

# INSIDE FINISHING

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*Communication for the Graphic Finishing Industry*

## **Egyptian Theme Stamped for Success**

the  
*immaginational*  
dream incubator  
by Janet Piedilato





# Bringing Ancient Imagery

## Collaboration Leads to Success

*By Dianna Brodine*

The print finishing business is often invisible from the customer's perspective. The packaging concept is presented to a printer, who interprets the needs of the customer and passes the foil stamping, embossing, and diecutting work along to a print finisher. The print finisher rarely engages in conversation with the customer, leaving the door wide open for miscommunication and errors in the final product.

The results can be quite different when the customer is involved from beginning to end in the creation of a product. When Janet Piedilato, a transpersonal psychologist, needed to bring ancient Egyptian symbolism to life for the packaging of her new products, she looked to the best in the finishing industry... and guided the process herself. The result brings the beautiful spiritual representation of the past together with the impressive decorating techniques of today.

### The Vision

*"I choose powerful mythic imagery in working with people, in attempting to usher them into a relaxing experience with their own personal dream state. As I moved ahead to embellish vessels and packaging, I wished it to symbolically represent the experience I wanted to invoke in the viewers, the sacred journey inward. I looked to Egyptian imagery for my inspiration. I chose the Lady of Peace for my logo, along with the Ancient Healing Eye. On the Dream Incubator box, the Zodiac Ceiling of Dendera, is featured." – Janet Piedilato*

Janet Piedilato has a private psychotherapy practice in Bedminster, N.J. Her work uses mental imagery to bring relaxation and greater mental awareness to her clients. Two of the tools that she provides to help her clients along this journey are the Immaginal Sacred Scent Collection candles and the Dream Incubator, designed by Janet herself. At first, the candles were given away, used as a tool to assist clients in reaching a relaxed, reflective state. Then clients began to ask for additional products for their relatives and friends. Piedilato sensed an opportunity to bring her message to a wider audience and began looking into more efficient packaging methods. Because of the complexity of the Egyptian hieroglyphics and symbols, she designed the packaging herself to make sure the images remained accurate and portrayed the correct message.

### The Collaboration

*"Napoleon's Le Description de L'Egypte is the huge folio produced by the French government in 1820, containing the gorgeous work which introduced Egypt to Europe! I set about to obtain the specific plates which I chose. Each was chosen for what they represent, as well as the empowering images they held... I cut and pasted these images on to the vessels before taking them to a computer artist to size for the actual presentation, which I wished to produce in black and gold. The deities would come to life from the depths of black to shine into the world. As in Dendera they are carved as reliefs on the walls, I wished to mimic this in the embossing. While few might actually experience a visit to the actual Egyptian temple, many could experience the imagery on my boxes." – Janet Piedilato*

Piedilato used her own computer and store-bought labels for her early packaging efforts. Mass production required a larger team. Adrianna Fusco was the graphic artist who used Piedilato's vision to create the computer graphics. Al Olivier also contributed, helping to properly size the folding cartons and set up boxes. Piedilato engaged Hap Engravers to produce the embossing plates. Century Packaging, East Brunswick, N.J., coordinated the printing of the boxes and Holographic Finishing, Ridgefield, N.J., finished the exotic look with embossing and foil stamping.

to Life



Century Packaging and Holographic Finishing worked with Piedilato for two years, creating the packaging exactly to her specifications. Because of the complexity of the stamping and embossing, the companies worked more collaboratively than is typical in the print finishing industry. "Generally, our stamping projects are simply a transfer of electronic files," said Joe Mosca, sales manager at Century Packaging. "This was hands-on. There was a lot more at stake here."

Michael Vulcano, president at Holographic Finishing, knew from the beginning that this project would require attention to detail that was truly beyond the norm. "We did extensive proofing because the packaging reflects a spiritual background. The hieroglyphics have to be done very precisely." Piedilato was looking for an old world antique feel for the product packaging. To achieve that look, Holographic did something unique – the finisher used the uncoated side of the paper for the printed side. The matte finish helped create the depths needed for the embossed images. In addition, Holographic worked with Quick Roll Leaf to develop a special color of gold stamping foil to provide the antique look for the stamped images.

### The Production

*"I saw this box so clearly right from the beginning... I wished to market this as something ever so special, gold leafed and embossed to truly touch and call to the buyer. You see the image... you are drawn to it... you touch it to feel what your eyes tell you are images embellished with embossing and gold leafing... it feels lush. The images, the hieroglyphs, dance beneath your fingers... Like the client who comes to enter an altered state of relaxation, the viewer is engaged in something very special."* – Janet Piedilato

The successful collaboration of customer, folding carton company, and print finisher had its start with Piedilato and her commitment to the product. "Janet was willing to spend the time and money, do the research, and do the package the right way," explained Charlie Vulcano, vice president at Holographic.

Mosca went on to add, "The relationship between Charlie and myself enabled this to happen. A lot of time was involved, and some people just don't want to put the time in."

The boxes made their first stop with Century Packaging. "Charlie has the more difficult part of it, but it was hard for us because of the colors and shadings," explained Mosca. "Also, printing on the uncoated side of the paperboard was a challenge, because the inks tended to absorb into the material like a sponge."

Vulcano described the process from his perspective: "We worked with Joe on layout and balancing out the sheet, because there was such deep embossing and combo stamping involved." Mosca elaborated, "We had to see how each item was laid out on the sheet for our printing and Charlie's embossing and stamping to work together."

The initial run of gold wax-free inks on black matte paper was completed by Century Packaging on an 8-color Roland with tower cover. The sheets moved on to Holographic Finishing for the embellishment

work. "We worked with the engraver to decide how deep the tooling needed to be to get the embossing as deep as possible without compromising the strength of the paper. The embossing is actually deeper than the paper is thick. We had to come up with makeready techniques to stretch the paper to allow the embossing without tearing it," said Vulcano.

The dies from Hap Engravers were critical to the accuracy of the pictures. A chemically-etched copper die was used for the flat stamping. A hand-engraved brass die was essential to the multi-level embossing and combo stamping processes.

Holographic credits its latest equipment installations with helping the company achieve success on complicated jobs. This particular product was created using two machines: the Iijima MJ 1040 ES stamper/diecutter from Diversified Graphic Machinery and the 2006 Saroglia stamper/diecutter. The cartons each required three to four passes through the presses, consisting of flat stamping, combo stamping, embossing, and diecutting. Multiple passes were used to recreate the symbols and hieroglyphics as accurately as possible.

The initial proof run was 1,000 pieces each for 12-14 different packages. It took two weeks, from creating the engraving to stamping, embossing, and diecutting the packages. After the initial run, the images were tweaked. The second run included over 100,000 pieces. "We were meeting deadlines for trade shows and other exhibition opportunities," stressed Vulcano. "Speed was essential, but not at the expense of accuracy."

The care taken in the printing and finishing processes extended to the packaging as well. "We had to be extremely careful as we sent the packages through the folder-gluer to avoid scratching the pieces. Everything had to be handled with kid gloves, all the way down to packing the finished pieces into boxes for shipping," explained Mosca.

### The Result

*"With the production, I hoped it would extend the scope of my work to a larger audience. As the work materialized I thought the art world, museums, and fine boutiques would recognize the beauty of presentation, as well as the quality of the product, as worthy in their own right, aside of my work."* – Janet Piedilato

The cartons that Holographic Finishing created for Janet Piedilato and her company, Immaginal, were submitted to the Foil Stamping and Embossing Association for the 13th Annual Gold Leaf Awards. The cartons won a silver award in the Best Foil Stamped/Embossed Folding Carton category. The recognition for the collaborative pieces has not stopped there. The Immaginal Dream Incubator was included in the gift bags given to award recipients, including Steven Spielberg, Ian McShane, and Jean Smart, at the Art Director's Guild of America award ceremony. Also, Piedilato just received notice that her products will be featured on Lifetime Television in June and July.

Charlie Vulcano summed up the experience and its unique result, "To get these pieces right, Joe Mosca, Janet, and I had to sit down and work together. We created a piece of artwork, not a carton." ■



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