



INDUSTRY
Retail

APPLICATIONS
Personalised Gifts

LOCATION
Stourbridge, UK

ABOUT **EXPRESSIVE GIFTS**

Expressive Gifts is an award-winning online retailer, that develops handmade keepsakes and gifts from handwriting and children's drawings. Each item is created with care and personalised to the customer's requirements. Founder and owner, Vicky Bannister, is a former credit manager who had previously spent her career in finance roles, before setting up the company in 2018.



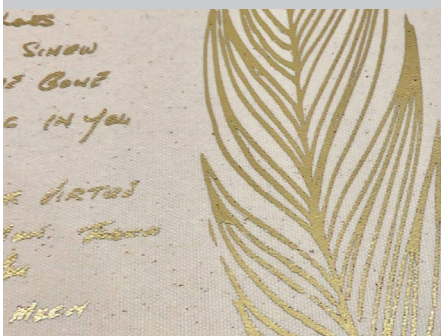
Freedom of Expression – OKI helps unleash the creativity of online gift retailer

THE CHALLENGE

From the outset, Expressive Gifts founder, Vicky Bannister, had a clear vision for the business. She wanted to create gifts and keepsakes that had a personal resonance and a special sentimental meaning. Each item had to be unique. To do this, she knew she needed a printer capable of handling a wide-range of applications including labels and paper documents as well as the keepsakes and gifts themselves. It was just as important that the chosen printer could handle multiple fonts, substrates and media types, as well as the ability to print a wide spectrum of colours.

"The colour reproduction is excellent. I've printed items in water colours and everybody is amazed with how good they look. I can work quickly and efficiently in four colour and even add a real foil finish in silver or gold to a printed-out design."

Vicky Bannister, Owner, Expressive Gifts



OKI Success Story

EXPRESSIVE GIFTS



Examples of Expressive Gifts' portfolio.

Bannister started to research printing solutions, a process which involved visiting the Printwear & Promotion LIVE show, where she received a demonstration of OKI's Pro Series White Toner Digital Transfer Media Printer.

As Bannister explains: "At that point, I was trying to work out what printer could best support me with what I wanted to do. I knew I did not want to be restricted to

methods of decoration that would only allow certain colour substrates and a small quantity of different media types. I immediately saw the potential of OKI's White Toner Digital Transfer Media Printer and the flexibility it would give me."

After some additional research following the show, Bannister made her decision to purchase the OKI printer, and as she says: "It has been part of the Expressive Gifts family ever since."

THE SOLUTION

Bannister found that the installation and set-up of the machine was intuitive and easy. "It was just a case of downloading the drivers, having a play around with the design software and I was up and running."

She now uses the OKI device every day, printing on everything from specific transfer papers which she uses for textiles, clothing and garment printing, through to handwriting and children's drawings which can be output



Example bag printed using OKI's Digital Transfer Media Printer.

onto any colour or substrate including wood, glass and acrylic. Through this process, Bannister makes extensive use of a variety of transfer media from OKI partner, FOREVER, across a wide range of different base materials. OKI's Transfer Media Printer has the flexibility to handle it all.

Bannister acknowledges when the business launched, she was limiting herself in terms of the product range she could offer. Over time as she has become more confident in what the printer can deliver, that range has grown significantly. "I have a lot of repeat customers who come back asking for different items. I know that the OKI Digital Transfer Media Printer will have the quality and the capability to deliver."

THE BENEFITS

For Bannister, the two standout benefits of OKI's Digital Transfer Media Printer are its flexibility to handle a wide range of different applications and its reliability. These have been key in enabling the business to cope when it has been extremely busy, especially through the pandemic and over the Christmas period.

The advent of Covid-19 resulted in an immediate and significant increase in demand for Expressive Gifts' products. Bannister's business is 100% online and with gift shops across the country shut, a whole new group of prospective customers were tempted onto the website and ultimately into ordering customised keepsakes and gifts.

Over Christmas, Bannister had seven consecutive weeks of working seven days a week, such was the ongoing demand. At times, the device was on almost continuously, printing a wide range of different end products and yet, there were no technical issues or difficulties.

"It is good to know that whatever customers ask me for, OKI's Digital Transfer Media Printer is going to be



OKI's Pro Series Digital Transfer Media Printer.

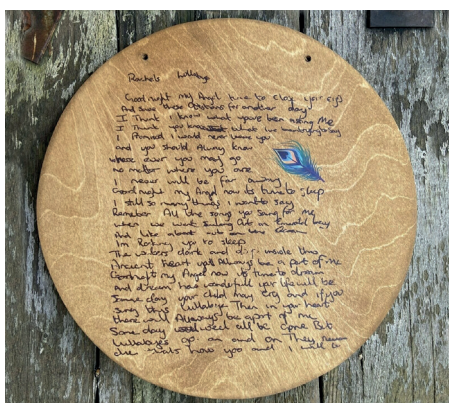
versatile and reliable enough to produce what I need to the quality my customers expect," says Bannister. The OKI device also delivers the kind of high-quality precision printing that is so important to Expressive Gifts. The ability to offer deep white on a range of substrates or as a neutral backing layer under standard colours, is key.

As Bannister explains, "Much of our work is based on capturing the exact handwriting of loved ones that have sadly passed away. The customer may have an old card that person has written, which has great sentimental value. We work from a photograph of the handwriting and we can produce an exact copy as part of the design. OKI's Digital Transfer Media Printer has the kind of quality printing capability that allows us to do that right every time."

"The colour reproduction is excellent too," she continues. "I've printed items in water colours, and everybody is amazed with how good they look. I can work quickly and efficiently in four colours and even add a real foil finish in silver or gold to a printed-out design."



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Examples of Expressive Gifts' portfolio.

THE FUTURE

Bannister has no plans to change the way she uses the OKI Digital Transfer Media Printer other than to try out different substrates and papers to expand Expressive Gifts' product range. She also has aspirations to print in larger formats in the future to further expand this. That might necessitate purchasing an additional A3 device. Being without the OKI device is a scary thought, however. "I couldn't run the business without it," she says. "It's as simple as that."



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Vicky Bannister, Owner, Expressive Gifts



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