

Aahs!! Signs Los Angeles, CA

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Phenomenal Growth of Aahs!! Signs Enhanced by DuPont™ Cromaprint™ UV Digital Printing System Seizing Opportunity Means Success



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For an unbeatable business success story, look no further than the Sawhney family and their astute management of the various Los Angeles area companies that comprise Aahs!! Even the two exclamation points in the firm's officially registered name convey the uniqueness of this enterprise.

One of its more successful components, Aahs!! Signs, generated nearly \$2 million in revenue in 2006. The firm recently installed a DuPont™ Cromaprint™ 22UV flatbed/roll digital inkjet printing system to better meet customer demand for brightly colored point-of-purchase displays, and flat signs on all sizes and shapes of popular substrates.

Aahs!! Past Explains Its Success

In 1981, Jagjodh Sawhney left his native India to settle in the Los Angeles area. Sawhney first worked for minimum wage at a local factory, and was later joined in America by his wife who also took employment on the same assembly line. In between work and other part-time jobs, both struggled to raise their three children. Ten years later, with financial and business assistance from friends, Sawhney purchased two local novelty/gift shops called Aahs!! (the name suggests one's surprise and delight when finding that perfect gift or home accent.)

By then, Sawhney's two sons, Gurpreet and Gurmeet, were young men and brought into the family business. Both shops prospered as a result of their long hours and hard work, with a third Aahs!! launched in 2001 at a prime West Hollywood location. Success was ensured. A small engraving shop next to one of the original Aahs!! stores was acquired in 1996 so customers could have their Aahs!! gifts engraved for a nominal charge. Two specialty stores selling Halloween-related products were also opened, and a wholesale division of Aahs!! soon appeared. Today, the total Aahs!! enterprise generates \$30 million in annual revenue.



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"I like working with companies that complement ours."



Signage Opens Door to New Business

The birth of Aahs!! Signs came almost by accident. But recognition of signage as a potential growth business was hardly accidental.

"All our shops needed point-of-purchase signs to promote special prices, sales or new products," says Aahs!! Signs Executive Officer, Gurmeet Sawhney. "We initially spent substantial monies at local printers preparing these signs. Then, while studying the individual invoices from these firms, realized considerable funds could be saved by doing signs in-house."

A small, rudimentary sign-making unit was purchased capable of producing just one, 10-foot square sign an hour. But the Sawhney's had a flair for layout and color, and before long, some gift shop customers who saw their work asked if they could produce signs for them. An opportunity was quickly recognized and seized. The Aahs!! Signs business opened in 2002.

Print Flexibility/Quality Helps Ensure Growth

In just four years, the sign company has expanded to two locations working two shifts, six days a week. And Sawhney says the flexibility and quality output of the Cromaprint® 22UV complements this phenomenal growth.

"The DuPont™ Cromaprint™ system allows us to quickly and easily produce a wide range of signs, from elaborate, stand up point-of-purchase displays for regional supermarkets, car dealerships and restaurants, to colorful lawn posters for local realtors," Sawhney says. This is possible because the unit easily switches back and forth in minutes between rigid and roll media in any size up to 2.2m (86-inches) wide.

"We print directly to flat foam board or styrene for a point-of-purchase display, then quickly switch to fabrics or similar roll media for other jobs," he adds. "We've even found a profitable niche producing prototype packaging graphics on flexible white cardboard, which easily folds into position for the client to use at planning meetings."

A second flexibility advantage involves making small volume orders easy to accommodate. "There's hardly any retooling involved from big job to small, so we can compete very effectively with mid- and large-sized printing shops that charge costly prep-time tooling up intricate multi color presses for each job," he says.

Most important, color and print quality are not sacrificed for speed, simplicity and flexibility, Sawhney says. "There's no trade off with the Cromaprint™ 22UV. The inkjet colors are unbelievably vivid and print sharply like more expensive offset presses. DuPont UV-curable inks dry fast, adhere well to practically any substrate without smearing, and maintain color and clarity indoors or out."



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During the purchasing process, Sawhney and his son, Gurmeet, investigated multiple companies and was impressed with DuPont's commitment to UV cure inkjet and their "customer first" approach. He adds DuPont technical service is a major benefit. "I've had other printing equipment, and service was always spotty even from local firms. DuPont's commitment to standing by its products and being a partner to us has been amazing. To me, that's worth a million," Sawhney adds. Which also describes the success of Aahs!! "Our business has changed very quickly and unexpectedly over the years, yet has prospered because our family had the foresight and flexibility to quickly seize opportunity when it arose. The DuPont™ Cromaprint™ UV system helps us stay nimble and gives us a partner we know and trust. I like working with companies that complement ours."

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