

# Creating a Burst of Colour with Digital Image Transfer

By Nathan Newbury, TheMagicTouch

Until recently, existing transfer processes and high equipment costs limited the level of customisation possible for decorating awards and promotional items affordably - especially in small quantities. But as customer demands become more sophisticated, the need to cost-effectively create items that really stand out from the crowd is imperative for a competitive edge. As such, printers and awards/recognition companies have been searching for an affordable means to produce awards that are both intricate in their design and unlimited in vibrant colours.

Thankfully, new technologies have made the high custom/low production cost relationship a reality in the awards and recognition industry. By combining today's comprehensive range of digital transfer media with traditional colour laser printers and copiers, decorators can easily achieve four-colour digital image transfer with incredibly professional results.

## PolymationTM

This latest method for digital image transfer stems from a breakthrough of polymer dry toner. TheMagicTouch recently re-engineered its entire line of transfer media with a new process: PolymationTM, which incorporates a newly designed catalyst to provide the ultimate compatibility with all generations of both oil and oilless dry toner printers and copiers. The proprietary process and patented transfer papers allow customers to print complex designs on any substrate, in any colour, with one-of-a-kind results. It's a clean, simple and quick process - with very little start-up cost beyond a laser printer and heat press. Because of the low production cost and high perceived value, the PolymationTM process means customers can bring back margins that have taken a hit in a sluggish and increasingly competitive market.

## CPM - Ultimate Versatility in Digital Image Transfer

TheMagicTouch offer a comprehensive range of transfer media utilising the PolymationTM process for light and dark textiles, hard surfaces and specialty surfaces. However, for a general introduction to PolymationTM, or for customers who want to try digital printing for the first time, CPM Hard Surface/Non-Textile Transfer Paper is the most versatile transfer paper in TheMagicTouch product line-up. CPM is used for applying full-colour images to a wide range of non-porous, non-coated substrates, including ceramics, plastic, metal, glass, acrylic, magnet, ribbon, leather and wood.

The following is a simple step-by-step example showing how to create a complex, four-colour award on acrylic using one piece of CPM transfer paper, an OKI digital laser printer and a traditional heat press.

**Step 1:** Load one A4 sheet of CPM paper into the feeder tray of a laser printer. Consult with your copier/printer manufacturer first to determine which side of the transfer paper should be facing up in your printer/copier model.

**Step 2:** Print graphic/image/logo - using an everyday design program such as Photoshop, CorelDraw or MagiCut- to the CPM paper loaded in the colour laser printer. Mirror the graphic if necessary for the substrate with acrylic, the image should be mirrored if applying it to the front of the acrylic, but do not mirror if applying to the back of the piece.

**Step 3:** Set the heat press time, temperature and pressure. For a transfer to acrylic, set the heat press to 140 degrees Celsius, 40 seconds, light pressure.



Position CPM Transfer

**Step 4:** Press CPM paper to substrate, using the appropriate pad. Once you apply CPM to acrylic, be sure to peel while the piece is still warm.



Peel CPM Transfer

**Step 5:** To ensure proper cure, set the acrylic piece under an open heat press for 5 minutes, or use a heat gun to set the graphic. \*Your acrylic piece is now done. However, if required, an opaque backing can be applied to the back of the acrylic to brighten the image and allow clear viewing when placed on dark surfaces.



Acrylic with Opaque Backing

**Step 6:** To apply the white backing to the acrylic piece, first place the mSheet coated-side down on acrylic. Press for 30 seconds using a WOW pad and peel hot.

### Tips for Success

- Always trim the transfer close to the size of the acrylic to avoid contact issues that can occur around the edges if the transfer is larger than the acrylic. Use the new CPM 6.4; an updated version that supports better 3D molding on uneven surfaces, and provides improved stack feeding, better fusing and easier release from the printed substrate.
- For printing multiple transfers: Single sheet feeding through the printer is recommended. However, if stack feeding from the bypass/multifeeder or tray is required, fan the stack of paper along all sides/edges to avoid multi-sheet feeding.

### Your Time is Money

From start to finish, the acrylic is completed in less than 10 minutes. Users can create highly customised finished products for their customers without a lot of equipment, set-up or waste. In fact, this is an excellent way to offer customers evaluation samples without a significant investment in materials or time. For this example we printed two transfers on one A4 sheet of CPM transfer paper and used toner materials that combined for approximately £ 0.25p/ 0.35 per transfer, plus the cost of the acrylic at £ 4.00/ 5.50

### About TheMagicTouch

TheMagicTouch operates in more than 54 Countries worldwide. Since 1989, the company has pioneered the digital image transfer business. TheMagicTouch manufactures and markets a comprehensive range of transfer papers for use with traditional colour laser printers and copiers. For more information visit the website.

Nathan Newbury is Head of Technical Support for TheMagicTouch GB. He has over 15 years of industry experience with dry toner transfer and specialty media for colour Laser and LED copiers and printers. TheMagicTouch GB is Based in Dunstable, Bedfordshire.