

Huston Patterson Company History

- Huston Patterson **began as Herald & Review Printing and Stationery in 1895**, a commercial printing division of the *Decatur Herald & Review*.
- In 1939, Ernie Huston and Jesse Patterson, **Herald & Review Printing and Stationery employees, bought the division** and renamed it Huston Patterson. The company remained in the same location until 1953, and then moved to its present location.
- **In 1961, Robert G. Kowa bought Huston Patterson.** At the time, the letterpress printing company had print revenues of \$200,000. Shortly after Kowa's purchase, the company bought its first offset, single-color printing press.
- Kowa's oldest son, Thomas W., began working for the company in high school. After graduation from Eureka College **in 1976, Thomas joined the company full time.**
- As the company grew, Huston Patterson added 2-color and 4-color presses. **Not until 1978 when Huston Patterson was running three shifts and weekends did the company buy its first new press.**
- In 1983, Robert Kowa purchased Sigma Graphics, a printing company in Ottawa, Ill. Today, **Sigma Graphics is Huston Patterson's Special Product Division**, with a variety of single to full color presses, bindery and finishing equipment.
- In 1989, equipment including a new Heidelberg Speedmaster 5-color 40" press was added to keep pace with the greeting card markets and later positioned Huston Patterson to pursue the label and packaging industry.
- **Thomas W. Kowa became President/CEO** following his father's death in 1991. Concurring with his father's business philosophy, he lead the company to future success as Huston Patterson continued to grow and prosper.
- In 1998, Huston Patterson added an in-house sheeter to better serve clients competitively and to pass stock savings on to clients
- A year later, 1999, Huston Patterson updated their prepress by going directly from computer to plate, eventually eliminating working with film completely.
- In 2001, Huston Patterson added an 18,000 square foot building to house a new KBA 7-color 64" press with in-line UV and aqueous coating.
- **Tonya Kowa -Morelli**, Tom's daughter, joined HP in 2004 as the Client Services Manager covering the Southwest territory. Tonya is the **3rd generation of the Kowa family** to work in the print industry.

- In 2005, a second new KBA 6-color 64” press with in-line aqueous coating was added. Both presses have scanning Densitronics-S Closed Loop Spectrophotometry Systems and ARC (Auto Plate Register) with CCD video cameras. At the same time, an all-new jogging and cutting system was added to the finishing area and a fully automated Screen plate-setter was added to prepress. This technology provides clients with unmatched versatility and speed for the most complex jobs.
- In the spring of 2006, Huston Patterson circulated its **first issue of HPxpressions**, a quarterly package print industry publication, and **launched their new HPx brand programs (the Huston Patterson Experience) and website www.experincetheevolution.com** geared to focusing on exceeding their clients expectations.
- In the spring of 2007, the **Robert G. Kowa Theatre was constructed** for HPx Academy training, client presentations and media / corporate events. The theater-style seating accommodates up to 24 participants, and the space is equipped with a full-size projection screen and surround sound stereo system.
- In the summer of 2007, Huston Patterson took to the skies by establishing a private aviation company, **HPx Air** and purchasing a Cessna T206, providing round-trip travel for clients and industry partners to and from the HP headquarters in Decatur.
- In the fall of 2007, Huston Patterson was **voted “2007 Innovator of the Year”** by the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters members for their innovative **HPx Academy training program**.
- In late winter of 2008, Huston Patterson purchased two more brand new KBA 6-color presses featuring UV and aqueous in-line coating capabilities. A new 40-inch was installed at Sigma Graphics and the 56-inch was installed in the Decatur plant.
- In the spring of 2008, **Tonya Kowa-Morelli, was promoted to Huston Patterson’s leadership team** serving as Vice President of Sales and Marketing.
- In the fall of 2008, Huston Patterson’s **HPxpressions quarterly publication received the bronze award** from Printing Impressions and Publishing Executive magazines. This award was given for the outstanding printing of the 2007 4th quarter cover using MetalFX.
- Today, Huston Patterson focuses on top sheet and label printing for the packaging and point-of-purchase markets. Huston Patterson **has more than doubled print revenues** from 2001 to 2008.

Quick Facts

- Huston Patterson is the one of the oldest package printing companies in North America, and has served the large format print industry for more than 100 years.
- Huston Patterson employs about 85 professionals in its Decatur facilities, drawing talent from Decatur and 20 nearby communities.
- Consumers come in contact with Huston Patterson printed products every day, although most do not realize it. Huston Patterson prints the materials and displays for point-of-purchase and point-of-sale displays found in major retail outlets.
- Huston Patterson is ingrained in the community fabric of Decatur. The company is part of the Chamber of Commerce, and relies on many local entities to keep its doors open. Huston Patterson hires local union contractors, maintenance workers, equipment and cleaning service professionals, utilizes local freight lines and terminals, paper and other product suppliers whenever possible.
- Huston Patterson's use of soy-based inks lends a hand of support to Decatur's local farmers and strong soybean processing tradition. The company is an industry advocate for sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.
- Huston Patterson ranks in the top five percent of private companies found in the U.S. Census Bureau as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) for commercial lithographic printing, which covers a wide array of printing categories, including large format label printing.
- While the trend cited by various U.S. government sources is for large format printing company numbers to continue to decline, Huston Patterson strives to grow sales, and continues its rich history of contribution to the local economy.
- Huston Patterson has expanded its offerings to include employee, client and industry printing education through their HPx Academy.
- Today, Huston Patterson focuses on top sheet and label printing for the packaging and point-of-purchase markets. Huston Patterson has more than doubled print revenues from 2001 to 2008.
- Huston Patterson's vision is to be, "A world-class printing organization, providing our clients with unparalleled value and performance through the effective use of both technology and craftsmanship. This is accomplished by incorporating our unifying principles of trust, integrity and commitment to our valued clients."

Sigma Graphics Company History

- For more than 50 years, Sigma Graphics has been a full-service commercial printer, **specializing in sheet-fed offset printing**. Sigma prints and ships products all over the United States, Mexico and Canada.
- In 1961, Sigma started producing desk calendars. Honing the craft of producing calendars with personalized imprinting and drop shipping, Sigma **now produces and ships about 1.275 million calendars per year** throughout North America.
- Originally located in Streator, Ill., as a storefront printer, Sigma moved to its current **location in Ottawa, Ill., in 1972** as one of the first businesses to build north of I-80 in the area. Most staff members have been in Sigma's employ for more than 10 years.
- Sigma has **expanded its facility three times to accommodate growth**. Sigma can economically produce virtually any single to full-color printed piece while maintaining an emphasis on personal service and long-term customer relationships.
- In 1983, Sigma Graphics was purchased by Huston Patterson, and Sigma's commercial **market began to broaden** into more parts of northern Illinois, Chicago and its suburbs.
- Sigma added a **state-of-the-art 18"x 25" 14-station Bourg Collator A Series** in 1996. At the time, only one other such piece of equipment was in operation in the U.S.
- In 2001, Sigma installed a new 46" Saber cutter with air table, and in 2002, moved in a 40" Heidelberg 5-color Speedmaster to **allow in-house 4- and 5-color work**.
- In 2005, Sigma added another **18"x 25" Bourg Collator A Series** to collate, fold, stitch and trim.
- In 2007, **Tonya Kowa-Morelli** was named as Sigma's Director of Sales, Special Products Division, successfully leading Sigma to realize new sales potential and markets.
- In 2007, **Stephen Frantz** was named as Sigma's Chief Operating Officer, overseeing the installation of new equipment and the expansion of working personnel and shifts.
- In 2008, Sigma installed a new KBA **40-inch six color press** featuring UV or aqueous in-line coating capabilities.

Key Company Officials



Thomas W. Kowa
President/CEO

Thomas W. Kowa began work in the printing industry during high school in the 1970s, as a part-time employee for Huston Patterson. At the time, his father, Robert Kowa, was president and CEO of the company. Tom continued to work for Huston Patterson during summer breaks while he attended Eureka College. Following graduation in 1976 with a business administration degree, Tom joined Huston Patterson full-time, working in various capacities within the production arena. Tom then moved into key management positions in both Huston Patterson's Decatur, Ill., and Champaign, Ill., facilities. In 1990, Tom was named executive vice president of Huston Patterson and of sister company Sigma Graphics, a commercial printing facility in Ottawa, Ill. Tom became president of the company in 1991, following the death of his father. Tom is also actively involved in several trade organizations, including the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters (AICC).



Steve Frantz
Chief Operating Officer

Steve Frantz has been involved with the printing industry for more than 40 years, beginning in the pressroom of Colwell Printing in 1964. The publication and stationery printer became Kowa Graphics in 1975. Frantz joined the staff of Midland Litho in 1980 as assistant to the vice president, commercial division, a company known for printing Hallmark greeting cards and state road maps. In 1985, Frantz was hired by Huston Patterson as general manager, where he worked on Sangamon Greeting cards and assisted in establishing national sales territories for labels. Frantz served as vice president, sales and production, for Printing Incorporated from 1990-1995, worked as vice president of sales and marketing for Midland Litho from 1995-2000, and rejoined Huston Patterson in 2000 in his current position of COO. In 2007, his duties as COO were expanded to Sigma Graphics. In November of 2008, Frantz was inducted into Label Printing Industries of America (LPIA) Hall of Fame. During his successful printing career, Frantz has worked or supervised in every area of the field but accounting.

Key Company Officials



Don Ellis
Vice President, Manufacturing

Don Ellis worked for the *Decatur Herald & Review* newspaper from 1971 to 1989, beginning as an apprentice in the composing room and then becoming a prepress foreman. In 1978, Ellis was promoted to ad services/commercial printing manager. While in the position, he initiated the division's first work from hot metal to photo composition, and began the commercial printing division. Ellis performed efficiency studies for the division that led to a streamline in operations. In 1989, Ellis joined Huston Patterson in the customer service area and quickly moved into the position of plant manager before later being named vice president of manufacturing, his current position. At Huston Patterson, Ellis has led computer-to-plate technology and remains active in directing all prepress and pressroom activities. Today, he is responsible for the entire plant and facility. Ellis has attended numerous print and technical training courses and holds an associate's degree in business management. He has also participated in quality management and ISO training to help keep Huston Patterson on the cutting edge.



Jennifer Taylor
General Manager, Sigma Graphics, Inc.

Jennifer Taylor began work at Sigma Graphics more than 35 years ago as a part-time typesetter when the company was based in Streator, Ill. In 1972, Taylor was hired full time as a typesetter and also began to work as the general ledger bookkeeper and office manager. The company moved to Ottawa, Ill. Taylor continued to serve as the company's sole typesetter until 1987. After Sigma became part of the Huston Patterson family in the 1980s, Taylor assumed responsibility for sales and customer service in northern Illinois. Taylor was named general manager in the late 1980s. Since 2003, Taylor has been dedicated to all of the managerial tasks of running the company.



Tonya Kowa-Morelli
Vice President of Sales and Marketing

Kowa-Morelli graduated in 2002 with a B.S. degree in Communications from the University of Illinois at Chicago. From 2002-2003, she was a sales associate for AFLAC, where she moved into management as a District Sales Coordinator in the summer 2003. April of 2004, Tonya Kowa-Morelli joined Huston Patterson as the Client Services Manager for Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas. In the fall of 2007, Kowa-Morelli was named Sigma Graphics Director of Sales, Special Products Division. In the spring of 2008, she was promoted to Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Through her knowledge and incentives, she continually leads both companies' teams to reach new goals and successes through all internal and external programs and activities. Additionally, she is an active member of the Huston Patterson's Task Force and HPx Team. Kowa-Morelli sits on the board of the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters Sustainability Committee and has been recognized as "one of the top women in printing" by Printing Impressions.

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