



## A Sign Maker from Jackson, Mississippi Solves His Ink Problems by Investing in the Gerber Solara ion™

Chris Ray of *Budget Signs* in Jackson, Mississippi thought his business was flying high with the addition of a new flatbed printer. Ray felt confident that after researching a number of printers, he would have the best success with a flatbed that didn't pull the substrate through the printer, but passed the print carriage over the substrate. The problem was the printer's ink. Ray reveals, "The ink wouldn't stay on the substrate. We did thousands of signs that went into the real world and they all came back. Some signs came back in three months, some in six months, and we are still getting them back today." Budget Signs quickly realized they needed a more reliable printer with flexible, durable ink.



Enter the Gerber Solara ion™. In addition to the fact that it employs the moving print carriage that Ray wanted, the Solara ion's GerberCAT™ cationic UV inks offer a vibrant, four color (CMYK) ink set with a proprietary formula that is nothing short of revolutionary. GerberCAT ink was designed to cure slightly slower than traditional UV inks. While not noticeable during printing, the additional time provided allows the ink to form a stronger, more durable and highly elastic bond with the material. The result of this unique ink chemistry and slower cure time is printed output with greater adhesion, more durability, better abrasion resistance, and outstanding flexibility.



Ray notes that testing the Gerber Solara ion's printed output for themselves was what made up their minds. "We saw samples at a sign show and a distributor in Atlanta, and we were happy with how well the ink held up. We tested jobs by printing on Coroplast™, which had given us the most trouble with our old printer and leaving them outside in water. After they were outside in water for up to two days, we rubbed them in alcohol, abraded them and still couldn't scratch off the ink." This was a completely different experience than Ray had with the other printer.

He adds, "With the inks from our old printer, once we flexed the material, the seal between the substrate and the ink was destroyed, and the ink would literally break off in big chunks. Our old

printer claimed their signs could be used outside, but that wasn't the case. With the Gerber Solara ion, we are comfortable that their claims of outdoor durability are true."

The superior GerberCAT ink wasn't the only reason Ray settled on the Gerber Solara ion. "We have other Gerber products, two GERBER EDGE® thermal transfer digital printers and three plotters, and they've held up well," says Ray. "Our machines have done what Gerber said they would do, so we knew when Gerber said they had made a flatbed printer that could produce signs for outdoor use, we knew we could trust them."

Ray adds, "Another bonus was the less expensive price of the Gerber Solara ion. That was a big plus," and the Gerber Solara ion's versatility was attractive. In addition, Budget Signs can print on a huge variety of substrates. Ray notes, "We print Coroplast signs for realtors, colleges, ball parks, churches and builders, styrene and Sintra® signs and 4 x 8 Econolite® signs. We printed a blues artist on ¼ inch Sintra to mimic old metal stand up signs, and we've even printed a reproduction of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel on ceiling tiles."



Ray can strengthen his customer base now that he has a reliable flatbed UV printer that cuts out the labor other methods have to employ. "It's great having a flatbed that you know will turn out multicolor jobs in a short time. If someone comes into the shop in the morning and needs a job that afternoon, we can complete it with no problem. We are used to silk screening where you have to print, trim letters and apply them to the vinyl, and now we don't have to do that. Also, we used to produce roll-to-roll on vinyl, then we'd have to let it dry for a whole day. We would laminate it, apply it to the substrate, and then laminate it again, which takes two people. The Gerber Solara ion eliminates these steps and cuts down on so much labor and time."



Ray is glad the quality of the Gerber Solara ion is living up to its claims. "It's great for everyday use—quick and easy and it's done; and we don't have to sacrifice quality. With our old printer, reds, oranges and some greens weren't what they should be, but the Gerber Solara ion's colors are brighter and more in line with the vibrant vinyl colors. The reds are just what I've been used to in the sign industry."

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