

ROAD TO SUBLIMATION SUCCESS

Cashing In on Retail Sales

By David Gross

“TO KNOW
EVEN ONE LIFE
HAS BREATHED
EASIER BECAUSE
YOU HAVE
LIVED—THIS
IS TO HAVE
SUCCEEDED.”

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

After 20-plus years, I still get excited about dye-sub transfer. No matter how much time I spend talking, teaching and writing about sublimation, there's nothing like the rush I get from creating a personalized product for someone that has never seen sublimation before. When making products at our trade show booth's sublimation kiosk, I share each attendee's excitement of using a favorite photo from their smartphone to quickly create personalized products such as phone covers, phone stands and bag tags.

What's even better? We have access to thousands of imprintable products capable of that same magic, many of which fall under popular retail trends. Which ones should you consider? Here are a few of my favorites.



All images courtesy David Gross

CUFF BRACELETS

One of the best-selling dye-sub products is the metal cuff bracelet. Available in a large selection of shapes, sizes and finishes, they are one of the easiest and quickest products to sublimation and are easily curved by bending an imaged piece of flat metal with a handheld tool. Design options range from photo collages to monograms on top of colorful background patterns. The cost in materials to produce a bracelet is under \$2, while selling prices range from \$20 to \$35.



SMARTPHONE COVERS

Device covers continue to be popular because people want a unique case that sets their phone apart from everyone else's. Styles including protective snap-on covers with imprintable inserts and notebook style cases with imprintable front fabric panels are available for most Apple and Samsung models—all easily personalized with vibrant, full-color photographs, logos and artwork.

CARD CADDY PHONE WALLETS

If a cover is not what your customer wants, then a card caddy phone wallet is perfect. These black silicone card caddies stick to the back of any cell phone to provide a convenient holding place for cash, an ID card or credit card. Caddies feature an imprintable microfiber screen cleaner that can be easily peeled off and then reapplied after use.



SMARTPHONE/TABLET STANDS

Everyone needs a stand that holds their cell phone, e-reader or tablet while charging or for viewing the device upright on a desk or counter. Made of Unisub hardboard, the stand's imprintable glossy white surface with black back and edges help deliver a professionally finished product, and the two-piece lightweight collapsible design makes them an ideal accessory for travelers. They also look great used as a photo easel.

SANDSTONE CAR COASTERS

These 2 1/2-inch white sandstone coasters offer a unique way to display a monogram, inspirational quote, school logo or sports logo in the cup holder of a car, truck or SUV. These new coasters feature a white imprintable coating that provides superior color reproduction over natural-colored sandstone coasters—a must when transferring photographs and colorful designs.

CUSTOM CAR MATS

Protect the interior of a car, truck or SUV with custom front and rear floor mats while also showing off a sorority, car club, sports team, colorful artwork or monogram. If car mats are too big to produce on your own equipment, check with your supplier to see if they offer a wholesale print service capable of producing them for you.

FLOOR MATS

Eye-catching floor mats with personalized monograms or messages are a great way to welcome visitors into a home or business. Color matching techniques provide digital decorators the ability to create beautiful floor mats that match any kitchen or bathroom's décor, and they are also excellent as a retail indoor POP floor graphic. Like car mats, check with your supplier for help producing wide-format products.



COLORLYTE CURVED ACRYLIC PANELS

These self-standing curved acrylic photo panels, available in 5 by 7 inch, 8 by 10 inch and 11 by 14 inch sizes, provide an attractive and modern way to display treasured photographs from both sides of the acrylic. The curve is achieved by inserting a warm piece of flat imaged acrylic into its corresponding forming jig (5-by-7-inch landscape, 8-by-10-inch landscape, 8-by-10-inch portrait, or 11-by-14-inch landscape).

CHROMALUXE CURVED METAL PANELS

These double-sided, self-standing curved aluminum photo panels, available in 5 by 7 inch, 6 by 8 inch, 8 by 10 inch and 11 by 14 inch sizes, look great on a desk, table or nightstand. Some like to have pictures on both sides of the panel while others like to have a picture on one side and text (e.g., wedding invitation or graduation announcement) on the other. The curve is achieved by forming an imaged piece of flat aluminum with a metal roller.

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GLASS CUTTING BOARDS

A beautiful and functional gift, tempered glass cuttings boards come in a variety of shapes and sizes and feature a grain texture on the cutting surface and an opaque white underside that accepts the image. Digital decorators can imprint colorful patterns, whimsical artwork or monograms directly onto the underside of the cutting boards to produce home accessories that complement any kitchen's décor.

CERAMIC TILES
A time-tested product, ceramic tiles provide beautiful results whether they are used as a coaster, displayed on an easel, framed individually, installed as a kitchen backsplash, or as a mural on an office wall. There are lots of different sizes and finishes to choose from, making it



easy to achieve the right look for any project.

BEVERAGE INSULATORS

Available for assorted sizes of cans, bottles and Yeti drinkware, beverage insulators can be decorated with full-color monograms, logos or designs. The sleeves are constructed of white polyester fabric on Neoprene, making them ideal for sublimation transfer while also providing a soft, comfortable grip at the gym, on a trail, or at a backyard barbecue.

POTPOURRI BAG

Fill any room with a beautiful scent and look. Using Reveal-S film, you can sublimate great-looking images and





designs onto small cotton bags and then fill them with potpourri. Makes an attractive high-margin product suited for wedding favors, fundraisers and craft shows.

PLASTIC DINNER PLATES

Whether they are used to feature a child's artwork or to impress guests at a party, these plastic dinner plates add an exciting dimension to a typically flat assortment of substrates. Using a 3D vacuum oven, digital decorators now have the ability to sublimate to things that are

not flat (e.g., dinner plates and one-piece phone covers less than 3/4 of an inch in height).

A&E



David Gross is president of Condé Systems Inc. For the past 24 years, he has been devoted to advancing sublimation technology. He can be reached by email at dgross@conde.com.

Reveal-S Sublimation Transfer Media for Cotton

Want to greatly increase the number of products you can decorate? How about sublimating to cotton? You can do it with Reveal-S transfer media. Reveal-S allows for the decoration of bold graphics onto white- and light-colored 100 percent cotton and blended fabrics using sublimation ink. The most amazing feature of the film is that it is self-weeding. Unlike traditional transfer media, Reveal-S does not leave a visible polymer window in blank areas.



Celebrating 25 years in the personalized products industry!

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- Blank Imprintable Products
- Production Software
- Educational Videos
- Legendary Technical Support



Photo panel options:

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