



MEA Print Shop Equipment

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-Gus Schowengerdt

Headquartered in East Lansing, Michigan, The Michigan Education Association (MEA) is a labor union representing more than 157,000 teachers, faculty and education support staff throughout the state. MEA was founded in 1852 as the Michigan State Teachers Association. Today it is the largest public employee union in the state and the third largest education association in the United States.

Usually referred to as a "teachers' union" its membership also includes college faculty, public school custodians and bus drivers among others. It represents people working in neighborhood public schools as well as school employees working for private companies.

While MEA works to serve its members' employment goals, it also promotes public education. Its mission statement states: "The mission of the MEA is to ensure that the education of our students and the working environments of our members are of the highest quality."

We spoke with Gus Schowengerdt, Manager of Creative Projects at MEA. Gus is originally from Ohio and has a diverse background. He graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in Sociology. He worked as a Manager in a live music night club and then transitioned into print by working pre-press and eventually as an Art Director in the commercial market. Gus earned himself a position as Art Director and Manager of Creative Services with the American Cancer Society, and worked

## MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AT A GLANCE

### INTERVIEW WITH

Gus Schowengerdt, Manager of Creative Projects

### SOLUTION

Print Shop Pro<sup>®</sup> Light Template Builder Directory Integration Document Converter PSP Mail Module

### PRINT SHOP STAFF

7

### PRINT JOBS PER YEAR

3000

### EQUIPMENT

Xerox Printers & Copiers including one XC1000, one Nuvera 144 and one C60, one 30" Challenge Cutter, one Horizon 200A stitcher/folder with feeder and trimmer, an MBO P20 folder, a Rosback scorer/perforator, a Challenge drill, a Bostitch M19 stitcher, a Powis Fastback tape binder, two PitneyBowes Connect+ 3000 postage meters, a Pitney-Bowes DA70s addressing machine & a Bell+Howell 1000 6-pocket inserter

there for 10 years. He decided to relocate his family to Michigan when a position with MEA became available. He felt like it was the perfect fit. Gus has been with MEA since October of 2015. He is responsible for managing a staff of 7 which includes, 2 graphic designers, 1 social media and web specialist, 1 person that runs the duplicators, 1 bindery coordinator, 1 data coordinator and 1 creative project team assistant who also runs the mailroom.

The print shop at MEA processes approximately 3,000 jobs per year totaling more than 5 million impressions

annually. All of the jobs are processed using Print Shop Pro®. When asked about his customers Gus shared, "We (MEA Creative Projects Team) support about 100,000 union members, teachers and education support professionals in the state of Michigan. Our customers are also MEA headquarters, departments, field offices and local coordinating councils."

The shops equipment consists of Xerox Printers and Copiers including one XC1000, one Nuvera 144 and one C60, one 30" Challenge Cutter, one Horizon 200A stitcher/folder with feeder and trimmer, an MBO P20 folder, a Rosback scorer/perforator, a Challenge drill, a Bostitch M19 stitcher, a Powis Fastback tape binder, two Pitney-Bowes Connect+ 3000 postage meters, a Pitney-Bowes DA70s addressing machine and a Bell+Howell 1000 6-pocket inserter. In describing their equipment Gus shared, "We purchase as much US manufactured or Michigan manufactured equipment as possible to support the national and local economy." Most of the jobs the print shop is responsible for printing include contracts and member handbooks. These documents are used by members to guide them through their union experience.

The MEA faced a major challenge in March of 2013 when the state passed legislature making Michigan a "Right to Work State." This decision allows workers in the state to leverage the collective bargaining power of labor unions and associations such as MEA, without being a member or paying union dues. "This was a big hit to many labor unions in Michigan and around the country," shared Gus. He continued, "To deal with the impact of this change, we've focused on making our print projects more efficient and economical. We also don't charge our internal customers for labor and they only pay us for materials, click charges and shipping/postage. This provides significant savings to our customers' tight budgets. And, compared to going to an outside printer, we can be very economical while still providing materials that have a lot of flair.

Suzanne Dietel, Gus' predecessor selected PSP. She worked diligently to have the system up and running before her departure, which was a huge benefit to the department and to Gus as he stepped into his new role. The workflow automation tools and online ordering features PSP provides made taking on the



Rob Vitu, Dan Hunt, Kris Enright, Rachel Beyer, Dave Bender, Miriam Garcia, Shantell Coats, Gus Schowengerdt

position much less difficult. When asked his favorite feature in PSP, Gus responded, "I probably benefit the most from the cloning feature in PSP. This makes job submission easy for our customers and makes the fulfillment a breeze for our print shop staff. I really like this feature because we don't have to reinvent the wheel every time a job is submitted. Once we have tweaked an order the customer can easily re-order and our turnaround time is faster. I'm still learning a lot. I've learned a lot through trial and error and I'm constantly discovering new things."

We were pleased to have Gus join us for our 2017 PSP User Group Meeting. He shared, "I felt the PSP Annual User Group Meeting was very beneficial. I am excited about going back and doing it again. I enjoyed meeting with fellow PSP Users and discussing our challenges and sharing our successes."

Outside of printing, Gus enjoys jogging. He says, "I've had a good life. My top priority in life now is making my wife and 4 year old daughter laugh. Spending time with them is what I enjoy most."

Users can locate information on Gus's favorite feature by accessing the PSP online Knowledge Base.

**edu Business Solutions** has been providing simple and reliable software solutions exclusively to in-plant print shops and copy centers since 2002. **Print Shop Pro®** is a web-to-print solution that helps increase productivity, automate processes, streamline workflow, reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction. It is being used nationwide by government facilities, school districts, colleges, universities, cities, counties, medical centers and corporate in-plants.

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