

**For Immediate Release**

## What's in a Label?

What's in a label? ... as in a label which completes a jar of pasta sauce, a bottle of juice, a bag of treats or one of thousands of other products that you may use through the course of your year. Sometimes a label is the flag bearer for a long product history that's somehow made an impact on you; often the label may connect you to a slice of life.

Consider the varied, interesting and eclectic labels on wine bottles, for instance. Many wine connoisseurs have quaffed a fine vintage and then carefully soaked and gently removed the label from the bottle. Then, it's been dried and held between the pages of a scrapbook to contain the recollection of whatever momentous occasion – or just kept in a wine label reference book as a reminder of what red to pick up from the grocer's wine rack next time steak *au poivre* is on the menu.

Or perhaps a label conjurs a childhood memory. Diana Fruit Company has a history that dates back to the 1920s when that European delicacy, the maraschino cherry, found a new home in California and a company to support it. Not long after came a canned good known to most children who grew up in the '30s through the '70s – Fruit Cocktail with the signature hot pink cherry. The colorful stand-alone cherry from the Santa Clara company also was the perfect topping to an ice cream sundae or banana split, the rare childhood treats. As a condiment, it could transform as the customer aged, turning into the finishing touch on that happy hour cocktail. The familiar labels on the Diana maraschino cherry jars conjure a long tradition and memories for many customers.



“The label is so important, because it's the billboard for your product,” says Daryl Isaacs, purchasing manager of Santa Cruz Nutritionals in northern California. Design and a certain look and feel that identify the brand are key components of labeling of course. But Isaacs understands there's a lot more behind a label.

In production and packaging, labeling likely is one of the last applications before a package is complete, whether filling a bag on a vertical form and fill seal line or packing a master case, Isaacs explains.

“It’s just absolutely imperative to have a high quality label from the backing to the roll stock to the adhesive,” says Isaacs. Any issues with a label – from a label not adhering to a package to ink that comes off the label – may lead to potential rework and repack. This means lost productivity, decreased efficiency and increased scrap.

Beginning as a snack manufacturer, Santa Cruz Nutritionals has evolved through the years to its current iteration as a producer of vitamin-enriched gummy products. In that time, hundreds of product lines have been produced and shipped in a wide array of packaging formats, all of which require a variety of label applications. Through the years, Creative Labels, Inc. has been instrumental in helping meet the needs of Santa Cruz Nutritionals and its dynamic and ever-changing label requirements.

The Gilroy, Calif., label company has worked with Santa Cruz Nutritionals to make the best decisions on labeling, ultimately delivering the highest quality roll stock, Isaacs says.

Getting to that end product, according to Isaacs, means navigating a label production planning process and carefully working through a variety of considerations. This includes determining whether the label requires a permanent or nonpermanent adhesive, how many colors need to be used in the printing process and to what sort of material (for example, acrylic, PET bottles, flexible polyester packaging or corrugated shippers) the label will be applied, among other considerations. Santa Cruz Nutritionals has many ongoing projects and essentially fills customer orders to demand and some to forecast. Their label needs are met by Creative Labels on essentially an as-needed basis.

“Creative Labels has a very strong commitment to customer service. Our basic orders have always been high quality, competitively priced and turned around quickly,” Isaacs says. “Creative also was able to find solutions for Santa Cruz Nutritionals that were extremely helpful on several projects through the years that required very unique applications and very precise requirements.

“They even provided a small piece of equipment to apply the labels,” adds Isaacs. “Creative came in and did an amazing job.”

Heidi Moore, senior buyer with Monterey Gourmet Foods, also appreciates working with Creative Labels for the quality of labels, the quick turnaround and the close working relationship the two companies have developed. “I would love to clone them,” Moore says.

Based in Salinas, Calif., Monterey Gourmet Foods has seven premium brands under its umbrella: Monterey Pasta Company, Monterey Gourmet Foods, Cibo Naturals, Emerald Valley Organics, Sonoma Foods and Isabella's Kitchen. Their pastas, pestos, tapenades, cheeses, dips and salsas are sold in most natural foods stores and a variety of grocery store chains.

The product labels are reminiscent of an old Monterey and days of John Steinbeck during the historic days of canneries. “Our labels have come a long way,” Moore says.

Moore adds that a bonus of working with Creative Labels is they are local. “Our service is very fast, because Creative just drives our order directly to us,” says Moore, who also is pleased to work with an environmentally friendly business that has a strong commit to recycling and solar power.

Founded in 1980 with one press, three employees and 700 sq. ft. of production space, Creative Labels has grown to five presses, 24 employees and 18,000 sq. ft. of facilities space. Creative Labels specializes in one-color to full-color high quality printing of pressure-sensitive labels, tags and coupons for a variety of industries, including numerous produce growers and shippers in Northern California. The company has HarvestMark capabilities and the equipment to produce the most technical and advanced label applications, including variable data.

*For more information, contact Creative Labels, Inc., 6670 Silacci Way, Gilroy, CA 95020. Phone (866) 552-2357 or visit the website at [www.creativelabels.com](http://www.creativelabels.com).*

**For Immediate Release**

## **Keep Your Vehicle Fleet Road Warrior Fit**

**– Best Maintenance Arsenal Includes Regularly Scheduled Cleaning –**

As they travel the North American roads, your vehicles are under continuous assault from acids, bird droppings, insect and animal remains, miscellaneous gunk, road salts and other contaminants. In the road war against corrosion, grime and muck, the best strategy to combat the assault is keeping a clean fleet.

Routine standard operating procedure to maintain a vehicle fleet includes keeping tires properly inflated to achieve optimum fuel efficiency and sticking to a regular service schedule for lubrication, parts replacement, hydraulics and a list of other items. A fleet maintenance program that also includes a regular cleaning schedule contributes to extending the life of your investment.

“Keeping your fleet clean is a very important part of a company’s maintenance program – both for longevity of the equipment and brand image,” says Jim Hill, president of JIM Mfg., Inc., a premier manufacturer of a mobile brush wash system designed for fleet operation care.

“Regular fleet washing reduces overall vehicle maintenance and keeps the fleet in prime condition,” says Hill. The road grime, salt and dirt build-up contribute to premature wear on dozens of vehicle parts, along with wear on the exterior finish, if not addressed. Washing all that away, however, can reduce or minimize repair costs for fleet operators. As well, a dirty surface has more drag than a clean one, so keeping a trailer clean will save money on fuel for the long haul.

While the impact to the bottom line in reduced repair and fuel expenses is quantifiable, the return on investment is somewhat more intangible, but no less impactful, for a fleet operator’s image. The single most important factor in a first impression is appearance; we often hear this applied to people, but it’s equally true of places and products. A clean vehicle, of course, makes a more positive impression than a dirty one – unless perhaps it’s an SUV in a television advertisement highlighting offroading for the aspirational user.

“A clean fleet directly reflects positively on an operator,” says Hill. “The vehicles represent the company to the public and customers. There’s a reasonable assumption that if a company is committed to this level of maintenance, there’s an equal commitment to overall maintenance. By extension, this contributes to an overall positive impression of the company.”

Hill advises companies operating medium- to large-size fleets on how they can incorporate an efficient and green cleaning function that minimizes cleaning costs for their operations. His company has designed the Vader I 5000 Series mobile cleaning unit which can clean a 53' trailer in eight minutes or less for only \$4, a cost significantly below that of a contract washer or commercial drive-through truck wash.



According to Hill, for a business washing 50 trailers a week, the savings generated by the investment in a mobile cleaning unit from JIM Mfg., Inc. can start within the first year of purchase. The Vader I has undergone a continuous process of upgrading, and many of its features such as “Catch Basin,” “Water Reuse” and “Bay Version” were developed as a direct response to changing industry needs. Formerly made of steel, the water tanks now are made of a polymer that reduces weight and makes it easy to see the water level. Ergonomic redesign of the operator seat and control area provides greater comfort and visibility.

Additionally, since the Vader system is brush-based, it uses fewer chemical cleaning agents than some other washing approaches. Vader also captures and recycles most of the water used in the cleaning process. So together, the Vader approach leaves a smaller environmental footprint.

*For more information on enhancing your fleet image with a green and clean plan, contact JIM Mfg., Inc., 1153 Lake Ave., Fairmont, MN 56031. Phone (800) 541-6299 / (507) 238-1210 or visit the website [www.truckwasher.net](http://www.truckwasher.net).*

***For Immediate Release***

## **Body Reshaping, Weight Loss Benefits from Infrared Heat Treatments – Keep Spa Customers Coming Back for More as they See Immediate Results –**

We live in a world where people want to see results – and see them quickly – so when spa and salon owners can provide a body reshaping and weight loss regimen that delivers visible changes quickly, then they are on a path to many happy returns for both their clients and their businesses.

Many spas and salons have found that infrared heat treatments fit these parameters. The unique wrap procedure provides workout benefits without an actual physical workout, and the customer sees results quickly in body shape and on the scale. For the business owner, infrared heat treatments expand spa and salon offerings into the weight loss and fitness area.

Losing 1 to 2 inches without exercising is an appealing idea for anyone who wants to realize a body change for the better, and a personal care provider who can deliver the means to achieve this will have very grateful customers. Lonny Qualls, owner of Bodyworks Spa and Salon in Sallisaw, Oklahoma, attests to the positive aspects of infrared heat wraps both as a personal user and a business owner.

“As a small business owner, because you’re so busy trying to keep everything going, you often have to let something go,” says Qualls. “Often that’s your health.”

After looking at photos from a graduation trip to Orlando with his daughter, Qualls asked himself, “Who is this fat guy?” That was his inspiration to start making changes. Over a two-year period, he modified his eating habits and started exercising, but found that no matter what he tried, he couldn’t lose weight around his midsection or change his shape in that area.

So he turned to an infrared heat wrap system at his day spa. “Because it focuses on the major muscle groups, it actually is doing what the name implies – it’s contouring and shaping your body.”

He started taking “before and after” pictures and saw the results. When he’d show others the pictures, they would want to try the wrap system. Ultimately, Qualls dropped more than 50 pounds. He continues to use the wrap and finds that he loses two to three inches total (measuring biceps, chest, thighs, waist, etc.) each time.

Qualls recommends three sessions a week to start, followed by weekly maintenance sessions. “It’s not a magic pill, but if people take care of themselves, they’ll see maximum benefits adding the infrared wrap system to their regimen.”

One 50-minute session burns approximately 1,000 to 1,400 calories. For comparison, a 50-minute racquetball session burns 1,020 calories; swimming or jogging for 50 minutes burns 600 calories; 50 minutes of tennis burns 530 calories, and walking at 3.5 mph burns 300 calories in this time frame.

“For the majority of my clientele, once they use the system and see results, they love it and want to make it part of their routine.” He reports that customers see results in inches and pounds lost.

The infrared system Qualls chose to introduce at his operation is the Kontur™ system, designed by German physicians as a treatment for joint pain and immobility and first introduced in the United States in the 1980s. The system is promoted for use in weight loss, body reshaping, cellulite reduction, detoxification, stress management, and skin tightening and rejuvenation. Three clinical studies have shown the Kontur’s effectiveness with weight reduction, body shaping, joint mobility and certain skin conditions.

In one clinical study of deep thermal treatment looking at weight loss, 12 participants had ten 50-minute treatments. Of the 12, six followed a reduced calorie diet. Even in the relatively short period of 20 days, participants achieved significant weight reduction. Weight loss was greater for those following reduced calorie plans. Those on lower calories had an average weight loss of 14.3 pounds and between 2.8 and 3.1 inches in thighs abdomen and hips. The other participants lost an average of 8.8 pounds and between 2 and 2.4 inches in thighs, abdomen and hips.

From the business standpoint, Qualls says a wrap system such as the Kontur is a great addition to a spa or salon. There are no messy gels, oils or spray and thus no inventory to order and track. Providers just need to ensure that they’ve wrapped their clients properly, that they are hydrated before and after treatment and attended to as needed during the course of the treatment.

“When a user is fully hydrated, the system works really well,” adds Qualls. “The cool thing is you’re not sweating out water; your body actually is burning calories.”

Qualls says that with some infrared systems, heat isn’t released properly. It comes out by way of face, hands and feet, so treatments can’t be done on those areas effectively. But since Kontur focuses on muscle groups, the heat generated is more evenly dissipated through the circulatory system, so by the time blood reaches extremities, it’s cooled down. So when a client is in a Kontur treatment, that’s opportunity for him or her to also have a manicure, a mini-pedi or a relaxation facial, and thereby produce incremental sales for the business.

Besides tandem services, a perfect complementary service to a heat treatment is massage, according to Qualls. Since the infrared energy has penetrated deep into the muscles, they’re not stiff or tight, making it easier for the massage therapist to work the muscle groups.

Post treatment cleanup is easy too for the salon. Pads are removed, sanitized and air dried; the massage table is prepared with new towels and sheets; and the room is ready for the next client.

For Qualls, besides seeing personal health benefits from using an infrared heat wrap system, he's seen a boon to his business in the treatment that can aid clients in losing weight and inches. The wrap system has helped diversify his income stream, brought in customers who might not otherwise have visited a spa and kept customers returning. He adds, "Once the word was out and people saw results, the machine itself literally paid for itself in just a few months."

**Debbie MacDonald has been delivering health and beauty services to customers in the Framingham, Massachusetts, area for more than 35 years.** Since opening her first salon, the Mac Med Spa and Salon owner has grown to three locations with 70 employees providing medical-based services to traditional salon offerings for hair and nails, as well as massages, facials and other body treatments.

To achieve this growth, MacDonald always has looked for ways to bring more to the menu of services so that her clients have the ability to create a complete, repeat regimen to meet their needs. She also chose to add the Kontur infrared heat wrap system to her lineup of services.

It was happenstance that brought her to one treatment that met these criteria she sought. A client asked if she were familiar with the infrared body wrap treatment – she wasn't at the time – then she saw a television spot and soon thereafter took a call about just such a system.

Most everyone is trying to get healthier, eat healthier and looking for help in these areas to lose weight and become more fit, and the infrared body wrap treatment helps in all these areas, says MacDonald. It delivers heat deep into tissues and muscles, thereby promoting blood flow and enhancing circulation, promoting the release of toxins that are stored in fat cells.



Clients are wrapped with six form-fitting, but comfortable, nonallergenic silicone pads that cover about half of the body. These wraps heat up when infrared energy is delivered to them through copper wiring from a control unit. The heat can be directed at several



particular points to target treatment areas. But it's not a system where one is just wrapped up to sweat; the user gets the real benefits of burning calories just like in exercise.

Once wrapped, clients simply lie back and relax for the 50 minutes. Afterwards, MacDonald says, "You shuffle away so relaxed; there's nothing comparable to the experience." She attributes this to the targeted infrared heat, which she describes not as an uncomfortable heat, but like the kind of heat you experience on a soothing vacation in the islands by pool or ocean.

MacDonald says she has many happy clients who find the infrared wrap treatments tremendously helpful in supplementing weight loss programs and have seen results not just in pounds but in changed body shape.

"They're doing something for themselves that's contributing to their goals of eating healthier and slimming down."

The deep heating and energy release in muscles and organs during the treatment compares to what happens during exercise, according to the product manufacturer. Fat and toxins – not just water – are released and eliminated. Users report feeling invigorated and detoxified, as their bodies continue burning calories and fat for one to two days after treatment.

While the benefits to customers are numerous, MacDonald notes there are many for the business owner too. Training to use an infrared wraps is simple and easily finished in a two-hour session. As well, with the treatment system, there are no items to dispose of, as with many other types of spa equipment and processes. And once clients experience the benefits of initial treatments, they want more, and they tell their friends.

With obesity a major health issue for Americans today – more than one third of adults are obese – spa and salon providers can provide a valuable service when they offer infrared heat wrap services to their clientele. When a customer can relax for 50 minutes on a massage table and experience results similar to an aggressive, full-body workout – without having to work out – spa owners will have repeat customers who love their spa!

*For more information about infrared heat wrap systems, call Kontur™ at (800) 685-1346 or visit <http://konturbodywrap.com>.*

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## **New Family of Opaque Paperboard for Retail Signage**

***– Double-Sided Paper Stock with Black Center Offers Ideal Solution for Many POP Applications –***

Supermarkets, clothing store chains and other retail outlets need clear signage with messaging that's sharply and professionally printed to draw in their customers.

Signs, posters or banners that are printed on both sides of a single piece of paperboard may bleed through to either side if the proper technology is not used. The effect will be accentuated in the light of day, for example, with a storefront window sign. This poor print execution where a customer will see backwards type from the opposite side of the sign if not "blocked out" looks unprofessional and may confuse the customer because it's difficult to read.

This is not a problem though if the right paper is used in the print process, whether it is done by a commercial printer or by the in-house production department of a large corporation or major retailer, where large format digital printers that can handle this sort of job are increasingly found.

"Think of a deck of playing cards. It's essential that players not see each other's hand, so playing cards are printed on paper stock that has black in the middle that prevents seeing through to the other side of the card," says Mark J. Rowell, president of Mammoth Media, a digital print house in Pembroke, Massachusetts. "There are similar solutions for banners and other POP signage that need to be visible from two sides, with either a different or the same message on each side. If it's in a storefront or other well-lit area, it's even more critical that the right kind of paper stock is used."

New types of "block-out" or "stop-light" papers are the ideal stock for retail window signage and banners. The 100 percent opaque papers are perfect both for large retailers who have large format digital print capabilities in house and for commercial printers. The opaque papers meet the double-sided, no-bleed-through requirements.

This specialized product is created from two papers, with a black adhesive between them, laminated to create one piece. The black center makes the paper opaque, allowing for clean, double-sided, no-bleed-through printing. So viewers only see what they're supposed to see – there's no seeing through to the printing on the other side.

"This type of paper is well suited to window applications, because it so effectively blocks direct sunlight," says Rowell. He has used it on many retail POP signage projects, small and large, including major programs which require printing and distribution of materials across a nationwide chain.

One paper Rowell has used for numerous POP client needs is Opacity 2, a branded product from Lamitech. The product has superior print quality for digital, offset and screen printing, and the standard clay coating works well for two-sided printing. Opacity 2 is a brighter white than its predecessor, Opacity, and was created specifically to meet the needs of the digital print market.

The availability of the product in sheets up to 65” as well as in rolls makes it versatile to meet Rowell’s diverse printing needs. For a project that required printing and distribution to 1,900 retail locations, Rowell says rolls were the right match for the job that required 32,000 sq. feet of paper – or about 1 ¼ miles of printing.

“As a digital provider, a client will come to me with an idea or problem, and they rely on me to come up with the right answer,” says Rowell at Mammoth. “In turn, I rely on my paper suppliers to come up with the best fit in often a quick turnaround.”

This is another benefit of working with a producer such as Lamitech, according to Rowell, who says the company can produce an order quickly at a reasonable price.

“We might call in the morning, and the product will ship that night. They’ve really adapted to develop product on demand in an increasingly faster moving digital age,” says Rowell.

Many other commercial printers also appreciate the value of block-out papers. Among them are SignMasters, which finds these papers tremendously flexible. The Passaic, New Jersey, full-service commercial printer creates retail signage for many well-known clothing, food and beverage, health care, sports and transportation brands. As a one-stop shop, SignMasters manages projects beginning with the artwork, then converts it to various sizes for different fixture applications (from sign holders to window displays), prints and assembles into kits for distribution to retail points around the country.

Al Raimondi, plant manager for SignMasters, says they are receiving more and more requests for opaque signs to block sunlight, fluorescent lights or other light sources. In the past, Raimondi says it was difficult to achieve opacity in a thin-paper format – earlier options included opaque styrene, but it was a thick material. But Opacity 2, with its charcoal center and availability in calipers of .0085 or .011, works perfectly for double-sided print pieces on any of SignMasters’ three print processes – offset lithography, large format digital and conventional silk screen.

The lightweight, flexible paper stock helps reduce shipping expense too, an important factor as transportation costs have continued to increase. Shipping can be a significant budget item for many retailers that often must use overnight services to meet aggressive advertising and promotional campaign deadlines across multiple locations. Since the paper is flexible, it is easy for signage to be rolled and mailed in a tube, but once unrolled, it stays flat and thus hangs well.

“In the past, a 60” sign, for example, would have to ship flat, which meant more packaging; the flexibility to roll just wasn’t there,” says Raimondi. “So there are significant cost savings if you can roll material and use smaller packaging (tubes). If you have 500 stores that need signage kits and you had to ship flat – the old style – the packaging and shipping could cost more than the printing. It’s an innovative solution to business needs,” adds Raimondi.

Raimondi should know – he’s seen the industry change through several decades. Prior to joining SignMasters, he owned and operated a graphics and printing firm for more than 25 years, and comes from a long family line with ink in their blood – back as far as 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy when his ancestor, Marcantonio Raimondi, worked as an engraver and printmaker.

The opaque paper board also is recyclable, biodegradable and compostable, which is important for businesses invested in sustainable practices and the triple bottom line. Today many retailers prefer using signage created from paper rather than foam board or plastics, because it is more easily recycled.

Lamitech also has a broad range of sheet and roll products, including virgin paperboard, cardstock, recycled chipboard, laminated materials, foils and films for commercial printers and major box and packaging companies in North America.

*For more information about the difference Opacity 2 papers can make in printing your POP materials, call Lamitech, Inc. at (609) 860-8037 in New Jersey or visit [lamitech.com](http://lamitech.com).*

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## **Gearing up for Operational Success in Heavy Construction**

**– Durable, Performance-Tested Gears Are Integral to Equipment Safety, Longevity –**



When multiple contractors are on a heavy construction site with numerous resources deployed – all hitting their marks to bring a job to successful completion – the gears in the guts of the machinery cannot fail.

Failure means work stoppage and, even if only for a short period of time, ripple effects throughout the project that may have negative consequences. Even more importantly, failure may have safety impacts for workers.

The largest manufacturer of pile driving and drilling equipment in North America understands how important a job the gear fills in its business operations.

“Our heavy construction equipment may be on a job site positioning an I-beam weighing a few thousand pounds that at some point before final placement may be hanging 100 feet in the air,” says Mark Hudspeth of International Construction Equipment, Inc. (ICE) in North Carolina. “If a gear fails in a machine, someone could be injured. From materials to design and engineering specifications, the gears that go into ICE equipment have to be precisely manufactured for performance and safety, because we cannot have a gear fail,” says the ICE purchasing manager.

ICE pile driving equipment is put to the test every day in deep foundation projects from rebuilding the canals and levees in New Orleans post-Katrina to building bridges, docks, piers, parking garages, railroad tracks and high-rise buildings. Hudspeth says these large projects most often are very time and resource driven, so ICE product performance must execute at a high level. As an original equipment manufacturer, ICE strives to be a good partner in the field. If their equipment fails, it reflects negatively on the company, and negative impressions are difficult to reverse.

“The cost impact of a piece of our equipment breaking on a job might be significant,” says Hudspeth. “Human and materials resources might be idled, and schedules delayed, all of which will diminish our image as an OEM. So ICE works very hard to build quality equipment that doesn’t fail.”

That's why for nearly 20 years Hudspeth has teamed successfully with Midwest Gear, a custom gear grinder and manufacturer. Midwest Gear consistently produces precision products that perform reliably and have longevity.

A niche manufacturer with a wide range of custom gear products, Midwest Gear makes internal gears, adapters, couplings, pinions, pinion shafts, bull gears, helical gears, spur gears, spline shafts, sprockets and wheels. Midwest Gear produces gears and families of gears with a face of 1 inch to 18 inches. The company also has heat-treating capabilities available for carburizing, nitriding, flame hardening, induction hardening and through hardening.

The majority of gears that Midwest Gear produces for ICE are essential components that go into vibrating hammers, augers and drills. Whether an ICE vibratory hammer is vibrating a foundation beam into the ground or pulling one out, for example, the numerous gears spinning inside the hammer are critical to the operation. "They're as important as the engine on the power unit side of the job," says Hudspeth.

"Our company is very driven by customer satisfaction," says Rich Andrews, plant manager at Midwest Gear. "We are focused and committed to providing products for our customers with zero defects."

Having the confidence in your products to put them out in service for heavy duty jobs comes from knowing that in every step of the build, working with each component's vendor, there's the highest level of attention to all the details, including precision tooling, quality control and on-time delivery. The confidence level Hudspeth has in Midwest Gear has continuously been reinforced through the years, because there have been no failures or quality issues.

Good communications further support the long-term working relationship.

"Communication is critical," says Hudspeth. Before any gears were fabricated and put in a gearbox assembly, which was then installed in a piece of ICE heavy equipment, they were envisioned on an engineer's drawing board. From that drawing board through fabrication and delivery, Midwest Gear maintains connections with all parts of ICE – purchasing, accounting, engineering. The resultant high-quality products have kept ICE loyal to the Ohio custom gear maker.

Midwest Gear also anticipates needs, a characteristic Hudspeth would suggest be on anyone's checklist when seeking a vendor of any sort. For example, the plant manager at Midwest Gear might call to say an ICE release has shipped and to ask if additional quantity is needed, or he might call to advise that a gear release is ready early and to ask for shipment direction. "The willingness of Midwest Gear to stock product has been critical in holding down our costs," says Hudspeth.

Adds Midwest Gear's Andrews, "Working with us, ICE has been able to cut inventory costs and minimize capital outlay. We can set up the gear tooling once and conduct one or two runs, rather than doing multiple set-ups, which add cost.

"A successful relationship really is a partnership," says Andrews, who always looks for ways to add value to customer relationships. For example, he encourages potential and current OEM customers – if they're not doing so already – to explore the benefit from looking at estimated annual use and planning for parts needs accordingly, as ICE does. If a part fails in a customer's equipment – and that custom component has not already been manufactured and sitting in inventory – there's going to be unnecessary pressure on the customer's business to get that part produced in a rush situation, which will add cost.

In another situation, Midwest Gear worked to develop a gear assemblage that was more durable and had interchangeable parts. The customer had been having failures with the gearbox that was made up of four gears. "We developed a more durable product to tight tolerances with interchangeable parts so there was less work in the assembly."

Midwest Gear is recognized for its precision gear grinding capabilities for straight or crowned teeth. Midwest Gear has grinding capability to produce high-quality precision gears at the higher rated AGMA (American Gear Manufacturers Association) levels of 10 to 15. The company handles materials research and works in plastic and steel to produce numerous high-quality products used in construction and industrial equipment, offshore rig and marine applications, rail transit and steel mills. They also have produced products used in the agricultural, forestry, paper and packaging and mining industries.

A manufacturer since 1972, Midwest Gear is an AGMA member, which represents some 400 of the world's top gearing experts. Midwest Gear is part of the Marmon Group, A Berkshire Hathaway Company.

*For more information on avoiding gear failure through customer gear grinding and manufacturing, contact Rich Andrew at Midwest Gear, 2182 E. Aurora Road, Twinsburg, OH 44087-1965. Phone (330) 425-4419 or visit the website [www.mwgear.com](http://www.mwgear.com).*

**For Immediate Release**

## **Taking on Insurance Companies When Making a Claim**

**– ‘New School’ Approach to Personal Injury Seeks Best Insurance Settlement  
in Shortest Time for Injured –**

No one plans on getting injured or in an accident, but unfortunately it happens every day. From car, motorcycle and bicycle crashes to other events which result in injuries, disability and even wrongful death, bad things happen.

So if you or someone in your family are hurt, you want to be sure you receive the compensation due from insurance to meet your medical expenses and cover living costs.

Unfortunately, the insurance company you may be counting on to assist you through a challenging time may be putting its own interests ahead of yours. According to numerous news reports and books on the topic, insurance companies are coming under increasing scrutiny for employing techniques designed to minimize payouts, delay settlements and even deny claims in an effort to maximize profits.



But this doesn't mean you have to kowtow to big insurance firms. Some attorneys are utilizing a "new school" approach to personal injury cases to achieve settlements significantly higher and faster than the industry average despite the tactics employed by insurance companies. This new approach is based less on how to try a case in court, and more on a deep and detailed understanding of the business of insurance, how payouts are determined and how these factors can be managed in favor of the injured party.



## **Insurance Company Tactics**

In the extensively researched book, “From Good Hands to Boxing Gloves: The Dark Side of Insurance,” David J. Berardinelli showed a pattern of business practices employed by giant insurer Allstate that minimized settlements for its customers but maximized company profits. The author and insurance law attorney explored how, in addition to underpaying customer claims, the insurance company as a matter of policy flat-out denied customer claims.

Even more surprising was Allstate’s stance during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. According to the book, during trial proceedings insurance adjusters changed the loss forms submitted by policyholders to reflect higher losses, bilking the taxpayer-funded National Flood Insurance Program, underpaying its customers and pocketing the difference.

Driven by a “bottom-line” mentality, Allstate and other large insurance corporations have engaged the services of organizations such as McKinsey & Company, a global advisor to large businesses. What these types of consulting firms have crafted for the insurers are computer-based models that set customer compensation parameters favoring the company to maximize profits and minimize payouts.

Anderson Cooper on CNN also has reported on how insurance companies have avoided paying billions of dollars in claims by delaying, denying and defending against claims through protracted legal proceedings. This standard has evolved in recent decades from practices first created for insurers as a way to cut losses and costs and to reduce fraud.

## **The “New School” Approach**

According to industry research, between 80 and 90 percent of those that file for accident compensation will accept an insurance company offer without challenging it. However, according to the Insurance Research Council, the average compensation increases by 40 percent simply by contacting an attorney – and informing the insurer that legal representation was contacted.

When personal injury victims actually *hire* an attorney, on average, the settlement comes in three times higher than without an attorney. For auto accident victims that hire an attorney, the recovery amount comes in three and one-half times higher.

This is because insurance companies know that if a customer hires, or even considers hiring, an attorney the financial implications for them are potentially greater. The insurers’ business models on which they base award decisions in fact will adjust payouts factoring in this new information.

This underscores the importance of an approach to personal injury that is based on a true understanding of the sophisticated computer modeling used by insurance carriers to determine payouts – factors that can be known and utilized to secure the best possible payout for the injured party.

“Traditionally, lawyers approach personal injury cases like lawyers; they look at how the case would be presented to a jury,” says Michael Steinger, founder of the South Florida personal injury law firm of Steinger, Iscoe & Greene. “In other words, they look at it from the legal perspective rather than from the business perspective of the insurer.”

Given that 85% of all cases don’t get to litigation, Steinger says a more effective approach is to understand how the business models of insurers have been created to assess the dollar value attached to cases and to use this inside information to obtain a more favorable result. Steinger calls this a “new school” approach to personal injury.

“We know what tools the insurance companies have in their toolbox, and our knowledge in this regard helps level the playing field,” adds Steinger. “This emphasis is reflected in the background and experience of our attorneys, many of which previously worked for insurance providers or large businesses.”

### **Speeding Settlement**

According to Steinger, the new school approach has another major advantage: it is designed to speed up the resolution of the case and final settlement so that those that are injured have the money when they need it – not long after they have recovered.

“Our goal is to obtain the greatest financial recovery as early as possible, rather than holding on to a case for the full four years allowed per Florida statute,” Steinger explains.

More than lip service for the client, there are tactical advantages to securing a faster settlement. Historically, insurers have run out the clock and delayed paying claims – waiting until all expenses have come in and the predicted future costs are clearer. This actually works to the benefit of the insurance carrier, which then argues in court for the minimum payout possible.

Knowing this, the new school approach engages experts as needed to assess the case and estimate future costs while the injured party is still undergoing treatment. Armed with this information, the law firm can press for a settlement sooner, rather than later, at a time when it is more difficult for the insurance company to fully gauge potential future expenses and risk.

Using this approach, Steinger says his firm consistently obtains larger settlements in less time for its clients than the national average.

“Most people don’t have the ability to take on the insurance companies. By understanding the business of insurance in addition to the law, our goal is ultimately to ensure clients that have been injured get what they deserve, and need, to recover,” says Steinger.

*For more information contact Steinger, Iscoe & Greene at (800) 560-5059 or visit [injurylawyers.com](http://injurylawyers.com). Steinger, Iscoe & Greene is a personal injury law firm with offices in Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Okeechobee, Port St. Lucie, West Palm Beach, Fort Meyers and Naples.*

**For Immediate Release**

## **Soyrizo Packs all of the Flavor of Chorizo in Healthy, Tasty Alternative**

For those who love chorizo Mexican pork sausage, but can do with foregoing the high fat content (along with the salivary and lymph glands that are traditionally part of chorizos), Soyrizo™ is a healthy, vegetarian alternative full of flavor and spiciness.

Fans of Soyrizo have called it the best thing to happen to veganism. Regardless if you're a vegan, vegetarian or hardcore meat lover, Soyrizo is the perfect match for many American, Mexican, Southwestern and Spanish dishes.

Soyrizo tastes like meat and has the texture of meat, but it has none of the attributes that will have your doctor or dietician reprimanding you for having it in your diet. The cholesterol-free product delivers 46 percent fewer calories in comparison to traditional chorizo and 57 percent fewer calories from fat. Soyrizo has no sodium nitrite (a food preservative and color fixative) either.



The versatile food makes flavorful breakfast omelets and other egg dishes as easily as a tasty Mexican lunch salad. For dinner, Soyrizo makes a perfect pizza topping and a mean vegetarian chili. It's an excellent addition too for beans, burritos, enchiladas, potatoes, rice, soups and tacos. A single-size serving of Soyrizo (2 oz.) has 120 calories and 7g of protein and all the paprika and other spices that combine to make a signature chorizo.

Soyrizo is made with 100 percent soy beans. Soy, which has been part of the human diet for thousands of years, is a vegetable that also has all eight essential proteins, so it's a perfect way to meet protein needs meatlessly.

Soy also boasts B vitamin, calcium, fiber, iron, potassium and zinc in its makeup, along with the much-touted omega-3 fatty acids. It's low in saturated fats and has no cholesterol either. Since what fat is in soy is mostly unsaturated, that means it doesn't raise cholesterol in the blood.

Shifting diets to include soy as replacements for other foods is believed to help lower the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. There also are indicators that soy reduces symptoms of menopause and osteoporosis, while there's linkage to lower rates of cancer as well. And for diabetics, soy slows digestion and absorption rates, which means more stable blood sugar.

A lover of meat and very flavorful Mexican food, Mark Roth created Soyrizo as an alternative to chorizo 15 years ago in California. After learning his cholesterol was too high and being told he needed to make some dietary changes, the El Burrito Food Products, Inc. company president was determined to make a type of chorizo that he could eat with the same taste and texture of his favorite chorizo. Soyrizo was the result.

A 12 oz. package of Soyrizo retails for an average \$3.99. Soyrizo cooks readily over high heat and can be frozen. Soyrizo natural soy brands, including Melissa's and Frita's, are found at traditional grocers and health food stores across the country, and are used in breakfast, lunch and dinner menu items at restaurants from coast to coast.

El Burrito Food Products, Inc. also makes soy knockwurst, sausage, meatloaf and taco filling, as well as fine salsa, guacamole, masa and nixtamal.

*For more information on Soyrizo or a variety of other soy-based products, contact Frank Perez, marketing manager, El Burrito Food Products, Inc., P.O. Box 90125, Industry, CA 91715. Phone (800) 933-7828 or visit [www.elburritofoods.com](http://www.elburritofoods.com).*

## FROM THE KITCHEN OF EL BURRITO

### Soyrizo Empanandas

These small, savory pies make great party appetizers.

Prep time: 1 hour

Number of servings: about 2 dozen



#### *Dough:*

4 cups flour  
2 eggs or ½ cup egg substitute  
5 tablespoons vegetable shortening  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 ½ cups plain soymilk

Place the flour, eggs or egg substitute, shortening and salt in a food processor bowl and pulse until well mixed. Add half of the soymilk and pulse until blended. Add the rest of the soymilk and pulse until a ball forms.

Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Roll the dough out to 1/8" thickness on a floured cutting board. Cut out 3" circles. Place 1 tablespoon of Soyrizo mix in the center of each circle. Fold into a half-circle. Crimp the outer edge with a fork to seal. Heat the oil in a heavy skillet. Add the empanadas and brown lightly on both sides. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm.

#### *Filling:*

1 ½ pounds Soyrizo soy sausage, crumbled  
1 medium onion, diced  
1 teaspoon fresh garlic, minced  
½ cup salsa

Oil for frying

Brown the Soyrizo quickly in oil in a heavy skillet (soy sausages need little cooking). Add the onion and garlic; cook until the onion is just soft.

Drain off any excess fat. Mix in the salsa. Set aside.

For more recipe ideas with Soyrizo, visit the "Recipes" section at [elburritofoods.com](http://elburritofoods.com).

*For Immediate Release*

## **Hospitality and Travel Industries Recognize the Importance of Keeping Kids Creatively Engaged During Family Trips**

Savvy professionals in the hospitality industry always remember their youngest customers.

By ensuring that kids are creatively engaged and part of a special experience – be it dining out or traveling to an exciting hotel or resort destination, such as The Breakers in Florida – all those sharing the same space in time will benefit. “Leisure dining,” for example, can be anything but for restaurant patrons if there is even one unhappy child in the room.

In the highly competitive environment to retain customers, businesses are challenged not only with the best way to address the kid equation, but how to do it cost effectively.

The Breakers in the heart of Palm Beach caters to a variety of guests, but it remains very family-minded. Guests are drawn to the legendary resort destination, founded just before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for its timeless atmosphere and relaxed elegance, as well as championship golf, tennis courts, luxury spa, five pools, boutiques and 140 acres of oceanfront, featuring luxurious beach bungalows.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 540-room, Italian Renaissance-style hotel has magnificent interiors and is artfully landscaped. In the last decade, \$250 million has been invested in revitalizing the property so the tradition of being the perfect energizing destination for multi-generational travelers will continue.



In addition to a complete Family Entertainment Center and extensive program of family and children's activities, and a variety of water sports, since 2003, one way the hotel has accommodated families and kept its youngest guests happy is with Wikki Stix, a fun, bendable and buildable craft toy that's a four-time *Parents' Choice Award Winner*.



Made of colorful yarn strips that are bonded with a nontoxic, food-grade patented wax, Wikki Stix can be bent, twisted and assembled to create two- or three-dimensional works of art. They can be used to connect-the-dots and make-a-shape, or craft rings, bracelets, necklaces and figures, among many other possibilities. As well, Wikki Stix are reusable, so kids can continue enjoying them even after their initial encounter. Individual packets of eight and a themed or custom play sheet provide children an open-ended play opportunity.

"Children get excited about Wikki Stix because they present a fun change to the traditional crayon and coloring book found in most restaurants," says Nick Velardo, Director of Food and Beverage, Restaurants and Recreation, The Breakers Palm Beach. "We see children getting really creative and imaginative with how they use them, and in some cases it becomes the entertainment for the entire table.



"They can be used over and over, so when one art project ends, another begins," adds Velardo, who notes how easily Wikki Stix can be removed from floors, or any other surface, without leaving residue or staining furniture. "This makes them especially appealing to restaurateurs who cringe at the idea of throwing away table linens that have been ruined by the dyes in many crayons."

The Breakers has provided Wikki Stix in several of its restaurants – The Italian Restaurant, the hotel's most family-minded concept located inside the Family Entertainment Center; The Circle dining room for breakfast; two casual beachfront restaurants, The Ocean Grill and The Beach Club; and The Seafood Bar.

Ann Margo Peart, who handles public relations for the property, agrees with Velardo on how providing Wikki Stix at many of The Breakers' restaurants is a great way to keep kids busy. "Families can play together. Oftentimes, when our team approaches a table, the whole family will be wearing 'Wikki' glasses.

"Kids will also make 'Wikki' bracelets for mom and dad," Peart says. "Because Wikki Stix are used more to make objects, they create a more interactive experience for families who are dining. The creations spark varied parental reactions ranging from being impressed with their young Michelangelo to belly laughter."

Perhaps Wikki Stix helped contribute to *The Wall Street Journal* naming The Breakers as the “Best Family Vacation!”



Other hotels have found Wikki Stix a good addition to their amenity kits that they provide guests upon check-in.

Lisa Douglas found that Wikki Stix work as well with young travelers at 30,000 feet as they do with those at ground level, as in The Breakers’ experience.

Douglas works in sales and marketing for Oakfield Farms Solutions in Dallas, a company that provides packaged snacks for its airline clients. Post 9/11, many airlines ceased serving complimentary food and gradually transitioned into onboard retail programs that offer a shelf-stable snack or meal for sale. A snack kit might, for instance, include salami, potato chips, cheese, crackers and a cookie.

Not long ago, Allegiant, a leisure travel company focused on airline service to small, underserved U.S. cities, asked Oakfield Farms Solutions to design new items for their onboard retail program, including a kids’ pack. Douglas had earlier found Wikki Stix at a hobby store when she was desperately in search of portable travel items to keep her then three-year-old daughter distracted on a plane trip. She has been a fan ever since.

“Quiet is key for both moms and fellow travelers,” says Douglas. Wikki Stix fit that requirement and were also easy to handle, as they don’t create a mess that requires cleaning off an airline tray table, clothing or hands.



So when Oakfield Farms Solutions became Allegiant’s supplier for multi-component airline kits, they proposed Wikki Stix as the “fun” item, because of the product’s cost effectiveness and its overall positive attributes – Wikki Stix are clean, no mess and not sticky, and they don’t disturb other passengers.

Another reason Douglas promoted Wikki Stix to Allegiant was because of their appeal to a broad age group.

“So many of the little goodies on the market are perhaps ideal for two- to five-year olds, or for perhaps a little bit older age group,” Douglas says. “In my opinion, Wikki Stix have play value for ages three to ten; adults too. I’ve taken Wikki Stix to meetings, and adults can’t resist playing with them to see what they can make with them. So, I thought Wikki Stix were a really good fit for Allegiant for that reason.”

Douglas also believes Wikki Stix fit her definition of a successful onboard premium that is conducive to repeat sales. “A really successful premium needs to be either disposable or collectible – and a superior premium is both,” says Douglas. “So for an airline, the ideal



would be to make a sale on the flight going out and the flight coming back. Part of that is the food item, but the other part is the premium.”

Put another way, a desirable onboard kid kit for sale would include something that either the children used and disposed of on the first flight – so they will want another one on the return flight – or is collectible (they saved the goodies from the first flight and want another set to add to it).



“Wikki Stix are disposable, but they can be saved and collected, so you can make more creations if you get more Wikki Stix,” Douglas says.

Douglas also loved Wikki Stix for her client, because they can be branded cost effectively, and the producer is responsive and offers reasonable lead times, all the things a supplier wants. Additionally, there are many travel-related play sheet options.

“There are many options for premiums now, but many are made outside of the U.S., have long lead times and are not always quality products,” adds Douglas. “For my daughter, I’ve bought knock-offs of Wikki Stix, and they just are inferior; they don’t hold up, and the wax breaks.”

While other companies have copied the idea for this product, Wikki Stix are the original. They continue to be made in the U.S. and are available in a variety of colors and sizes.

For more information, call 800-869-4554, fax 602-870-9877 or email [info@wikkistix.com](mailto:info@wikkistix.com). You may also visit [www.wikkistix.com](http://www.wikkistix.com), or write to Omnicor, Inc., 2432 W. Peoria, #1188, Phoenix, AZ 85029.