

At SignCraft

When it works, the family-operated business is an amazingly powerful engine. Blackbear Sign Works, featured in this issue, is a great example. For 27 years, Bo Laveault has built a business that is family-staffed and is now being passed along to the next generation.

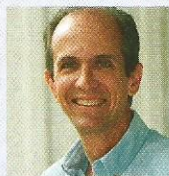
It takes time to train an all-around sign person. Bo's theory is, "If you're going to invest in someone, they might as well be family."

There are plenty of family-operated sign businesses—spouses or siblings working together, parent/child (or children) combinations, grandparents working with grandkids. It's worked here at *SignCraft*. Bill, Dennis, John and I are brothers, and we worked first in our own sign shop then started *SignCraft* together 32 years ago.

And family businesses are a huge part of the US economy. There are nearly 6 million of them, and they employ well over half of US workers.

Working with family is both art and science. There are probably at least as many reasons why family businesses work as why they don't. But when they do, they're often very effective—as the crew at Blackbear Signworks will tell you.

—Tom McIltrout, Editor



Upcoming Events

December 5-7:

USSC Sign World International, Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, NJ, hosted by the United States Sign Council. Visit www.ussc.org for details.

March 4-8, 2014:

Mazeppa Mardi Gras 2014, an authentic Letterhead Meet to bring back the feel that was thought to be over, hosted by Mike Meyer, www.mikemeyersigns.com, or Mike Meyer Sign Painter on Facebook.

April 23-26, 2014:

ISA International Sign Expo, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Florida. Visit www.signexpo.org for details.

Ongoing:

3M Graphics Installation Training, contact 3minstallationprograms@mmm.com for details.

Avery Dennison/Mutoh Car Wrap Training Program, www.mutoh.com/avery.php or http://na.averygraphics.com/AvGrNA_avery_wrap_school.asp, 800-996-8864

Dan Sawatzky's Sign and Sculpting Magic Workshops, Yarrow, British Columbia, Canada, www.imaginationcorporation.com, 604-823-2216

Roland Academy workshops, Irvine, California, 800-542-2307, www.rolanddga.com

SGIA Webinar Series hosted by Specialty Graphic Imaging Assn., www.sgia.org, 888-385-3588

Letters

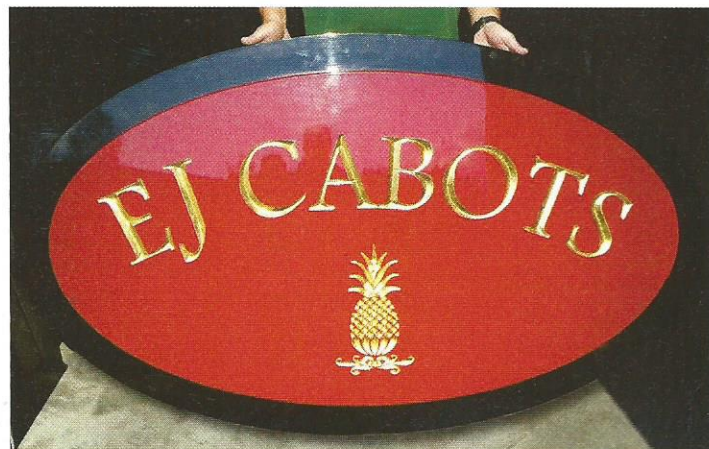
Put a shine on it

Dear SignCraft,

As we installed this sign, traffic stopped and people yelled out the window, "Who made that? Where are you from?" It's a little unusual for a sign in that it shines like the fender of a new car.

We've had a lot of comments on the sign ever since. When they see it in our portfolio, people from as far as 60 miles away have said, "You made that? I know that sign, it's a landmark...." Needless to say we were surprised. The first time we heard that, it was no big deal, but we're hearing it all the time so I think that's pretty good.

The 70-by-40-in. sign is made from 2-in. 18 lb. SignFoam HDU [www.signfoam.com]. It was painted with automotive



paint, then buffed to a shine. The graphics were finished with 23k gold leaf.

We used DuPont's Nason automotive system. We shot the raw HDU with an epoxy primer, followed by five coats of high build polyester primer. It took a couple of tries to get the primer right because the HDU is so porous. Then it got three coats of paint and five coats of clear. We color sanded (or cut-and-buff) to get the final finish.

My husband is a "car guy" and really wanted to try this. We use the Matthews Paint system [www.matthewspaint.com] on all of our work, but we wanted the deep color and high shine of automotive paint for this project.

The finished sign was as tough as the average car door. We used six painted brackets to support the sign on the building.

Dawn Pease, Dawn's Sign Tech, North Andover, Massachusetts

