

# Making a Difference with Color-Logic

## GAM—Graphics And Marketing Rules for Success



By Dennis Mason

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**GAM—Graphics And Marketing** in Sterling, Virginia, has a valuable model for smaller print providers. The company is a digital printer serving US Eastern Seaboard clients with quick-turnaround and short-run projects. A recent conversation with three GAM executives—Nathaniel Grant, President; Ronnie Price, Creative Director; and Conrad Coe, Production and Fabrication Engineer—made it clear what they think makes GAM successful. Here is the conversation distilled into nine rules:

**Embrace Digital**—GAM abandoned the offset process nearly ten years ago and today runs an all-digital shop. Their major equipment consists of seven Ricoh digital presses, a Ricoh latex wide format printer, an EFI VUTEk roll-to-roll machine, and a Colex flatbed cutter/router. According to Grant, "Going digital and standardizing on Ricoh machines took the guesswork out of most of our orders. We have lots of flexibility and can easily move work from one press to another, thus avoiding delays or shortening delivery times."



Nathaniel Grant, GAM Graphics And Marketing President

**Broaden Beyond Just Printing**—GAM saw opportunities in signage just a few years ago and found that customers like the idea of one-stop shopping for related jobs formerly available only from different vendors. Being all digital has helped immensely in GAM adding signage to their product offerings, and a background from sign-making that Grant brought to the company made it easier. Says Coe, who manages the wide-format end of the business: "Banners and trade show graphics have become a major part of our business, and the GAM all-digital approach encourages customers to let us do more for them."

**Make 24-Hour Turnaround the Norm**—GAM likes quick-turnaround jobs. And Grant says: “Performing on short notice often leads to more long-run jobs. Being all-digital makes quick turnarounds part of the GAM DNA”

**Broaden Design Capability**—At GAM, graphic design goes well beyond standard prepress and file preparation. Price, the creative director, joined GAM in 2002, and having design capability within GAM has strengthened relationships with clients as well as clients’ agencies. According to Price, “Clients often don’t care how something is done, so long as it looks like they want when it is printed. And agencies often need to be told how to execute designs so that they will print well. We often work with agency designers who been taught web design but not print design.”

**Establish Relationships Rather than Driving for Lowest Cost**—Here again is where having in-house design capability becomes important. Customers often return to GAM for quick-turnaround work because they understand the depth of GAM capabilities without being sold every time. Says Price: “Selling our design capability on every job gives customers confidence that we can handle even files that might cause other printers to stop a job and wait for modifications to be delivered.”

**Demonstrate Capability by Showing Prospects What Can Be Done**—GAM sales personnel carry plenty of samples, as well as swatch books illustrating unusual techniques and combination effects that customers may not be aware of. Two important examples, shown below, are a GAM sample sheet demonstrating use of the fifth color available on GAM presses, and a swatchbook given to customers and their graphic designers to show the metallic special effects GAM can produce.

**Cross-Train to Eliminate Learning on the Job**—In a small shop like GAM, one absentee employee can change a quick-turnaround job

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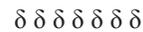
GAM Capability Sheet with Partner Examples and GAM Color-Logic Swatch Book Used by Sales Personnel



to a nightmare. GAM production employees are cross trained on the various processes available and can pitch in when something goes wrong.

**Always Be Open to New Technology**—GAM began the transition to digital in 2008, when many printers were waiting to see if digital was really a thing (and often were hoping it was not). “And with digital competence already established, adding signage was easy,” says Coe, who is responsible for most signage work at GAM.

**Partner with Vendors**—GAM has successfully limited its equipment and software to just a few key manufacturers. Doing so reduces the need for employees to learn different systems and helps ensure that fewer problems occur when pressure is on to complete a job quickly.



Two vendor partners that have made significant contributions to GAM success are Ricoh and Color-Logic, and how these vendors differ demonstrates the importance of not focusing on equipment at the expense of software, or vice-versa.



Conrad Coe (L) and GAM General Manager Eric Hilden in the GAM wide format area



GAM Demonstrates the Company Capabilities in Many Ways

Early on, GAM made a significant commitment to Ricoh, purchasing both digital presses and wide-format printers. Ricoh, in turn, relies on GAM to print Ricoh sales literature and trade show graphics, as well as affording Ricoh the opportunity to show prospects machines in actual production. Color-Logic, a more recent GAM vendor, enables GAM to execute files across various media and production processes, inexpensively making special effects and print embellishments available.

Discussing the Color-Logic relationship, Ronnie Price, the GAM Creative Director, says: "Having a Color-Logic license enables GAM to show customers how a metallic design concept—too often regarded as

particularly expensive and time-consuming—can not only be produced quickly and inexpensively, but can be executed on all GAM machines for any number of purposes." And, adds Price, "The Color-Logic Touch7 software lets us take full advantage of the neon colors available on our newest Ricoh presses and lets us demonstrate the unique features of Extended Color Gamut (ECG) printing."

GAM has moved decisively into the most advanced areas of printing by following the nine rules outlined above. GAM President Nathaniel Grant sums up his company philosophy: "At GAM, we try to stay on top of the latest technologies and trends in printing. As a relatively small printer, we have the ability to move quickly into promising areas and bring any advantages to our customers significantly quicker than a large printer. We bring true turnaround and cost benefits to GAM customers and they reward us with repeat business."



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