



A Rhode Island Sign Shop Owner Discovers How The Gerber Solara ion™ Pays for Itself

John Eramian of Eramian Signs in Johnston, Rhode Island, has the experience to realize that taking a smart risk like buying the Gerber Solara ion™ UV flatbed printer during a recession is a wise business decision. Eramian started hand painting wooden signs as a child side-by-side with his father, and he has seen technologies come and go. His small shop dropped from five employees to three because of the slowing economy, but Eramian Signs is standing strong financially. Eramian notes, “In the past, we could not produce multiple low end signs for a low cost because we would have to print on vinyl, cut out the letters and apply it to the substrate, which cost a lot in labor. Having the ability to print so efficiently by printing directly on the substrate with our Gerber Solara ion has saved us, to be honest.”

Eramian explains the severity of Rhode Island’s economic problems, “Rhode Island has the second highest small business tax in the nation, which is very punitive for companies like mine. Because of this economic atmosphere, we are forced to do more with less.” How does the Gerber Solara ion hold up to the pressure? It holds up well because the Solara ion’s patent-pending GerberCAT™ cationic UV inks and Cold Fire Cure™ system allow it to print directly onto a huge array of substrates, including heat sensitive substrates like vinyl, corrugated plastic, foam core and even paper-based materials like corrugated cardboard and poster board. This allows businesses to eliminate labor and avoid wasted materials produced when trimming vinyl, producing high quality signs at lower prices than traditional solvent ink printers.

Eramian describes the new jobs the Gerber Solara ion allows him to produce, “We are able to do more things now that we have the Solara ion. In the past if we got an order for 50 lawn signs, we would have to farm it out to a screen printer. Now we can do these jobs at a price no silk screener could offer, and we can add touches that make it pop, like blending letters and adding a picture. It used to be that if the customer wanted a picture, it would skew the price so much that we couldn’t compete, but with the Solara ion, adding a picture doesn’t affect our cost at all. This allows us to get into the four-color low end market without the health hazards, space issues or high cost of setting up a screen printing shop.”

Some of Eramian’s colleagues thought he was crazy to invest in the Gerber Solara ion during a recession, but Eramian has proved them wrong with the substantial return on his investment. “This was a huge investment in a down time, but it has turned out to be the thing that has truly saved us. My colleagues ask how much it costs, and I tell them that I did have to take out a loan, but the Gerber Solara ion can produce \$1,000 worth of signage in a day, so even if I only use it a couple days a month, it pays for itself. This is an excellent machine for the price. It is priced at a point a small shop like ours can actually afford. Some of the competing machines are over \$100,000, and I don’t think they are any better than my Solara ion. It is very reliable. Even the simplest vinyl cutting machines have their moments when they mess up, but this machine does not do that which is surprising to me given its complexity.”

Eramian is using the Gerber Solara ion for permanent outdoor signs, such as an outdoor sign for a gym and also one for a health food store printed on Dibond®, but most of his profit margin comes from temporary signs for real estate and yard signs for contractors. The low cost of the labor needed to run the Solara ion and the savings in materials allows Eramian Signs to make money on these jobs when others are closing their doors. Eramian asserts, “I was taught by my father who hand painted political campaigns signs with me, and it was something we dreaded—multiple signs with a lot of copy—but now

we look for jobs like that. This is a long term dream for people like me, the ability to own a machine that can produce high quality medium volume work for a low price.”

Eramian Signs’ ability to attain a high profit margin with the Gerber Solara ion is just one way it can benefit your business. Gerber frequently offers discounts that make this wide format UV printer accessible for almost any size print shop, allowing you to achieve the goals you dreamed of for your business. To find out more about the Gerber Solara ion’s revolutionary technology, features, discounts on extended warranties, introductory savings on new Gerber Solara ion models or to see a demonstration, contact your local distributor or Gerber Scientific Products at 800-222-7446.

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