
We Need to Keep Learning – Profile Magazine April 2007

Allow me to share with you a story a framer told me when I had dinner one night at the recent framing show in Las Vegas. The story was about another framer he knew who had to frame a large needlework.

This framer was presented with a big needlework to frame. Given he had framed many needleworks, many times before, he treated it as he usually did, and decided the best way to mount this was to permanently glue it down onto MDF and use his standard “non-conservation” framing materials, just as he had always done before.

5 years later, the “needlework customer” decided to have it re-framed, as she wanted to pass it on to her daughter as a special gift. For no special reason, she took the job to a different framer in town, who dismantled the frame to inspect the condition of the needlework for re-framing. When he did this with the customer, they were shocked to discover extensive, irreversible damage to the needlework from using poor mounting methods and poor materials. The damage was so bad, that artwork was professionally assessed by a conservator as “beyond repair”.

Ok, sad story, whatever.... but wait... there’s more to this...

The needlework was a priceless, sentimental “time piece” to this client. She was 68 years old, and since the age of 6, every single time she had a major event in her life, she added some stitches to the needlework to tell “her story”. She stitched something on it when she graduated from school, when her father died in the war, when she had her first child, when she got married, when her husband died, when she became a grandmother.... every event of her life was stitched to this unique, priceless needlework over a period of almost 60 years....

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Obviously disappointed, she took the original framer to Civil Court for the damage to her needlework, and the eventual outcome was an “out of court” settlement which ran into a six figures!

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When the Civil Court judge asked the framer for his defense, and why he chose to use such poor methods and materials for framing the needlework this way, the framer’s defense was this –

“But I’m a qualified framer, and I’ve been framing for 20 years. I just did it the way I was taught..... 20 years ago.”

The lesson here is this - ***“We need to keep learning.”***

Some of us forget that almost every profession requires a continual learning curve and each person has a professional & personal responsibility to keep themselves in touch with these changes.

- ▶ Things change
- ▶ People change
- ▶ Methods changes
- ▶ Knowledge changes
- ▶ Expectations change

Our profession is no different to others. As picture framers, we too have a professional requirement to keep up-to-date with these changes – or suffer drastic consequences such as this.

For example –

- ▶ Accountants need to keep up-to-date with the changing tax laws. An accountant who obtained their accounting degree 20 years ago, can't apply 20 year old tax laws to this years tax return? They need to keep up-to-date
- ▶ Doctors can't prescribe 20 year old medicines to patients today. They have to keep up-to-date with new medications & treatments to be able to offer their patients the latest and best possible ways to stay healthy.
- ▶ I.T. professionals who obtained a degree even 3 years ago would certainly be irrelevant today, unless they kept up-to-date with their industry changes.
- ▶ Motor mechanics can't service new cars with old methods, parts & tools from 20 years ago? They need to keep up-to-date.
- ▶ Even the humble "taxi driver" needs to keep up with changing roads and rules. Just because the Westgate Bridge wasn't around 20 years ago doesn't mean it is an acceptable excuse not to use it today.

Have a look at car manufacturing and how it has changed. 20 years ago, there was no such thing as an "airbag" or an "ABS brake". But now, car manufacturers are at the stage where they are including these safety features as "a standard", not "an option"? Why – because they understand they have a moral obligation, and the consumer now "expects" it.

Not only do we have a professional responsibility to keep up-to-date with changes, we also have a moral obligation - Just like doctors, we have a moral obligation to keep up-to-date with better & improved methods for protecting our customer's priceless memories.

Even if you have the knowledge and you decide to make a compromise in what you offer your customer – remember this - It should not be up to us to choose, we need to give our customer's "the choice", as it is really theirs to make, not ours.

"Today's technology will become tomorrow's standard", so keep learning.

Don't be like the framer who got caught out using "20 year old methods & materials" to frame a "priceless" sentimental item, as it may really cost you!

So sign up and support some of the great educational seminars at this year's Framing Show. Even if you are "an expert", you never know what you might learn! See you at the show!

Jared Davis CPF, GCF



With over 15 years experience in the framing & graphics industry, Jared Davis CPF, GCF has covered the wholesale, commercial and retail aspects of the business. His previous sales, marketing & training experience gives him an understanding of the changing opportunities for retail businesses, and he offers an up-to-date approach on new methods and techniques now required by today's business owners, to be able to successfully market, merchandise and sell their services to consumers. Jared is also a featured educator at major international industry tradeshow & conventions.