

# Paschke Online

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## "There's Gold in the Mounting Business"

August 1998

Rumor has it that gold bullion is no longer worth the gold it's made out of, but I have a hard time with that theory. As far as I can see money is still money and profits will always be the surplus left over after all the debts and overhead have been paid out. So the formula for success is to bring in more dollars than are required to be paid out...sounds simple enough.

### A STORY FROM MY PAST

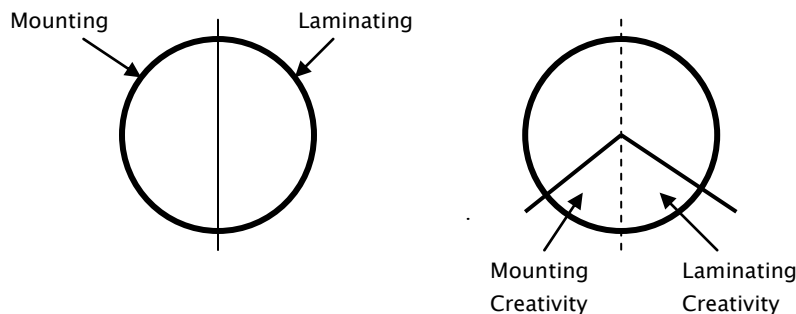
Back in 1985, as a progressive framer armed with a newly purchased 40"x60" VacuSeal I set out to light the framing world on fire by mounting everything in sight. That way I'd pay off my new investment AND make lots of money! It was only after I purchased my wonderful new companion that I then realized I had never really thought through my market and growth potential. Nor had I considered the type of art I was dominantly framing. I simply knew I *wanted* a vacuum press, not that I *needed* one.

It seems I was more noted as a framer for my innovative matting designs for original watercolors, pastels and graphics that all needed preservation mounting, than for poster mounting...and I didn't even sell posters. Upon this revelation I realized all I really wanted to do was mount decorative papers to existing mat boards for creative framing, and other than that there was very little mounting I needed to do at all. Suddenly, I realized I probably owned the largest paperweight in Northern California, and if I didn't figure out how to make it pay for itself I would be in debt forever!

### THE WHOLE PIE

Whatever you call it...the whole pie, the whole nine yards, the whole enchilada, I had to begin looking at the big picture, the **entire** use of my press. *Mounting* is only half of the potential work a vacuum press can do, *laminating* is the other half, and **both** must be tapped into for total profit potential to be realized (**diagram 1**). If the targeted market is *mounting* and there is a press operator working the machine every minute of the day, every day while open for business, maximum profits are indeed being felt from mounting alone. Most framers, however, do not run their presses all day every day, but only when projects are due. The idea is to get the most from the equipment.

Diagram 1



*Only half of a heat press's potential use is mounting . . . the other half is laminating. The overlapped wedge is creativity. It takes all three to maximize the gold in the press.*

### ADDITION OF LAMINATING

Once a heat system has been purchased, the additional investment required to venture into the world of laminating is minimal, and remains limited to a roll of laminate, overlay foam (aka foam plastic), and perhaps an optional perforator (aka piercing tool). Laminating within a press uses vinyl films to heat-set a surface layer designed as a glass substitute.

Encapsulation (or two-sided lamination) with polyester films is not recommended for application with this type of framing equipment. Initiation of laminating into frame shop services will require additional marketing to ensure growth and public awareness. Yellow pages advertising, mailers, and networking all provide good sources for telling the world of new framing services available.

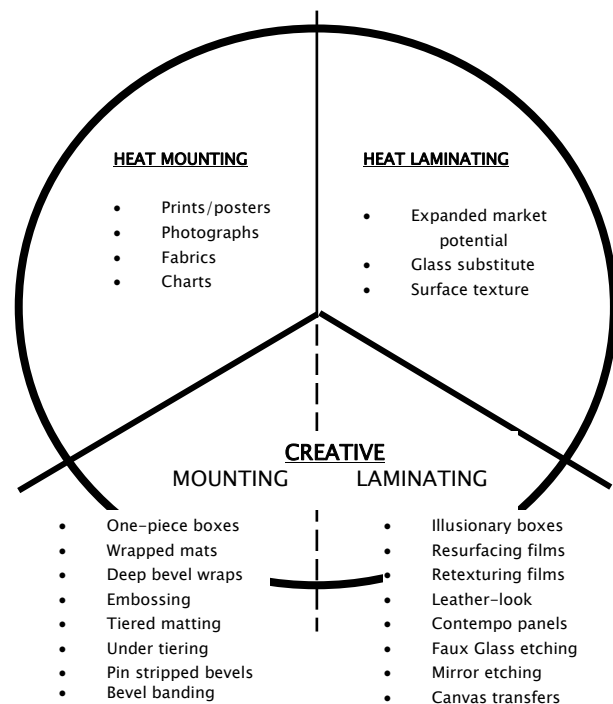
Potential sales for surface laminating will therefore be found wherever glass may not be used. Any place dealing with children, such as day-care centers, preschools, nurseries and Pediatricians' offices would be perfect. The same is true with the elderly at nursing homes and hospitals. Detention facilities, jails, and institutions are all places where safety is an issue and may not wish glass present.

Engineering and architectural firms, city, state, and federal offices may need laminating services to prepare materials, charts, and designs for presentation to groups or clients. Real estate agencies obviously need maps for both pinning home locations and for drawing on with washable markers, think of the market potential there alone! Also consider sporting goods stores, hunting, fishing, hiking and camping information centers or recreational areas. The possibilities are endless. But these are *still* just the basic standard uses of mounting and laminating.

### THE CREATIVE SLICE OF THE PIE

Once mounting and laminating are both offered and the press is used continually during business hours then full profits are there, but if not there is yet another profit making segment which still may remain untapped. This is the *creative* portion of mechanical and hot vacuum press usage, where the most fun and greatest profits lie. Creative applications are any use of mounting and/or laminating materials used in an innovative design using a heat press, as seen in the chart. This segment overlaps into both mounting and laminating.

Tiered matting with colored core boards and art papers; one-piece shadow boxes; wrapped and embossed mats all fall into *mounting creativity*...while resurfacing, refinishing and retexturing films; leather-look; contempo panels; faux glass etching; mirror designing; embossing; and canvas transferring of both photos and prints overlap into *laminating creativity* (diagram 2).



Selling mounting and laminating creativity is really easy. Embossed mats, shadow boxes, and faux glass etching are all perfect examples of the ultimate in custom framing and design. And as I've mentioned in previous articles, always sell the \$50.00 difference in price between a 16-ply tiered mat design and a standard double mat. Creative applications do sell themselves, as long as they are shown on the walls and as corner samples.

### THE WHOLE OF THE PROFITS

As long as any press (hot or cold) is used continually for mounting during the course of each business day it is being used 100%. If it is also used for both mounting and laminating all day it is also used to its maximum 100%. If however, it is idle some of the day AND no laminating OR creative applications are employed, then perhaps only 1/3 of the total available profits are being challenged.

### INVESTMENT PAYOFF

Anytime investment in a major piece of equipment is being considered, research should be done to establish the approximate time required to pay-off the actual investment. This should to be done before any incoming dollars become profits. This is what I never considered when making my initial decision to purchase my first press.

If only taking **mounting** into consideration when calculating equipment payoff, it will take much longer to recoup investment dollars than if including **laminating** in the equation. The entire approach to successful profit dollars comes with press usage that includes **mounting, laminating** and **creative applications**.

Let's look at a hypothetical investment figure and consider the potential for pay-off. For every investment figure of \$2000 look at mounting only, then mounting and laminating, finally then look at mounting, laminating AND creativity in the equation.

**MOUNTING** 20pcs week @ \$ 10. = \$200. divided into \$2000. = 10 week payoff  
added to

**LAMINATING** 10pcs week @ \$ 20. = \$400. divided into \$2000. = 5 week payoff  
added to

**CREATIVITY** 2pcs week @ \$100. = \$600. divided into \$2000. = **3½ week payoff**

The above estimate illustrates gross sales potential. The \$10. shown as a mounting charge was pulled from a suggested distributor price list which is designed to include cost of materials, overhead, and profit. What is not included is the equipment investment, that is where the \$2,000. comes in.

Twenty mounted pieces a week may be high, or too low for your estimate, but consider when you don't own a heat system how much mounting may be avoided altogether or only recommended hinging, as I did. Once a heat press is purchased it is truly amazing how many additional mountable projects walk through your front door...how did they know about that new press?

Selling the services surrounding heat mounting equipment is easy. In-store samples, comparisons, and niche marketing will always win out. After all, the customer always wants what will make the project look the best, and since we are the expert framers...we will always know what the best is.

### **MODERN TECHNOLOGY**

I ran across an old *craftrends* article from October 1993 written by Mike Hatnett the other day on the joys of modern technology (in relation to labor-saving devices), and how making them so convenient has invaded our ability to truly get away from work. It seems with portable phones, faxes, and lap-top computers we are able to read, write and do 'rithmetic nearly anywhere from a car on a mountaintop to a towel on the beach. Luckily as framers we aren't yet able to take our choppers and vacuum presses with us to the beach...yet, vacuum presses are also a wonder of modern technology.

The author wrote, "we seem to be working harder today (1993) than five years ago, and five years ago weren't we working harder than five years before that? Makes 1998 kind of scary, doesn't it?" So here we are face to face with 1998 and still have too much to do in too little time. But don't we also say time is money? And if we are spending more time working aren't we in turn making more money? Not unless you're tapping into all the pieces of the mounting pie. And if you're lucky, that pie may be made of that gold bullion after all.

END

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Additional information on mounting basics is found in  
*The Mounting and Laminating Handbook, Second Edition, 2002*, and  
*The Mounting And Laminating Handbook, Third Edition, 2008*.  
*Creative Mounting, Wrapping, And Laminating, 2000*

will teach you everything you need to know about getting the most from your dry mount equipment and materials as an innovative frame designer. All books are available from **Designs Ink Publishing** through this website.