn't mean its versatility is limited. The Solara ion's ability to print on such a variety of substrates means it can do unusual jobs, not just big jobs. FASTSIGNS Solara ion has printed on corrugated plastic, foamboard, Gatorfoam®, Alupalite™, PVC, and has even printed on an acoustic ceiling tile--a beautiful ocean shot looking through the water at the underside of a boat. "We're even going to try it on floor mats that are rubber with fabric on top as a thank-you gift for one of our clients," Collins says. The sky is the limit on how the Gerber Solara ion can help grow his sign making business.



Not only has the Gerber Solara ion started making money immediately, it will continue to produce profits with Gerber's superior support and service, and its technology will consistently bring a good return on FASTSIGN's investment for years to come. As Collins states, "This is going to be our best year ever."

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