



WHERE QUALITY SIGN
SUPPLIES AND
EXCELLENT SERVICE
MEET

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Mark Twain said it's not the size of the dog in the fight that matters; it's the size of the fight in the dog. That quote represents part of the Earl Mich Company whose 18-employee Sign and Digital Graphic business acts like the big dog in town.

Vice President Greg McKay enjoys the small company size and plans to keep it that way.

"We may be a small company, but we have a big company attitude," McKay said. "A company of our size has a great advantage in terms of customer relations. We get to know our customers and develop personal relation-



ships. That doesn't get to happen with the larger companies."

The Earl Mich Company is a family-owned business that started in 1930 with die cut letters made from cork and felt. Now, after 80 years, the great great grandson is leading the company. Although some of the original machinery is still in use, they've come a long way since then.

"In the 90's we really evolved," McKay said. "We still produced wholesale graphics but that's when we steered more to converting materials and acting as a supply distributor."

In recent years, Earl Mich ventured into launching their private label products. Currently they carry their own line of cast and calendared sign vinyls along with an EMC brand of transfer tape. They also have a line of banner materials. Now they have the ability to offer their own quality products for less cost to the consumer. They are working on adding a complete line of digital media and overlaminates in the coming months.

"As the economy worsened, we saw it as an opportunity. Name brand products are great and sold people in the past, but now it is more important for our customer to put food on the table than to have a brand name product in some cases," McKay said. "We still

offer them a quality product, but at a much more tangible cost."

Many customers were looking to increase business by adding new product lines, such as making t-shirts, towels and other promotional items.

"They already had the printers and cutters, all they really needed were the materials and a heat transfer press to make these products. That's where we stepped in," McKay said. "Today, everyone is hungry for new types of business. We saw a need and fulfilled it by offering them the heat presses and a complete line of heat transfer materials that would help increase their revenue."

Another Earl Mich branded product due to launch this year to continue its market growth is a heat transfer material. This new line of materials has advantages such as it weeds easier and transfers with less heat and press time. It will also have a printable material that will work in most printers. This new better quality material at lower prices will also help customers continue to grow their heat transfer business.

Earl Mich provides many customers with wholesale graphics. They offer services such as die-cutting, computer cut graphics, digital printing and laminating, installation, screen printing and much more. They do what some



graph-
ics depart-
ments don't
have the equip-
ment or time to do
themselves. Both small
and large sign shops can
take advantage of these ser-
vices so they never have to turn
a customer away.

Earl Mich's knowledgeable staff, along
with their customer care, make it pos-
sible to thrive as well as they have.
The company provides flexibility and
is able to give their customers exactly
what they request. Because they order
in bulk, and have full converting ca-
pabilities they are able to meet these
needs, no matter the size.

"What's kept us strong is our ability to
convert vinyl into whatever size is re-
quested," McKay said. "We will con-
vert a 48 inch roll into rolls as small
as 1/4 inch if that is what the custom-
ers need. We tailor to the old sign guy
who hand paints his signs to someone
using large format digital printing. It's
all about making them happy."

Tailoring orders to the customers'
need is labor intensive and expensive,
but Earl Mich cares more about
the customer than the cost.

While the temptation of distributing
less expensive materials from overseas



to in-
crease
profits is
present, that
the lack of qual-
ity control is too
great a risk for Earl
Mich. That is why they
do not see themselves going
in that direction.

"I feel it is more dependable purchas-
ing materials from companies' we've
worked with who have been provid-
ing materials into this industry for
years," McKay said. "There is a trust
in their products and we've developed
a relationship with the people and
products that are very important in
this industry."

Working in-house with the materi-
als gives Earl Mich the advantage of
testing the products before handing
them over to the customer. They have



the convenience of experimenting what prints best, what problems may occur and they get to know their products extremely well. When a company has hands-on experience like Earl Mich, they can provide customers with product support and recommendations based on personal knowledge that may not be available on a spec sheet.

The company's latest test is launching a line of LED lights used for electric signs.

"We've never been an electrical supply house," McKay said, "but now everything is moving to this. It's much cheaper to run a sign with LED's as opposed to fluorescent or neon. They last four to five years with little or no maintenance and are much more environmentally friendly."

Earl Mich stands by their newest product by offering a labor warranty as they are confident there will be no problems due to extensive testing. The launch started in spring and although customers have been slow to convert to the new product, McKay and company are seeing some growth and plan to stay aggressive and on course to make this a successful product line.

Evolving from die-cut letters to pre-spaced letters and graphics and now entering the digital world,

Earl Mich stays ahead of the curve by also looking to add the latest technologies.

"Something is always coming down the road in terms of technological advancement," McKay said. "I feel the constant improvements give our company a chance to grow and adapt with the changes."

Regardless of the amount of changes, Earl Mich remains close to its roots. They will forever be a company that values quality and customer care, as they've been doing since 1930.



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