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69th Annual Franklin Event

SPRIT OF FELLOWSHIP ABOUNDS AT 69TH ANNUAL FRANKLIN EVENT

By Patrick Henry, Franklin Event Committee Member, Liberty or Death Communications

What a splendid evening, and what a fitting celebration of the graphic communications industry at its best: the 69th Annual Franklin Event.

On March 30, Print & Graphic Communications Association (PGCA) joined 225 guests in paying tribute to individuals and organizations who have made exceptional contributions both to the industry and to society at large. Culminating in the presentation of the Franklin Award for Distinguished Service to baseball great and philanthropist Mariano Rivera, the event was also PGCA's formal debut as the regional trade group it became through the consolidation of Printing Industries Alliance and the Graphic Arts Association as of January 1, 2023.

The setting was the Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, an elegant venue on the Manhattan waterfront in New York City. There, throughout cocktails and dinner, guests did what members of the industry always thrive on doing at social gatherings: renewing old acquaintances, making new ones, and reflecting on how fortunate they are to be part of such a convivial and collegial scene.

The awards portion of the program, overseen by PGCA Co-Presidents Tim Freeman and Melissa Jones, moved briskly through a series of introductions and acceptances that kept the sound of applause continuous at the dinner tables.

Sextet of Supporters

First up were representatives of six companies hailed as Print Industry Champions for their support of the workforce development program for which Rivera has been honored with the Franklin Award. Sponsored by the Mariano Rivera Foundation, the Print – Design – Packaging Development Program prepares high school students to earn professional certifications in print-related job skills that are in high demand among industry employers.

The six Print Industry Champions make the program possible with their contributions of training curricula, instruction and mentoring, learning space, and equipment. Hailed for their generosity were Atlantic Tomorrow's Office, EFI, Fiery, Konica Minolta, Premium Color Group, and Ricoh.



Melissa Jones, PGCA; Mariano Rivera;
Tim Freeman, PGCA



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New York Yankee Great, MARIANO RIVERA, Honored for HOF Career and Community Service

On March 30, the Print & Graphic Communications Association presented Mariano Rivera, New York Yankee legend and Major League Baseball Hall of Fame member, with its 2023 Franklin Award for Distinguished Service. Mr. Rivera was recognized for his stellar athletic career and equally important, his philanthropic efforts to provide economically disadvantaged young people with the skills and tools they need to be successful in life.

MARIANO RIVERA LEARNING CENTER

Under development in New Rochelle, NY, this 40,000 square foot facility will provide guidance and resources to students of impoverished families, helping them to achieve success in higher education and establish careers in high demand fields.

SAVE 653

An initiative, that adds what Mariano regards as his most important save, to his record setting 652 games saved as a big-league relief pitcher. Through fundraising, education, scholarships and personal guidance, Save 653 serves to give youth from minority communities the resources and relationships they need for success in today's world.



Join The
Mariano
Initiative
Save 653




**Mariano Rivera
Foundation**

The Mariano Rivera Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public non-profit organization. Your donation will support the foundation's mission to help underprivileged youth around the country.

COVER CONTINUED

Few in the audience needed an introduction to Paul Reilly, recipient of PGCA's Lifetime Achievement Award. As President and CEO of Cenveo, he was one of the industry's most active and successful consolidators of commercial printing businesses. He later co-founded New Direction Partners, an investment banking firm that specializes in print industry mergers and acquisitions.

His Queens Roots Showed

Like the other recipients, Reilly kept his remarks amiable, succinct, and not focused on himself. He bantered with Diane Romano, another honoree, about what he said was her unbreakable resistance to his salesmanship in the old days. He confessed to Rivera, a New York Yankees icon, that as a Queens native, he is a born fan of the New York Mets. He thanked everyone present for their praise, and the industry for the many opportunities it has given all of its members to succeed.

Like Reilly, Diane Romano is one of the industry's best-known figures in the Northeast. Like him, she also gained national attention for leading business ventures that changed the way the industry operates – in her case, by advancing its adoption of electronic prepress and digital file exchange.



(l to r) Paul Reilly; Mariano Rivera; Luis Villa,
Atlantic Tomorrow's Office

As the current president of the Graphic Communications Scholarship Foundation (GCSF), she directs a campaign to fund the educations of students preparing for careers in the field. For leading this community-minded effort and many others like it, she was recognized with the 2023 John Peter Zenger Medal for exceptional service.

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Franklin Event Honorees (l to r) Diane Romano; Vince Roma, Ricoh; Dino Pagliarello, Konica Minolta; Mariano Rivera; Andy Griffin, Premium Color Group; Larry Weiss and Luis Villa, Atlantic Tomorrow's Office; John Watson and Mark Fitzgerald, Premium Color Group; Paul Reilly, New Direction Partners; Melissa Jones and Tim Freeman, PGCA

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COVER CONTINUED

"...he spoke less about how he developed his extraordinary talents than about how he learned to acquire a sense of purpose and self-worth – a source of strength, he said, that too many disadvantaged young people have difficulty finding within themselves."

Never Stand Down

With bluntness, humor, and fervor, Romano described the value of commitment to the worthy causes she has supported within the printing industry and in other areas of her professional and personal life. Citing struggles of her own, she urged courage in the face of adversity and fidelity to the idea of always helping others in need.

Lisa Vega, Executive Director of the Mariano Rivera Foundation, outlined the philanthropic organization's goals and initiatives in her introduction of its founder. Its mission is to educate, mentor, and support young people from underserved backgrounds in their pursuit of fulfilling careers and better lives. The joint effort with PGCA and the Print Industry Champion honorees will accomplish this with training provided at printing companies in the region and at a Foundation-sponsored learning center soon to be under construction in New Rochelle, NY.

Mariano Rivera rose from poverty and obscurity to become one of Major League Baseball's true modern legends: a unanimously voted Hall of Fame inductee whose pitching record of 652 games saved stands unbroken to this day.

In accepting the Franklin Award for Distinguished Service, he spoke less about how he developed his extraordinary talents than about how he learned to acquire a sense of purpose and self-worth – a source of strength, he said, that too many disadvantaged young people have difficulty finding within themselves.

Pillars of Philanthropy

Faith, integrity, community, commitment, achievement, and stewardship are the core values that the Foundation strives to instill in its young protégés through programs like the one it is now carrying out in partnership with the printing industry. Rivera urged everyone to join with him in making Save 653, the one he regards as the pinnacle of his career: lifting young people out of discouraging circumstances and setting them on paths to brighter futures.

After the evening concluded on that high note, Rivera didn't disappoint the many guests who flocked to him for autographs and photo opportunities. The success of the event also owed much to the support of Platinum Sponsors Atlantic Tomorrow's Office, Canon Solutions America, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy, Konica Minolta, Premium Color Group, Thomas J. Quinlan III, Quad, and Unimac; and Gold Sponsors Blanchard, Case Paper, Dalim Software, Dow Jones, Duggal Visual Solutions, Heidelberg, Kodak, New Direction Partners, Ricoh, and Paylocity.

Be a part of Mariano's Greatest Save #653! Donate today – your donation will support the Mariano Rivera Foundation's mission to help underprivileged youth around the country. Visit <https://themarianoriverafoundation.org/653/> or scan the QR code on page 2.



(l to r) Melissa Jones, PGCA; Cheryl Kahanec, Quantum Group; Diane Romano, Zenger Medal Honoree; Tim Freeman, PGCA



Nick Fiorenza, PGCA Counsel, telling Mariano Rivera a story (of course), while Tim Freeman looks on.



(l to r) Marilyn Matty, Patrick Henry, Liberty or Death Communications; Kathy Presto, HH Global; Hallie Satz, HighRoad Press and PGCA Vice Chair



(l to r) PGCA Board member Darren Bradley, Highmark Health; Larry Gilroy, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy; Bob Wislocky, Newark Trade and Tom Gilroy, GKG



PGCA Co-Chairs (l to r) Adam Avrick, Design Distributors and Jim Rosenthal, PDC Graphics



(l to r) Deborah Corn with Yasmina Ben Bouchta, Bintee LLC and Luis Villa, Atlantic

"As a first-time attendee of the Franklin Event, I found myself equally starstruck by the industry firepower in the room as I was delighted to see friends and colleagues, and meet a host of incredible printers, paper people, vendors and students throughout the evening. It was the trifecta of high-level networking, a deep and collectively shared pride of the printing industry and being present to honor Mariano Rivera for the work he is doing with his foundation, Diane Romano for her life-long philanthropy and Paul Reilly for his admirable career and industry support that will keep this event in my memory bank for many years to come. Great job Team PGCA - and thank you for the invitation to attend!!!"
— Deborah Corn, Intergalactic Ambassador to The Printerverse



The crowd, enjoying the facility and their print industry colleagues.

A CONVERSATION WITH OUTSTANDING FEMALE LEADERS IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY

As a follow up to last year's Women's History Month interview, we reconvened on March 25th with leaders on the Print & Graphic Communications Association (PGCA) board of directors, to get acquainted and talk about some timely topics. Kim Tuzzo joined a Zoom call by Kathie Hartmans, past PIA chair, Quality Bindery Services, Hallie Satz, Vice Chair, PGCA Board, HighRoad Press, and PGCA Directors Denise Padula, Alchar Printing and Christine Bassil, Vice President with NB Bookbinding, Inc. Read more about these ladies and their businesses on page 11. Here are the highlights from our conversation.

■ **Hallie Satz:** It's good to see everybody again and continue our talk during Women's History Month. Because this is a near and dear month to me, as a woman-owned business.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Hallie, didn't you do a celebration at your company for Women's History Month?

■ **Hallie Satz:** We did have a celebration and took a group picture of the women of HighRoad for International Womens Day on March 8th. We made a large poster and displayed that at the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) conference in Nashville. We then had a lunch celebration on a later date which was women-only allowed. However, we did invite the HeForShe's for cake afterward. But as I half joked to our group of women at HighRoad, "every day is a man's day in the world, so there should be at least a day and month devoted to women, in my opinion."

Q: How have you been challenged with keeping and recruiting employees and have you thought of anything creative to keep people or lure them to your company?

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** We haven't had any issues at all, thank God. And I think it's because we stayed open all through Covid, so there wasn't that lapse time where people decided to go do something else or didn't want to work anymore. We've had some people leave, but not because of that, just because of other circumstances. But I can't believe how fortunate we are because I have heard from other companies who had employees retire, especially pressmen retiring - where do you find a pressman?

I know some companies who had mailing services and their girl left to go someplace else because there was a signing bonus and \$5 more an hour. And I don't know how employers are affording to offer bonuses and pay increases but they are at a loss now for new employees. There's just not a source for people that do the type of work that we do. I think a lot can be taught but I just don't know if anybody really has the patience to do it anymore.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Denise, do you have any thoughts on this topic?

■ **Denise Padula:** Yes, I want to echo what Kathie said because during Covid, we kept our staff at work and looked into the DOL Shared Work program so employees could have time off and still be compensated.

I think that really encouraged the team to take a second look at how much we truly were partnering with the employees and taking care of them, seeing what was best for them. For example, I have a 76-year old press operator who said 'I'd like to continue to work, but just four days a week instead of five.' I told him, of course, that would be fine. It would truly be a benefit for both parties.

We had one person leave recently who went to work for NY state because his buddy found an opportunity for him there. We had great luck hiring a new employee to replace him. The new hire had no experience in the industry, and he's being trained in the bindery. He's been here two months, working out great. We found him through word-of-mouth advertising; asking staff if they knew anyone who fits our company culture, and we'll train them. This is Nate's first full-time job and he's learning, retaining and is a really nice fit. So, I think networking for new employees is the way to go because you really do get the cultural match for employees and the rest can be learned.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Yeah. That's a good point.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Both Denise and Kathie have people that have been with them a long time, so they have that loyalty and not so much turnover as a result. Christine, do you have any thoughts on this question?

■ **Christine Bassil:** Similar to what the ladies just mentioned, we remained open, kept all our employees. Two decided to leave, they were scared to come to work during Covid. What we did to replace them is we contacted employees who worked for us years ago and offered them the opportunity to come back with higher pay. We didn't have any issues training new employees because we ended up hiring two former employees of ours.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** That was good. I'm not sure how many former employees I would want back though. There's a couple.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** You have to be selective, I guess. How about you, Hallie? Now you've just had a whole influx of new people with your new venture.

■ **Hallie Satz:** We had to merge cultures and I'm going to say that was a challenge. HighRoad had a 19 year old strong culture that was very specific and took a long time to build and we were proud of it. We brought in 40 people from Mittera in Parsippany that were from a very different culture, but I believe the people that joined liked the HighRoad culture. So that's been positive. We had to take stock of the benefits and policies at each company, and we decided to take the best of what everybody had and gave it to all employees so no one felt like they lost out.

We did not want to have unhappy people so we could keep everybody. I will say the one challenge is more on the front office end of the business. We need in-house workers, and we are up against companies that offer remote jobs in accounting etc. It is a challenge as we do need in office full time for most jobs.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Good for you.

■ **Hallie Satz:** And those jobs, applicants think it's a remote job which we don't do. And the pay scale for those types of positions is off the charts too. So I'm going to say that's where more of our challenges are.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** I think a lot of people that have remote workers are finding it to be very, very difficult. And the remote workers are getting more and more demanding. I don't think they're seeing the results that they thought they would see from those workers. And when they try to contact the remote worker at home and they don't respond right away, well, what are they doing? They might say, oh, I was there, I just didn't see the email. That kind of crap. A friend of mine is going through this with her group and she's so frustrated because they just keep challenging her with these remote working days. And they won't even answer an email over the weekend because that's the weekend, even though they're salaried employees. It's just kind of silly that that's what it's come to. There's no cooperation anymore. I'm glad we didn't have to go through it.

■ **Hallie Satz:** Yes, it's the whole front office part where I have been spending a lot of my energy.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** I'd be interested in, this is more of a personal question, but how do you manage the stress of your job? What are the ways that you relax and decompress so you can come back the next day and not just be so wound up.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Wine. Don't put that in the article.

■ **Hallie Satz:** I think that's perfectly acceptable.

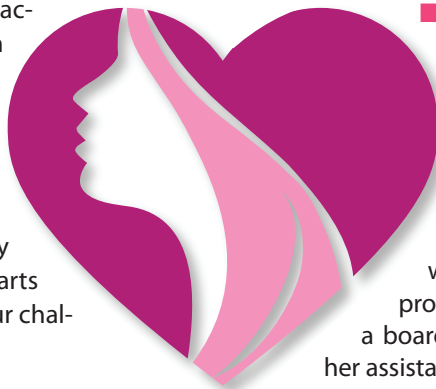
■ **Kim Tuzzo:** We should have had a BYOB today, huh?

■ **Hallie Satz:** Yeah, there you go. Who says we didn't? Are you kidding? I stopped on the way from the airport and I told my team, I'm going to have the driver make a stop before the event, because even though they give you the drink tickets there's usually a long wait on line for the beer and the wine. I'm going to buy the vodka and the tequila. Don't worry. I have it covered. I've been to enough conferences, I come prepared.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Yeah, your priorities. That's what you got to do.

■ **Hallie Satz:** So, no problem there, Kathie.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Do any of you have someone that you reach out to either within the business or outside of the business to help you with a crisis or problem?



■ **Denise Padula:** Oh, I meet regularly with someone from the New York Small Business Development Center. They offer a free program to NYS businesses and entrepreneurs for business counseling, training, and business research. The closest facility for me is based out of the SUNY Albany campus. I met Kate Baker (currently Director of NYSBDC) when we were going through the NYSMBWE certification process. Since our introduction, she has been like a board director for me. Alchar found a new bank with her assistance. She presented my business portfolio (without corporate name) to three banks, identifying my company needs as well as past performance, resulting in three proposals for my review. It was nice to have somebody basically take my credentials, present them and have all three banks say that they want my business, rather than me doing it on my own, one-by-one.

Similarly, it has been beneficial to have a sounding board to discuss hiring options and union contract negotiations. I have changed attorneys, CPA firms and banks since becoming the owner. As a sole owner, it has been important to find business and personal peers. I have found this group, Kate from SBDC, the Forum for Executive Women (professional women's group) and other boards are excellent arenas to meet professionally to discuss business agenda items that still offer a strong circle of friendship.

During COVID, each of us as women leaders of our businesses, had to make sure we were working in and on our companies. We were asking our team to go in, or covering for people who were out, whether for sickness or because of a benefit that was in place for them. It does grate on you, and it was a very uncertain time. You felt alone and did not have a lot of information.

Kate Baker from the SBDC was the person giving the Zoom webinars on how to apply for PPP loans, who was eligible, EIDL loans and then Employee Retention Tax Credit opportunities. The Capital Region Workforce Development board connected us

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with contacts within NYSDOL for the Workshare Programs and benefits. The PIA was providing important updates regarding essential workforce criteria and the local chambers of commerce were updating us on local restrictions and vaccinations. All of these agencies and groups provided pertinent business information and platforms to connect with other business owners. It was a godsend to have this group of peers and confidants to connect with who were going through the same things personally and professionally.

■ **Christine Bassil:** That's cool.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Christine, have you had anybody that you reach out to for help?

■ **Christine Bassil:** As far as I'm concerned, I'm lucky also to have a group of professionals that I work with. Whether it's the CPA firm we work with, if I need accounting or tax advice, I reach out to that person. Same when it comes to the technical stuff. I used to go to my father for advice and ask him so many questions, he's the one who taught me this business. I'm still learning from him. Also, throughout the years, I have developed friendships with professionals, whether clients or vendors whom I would call and ask technical questions. Whether it's a printing related question or even paper, ink, things that we as book binders normally don't get involved in.

I want to educate myself because if I run into a specific problem, I'd rather have all the information so I can offer the proper solution. So, I'm fortunate also to have known people who have the willingness to share their experience. They also come to me when they have technical questions related to book binding.

Earlier you had asked the question whether we have challenges with employees. My challenge is not our employees. Our challenge is finding professionals. The young generation who's joining the work forces, even those employees who supposedly have experience are displaying a spirit of no willingness to learn or help. They keep repeating the same mistakes. That has been my number one challenge for the past two years.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Well, now you can connect with Kathie Hartmans. She's been doing this a long time.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** There you go. I feel the same way too. The people I deal with every day are printers and you don't have that connection with other book binders. I do have a binder in Canada that we bounce things off of. Most of my connections are just people that you networked with and gathered up over the years. You can call them at any time and ask them a question and they never think anything of it. It isn't a silly question and they usually know where to direct you and help you out. With most of our customers being printers we have become such good friends with them that they help out anytime I ask them for anything, especially about paper.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Hallie, do you have someone that you rely on for help?

■ **Hallie Satz:** Well, I'm going to say for stress relief, I just want to mention, besides wine, ha, ha, mine is cooking. That's my Sunday afternoon kind of thing I do. I don't really have any big hobbies, but I'll just say I like to cook, and I'll cook for a few hours. It gives me something to do with my hands and it's mindless. And I enjoy cooking.

But for go-to, I'm going to say my team, my senior team. I've worked with Tom Scaglione and Angelina Killane-Sims, who was a past recipient of the Zenger medal a few years back. They are the people I started HighRoad Press with in 2004 that I brought with me. I worked with my amazing hard working father, Ed Denburg. But my father was very tough on us. He was the guy to throw you in the pool. You'll try to figure out how to swim or you'll drown.

So, I made a lot of mistakes and that's how I learned not to make them again and how I also learned eventually to sell printing, run the business and manage. I've certainly learned by my mistakes of course. But my team, even though they work for me, they're the people that I'll complain to and go to and talk through many issues. They are amazing. It takes a village!

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** That's good to have that support network. We all need that.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** And then there's Tim Freeman. Tim is a valuable resource for almost anything. He may not have the answer right away, but somehow, he finds the person that can help you out with whatever the problem is.

■ **Hallie Satz:** Yes, I call on Tim for advice and he's always so patient and really great that way too and a fantastic resource.

■ **Denise Padula:** We all cheer Tim.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** It's funny because he's so even tempered, and he rarely gets upset. I never have to worry, Tim's going to get mad, because he's just really calm and levelheaded. He's great to work for. We're lucky, Caroline and I, and now Melissa and Steve, all to work together. And the merger's gone very well so far.

■ **Hallie Satz:** It was such a good idea and needed to be done and great that it was done when it was and didn't wait too long.

■ **Denise Padula:** Back to the stress relief question: I have to take 45 minutes a day to work out in the morning. I feel like that way my head is on straight enough that I can tackle whatever the rest of the day has in store for me. It's the one thing you do for yourself – make time. So if you do that before work, you feel like you have done something for yourself.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** During the pandemic, my mom and I would go biking. Every morning we would go biking because we're outside, we could do that. And I'm waiting for warm weather so we can do that again, because I really don't mind doing that.

Q: What's your biggest challenge at your company lately?

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Business. Getting more business.

■ **Denise Padula:** During Covid we felt like we were a little bit stagnant. So right now, I'm looking at how to expand, what areas I want to expand in. And be honest, I'm floundering a little bit with it. There is so much potential and you research a little bit more and you think about the space you have or the employees that you have, how you can incorporate an expansion other than the obvious of more clients doing the same thing that we do.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Yeah, well everything's going down in quantities too. I was talking to somebody the other day and a lot of his customers, instead of a 48-page book, they want to do a 24-page book. Or instead of 5,000 books, they want to do 1,000 books. They're just kind of scaling down and using other media to get to their customers. He's a good salesperson too, so he's seeing a significant decline in the type of work that he used to do before. Our biggest challenge is trying to sell the business. That's what we're trying to do. Christine, do you want a Western New York location? We might be able to help you out.



■ **Hallie Satz:** We had been really busy, but just recently with the new economic news I am seeing some clients cutting back on orders, reducing quantities, canceling a couple. I'm a little concerned. Not so much that there'll be a new recession like what happened in '07 or '08. But we had been so crazy busy for so many months, but it just seems like it's leveling off a little bit.

And not just in printing. If it was just printing, I wouldn't mind because if it was just printing and other industries are busy, then printing will soon get busy. That never bothers me. As long as marketing and other companies are busy, we'll get busy. But I'm talking to other industries, and they are starting to get slow, that bothers me. I hope it's just a blip for this moment and nothing more than a blip.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Let's hope so.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Was there anything positive that changed at your company, as a result of Covid, or you changed the way you do things?

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** We have a lot of different work coming in. We never used to do fulfillment, but we have some good individual reps that do a lot of mugs and promotional products, that they don't want to do themselves. So, they're sending them to us to do

the fulfillment. I think the best thing that we ever did was buy the mailing company because it's just been so consistent throughout the years.

■ **Hallie Satz:** We did the same thing, we just put in direct mail and we just signed to start SOC2 certification, which is a whole other new area for us. It's a challenge, but an exciting challenge and we expect that to increase our business.

■ **Denise Padula:** Did both of you ladies have enough square footage to incorporate the new mailing division into your companies?

■ **Hallie Satz:** We took more space outside of the HighRoad building in Moonachie so we could add the mailing services.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** We already had it.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Christine, have you added anything new, any new products or new industries or anything?

■ **Christine Bassil:** We did invest in a new piece of equipment. It's a round cornering machine from Italy. So instead of die cutting the board and the material the conventional way to make covers with round corners, we now can simply feed the cover into the machine which in turn pushes the corners in. So that saves us time and labor. And that's a positive thing because now we can offer round corner books at almost the same price as a square corner book.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** That's great. What was the other thing?

■ **Christine Bassil:** The other was a headband machine for the runs, because usually headbands are attached in line. But you were mentioning nowadays there's no more 10,000, 20,000 orders, it's more within the range of 500 or even 200. So, we wanted also to get a headband machine that we can use it to save time and money and still be able to offer a competitive price.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** We're much smaller. Christine, you're in New Jersey too?

■ **Christine Bassil:** Yes.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** I don't know if you guys have shared work in New Jersey, but if you do, you should look into it because I swear by this program, it's the best thing New York State ever put forth. It's the only program I think that's worthy of actually helping employers as well as employees. And it's just been a godsend over the years to be able to have it. When you don't have the work, you don't want to lay people off, but you can give them a day off. They love it. They still get almost half their pay. It's just been a terrific program. Everybody should be invested in it.

■ **Denise Padula:** And during Covid they also incentivized it where it was an addition, besides the half day basically for the unemployment day, you still got \$600 a week and then they dropped it to \$300 a week the second year of Covid. And it was still, what a bonus for the employees. Okay, I'll take it. I don't have to work on Wednesdays. I get a half a day paid plus \$300. Sign me up.

■ **Hallie Satz:** We had people that we did offer it to during Covid.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Oh, we have it all year long. We're on it right now and then we'll probably go off it in another month just when business picks up and then we'll go back on it maybe towards the summer and then back in January or February. And we just go back and forth between it. It's one week, we might have three weeks that we're not on it and then two weeks that we are. And it just flows really nice.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** It sounds like everybody's found the little things that can help them by either creating a new opportunity or using a government service. Thank goodness. Get us through to hopefully better days and hopefully they're here to stay. Has anybody been out now traveling?

■ **Hallie Satz:** Yeah, I travel quite a bit as I am in Nashville now and I'm going to Kentucky a week from Friday. I travel quite a bit.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** I'm glad you all feel like this is worthwhile being part of the Association and you feel like you're getting enough out of it to make it worth putting your time in. And that makes us feel like we're doing the right thing here and offering the right services and, not even if it's a particular money saving service, it's just having a community. You know who your friends are and you can reach out any time. It seems like that got better through the pandemic. People know they can depend on the Association. So that's been a nice outcome, I think.

■ **Denise Padula:** We have benefits, we have peers. We have experts and friendship that you can't get everywhere.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Yeah. I wonder if it's like that in other industries. I don't know. And I worked here for my whole career, so I don't really know if other industries are as inclusive and welcoming as it seems like printing is.

■ **Denise Padula:** I don't know. We're a different breed.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Seems like you really have to love it to be in printing. It's not an easy thing. You can't just coast. You've got to always be looking for a way to change your business or to keep ahead and it's not the easiest, but everybody's smiling, looking happy. Is there anything else anybody would like to talk about?

■ **Hallie Satz:** I don't know about anybody else, but as a business owner, I have less and less time to focus on business and growing sales and focus on employees, because I'm constantly getting questions from clients requesting reports for ESG and DEI corporate initiatives. These are all important areas for HighRoad, but not areas we have spare people to work on full time, so they usually wind up as extra work for me.

We are a fairly low-layered company at HighRoad. I know I said we have 90 employees, but trust me, most of that is all manufacturing. We don't have a lot of management and office people.

■ **Denise Padula:** No, and to Hallie's point, it ends up being something that the owner has to take care of because you do not have the staff to do that. We just had a census come in, so the controller was working on that. But the bottom line is you still have to go in and finish it up and, you're not going to hire your accountant to pull the numbers for the report and put them in just so. And it's census, it's DEI. It's the harassment training. It's like, make sure you have time and you're following up the safety committee.

■ **Hallie Satz:** And you can't keep your clients if you don't do that work. My husband will get upset with my work hours. He continually asks, why are you doing so much? And I continually tell him you just don't understand it. Every day I will get a new email from either the state, or a client's compliance department asking for new or updated information, and we do not have people to always work on this. So, if it has to get done it does fall on my plate at times.

■ **Denise Padula:** You can't work on your business because you're working in it and on things that are not making us money.

■ **Hallie Satz:** I did try to hire somebody but there is no way I can dump this on someone else. I need a better strategy. I know with my new strategic alliance with Mittera there is a plan for me to focus more on the business instead of the day-to-day business.

■ **Denise Padula:** Personally, I appreciate the comment.

■ **Hallie Satz:** Yes, that is not a female thing, that's just a general thing.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** It's always something new. Some demand or some requirement. It's always challenging, that's for sure.

■ **Hallie Satz:** Makes that retirement want to come.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Yes.

■ **Denise Padula:** Once you figure it out, Kathie, could you please write a little memo and send it to your dear friends? I call it my escape plan, not my retirement.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** I think the sad thing is we're just going to have to eventually just close because nobody wants to get into the business unless a printer absorbs us or another bindery does, it doesn't seem to be feasible. And it's something that you don't think about when you first start in business. I never thought this would happen.

■ **Denise Padula:** People don't want to work that hard.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** No.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** Well, you've made a community there, Kathie, with everybody locally and everybody that knows you and, not even just in Buffalo, but it would be a shame. But I understand you wanting to step back and not not have that daily pressure of owning a business.

■ **Kathie Hartmans:** Well, I keep telling them they're going to miss us when we're gone, but they're not listening.

■ **Kim Tuzzo:** You never know where that opportunity might come from, so just keep spreading the word. Well thanks everybody for calling in today. It's great to see everybody and talk about a few things. I'm so grateful we're all still here and working and doing pretty well.

Our interview subjects, as they introduced themselves.

■ **Christine Bassil,** Vice President with NB Book-binding, Inc. in Clifton, New Jersey. We're a family-owned business. Christine also serves as a Director on the PGCA Board.



■ **Kathie Hartmans,** Quality Bindery Services in Buffalo, New York. Kathie was chair of the Printing Industries Alliance for three years and helmed the Association during the pandemic.



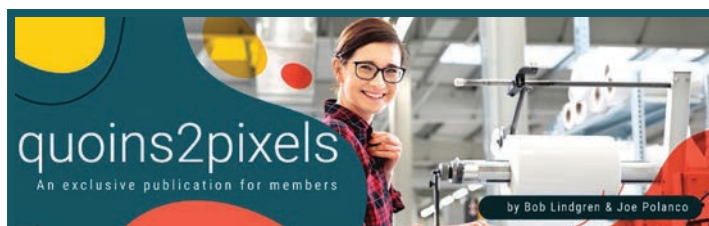
■ **Denise Padula,** owner of Alchar Printing in Troy, New York. We are a New York State certified WBE and we're also a union company. Denise served on the Printing Industries Alliance as a director for many years and currently serves on the Print & Graphic Communications Association Board of Directors.



■ **Hallie Satz,** owner of HighRoad Press in Moonachie, New Jersey, current Vice Chair of the newly-merged Association. I was so happy to see Christine join the call, who I know we've done business with and is a neighbor of us. And Denise and Kathie, happy to see them again.



■ **Kim Tuzzo,** Marketing/Program Director with PGCA. I am in charge of the events and communications for the Association. I truly enjoyed connecting with these four female leaders in the industry!



HIRING IS EASY

Let's be truthful, hiring is easy, but finding the right person is challenging. With today's electronic postings, finding "applicants" is easy. Sorting through the chaff is difficult. Do you know what makes it easier? Creating a system. First, develop a job description of the skill set necessary for the position – and the expectations, e.g. willing to work overtime; does well in a fast-paced environment, etc. Once you've determined the guidelines for the position, the interview process can focus on quickly determining if the person has the skills. That should be determined in a screening interview (face-to-face is best). Subsequently, the individual's potential supervisor can perform an interview to determine whether the applicant has the right attitude and work ethic to fit into the team. Many firms will also have one or two fellow employees conduct an interview – just to make sure there's a fit. Is this time consuming? Yes, but the results can be extremely positive.

BENCHMARKING

As we all know, benchmarking is comparing our performance metrics to internal as well industry best practices. As we'll explore in future articles, it has many benefits, but also can create challenges when we start comparing ourselves to firms which may not represent our company's structure. Regardless, let's look at areas, where we can potentially develop internal benchmarking. First, and a very important area, is our financial statements. When we structure our financial reporting to segregate variable costs of manufacturing from fixed costs, we can start the process of measuring profitability drivers in our production process. Another area is tracking the number of days it takes our customers to pay their invoices. Cash is the engine which runs our business and the faster we receive payment, the better. A third area for benchmarking is in the pressroom and bindery. Makereadies; net output per hour are two key areas. Granted there are many variables (type of paper; size of sheet; registration; ink coverage; # of folds) but collecting this data and then creating benchmarking is one of the methods to improve profitability and easily sustain growth.

quoins2pixels is written by Bob Lindgren and Joe Polanco. Bob and Joe have spent decades in the printing industry, and throughout their careers, they have counseled hundreds of company owners on a variety of management topics. Bob can be reached at (818) 219-3855 and Joe at jspolanco49@gmail.com.

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→ Print Across America

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printacrossamerica.com

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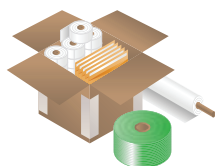
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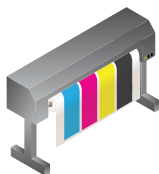
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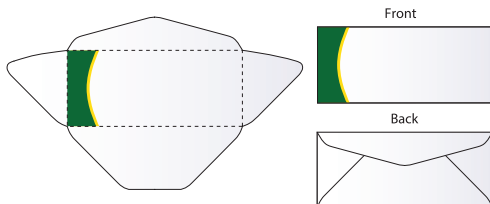
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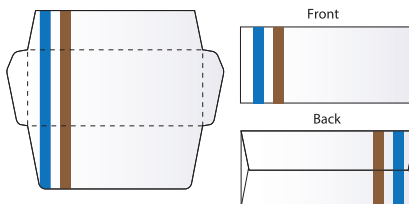
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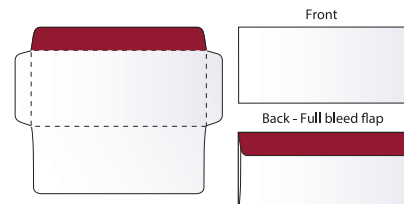
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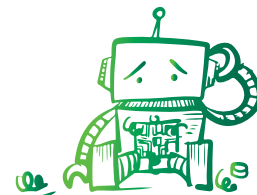
The Standard Group, Reading, PA

CHECK YOUR TECH

HOW TO LOOK INCOMPETENT

By Bill Farquharson, Sales Vault

I made a call to my dermatologist recently. After several rounds of "To make an appointment, press 1" followed by, "To make an appointment in our Plymouth office, press 1" followed by, "To make an appointment for Democrats, press 1," I heard the following message:



404-PAGE NOT FOUND

"Did you know you can now make an appointment using our new text service? Give us a couple of times you are available and we will text you back."

So I hung up without listening to the rest of the message and sent a text.

Two days later, I hadn't heard anything from them. So, I called back, went through all of the gyrations once again, skipped the part about texting, and heard the next part of the outgoing message:

"You can also make an appointment online."

Great! So, I hung up and went to their website. I searched page after page but could find no such capabilities.

So, I called back a third time, this time I made it all the way to the end, waited on hold to speak to an actual person, and after about 5 minutes got a recorded message asking me to leave my name and number. So, I did. And the day passed without me hearing from anyone.

The next morning, I got a phone call from the dermatologist's office and learned they have no appointments until July. Great. "Oh," the woman said, "we no longer offer online appointments. It got too overwhelming."

I tell you this story so that you will check your tech. We set up these wonderful shortcuts, but time goes on and things change. Do they still work?

QR codes that go to a "404 page not found" error message or broken links or systems set up long ago that now fail demonstrate incompetence, laziness, and sloppy business practices. They reflect on your quality and kill a sale without your even knowing.

Make no assumptions. Even if you are reading these words and thinking, "Oh, we're all set in that department," you might be missing something. Poke around. Listen to your outgoing VM. Spend time on your website.

CHECK YOUR TECH.

Sign up for the monthly Short Attention Span Webinars, held on the second Tuesday of each month, at printcommunications.org/. Watch the last six months of the Bill and Kelly show at printcommunications.org/pgca-for-you/ and pick up some excellent sales tips!

About the author: Bill Farquharson believes sales success leaves clues. If you want to be the best, learn from others who have solved the same challenges. Visit salesvault.pro/partners/ to learn from Bill.

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