Case Study – February 2016

Creative Displays specialises in the design and manufacture of interactive retail displays. With a track record spanning nearly 30 years, and a host of high profile clients, they provide some of New Zealand's most innovative display cabinet solutions.

Since 2003, Creative Displays had been using Vectorworks to aid the in the design and production of its products. In late 2015, the business migrated to Quantum – Megabits' total design and production solution for joinery business.

Robert Tollenaar, Creative Displays' General Manager, shares his thoughts on how the new software solution is transforming his business.
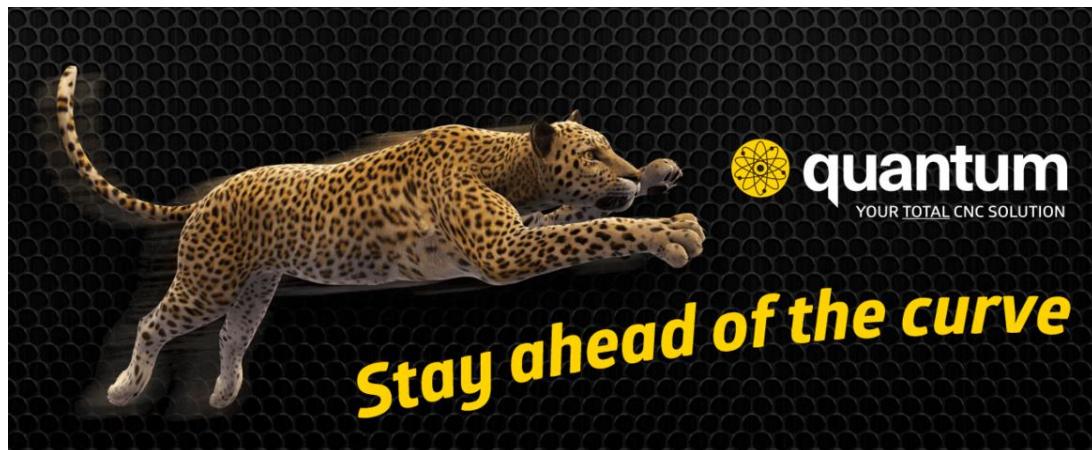
Can you tell us a bit about Creative Displays?

We manufacture shop fittings, slat walls and displays, as well as the odd kitchen and item of furniture for commercial or industrial use. Our area of specialisation is customised displays and wall units for retail applications, and we do a lot of work with in interactive displays. Our clients are retailers, and wholesalers looking to get an edge over their competition.

How long have your been using Vectorworks software in your business?

We've been using Vectorworks ever since I took on the business in 2003, and had added InteriorCAD in 2011. While we found the software very intuitive to use, it wasn't well-integrated, which meant that exploding design files and importing them into our Biesse nesting software was very cumbersome. A lot of the nesting work still needed to be done manually, which was a real headache.
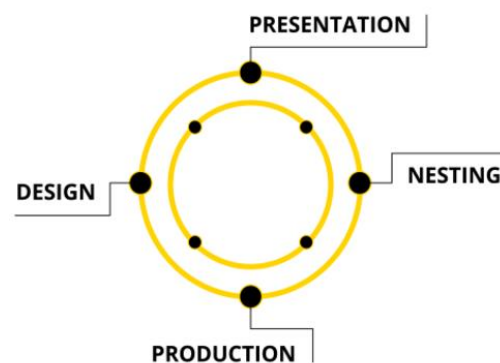
What made you switch to Quantum?

In 2015, Megabits suggested that we try the newly-released, updated version of InteriorCAD as part of its full-service CNC solution – Quantum.

We already knew that Vectorworks solutions were intuitive, and much easier to learn than other software, so we jumped at the opportunity.

Marilyn Best from Megabits gave us a demo of the new software and it ticked every box on our wish list, for a price that was really reasonable in comparison with other software.

It's a total joinery package the covers everything from design, high end presentation, best rendering available and direct output to CNC. Its drawing tools are of an incredibly high standard, and it can integrate seamlessly with virtually any CNC machine.

The ability to create complex, organic shapes easily is a core feature of Quantum. How important was this for your business?
Quantum's most attractive feature was its ability to create curves. Retail display designs rely hugely on organic shapes – while there may be a square box in the middle of the display, it will almost always have a number of complex shapes wrapped around it. Quantum lets us create these kinds of shapes and output them to production much more easily. We've been very impressed with the shapes we can export in 3D.

How else has Quantum benefited your business?

It's been just a few months since we started using Quantum, but we're already seeing significant benefits. Because the software is a total solution that goes right from design and presentation through to nesting and CNC production, it's automated a lot of the manual processes that we used to have to undertake.

The amount of time we're spending on programming has certainly come down a lot, which means our most experienced operations guys aren't stuck behind a computer anymore. They can be out on the floor, making sure each job is running smoothly.

No longer having to do nesting by hand, or rely on the inconsistent software that came with our CNC machines, is a huge headache resolved.

Has Quantum helped your turn-around times?

Absolutely! Before we moved to Quantum, stuff used to get made faster than we could programme it – now it's the other way around!

Deadlines are absolutely critical, and we're often up against the clock to get the job turned around to meet the client's requirements. Being able to do things quickly – especially on the programming side – has meant we can turn our jobs around much faster than before.

As an example, we had an urgent job on before Christmas where there were just three weeks to produce an installation for a major retailer in Auckland. Prior to using Quantum, we would have been working many late nights to get the work done in time. With the software, we were able to pump the work out in good time, without any stress.

Pitching your concept to the client can be critical to winning work. How has Quantum helped you sell your designs?

Beautifully rendered images are so important in our work, and we've always relied on Vectorworks to present our concepts.

Vectorworks has actually given us a big edge over many competitors too because, while they can draw, they can't produce the photo-like 3D renders that we can.

As an example, the concepts we do for a major cosmetics company's retail displays need to go to New York for sign off – so they have to be world-class. We've also done the occasional video walk-through, and our clients love them so we're keen to do more.

As we start using InteriorCAD more, I can see huge opportunity to improve our concepts even more.

How much training did your team need before they started using Quantum?

We know that to get the greatest benefit from Quantum, we need to be fully trained on all of its features.

One of the major benefits of the Quantum solution was that it's based on Vectorworks, which we knew from experience was really easy to learn and intuitive to use. What's great about Quantum is that the support team is based in New Zealand – so accessing their expertise is easy

We're planning to get another couple of licences for our design team, and to put our designers through more training, so they can make the most of the full suite of tools that

come with Quantum. We know that's a really important thing to do, in order to get the most out of the software.

Have there been any unexpected bonuses?

The labelling feature is really cool. It names each part that comes off the machine, adds a Job ID and indicated which parts need to be edge-taped.

Another great benefit is the ability to trace Vectorworks drawings out in ICAD, run them through the CNC output and figure out materials needed – it makes pricing materials much easier!

Our designers also love the 'publish' tool in Vectorworks, allows you to select which sheet layers you want to present – it's much faster than having to include every layer.

megabits
your visions realised

Talk to us about Quantum now!
Call us on 09 445 8480 or email us on marilyn@megabits.co.nz