



E-Dekor of Norway Takes Screen-Printing from Demanding to On-Demand

Product Spotlight:

GERBER EDGE®

**E-Dekor
Elverum, Norway**



In a small town located 100 miles north of Oslo and about an hour outside of Lillehammer, sits a thriving sign shop by the name of E-Dekor. In business since

1980, this successful retail enterprise once generated every sign via screen-printing. Now 80% of that work is produced using a much faster, less costly method that keeps E-Dekor on the leading EDGE of quality and technology – a method called the GERBER EDGE® digital graphics production system.

Shop owner Lasse Erlund likens his “discovery” of the EDGE three years ago to awakening from a prehistoric nightmare.



“We [he and his three employees] were drawing on paper, hand painting, hand cutting vinyl, and working with transfer type,” he recalled. “Once we got the Gerber equipment, it was like going from the Stone Age to the New Age. In terms of design, we are no longer limited by time and materials; only by our imaginations. There are so many possibilities.”

As a companion to the EDGE, the shop also utilizes the new 15" Gerber enVision™ 375 plotter to rapidly and accurately cut out designs generated via the EDGE and GRAPHIX ADVANTAGE®. Prior to “going Gerber”, the shop was continually forced to pay for special cutting tools to accommodate whatever designs employees printed on Erlund’s old book printing machine. Each tool was custom-made in Oslo, and took days to fabricate. Naturally, this proved expensive for E-Dekor and the customer. Today, thanks to the EDGE digital production system, the shop can print and contour cut graphics in any shape or size on the same day.

Erlund, who began his professional career as a book printer, has always had a passion for the arts ... pursuing drawing and painting in his free time. Seventeen years ago, he finally answered his creative calling and established a sign business. While that business still relies in part on screen-printing, the majority of E-Dekor’s output today rolls off of the EDGE.



As a result, Erlund estimates that the equipment – which occupies only 32 square yards of his 730 square yard shop – earns half of his average annual sales of about 4 million kroner (\$600,000 U.S.).

“We’re just as productive as we were prior to buying the EDGE, but now the shop makes money,” noted Erlund. “So I have another name for the EDGE. I call it my money machine.”

In addition to earning money, the EDGE saves money. Because it uses patented computer-based thermal transfer technology to fuse color onto vinyl substrates, labor costs are lower; and problems caused by disposal of screen-printing chemicals – such as colors, thinners, and lacquers – are almost totally eliminated.

So why did Erlund turn to Gerber?

In 1984, before he’d ever heard of the company or its products, Erlund invested in different technology – a decision he came to regret very quickly.

“We worked with that equipment for about two years and had nothing but trouble with it,” he recalled. “The cover was always on the floor so we could get inside the machine to adjust and fix it all day. I was more of a mechanic than a sign maker!”



As a result of this aggravation, he decided to try something new, and in 1986 paid a visit to the Gerber distributor in Oslo. Erlund was so impressed with what he saw there; he ordered his first Gerber product the very next day. He acquired the EDGE and Gerber HS15^{plus}T 375 high-precision cutter not long thereafter, and was elated to discover that the distributor is available to provide telephone support even during evenings and weekends. He began using the system, which he described as “very easy to learn and operate”, within two hours of its installation and has never looked back.

More than a decade later, E-Dekor enjoys a solid reputation for quality and fast turnaround, and is best described as a high-volume shop with a constant flow of short-turn jobs.

“People see that we are able to deliver jobs very quickly, and they start to expect it,” said Erlund. “Because the equipment is so unbelievably reliable, projects that once required a week to produce can now be completed in half a day. Unfortunately, this makes it easy to spoil our customers, but that’s okay; we know that they’re very satisfied.”

Among its many projects, E-Dekor produces a wide variety of labels. Currently working on a unique concept to mark CD’s and videos, the shop has created small, colored labels in four shapes on which people can print their name and phone number.

“These are ideal for people who lend their CD’s and videos to friends,” he noted.

A much longer-term product, sold throughout Norway for ten years, consists of 40 separate four by four-inch multicolor labels bearing various symbols and text for ventilation equipment. Explaining that these were initially generated via screen-printing – an expensive and time-

consuming method, Erlund said that the EDGE makes it possible to print these labels on an as-needed basis now.

"We no longer need to carry a large inventory; we can print on demand."

Of course, E-Dekor handles large-scale projects, as well. The shop often uses the EDGE to create vehicle graphics for vans and trucks. These graphics were previously screen-printed, but again expense played a major role in Erlund's decision to generate them on the EDGE instead.



"You can't match the EDGE on price because the stock costs so much less than for screen-printing," he stated, indicating that he generally relies on GerberCal® vinyl for many of his graphics, and 3M™ Scotchcal™ Series 230 Translucent Film from Gerber for illuminated sign graphics.

"Both give a nice look," he offered, "and the cost is very low compared to the income generated."

All in all, Erlund is impressed by Gerber's advanced technology, and has only good things to say about the EDGE and the new Gerber enVision 375 plotter.

"My business is doing really well, and I attribute that to Gerber. I'm more than satisfied with the output – as are my customers. That's obvious on the balance sheet. Profits are much higher. Just ask my bank!"

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