



OPPORTUNITIES WITH UV FLATBED PRINTING

How to Customise & Profit
with UV Flatbed Printing

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Customisation and Business Opportunities



UV print has revolutionised customisation and personalisation in any number of industries.

It's quick, simple to master and removes the set-up costs and times you'd have with screen or pad printing from days gone by. If you've decided that UV print is the way forward for your business, it's likely that you've identified your niche and are ready to start producing for your clients.

So how do you combine your ideas and your UV print setup to start making a profit? Read on through this guide and we'll take you through:

- Common routes into UV printing
- What you need to get started
- Getting your products to market
- Getting a return on investment
- Products you can make and sell



How can you combine your ideas and UV print setup to make a profit?

UV Flatbed Printing



There's Huge Potential in UV Printing



New Ideas. New Markets. New Materials.



If you can think of it, chances are you can create it with UV Print.

Golf balls, bottles, ceramic tiles, trophies, smartphone cases, diaries, plastic, PVC, wood, cardboard, acrylic, leather, merchandising, promotional items, gifts, stationery, electronic devices...

It's incredibly satisfying to have an idea you absolutely know will work. You're sure your customers will love it. You'd love to produce it and it'll make your name in the marketplace.

But many a dream has been dashed by the barriers to entry being too high. The cost is prohibitive, the process too complicated or the technology just doesn't exist!

UV printing has broken down these barriers in the personalisation and customisation markets, making it one of the most groundbreaking and exciting innovations the print industry has seen. If you can think of it, chances are you can create it.

That's not to say UV printing only lends itself to highly innovative ideas from the most creative of individuals. Some of the most useful and profitable applications could be practical everyday items and signage – think safety signage, for example.



You can create various textures by building up layers of clear ink - particularly useful as a quick, cost-effective method of producing braille text, used in lifts and staircases or on emergency signage.

Better Technology Brings Better Opportunity

Customers love customisation. We are so used to mass-produced products that our own personal selling point, our individuality, feels like it's being eroded along with them. How can we express ourselves when finding that inspiration has become so difficult?

This is where you come in!

Give the customer what they want, before they even know what that is!

New markets and opportunities are yours for the taking as you can personalise virtually anything on demand, including corporate merchandise, signs, awards, giftware, industrial goods, bespoke domestic items, gadgets, garden and homeware, wedding gifts, sporting goods, product prototypes and more.

You also have astonishing flexibility when it comes to the material you can use and the products you can print on. UV ink can be printed directly onto a vast range of substrates including plastic, PVC, wood, cardboard, acrylic, leather and so much more.

If printing vibrant colour directly onto virtually any object or surface isn't enough, UV inks make special effects like embossing, textures, white and 3D effects so easy and so effective. So, whether you are a sign maker, graphics producer, advertising agency, designer, retailer or entrepreneur with loads of ideas, or if you already have your own screen or pad printing setup, UV printing can open up an abundance of new opportunities.

The right software can make all the difference too and VersaWorks by Roland DG has been refined to make your print process quick and easy. It opens up the possibilities of your printer and ensures you are getting as much from your machine as you can.

Personalised UV printed headphones

So, What is UV Printing and What Makes It Special?

Personalise drumsticks and other musical instruments

If you've seen the benefits presented by UV printing, you likely know how the technology differs from other forms of digital print and where its advantages lie.

Cost saving comes in several forms, from the economical low temperature and long lifecycle of the UV lamps to the instantly curing ink that allows the printed item to be used immediately. The LED lamps used in Roland flatbed UV printers are also ozone-free and emit only UV-A light, making them safer and more energy-efficient than many other UV printers.

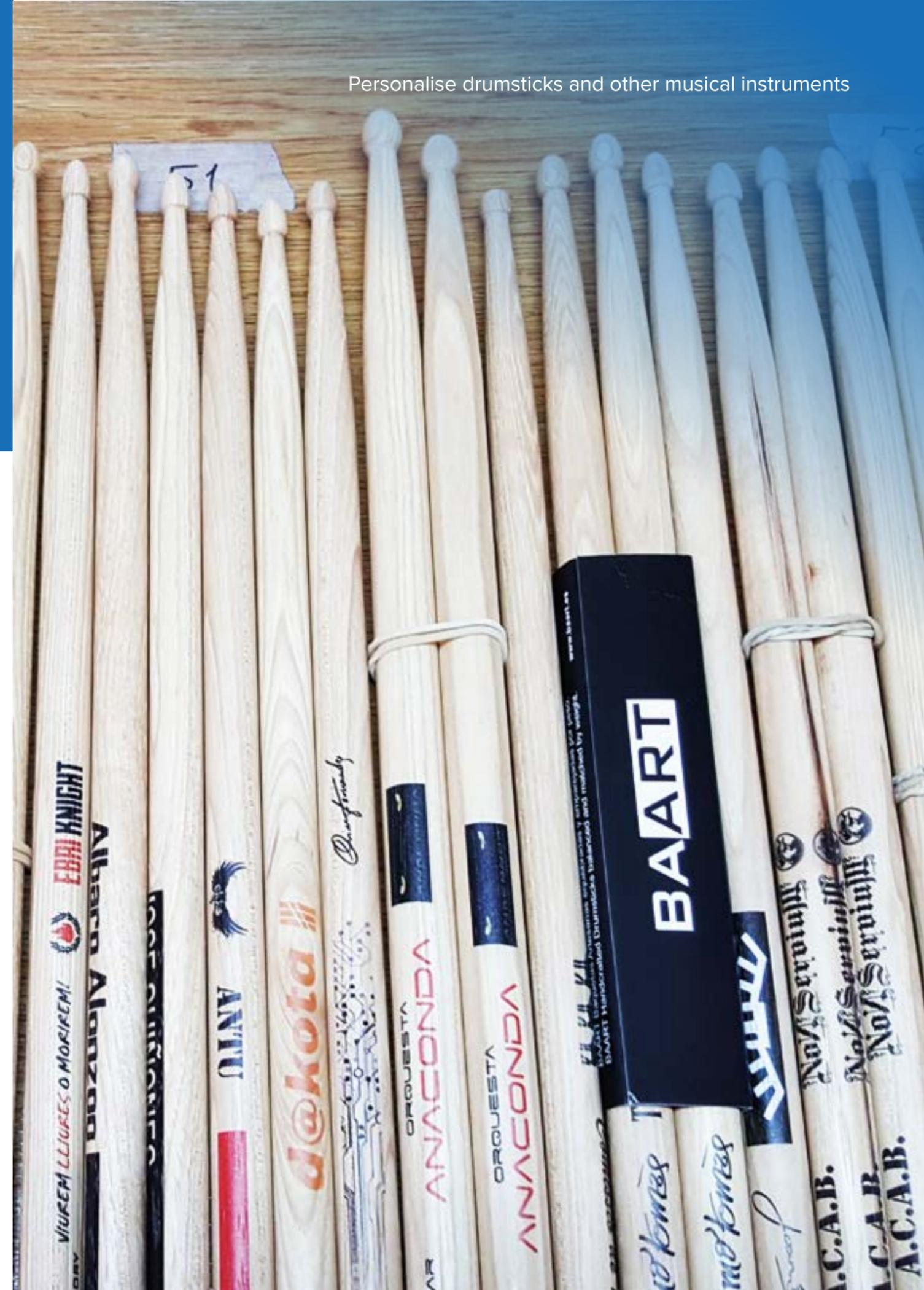
Of course, the reputation of your business and your ability to make money is directly affected by print quality. Roland's flatbed UV printers deliver precise ink placement thanks to advanced piezo print head technology, creating exact print quality, colour density and finish.

UV inks are designed for vibrancy and flexibility. They can print onto the broadest range of items, offering exciting

opportunities to personalise a whole array of products up to 200 mm high using solid white and gloss inks (matte and gloss) that work with the CMYK colour gamut to create stunning results.

Special effects are where UV ink really comes into its own. Printing multiple layers of gloss ink can create simulated embossing, braille and 3D textures. Enthusiastic users are constantly finding new applications for gloss inks, and we are sure there are many more that nobody has even thought of yet.

There are some surfaces that even UV inks struggle to adhere to, but special primer can be applied that allows users to print onto plastic, acrylic and other difficult substrates quickly and easily. UV ink is hard wearing to rubbing, light and chemicals, meaning it will stand the test of time.



Four Common Routes into Owning a UV Printer

This guide aims to help make your leap of faith into purchasing a UV printer a little less daunting by showing you the myriad benefits, from easy mastery to making a quick profit. So, if you're wondering how others have decided upon entering the world of UV printing, here are some common routes:

01 - Show Your Entrepreneurial Spirit

An entrepreneur is many things – willing to take risks, can spot an opportunity before anyone else, thinks creatively and always passionate about what they do. However, often the biggest difference between a successful entrepreneur and the rest of us is their ability to stay calm in the face of failure.

UV print was a big shift away from the tried and tested “traditional” printing methods. Those early adopters are now reaping the benefits. But just because UV print is more established, you can still take this technology in new and innovative directions. If you've spotted a niche or simply think you can do it better, owning a UV printer can help you propel your business towards your goals.

02 - Turn Your Passion into Profit

Having the means to turn your passion into a business is such a privilege and the good news is it has never been easier. Imagine being able to use the time you spend in work doing what you love and turning it into something successful.

Loving what you do isn't a magic recipe for success, but it can definitely help give you the energy and drive to give your business the best chance to succeed. And if there is a way to make a profit doing something you enjoy and that you'd be doing in your free time anyway, it could really be a great opportunity.



03 - It's Time to Diversify or Expand

There's a lot to be said for pushing your established business into new territory. Whether you've spotted a gap in the market or just have ideas that outstrip the capabilities of your equipment, diversifying can keep your business fresh, innovative, and tapped into larger markets.

And if you're in a place where you want to and can expand, that's usually great news. Perhaps your embroidery or cut vinyl business was set up as a side-hustle to scratch a creative itch or supplement your income. To have developed to a place of growth is a great sign of success.

04 - Bringing It In-House

Some businesses use third-party suppliers to deliver elements of what they provide. You'll always do due diligence in who you work with but relying on one or more third-party supplier can slow down important processes and be a barrier to productivity. Taking on more autonomy and responsibility in your business can be liberating.

To minimise a cumbersome and costly sign-off process with a supplier, many businesses choose to bring processes in-house. This can help improve your speed and responsiveness, have more control over price and ensure the quality of your products reach your expectations.

What Do You Need to Get Started?

Hopefully, you're full of ideas and desperate to get started. The next step is knowing what you need to make sure you hit the ground running.

01 - Printer and Ink

First and foremost, you need a UV printer and compatible UV ink. There are many machines available to fit a variety of needs and budgets, so it's important to do your research and land on the right set-up for you, your business, and your customers.

The best advice we can give here is speak to a Roland DG representative or dealer – experts in our technology, familiar with your industry and eager to give you the best advice possible. Of course, research on the web and shop around, but there's no substitute for talking to someone who has a wealth of experience in helping others like you to build their business.



02 - Design and RIP Software

The printer and ink deliver your idea to the physical realm, but you need suitable design and raster image processor (RIP) software to get the designs from your computer to your printer.

You may well have a preferred design programme, be it Adobe Illustrator, CorelDRAW or similar, and you will need one to produce your designs and get the most from your investment.

A RIP's purpose is to turn vector files produced by these programmes into rasters – otherwise known as a bitmap (pixel-based, fixed-resolution images). The printer can then read these files, convert them to print and help control the output in terms of quality, speed and much more.

Most printers have a basic 'out-of-the-box' driver that helps raster images, but a RIP like Roland DG's VersaWorks provides much more functionality to help with your workflow.

From simple processes like scaling or duplicating to adding white inks, gloss ink and complex layering, VersaWorks can do it all. It can even help with easily personalising designs with fonts and images through its variable data function. It can support your workflow, streamline production, and make it easier to get new hires up and running through its customisation options.

VersaWorks is an easy-to-use RIP included with every new purchase of a Roland printer. It gets you printing quickly with little fuss and a shallow learning curve. There are several RIP software packages available that give users different levels of functionality, and many are compatible with a Roland UV printer.



03 - Something to Print Onto

Have you already got a good idea of what you will be printing on? As we've already established, UV ink can be printed on any number of surfaces. Sometimes it can be hard to decide what's right for you though and suggestions are always welcome.

Print technology that is compatible with such a broad range of substrates is impressive. The print head travels just above the surface of the item, so the flatter the object the better, but even slight unevenness can be overcome using functions such as 'Distance Mode' in VersaWorks. This slows down the print head, allowing it to retain print quality while managing any irregularities on the surface.

Sourcing items to print onto at the price, quality and quantity that suits you can be overwhelming, but there are resources available. You could try:

- Online marketplaces – your first stop for purchasing online is often your customers first stop too
- Overseas marketplaces – widen your options by seeing what's available abroad*
- Social media groups and marketplaces – these can be a great source of information on the best places to find what you're looking for

* It's worth noting that there could be different legislation in relation to the products you're selling, specifically when sourcing from overseas.



Getting Your Products to Market



We've demonstrated that there is a broad range of businesses that might be interested in UV print, so routes to market will vary considerably and depend greatly on who your customers are. Here are six ways to reach them:

01 - Sell your products online via an online marketplace

- Customers are already aware of, trust and are used to buying from general marketplaces like Amazon and eBay or more specialised marketplaces like Etsy or Redbubble
- You benefit from the platform's position in the marketplace and their ability to help you find your audience
- There may be more competition on these platforms and customers can directly compare your offering to others
- You can incur fees for listings, promotions and more

02 - Build your own e-commerce website

- How are your IT skills? There are lots of options for creating your own ecommerce platform out there and many give you marketing features like email marketing and SEO tools.
- Roland DG wants to make ecommerce as simple for our customers as possible, so we created iMaxel PersBiz, the online shop designed to help sign makers and print businesses start selling online quickly and easily.

03 - Utilise Social Media Channels

- Selling on Facebook and Instagram is well established now, and many users are reaping the benefits of the integration of ecommerce in these platforms
- The pros and cons are similar to online marketplaces mentioned above, with the added benefit of integrating your business with the groups and social channels already present, as well as their impressive ads features.

04 - Sell your products in-person through a retail outlet

- Imagine wowing visitors with the versatility of your machine at a live event. You could show your customers what you can do first-hand, whether it's on your own premises, a seasonal pop-up, or a trade show. Impress with the process and the applications you can produce, turning spectators into customers.

05 - Up-sell/Cross-Sell to your existing customer-base

- You have an established relationship with your customer base, so why not offer them something new in addition to your core product? Personalised UV printed items could supplement your current offering and provide an opportunity to up-sell or cross-sell. A sign shop could offer customers USB drives, pens and other merchandising alongside their next purchase, for example.

06 - Produce Items for Other Businesses

- As an owner of a UV printer, you have a competitive advantage on other businesses who aren't structured to buy one but would like to add personalised products etc to their offering. You could step in and be their third-party supplier.



Making a Profit

We want to give you an idea of the type of projects that could help propel your business and start making you money. Many of you will already have great ideas that you can't wait to start producing, but sometimes we need a little inspiration. So please use this guide to help you decide the direction you want to go in.

Small businesses can come up against plenty of barriers to making a profit, especially early on. Prices set too low, expenses that are too high, they ignore what it is the customer really wants. So for any business to succeed and be sustainable, profit must be made before too long.

The Fast Way to Get a Return

You can produce more with greater flexibility and lower overheads than traditional screen or pad printing processes. Set-up times are negligible, and the output dries instantly, allowing you to offer your customers more options to customise their products without impacting your workflow or profitability.

50% of consumers believe customised products make better gifts*

Stockpiling is a thing of the past. With UV print, you print what you need, when you need it.

In days gone by, businesses would buy in bulk from a third-party and hope to sell the stock to make a profit. If they didn't, they paid for items they couldn't recoup on and needed to store or dispose of.

* Deloitte Consumer Review www.deloitte.com



With in-house digital printing machines, it's no longer necessary to print thousands of identical items in the hope of making a profit. If you have a desktop UV-LED printer, you can print very short runs of personalised items without the steep overheads of outsourcing the work.

Here are some of our favourite ways to turn a quick profit:

Make It Personal

Add value to items by customising them

Keep It Niche

Offer what nobody else is

Produce What You Need

And not what you don't

Do It Quickly

Meet the demand

Enter New Markets

Win corporate contracts or partner with agencies

Become an Expert

We give you the tools to master your machine

Make Great Savings

Spend money where it's useful



Looking for Ideas?



We have hundreds of them

The huge success of Etsy and Redbubble show just how popular the customisation and personalisation market is, and with equally huge possibilities for UV printing, you can expand what you offer to your existing customers and start finding new ones.

UV printing offers a fantastic business opportunity for creative entrepreneurs, or it can be a profitable application to your current graphics business. There is no complex learning curve – it's just a simple matter of creating the designs and selecting the right print mode.

Here are just a few examples of what can be done with a UV flatbed printer, but you can find a tremendous range of ideas wherever you turn.

Travel Products

- Leather luggage tags (blanks cost around \$3.00 per item)
- Leather passport cover (blanks cost around \$6.00 per item)



ROI for customised leather luggage tag (retail \$24.00)



Materials	Cost	Cost for Job
Promotional luggage tag	\$3.00/tag	\$3.00
CMYK Ink	\$0.40/m ²	\$0.20
Total Material Cost		\$3.20
Pieces per hour (depends on complexity)		30
Profit per hour		\$624.00



Electronic and Computer Goods

- **Plastic mobile phone cases** (blanks cost around £1.00 per item)
- **USB sticks** (blanks cost around £2.50 per item)

ROI for customised phone cases (retail \$30.00)



Materials	Cost	Cost for Job
Blank phone case	\$2.00/case	\$2.00
CMYK Ink	\$0.40/m ²	\$0.20
Total Material Cost		\$2.20
Pieces per hour (depends on complexity)		30
Profit per hour		\$834.00



Giftware and Promotional Items

- **Golf balls** (blanks cost around £0.88 per item)
- **Leather wallets** (blanks cost around £5.00 per item)

ROI for customised golf balls (retail \$25.00 for 3)



Materials	Cost	Cost for Job
3x blank golf balls	\$1.77/ball	\$5.30
CMYK Ink	\$1.00/m ²	\$1.20
Total Material Cost		\$6.50
Pieces per hour (depends on complexity)		20
Profit per hour		\$370.00



Stationery and Desk Goods

- **Pencils** (blanks cost around £0.13 per item)
- **Notebooks** (blanks cost around £2.90 per item)

ROI for customised notebooks (retail \$24.00)



Materials	Cost	Cost for Job
Blank notebook	\$5.80/notebook	\$5.80
CMYK Ink	\$0.40/m ²	\$0.20
Total Material Cost		\$6.00
Pieces per hour (depends on complexity)		20
Profit per hour		\$360.00

Get In Touch

We hope this guide has given you the information you need to take the next steps into owning and profiting from a UV flatbed printer.

Roland DG has seen many small businesses go from strength to strength with UV customisation and personalisation. This guide should give you a head start on getting a return on your investment as quickly as possible, helping your business grow.

If you need any more information, our team would be happy to help, so contact a Roland DG expert today.

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