

Ideas for Working with Laminates

by Anne Vazquez

Laminates in framing can be used in a variety of ways. As an alternative to glass or acrylic, they can be a cost-effective choice for your customers' artwork. But cost is not the only reason to offer laminates in framing. Environmental condi-

Plaques can be an interesting mounting approach for some of the images your customers bring to the shop.



courtesy of Hunt Corp.

tions can also be a factor. For instance, if you know that an item is going to be displayed in a humid area, applying a laminate to the artwork might be something you'd want to suggest. Of course, you can create a sealed framing package using glass or acrylic. However, if your customer does not wish to apply this preservation effort to the piece, laminating can be a logical choice.

Since the process involves the act of adhering a laminate to an item, this is not a preservation approach. The heat approach involves dry mounting the framing

“package” in a mechanical or vacuum mounting press. It should be noted that applying a laminate to the front of an image (usually as a substitute for glass or acrylic) is called surface laminating. This is in contrast to double-sided lamination, which we often see on menus and wall maps, for example.

Items that you may want to consider laminating are posters, reproduction prints, photographs, and certificates. Housing newspaper clippings in this way is also a popular approach. Although the process is not reversible, the laminated surface protects from contaminants. Dried flowers are another category to consider. These delicate, irregularly shaped items can be difficult to mount and laminating them can be the solution to the challenge.

Laminating films can also be used in the creation of canvas transfers. The availability of textured films enables the user to instill the desired finish to the image, including a matte, glossy, or heavy canvas appearance.

Manufacturers of laminates offer a variety of characteristics in their product lines. Surface finishes include matte, satin, glossy, linen-like, and canvas-like. Also, as with glass and acrylic, laminate films are available with UV-filtering properties to minimize fading of the image. Finish Guard UV Laminating Films from Bienfang, for example, are available in five finishes and

are UV-filtering.

In addition to the choices of film finishes, you can choose the color of the edge of the plaque so it complements the image. Companies such as Drytac Corporation, The Print Mount Company, and Unique Mounting Services offer laminating services of plaques and/or posters to retailers who do not have this equipment in their shops.

In addition to two-dimensional projects, laminating can be a useful tool for creating plaques. Say a customer brings in an image that they want to display simply, yet display it all the same. Creating a plaque for this piece is an alternative to housing it in a frame. This can also be used for a customer looking to display a grouping of images. A series of plaques is an option.

Sue Doyon, product manager of the framing division at Drytac, notes that the Canvastex and Linentex in the company's ArtShield line of laminates have been popular for use with photographs. These two products, which simulate a canvas and linen appearance on the image, are applied with heat.

"Some of the things to consider with laminates is that they are non-breakable, the finished weight is relatively light," advises Doyon. "And since laminates are

moisture resistant, they are good for use on items that will be displayed in kitchens, swimming pool areas, and bathrooms."

In the realm of framing, there are certain items that will not react well to being mounted with heat. Cold mounting methods are often called upon for those instances. The same principle exists with laminates, which is addressed with cold roller laminators. Art Materials Service recently introduced equipment for the application of its laminating films. Long popular in the sign industry (as discussed by Chris Paschke in her "Mastering Mounting" column this month), cold laminating equipment can be utilized by framers as well.

If offering a variety of options to your customers is what you strive for, laminating can be one way to expand the choices. If the items that arrive at your design counter appear to be good candidates for laminating, then consider the possibilities of this service in your business. ■

To read about the technical aspects of working with laminates, look up these articles on the PFM website—www.pictureframing-magazine.com: "Mastering Mounting," by Chris Paschke, CPE, GCF, September, October, and November 2001 installments.