

# CONNECTED

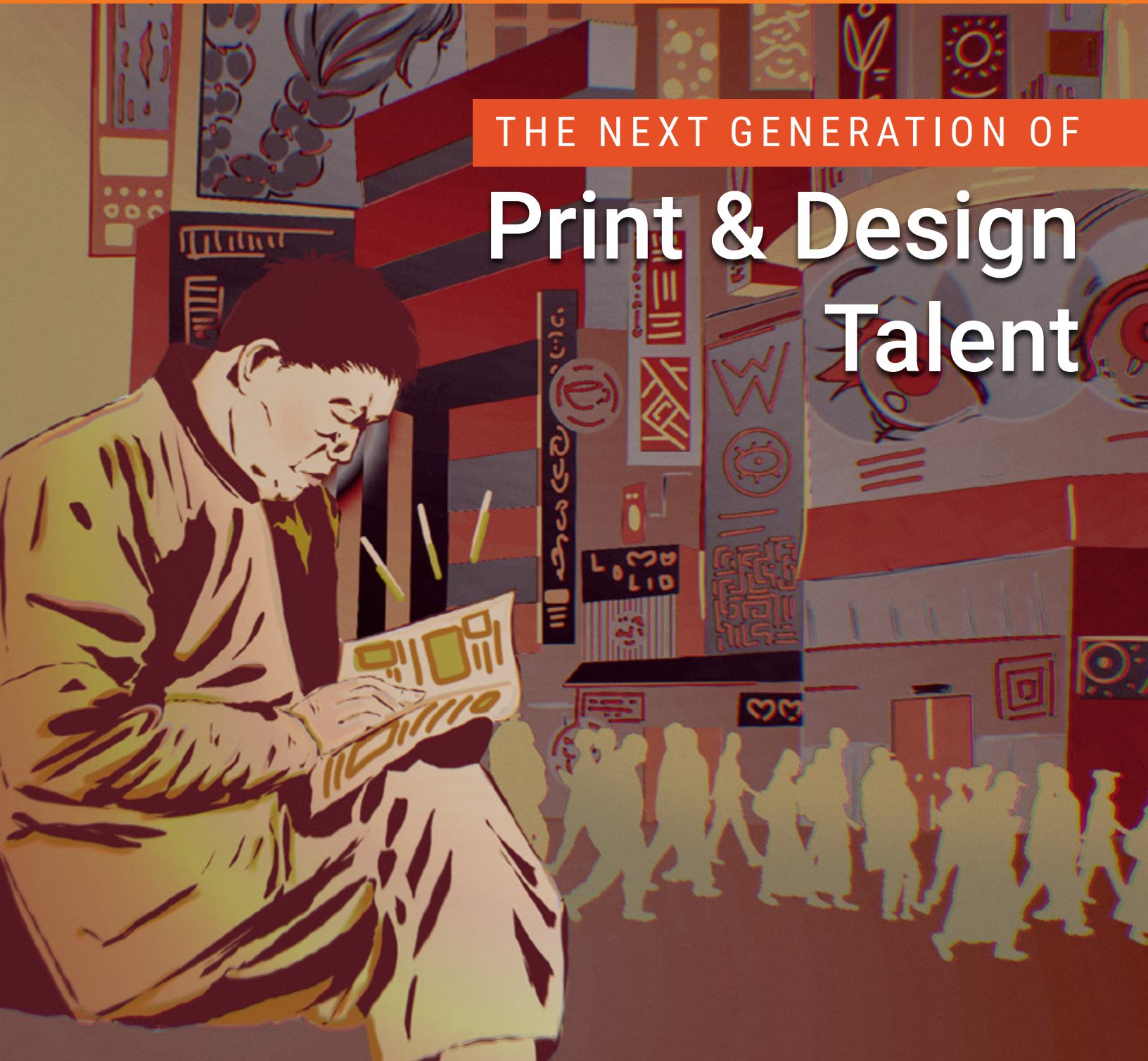
VISUAL MEDIA ALLIANCE

SPRING 2023



THE NEXT GENERATION OF

## Print & Design Talent



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# Take your print designs to the *next level...*

## Free spot color training course!

*The UBEO design team will walk you step-by-step through the process of setting up spot colors in Adobe Photoshop, InDesign and Illustrator.*

Spot colors and additional channels beyond basic CMYK have amplified the options for designers and marketers, opening a huge range of design possibilities. Learn the skills necessary to take your designs to a whole new level utilizing spot colors like Gold, Silver, White and Clear in UBEO's Spot Color Training Course! **Scan the QR code below to access this course!**



*Take your print designs Beyond CMYK in UBEO's Spot Color Training Course!*



**Ready to bring CMYK+ printing capabilities in-house? Reach out!**

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Visual Media Alliance is non-profit trade association serving Northern California printers, packaging, label makers, and design agency and other small business owners. By providing events, education, discounts, advocacy, industry promotion and insurance programs, we help our member firms become more successful and profitable.

## ON THE COVER

Winning design from VMA's "Print in Popular Culture" student design contest by Leslie Burciaga Villa of Chabot College in Hayward.

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Valued Member,

I often hear from members that recruiting qualified employees is a top challenge. In prioritizing our members' concerns, VMA is committed to supporting the next generation of industry talent.

Every year, VMA provides financial support to students through our Condrott Scholarship fund. Last year, VMA awarded 20 cash scholarships, provided travel funds for students to attend the TAGA conference, and awarded 15 partial scholarships for our Print 101 class. For this issue of *Connected*, we held a student design contest on the theme of "Print in Popular Culture" to get students excited about the industry. Leslie Burciaga Villa from Chabot College won first place and will be awarded \$500 to further her education. Her stunning design graces the cover of this issue.

Last month, I had the opportunity to interact with students and faculty at Cal Poly's Graphic Communication Week. I toured the printing and design labs and was inspired by the many new initiatives the department is working on. Several VMA members at the career fair were recruiting interns and full-time hires for commercial print and packaging positions. Brainstorming off of this success, VMA and PIASC coordinated a member-exclusive Cal Poly GrC Career Fair on April 21 to give members key access to interns and recent grads.

We also support continuing education. Part-time students, such as current employees of VMA members, are now eligible for PGSF scholarships, even for online-only programs. No transcripts or GPA are required for the initial application. For more information on this new opportunity, contact me or go to [pgsf.org/scholarship-application](https://pgsf.org/scholarship-application) and click on the part-time student's tab.

We have big news on the training front for members who have employees without formal graphic design or print backgrounds and who can benefit from on-demand training; The APAN affiliates inked a deal with Print University to offer 58 training videos covering five broad subject areas in print and graphic arts. All VMA members in good standing have access to the new online training platform. See more at <https://bit.ly/40k7NuC>.

We are excited about the education and training opportunities available to VMA members. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime with questions about our programs.



Sincerely,

Ian Flynn  
VMA President

***"Show me a successful individual  
and I'll show you someone who  
had real positive influences in  
his or her life."***

— Denzel Washington, Actor



## VMA BRINGS NEW TALENT, TODAY & TOMORROW

It's no secret that recruiting and retaining qualified workers is one of our industry's top challenges. As the local trade association for printers, creatives, labels, and packaging manufacturers, VMA aims to support the industry's ongoing strength. Therefore, one of our goals is to inspire and engage the next generation.

The creative and printing industry remains a rewarding career with many opportunities! We provide scholarships, internships, field trips, classes, contests, and more to excite and engage students. Read below the many ways we foster the industry and new talent.

### Cal Poly GrC Program Member-Exclusive Career Fair

One of the biggest challenges we repeatedly hear from our members is the difficulty hiring employees.



That's why we hosted a member-only career day on April 21, 2023 – giving members priority access to Cal Poly GrC students. This was an opportunity to meet and interview full-time or summer interns in four concentrations: print management, design reproduction, packaging design, and UI/UX design.

**It was free for members and a great opportunity to scoop up hot talent.**

### Cal Poly Internships Offers Fresh Minds to Local Businesses



VMA is excited to coordinate summer internships for Cal Poly graphic arts students with print, label, and packaging shops and creative agencies.

Internships allow companies to invest in their own success and discover new talent and future leaders. Students will be paid \$20-25/hour by the employer. VMA will provide scholarship funds to be used for course credit.

Interns also gain valuable work experience, course credit, the opportunity to explore a career path, develop skills, network with professionals in the field, gain confidence, and possibly even transition into a permanent position.

The GrC program is one of the finest in the nation, and we are fortunate to have access to this pool of talented fresh minds in our backyard. **If you are interested in participating in the program as an employer, please contact [shannon@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:shannon@visualmediaalliance.org) or 415-710-0568.**

### \$500K in Scholarships for Current and New Students

Visual Media Alliance offers graphic arts scholarships to attract new talent to our industry and improve the skills of our existing workforce. The general fund is supported by the Guy and Louise Condrott Scholarship Fund, Inc. and the VMA Scholarship Fund through various fundraising events throughout the year.



We award up to 20 scholarships of \$1,000 each calendar year to current students enrolled in an accredited college or university that offers a certificate or degree related to graphic communications. To date, we have awarded \$100K and helped bring new employees to print and other visual media businesses around Northern and Central California.

This year, we've partnered with The Print and Graphics Scholarship Foundation (PGSF) to provide \$500K more in scholarships for the 2023-2024 academic year. The monies are available to both part-time and full-time students across the country, those pursuing a degree or certificate, and those in the workforce looking to uplevel their skillset. This means your employees are eligible as well!

More details at <http://bit.ly/3JwCO8l> or [PGSF.org](http://PGSF.org). If you would like to donate to VMA's fund, please contact [ian@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:ian@visualmediaalliance.org).

### NEW Industry-Specific Training for Employees – FREE for Members



We're so excited to share that we've recently signed a deal to provide a slew of on-demand visual arts courses in conjunction with Print University! This program is relevant for students, but is really geared toward print shop staff that are new to the field and existing employees moving to a new role or who need a refresher.

The new offering will provide 58 (and growing) training videos covering five broad subject areas in printing and graphic arts to members and their staff. Print University provides convenient and easy-to-use training for new and current employees. Students can watch courses from any device when it is convenient for them. The average course length is only 20 minutes so easy to squeeze into the day.

What's more, the program provides "Suggested Learning Tracks" based on job roles and type of print shop. Additionally, classes in Spanish are coming soon, and other new courses will be added quarterly.

Sample courses include: Introduction to Finishing. Embellishments. Trimming & Cutting. Finishing for Wide Format. Direct Mail Printers. Selling Strategies for Printers. Print Workflow & Processes. Check out these and many more.

All members in good standing now have complimentary access to the new online training platform. See <https://bit.ly/40k7NuC> for more information. Or contact [shannon@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:shannon@visualmediaalliance.org).



## STUDENT NETWORKING AND FIELD TRIPS

**ConnectUp Event Student Invitations.** VMA is working with professors and career centers to invite graphic arts students to our highly successful and fun in-person networking ConnectUp events <http://bit.ly/40o7vDk>.

At these events, participants (whether members, colleagues, or students) can network and go on printing plant tours and see hot print and visual arts technology in action. Past events have been at JP Graphics in Santa Clara. Commerce Printing in Sacramento. Trade Litho in Antioch. And First Impressions Printing in Hayward.

**Student Field Trips.** Likewise, we are organizing student-specific field trips to member shops. Viewing first-hand the inside workings of a print shop is extremely exciting and engaging for students. They see cool technology in action and the tangible output of creative work. Students get to speak with owners and managers about what it's like to work in the industry and talk about career opportunities.

As a business owner, hosting either or both of these events is great for your business. You can support the industry, show off your facility, inspire the next generation, earn PR by posting on social media, and find new talent.

**If you are open to hosting a ConnectUp or field trip at your business, contact [shannon@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:shannon@visualmediaalliance.org).** P.S. We take care of the food, drinks, and all logistics.



### VMA's Career Center Assistance

VMA helps members with their staffing by posting member companies' job descriptions on Indeed, the largest online career site. We also provide job descriptions to help you craft the right job requirements. We have an active student program and reach out to the local community and 4-year universities with job listings.



Please contact [kathy@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:kathy@visualmediaalliance.org) with questions or your job description.

### Engaging Students with Creative Design Contests



Every year, we have student design contests to get students involved directly in the industry. Each contest has a unique theme, and students can win hundreds of dollars in scholarship money directly

from our scholarship fund. We also promote the winners and their designs in our marketing materials, which go to potential hiring managers.

Last year's content was on the theme of business sustainability in line with the 2022 Earth Day theme. See the winners at <http://bit.ly/3Tw8Dm9>.

**This year's contest is on "Print in Popular Culture" Check out the cover and page 11 for the winners.**

### Mentorships Evoke a Personal Connection



In addition to all the aforementioned strategies, we coordinate mentorships between graphic arts students and our print and design business owner members.

This is a great way for students to make personal connections and receive guidance from an industry leader!

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about career opportunities in the industry and the mentor's experience and path.
- Get inspiration, motivation, emotional support, and role modeling.
- Receive guidance on exploring careers, setting goals, developing contacts, and identifying resources.

**If you are interested in the rewarding opportunity of being a mentor, please contact [shannon@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:shannon@visualmediaalliance.org) or 415-710-0568.**

# MEMBER NEWS

## Centurion 7 Advises MarkSYS on Sale to Endurance

MarkSYS is pleased to announce that it has been acquired by Endurance Square, LLC, with the help of Centurion 7.

MarkSYS (Marketing Systems) is a fully integrated, technology-driven, marketing & communication company in Rocklin, CA. It's been one of the 5000 Fastest Growing Companies, well-known for its proprietary cross-marketing software.

Centurion 7 Business Advisors is a team of experts, who provide professional guidance to business owners in exit planning, sales strategies, and wealth management. Jerod Meents of MarkSYS said, "I wasn't aware of what selling a middle-market business entails or how much work it takes. Rhett's knowledge helped us through the entire process, from valuing our business, structuring the deal, tax consequences, conference calls, negotiation between buyer and seller, navigating the escrow." Congratulations MarkSYS!

[centurion7.com](http://centurion7.com)



## Melrose Nameplate Solves Customer Crisis

Melrose Nameplate is a medium-sized manufacturer located in Hayward with an 80-year history of providing customers with solutions to challenging issues. Once again, it has proven its dedication to solving tough customer challenges.

The customer was looking for a conductive thermal pad solution for their assembly specifications, but current materials carry excessively long lead times. Melrose materials experts determined that digital fabrication to create an acrylic thermal pad could eliminate tooling time & costs to compress the manufacturing cycle and turn the parts quickly.

Melrose's secret is listening to the needs of our customers, determining how they can solve the problem, and leveraging all their internal and external resources to create solutions that deliver tremendous value. Great advice for all businesses! [melrose-nl.com](http://melrose-nl.com)



## Konica Minolta Signs CEO Action Diversity Inclusion Pledge

Konica Minolta's Sam Errigo has joined over 2,400 CEOs and Presidents in signing the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion pledge.

CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion is the largest U.S. CEO-driven business commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion within the workplace. The coalition offers opportunities to network with peers around DEI topics, resources, mentoring programs, and more.

"This employee diversity leads to innovative thinking, original ideas, and value generation," said Sam Errigo, President and CEO, Konica Minolta.

VMA encourages all our members to make a similar commitment. [konicaminolta.com](http://konicaminolta.com) | [ceoactionfordiversity.com](http://ceoactionfordiversity.com) | [Konica Minolta's DEI initiatives](http://konicaminolta.com/dei)



## INDUSTRY WELCOMES

### Almaden is Growing

Almaden, a leader in supply chain marketing, has brought Anna-Claire Eakin on board as Creative Director and Senior Account Executive. Anna-Claire's extensive promotional product expertise and reliable customer service will be an asset to the Santa Clara-based company. [almadenglobal.com](http://almadenglobal.com)



### New Partner and CTO at Rods and Cones

Jason Tempestini joins Rods and Cones as a new partner and CTO. Tempestini's professional experience was honed in the press room, where he modernized prepress and automated workflows and worked with the digital and litho, grand format, all in a G7-certified environment. Rods and Cones is a provider of color management for advertising and graphic agencies, prepress and print providers. [rodsandcones.com](http://rodsandcones.com)



# On-Demand Print Industry Training for Your Employees.

## NEW! Print University - Online Print Industry Training

### **Free for VMA members in good standing**

VMA is proud to give our members' employees access to nearly 60 virtual courses on print production, sales, and more.

#### **PRINT UNIVERSITY PROVIDES:**

- Easy training for new & current employees
- A great recruiting tool
- Access 58 print industry courses
- Ability to watch courses from any device
- Convenience with an average course length of only ~20-minutes
- Suggested Learning Tracks based on job roles and printer speciality
- Spanish classes coming soon
- New courses will be added quarterly, including state-of-the-industry updates

**See more information at <https://bit.ly/40k7NuC>**

For questions, contact [shannon@visualmediaalliance.org](mailto:shannon@visualmediaalliance.org).

#### **SAMPLE COURSES**

Analog vs. Digital Printing  
Print 101: Offset Lithography  
Print 101: Inkjet  
Introduction to Finishing:  
Embellishments  
Trimming and Cutting  
Binding Methods  
Mailing  
Finishing for Wide Format  
Commercial Printers  
In-plant Printers  
Direct Mail Printers  
Selling Strategies for Printers  
Print Workflow and Processes  
Primer: Software & Functions



## Check out VMA's New Website

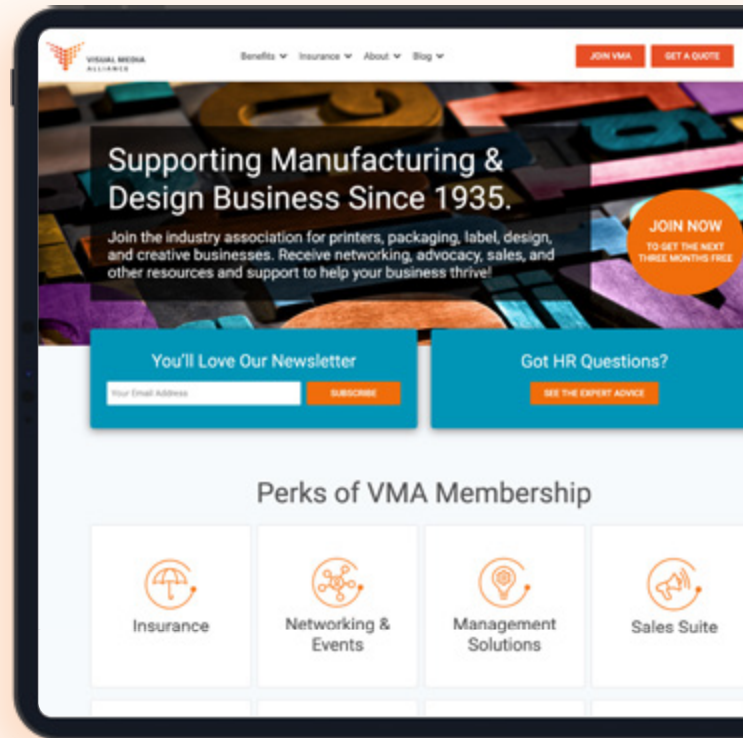
With lots of forethought, creativity, and dedication, we are excited to share that we just launched a new 80-page website! We also updated our URL. **Check it out at [visualmediaalliance.org](https://visualmediaalliance.org).**

Our objectives in the redesign included creating a site with stronger SEO and UX. As well as to speak to our audience and prospects, be on brand, and meet Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) goals.

VMA sent out an RFP and talked to several firms. We chose member-firm, Adduci Design ([adducistudios.com](https://adducistudios.com)), known for building beautiful websites, experienced in brand strategy, and, as a VMA member, knows VMA's mission well.

VMA's marketing team, fortunately, had the expertise to handle the branding, architecture, and page templates in-house, and the Adduci team brought the branding alive with a gorgeous and unique look that speaks to both print and design. Thank you, Adduci for the fantastic work!

This is an exciting achievement for the association and the industry, as VMA represents the graphic arts industry for all our members. We know that our website is one of the first visual representations of our mission, and we're so pleased with the update.



## Free Energy Audit for Members



We are excited to share a cool new member benefit — a free energy audit by APPI Energy, a provider of holistic data-driven energy management solutions for printers and other manufacturers.

APPI will comprehensively evaluate your business's demand and usage profile, analyze your energy usage, evaluate your energy bill, deliver a green-apples-to-green-apples comparison of supplier prices and contracts, and negotiate a supply solution tailored to your budget needs and sustainability goals.

It's a great way to save time and money, reduce risk, and increase sustainability actions.

**For your free energy audit or to learn more, contact Michael Lewis at [mlewis@appienergy.com](mailto:mlewis@appienergy.com).**

## ConnectUp Live Networking

ConnectUp is VMA's in-person networking event at print and agency member locations throughout our footprint. Check out [visualmediaalliance.org/connectup](https://visualmediaalliance.org/connectup) for upcoming dates.

Our last ConnectUp event was at First Impressions, a trade printer in Hayward. More than 50 people registered and attended this professional social gathering!





# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## XEIKON

### Xeikon

Xeikon is all about digital printing customer-centric innovation. They provide the best solution for the customer's applications. Xeikon has the tech, flexibility, and more than 30 years of expertise to meet every business's needs.

Kevin Sinock  
Kevin.sinock@flintgrp.com  
949-842-0575  
[xeikon.com](http://xeikon.com)



### Absolute Printing Equipment

Absolute Printing Equipment is the N. America distributor for KAMA, manufacturer of foil stamper/die cutters, folder gluers, and more; and of all BaumannPerfecta paper cutters, jogging systems, stack lifts, unloaders, pile turners, and robotic handling systems.

Brett Stow  
Brett@absoluteprintingequipment.com  
317-862-9096  
[absoluteprintingequipment.com](http://absoluteprintingequipment.com)



### Bayside Printed Products

For 30+ years Bayside Printed Products, a custom printing and design provider for any medium, market, and budget has been helping customers by redefining what printing is and what they can help them with.

Emily Keyser  
Emilyk@bayside1.com  
650-742-0660  
[bayside1.com](http://bayside1.com)



### Sierra Pacific Lithographics

Since 1970, Sierra Pacific Lithographics Inc. has delivered its clients an ever-expanding list of capabilities. They provide full printing services, foil stamping, and bindery options, including archival fine art prints and large-format posters.

Shannon Milton  
Shannon@splitho.com  
916-993-6500  
[splitho.com](http://splitho.com)

## VMA UPCOMING EVENTS

View all upcoming events at [visualmediaalliance.org/networking-events](http://visualmediaalliance.org/networking-events).



### Collective Conversations: Sales Prospecting Strategies – May 17

Join us for our upcoming virtual Collective Conversations event on May 17th on "Sales Prospecting Strategies." Get sales prospecting secrets and insights from industry sales veteran, Bill Farquharson. Learn the best days of the week to reach a prospect in the office, hear alternate strategies to connect with potential customers, and more!  
Register here: <https://bit.ly/3Ucc55R>



### ConnectUp at CMYK – May 18

Join us to network and tour at our VMA printer member facility, CMYK Print & Promotions in Stockton on May 18. CMYK Print and Promotions is a trade printer with in-house packaging capabilities. Come network with other industry professionals. Get a behind-the-scenes preview of intriguing packaging techniques and equipment, including brand new presses. Plus, we'll have food and refreshments!  
Register here: <https://bit.ly/3GiiruN>



# CRAB FEST<sup>2023</sup>



## Crab-solutely Amazing CrabFest 2023!

Our Spring CrabFest was a smash—reaching crab-acity with 135 people in attendance! We had delicious all-you-can-eat fresh crab, pasta, wine, music, dancing, bocce ball, and more. There was networking, laughter, and a good time all around!

Jim Frey said of the event: “We had a wonderful time! Thanks for a great evening. We’ll definitely be back next year, and Blair and Jean want to come too. It’s always nice when all your hard work and planning pay off. Another successful event.”

Check out more photos at <https://bit.ly/3JtfQ3K>.  
We can hardly wait until next year’s event!





# “Print & Popular Culture” Student Design Contest Winners

To get youth excited about our industry, VMA sponsored a student design contest on the theme of “Print and Popular Culture.”

While digital media consumes much of our day, print remains critical in our lives and lifestyles. We asked students to research the many benefits of printing and print materials and use their design to bring awareness to print

using popular culture, such as movies, music, television, video games, sports, entertainment news, fashion, and various forms of technology.

The winning designs are showcased below. Monetary awards come from VMA’s scholarship fund dedicated to supporting growth in the industry through education.

## First Place.



Leslie Burciaga Villa of Chabot College in Hayward won first place for her contemporary and stunning design. Leslie will be awarded \$500. Her design is shown below and on the cover of this issue of *Connected*. Leslie plans to graduate in 2025. She is excited to make art part of her future career. You may contact her at [leslie.burciagavilla@gmail.com](mailto:leslie.burciagavilla@gmail.com).



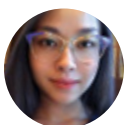
## Leslie shared the following about her design met the objective:

*“We live in a world where we are constantly consuming all types of media, especially on the internet; advertisement after advertisement, we’ve come to a point where we start to not care for these advertisements.*

*My piece illustrates how people don't care for the big screens and all these promotional videos, especially when it's shoved in your face; most people would walk away, not taking in any information. On the left, an older man peacefully reads his magazine, and a physical piece like a magazine gives people a reason to care.*

*Printed works feel way more special since more companies went online to promote and don't print; however, that gives printed-out works an advantage, so my piece shows that print matters using pop culture.”*

## Second Place.



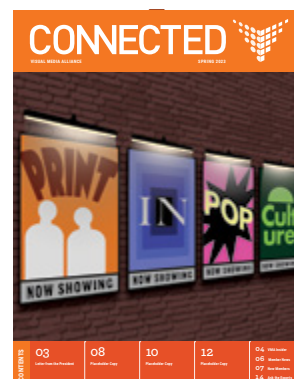
Congratulations to Thanh Truc Nguyen (Tina) of Sacramento City College, our second winner, who will be awarded \$250. Tina is passionate about print, as can be seen from her design. She can be reached at [rilanguyentk@gmail.com](mailto:rilanguyentk@gmail.com).



## Third Place.



Mira Shupe wins third place and \$100 in scholarship funds with a design that captures the lasting nature of print in popular culture, pointing out that printed posters are treasured collectibles. She may be reached at [mrshupe@calpoly.edu](mailto:mrshupe@calpoly.edu).





# Nurturing the Next Generation of Print and Graphic Arts Professionals

BY REVA HARRIS

Even though next-gen technologies are opening exciting new opportunities in print and graphic communications, the industry needs help to foster the next generation of talent to take advantage of them. The print workforce is aging, and you'll be hard-pressed to find a printer that's not facing a persistent labor shortage. Getting young people engaged with print or packaging is key to the future. The Print and Graphics Scholarship Foundation (PGSF) understands that mission and is wholly focused on developing the future of the graphic communications industry.

Since the 1950s, the not-for-profit organization has given more than \$20 million in scholarships and grants to students and professionals pursuing an education in graphic communications. Recently, PGSF began offering grants to schools to cover the cost of travel, small pieces of equipment, and other expenses that the school may not cover. In 2022, the organization gave away \$100,000 in grants and \$550,000 in scholarships to over 200 students and schools.

Though PGSF offers scholarships and grants nationwide, many of those awards went to students in California. "Based on our relationship with Cal Poly, probably 15% to 20% of applicants come from California," says Jeff White, Director of Development. Last year, 9% of PGSF's funds went to

Cal Poly students alone. Other 2022 recipients attended the California Institute of the Arts, Cal Poly Pomona, and Cal State Northridge.

Here's how the organization is getting young people interested in graphic communications and what PGSF's leaders say business owners can do to get involved.

## Promoting the potential of a career in print

PGSF's Chairperson, Jules Van Sant, says that demonstrating the potential of print is essential to engaging with the next generation. "As an industry, we haven't done enough to show young people that we have a future, and they can be part of it."

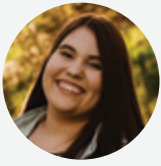
By investing in the next generation, PGSF exposes scholarship recipients like McKenzie Munson to many opportunities. After Munson developed an initial interest in print, she learned of PGSF and its advocacy for young people in the industry. With PGSF's support, she was able to pursue her passion. She now works as an estimator and account manager for a mid-sized printer in the Midwest and is even part of PGSF's board. Her story demonstrates that getting young people excited about print pays off exponentially. They don't just go on to work in the industry; they also help bring their peers along with them.

***"Printers won't be able to hire the new generation of talent if they're not embracing diversity and inclusion.."***

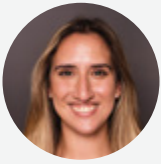
— Jules Van Sant



Joshua Burgos, PGSF poster design contest scholarship winner.



**McKenzie Munson**  
PGSF scholarship recipient



**Andrea Tancredi**  
PGSF Scholarship recipient

## The future is inclusive

Van Sant says embracing diversity and inclusion is essential to build a bridge with young workers. “I think that’s how the industry remains relevant. Printers won’t be able to hire the new generation of talent if they’re not embracing diversity and inclusion because young people won’t want to work with them.”

White sees a change in the student pipeline as more women and minorities pursue an education in graphic communications. “When I was in school, we had four or five women in the printing program out of 176, which was remarkable. And now it has completely changed. At a recent conference, Cal Poly and Clemson brought students to the event, and they were mostly women.”

To foster diverse pipelines, PGSF is also working with organizations that work with junior colleges and trade schools. “We’re expanding our reach so that we can get people early. That way, we can usher in people that can grow with the industry,” says Vansant.

## How business owners can engage the next generation

So, what can business owners do to engage with more young people? Van Sant says that printers should begin taking advantage of the new opportunities that technology offers. “I think it’s up to employers to understand what opportunities there are beyond just taking the job and printing it.” Young workers want to work at companies that provide them with the skills they need

to stay relevant, and forward-thinking businesses will be more competitive.

White says that the industry needs to be more engaged with schools. “I did a survey a couple of years ago of printers that were located somewhere near a school that taught printing, and 80% of the printers either didn’t know there was a school that had printing near them, didn’t want to work with them, or chose not to work with them.”

### Here’s what White and Van Sant say owners can do to overcome these obstacles:

- Build relationships with the local technical schools, high schools, and colleges
- Offer internships that allow young people to get exposed to jobs in print and graphic communications
- Participate in local associations and organizations to help get the word out about print in the community

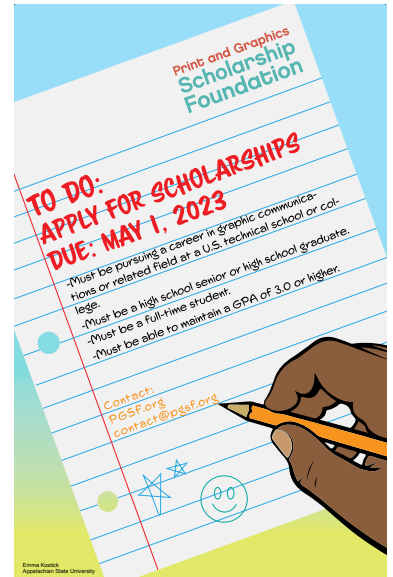
## Building the print labor pipeline is possible

The print labor shortage may seem dire, but PGSF proves that connecting with young people can help rebuild the labor pipeline. By keeping your business relevant and competitive in the marketplace, you can be relevant and competitive with young workers.

For Van Sant and PGSF, the mission is clear: “The more money we can give away and the more we can show schools and students that we’re invested in the future, the more feedback we’ll get from young people who’ll say, ‘Print could be a viable career path for me.’” Learn more at [pgsf.org](http://pgsf.org).



BeReal event photo with Jules VanSant (PGSF Chairperson) and Dina Vees, Associate Professor at CalPoly in the Graphic Communications Department, and students. Photo closeup - Jeff White (PGSF Director of Development) and Jules VanSant (PGSF Chairperson).



Joshua Burgos, PGSF poster design contest scholarship winner.



Jules VanSant (PGSF Chairperson), Mark Bohan (Konica Minolta and fellow Cal Poly GC Dept Advisor), and Kendra Roberson 2nd year student at Cal Poly.



# ASK THE EXPERTS



## NEXT GENERATION IN PRINT & DESIGN

COLLEEN TWOMEY, PROFESSOR AT CAL POLY STATE UNIVERSITY

As a faculty member for the last 11 years in the Graphic Communication department at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, I have seen hundreds of students graduate from our program and go on to have amazing careers in the broad Graphic Communication industry.

For this theme of “the next generation of print & design,” I have reflected on what skills we provide these young folks and the aspirations of our students. This reflection is not on design trends or aesthetics — rather on what the impact of design can have.

It’s never “just design.” Our curriculum doesn’t teach design principles merely for design’s sake. There is always intent to our design. That intent might be output for print, packaging, a website, or an app (or all of the above) — but there is always intent on getting that design file into the right format and workflow. That is why skills in file preparation, prepress, color management, and print methods will always be important. Much of what we do in the industry is integrated — so our students need to know all of these facets to succeed.

Accessibility in design is also essential to our students and a part of Cal Poly’s curriculum. In graphic communication, are we considering market segments that have traditionally been overlooked? How can we make our designs more universal and accessible? Choices of color, typography, and clean space can have a positive impact for visually impaired consumers.

Including interactivity in packaging, print, and signage, such as the [NaviLens](#) code, can provide a more independent shopping experience for visually impaired people. Adding tactile elements to form factors in packaging can increase the brand’s engagement with the consumer, especially if that tactile element helps visually impaired consumers distinguish between one package and another.

What about consumers with mobility challenges who may have difficulty opening structures? Can we design more universal packages that can enhance the user experience of the consumer and increase the relationship of these consumers with the brand?

What I find so encouraging about our students is that these questions on accessibility seem to be innate. These young folks are incredibly curious and want to make a positive impact on society and the environment. I am encouraged by what I see — students who have the skills to succeed in print (or packaging, or UX, etc.), but also want to make the companies they work for a better place.

Colleen Twomey is a professor in the Graphic Communication Department at Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo, CA. Colleen started teaching at Cal Poly with 22 years in the consumer packaging and print industry. She loves how packaging influences consumer behavior through color, imagery, touch, smell, and interactivity and how students are focused on sustainability. Her favorite color is PMS 012 (yellow)! [ctwomey@calpoly.edu](mailto:ctwomey@calpoly.edu)



## BE A MAGNET FOR THE NEXT INDUSTRY LEADERS

LAURYN KIM, THIRD-YEAR GRC STUDENT AT CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

As a Graphic Communication student, I continue to be captivated by the vast opportunities that arise from this industry and am thankful for the insight I’ve gained from the perspectives of students and professionals in the field. As my peers and I enter this industry, companies can ensure success on an individual and organizational level by embracing innovation, creative freedom, and inclusive work culture.

As demands constantly evolve and new generations of employees enter the workforce, companies’ ability to innovate and adapt is crucial to meet the needs of workers and the industry. Years of educational experiences with online learning have led many current students to favor a hybrid working environment to maintain flexibility and efficiency while upholding human connections. Not only do employee needs change over time, but the graphic communication industry constantly evolves as well. The rapid advancement of printed electronics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and inclusive packaging technology has demonstrated the seemingly endless growth areas in graphic communication and companies that appeal to my peers, and I embrace these areas of opportunity.

Graphic communication is full of creative geniuses, and companies need to allow employees to express their unique ideas to produce high-quality work while preventing burnout. Applying individual employee strengths to a specific job role

is expected, but many students don’t want to be placed into a single box that limits their abilities. Students often express their desire to explore other fields of interest in a company to discover their talents and passions further, enhancing their professional development.

Another magnetizing element that attracts future industry leaders is having an inclusive work environment. Upholding a company culture that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion doesn’t mean simply onboarding people of different backgrounds — it means providing appropriate resources for individuals to succeed, making equity evident through actions and not just words in a handbook. Inclusivity is a key ingredient to make employees know they are valued and truly supported by all levels of hierarchy in the workplace.

I am hopeful for the future of graphic communication, and my peers’ collaborative spirit and driven work ethic reinforce my confidence that the next generation will strengthen this industry through innovation, creativity, and inclusivity.

Lauryn Kim is a third-year Graphic Communication (GrC) student at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. She is concentrating on Management and hopes to enter the Human Resources or Public Relations field. She currently serves as a student advisory representative for GrC and the College of Liberal Arts, President of Mat Pica Pi, and HR Recruitment Student Assistant for the Associated Students, Inc. [laurynkim02@gmail.com](mailto:laurynkim02@gmail.com) or 951-532-6816



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