

Leading equipment manufacturer chooses CorelDRAW[®] Graphics Suite to customize their products

Overview

Name: John Merucci

Company: Vaughn Hockey

Location: Ontario, Canada

Industry: Sports Equipment Manufacturer

Product: CorelDRAW[®] Graphics Suite

"Being a professional designer by trade, I know what other programs are out there and they just don't compare to CorelDRAW. It's the easiest tool to use with the same professional output as other software packages. We couldn't do our job without it." – John Merucci

Vaughn Hockey is one of the world's top manufacturers of ice hockey goaltending equipment. The company serves all levels of hockey—from small town leagues to professionals around the world—including the best of the best in the NHL. For decades, Vaughn Hockey has been recognized as a pioneer in goalie equipment, building a reputation for delivering cutting-edge designs on all its products.

As the popularity of hockey grows worldwide, so does the demand for new and unique equipment. To stay ahead of the curve and attain a competitive advantage, Vaughn Hockey uses powerful software to aid the design and manufacture of its equipment. For the past 15 years, the company has relied on CorelDRAW[®] Graphics Suite to create the stunning graphics and eye-catching looks its products are known for.

"When it comes to goalie equipment, new technologies are always making it better, but we know the single biggest driver of sales year-over-year is the introduction of hot new designs," says John Merucci, Head Graphic Designer, Vaughn Hockey. "To stay ahead of the competition, it's important that we provide our customers the look they want. The graphical aspect of our equipment appeals to our customers. CorelDRAW Graphics Suite is key to making this happen!"

Cool as Ice

Great graphics and an undisputable cool factor play a critical role in the business of selling goalie equipment. To differentiate itself, Vaughn Hockey realized early on that while a hockey pad or goalie mask may be a commodity, the shell and overall appearance is a big factor in driving sales. Each model and product needs to be different and unique from the competition.



"We understand that we're set apart from other manufacturers because of the overall appearance of our equipment, not just the guts of what they're made of," comments Merucci. "Each of our products needs to have its own identity, its own feel and its own structure. You can't keep putting the same thing out year after year, or you won't last long."

To ensure that their products are unique, Merucci uses CorelDRAW Graphics Suite to turn a goalie pad into a customized work of art. In addition to its yearly seasonal collections, Vaughn Hockey also offers a retail line of products that enables customers to submit their own custom designs for their equipment. Upon receiving images and designs from the customer, Merucci and his team use CorelDRAW to bring their designs to life in record time.

"Some of our customers are very creative in what they send us, with designs that are very intricate," Merucci states. "Once we get the design, CorelDRAW makes the process of customizing the hockey pad easy."



The Personalization Process

The process of making unique equipment designs starts in CorelDRAW – whether the image was created in the software by Merucci and his team or sent in by a customer.

"CorelDRAW gets the process started. For example, when customers send us their designs, we're able to accept almost any

file format. With CorelDRAW, I'm able to open them and start working immediately," says Merucci.

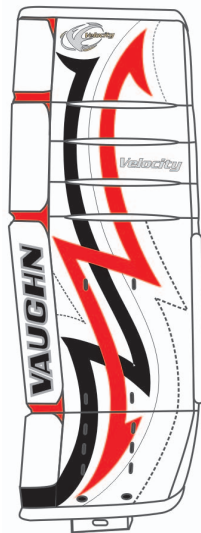
Merucci says for his work, Corel[®] PowerTRACE™ is one of the most valuable new additions to CorelDRAW Graphics Suite. With Corel PowerTRACE, his team is able to recreate a customer's graphic twice as fast as before, lifting the burden of having to hand draw each image. "If the customer sends us a rough sketch, I can use the software to simply trace or re-draw the design, getting it ready for the next step in the process."

Once the graphics are finalized in CorelDRAW, Merucci outputs to a laser cutter, creating a cardboard template. The template is used to easily create the patterns and cut the material of the design. Then, the team stitches the design onto the pad.

When working on large scale custom projects like team pants, CorelDRAW makes it easy for Vaughn Hockey to turn out top notch products with unique designs in large quantities.

"We do a lot of team pants, somewhere between five and six thousands pair a year. To give them a great look, we embroider everything," says Merucci. "CorelDRAW lets us import any image and quickly make intricate templates out of the design. We can then cut the material with precision and send it to be sewn."

Merucci says one big advantage CorelDRAW provides is the power to quickly create various samples and different looks before the final image is complete. "CorelDRAW lets us do quick samples so we can see which design and layout will work best. We couldn't do our job without it"



CorelDRAW – Vaughn Hockey's MVP

In an industry where success depends on delivering a customized and unique product fast, you have to get the design right the first time.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite is the versatile tool that enables Vaughn Hockey to put designs on pads and pants that otherwise would be virtually impossible to accomplish under such tight time lines. For Merucci and his team, the suite's speed, ease of use and flexibility score big points. "I've tried a lot of different programs, but I've never felt as comfortable with any other software," Merucci says.

Since standardizing on CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, Vaughn Hockey rarely goes a day without using the application. Whether they are creating their own advertising or stunning equipment designs, CorelDRAW is an integral part of the business.

To learn more about CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, visit www.corel.com/coreldraw.

