



Home-grown design and printing business Images Inter Alia has expanded by leaps and bounds over the past year, and owner Julia Dashkevich says her customers are to thank for the success.

"Our reputation seems to be growing," she says. "But it's still about local people. There has been great, great support from local people here. Now I know what people are talking about – I feel the community spirit."

The North Street business has been fulfilling graphic design and printing needs in the area for 12 years, but has recently expanded its client base far beyond Perth's borders, with orders coming in from Kingston, Ottawa, Peterborough and Montreal. Despite the recession that

gripped the economy in the last year, Julia says it was Images Inter Alia's busiest year yet.

"Nothing is every typical here. There are no rules," she says. "You could come in and have no jobs lined up, and suddenly there is a lineup of people."

It is the challenge of creating eye-catching designs customized for each client that makes her job exciting, Julia says. Images Inter Alia will design anything from business cards, car magnets, posters and collages to sign design, art reproduction and photo correction.

"It's interesting. It's never the same," she says, describing the social atmosphere of the shop at 50 North St., beside the Downtown Perth Pharmasave. Conversations with clients have become more like conversations with friends, and people often linger around the shop to chat with other clients.

"It's a very social spot. A lot of people will come in here and just talk – not about business, but about other topics," she says. "All of these little details are adding to my enjoyment of it."

Julia took over the business in July of 2008 after relocating from Bulgaria, where she worked as an economist. Her new career is more rewarding than she dreamed it could be, she says.

The business has been located at its current spot since August, but it is actually where Images Inter Alia was originally located before it moved down the block briefly. Now that it is back in its old home, Julia says the shop is more visible from the street and offers more space for its expanding arsenal of printing and design equipment.

"We're very happy, and all the bright colours keep us awake and in a good mood!" she says, referring to the vibrant yellow walls that add a punch of colour to liven up the design shop.

The shop is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in order to serve the maximum number of clients, no matter what their schedule is.

If you stop by first thing in the morning, you will likely find Mindy Brown hard at work, designing everything from business cards to photo collage albums.

Brown completed a degree in animation at Sheridan College and Algonquin College and worked as an animator for cartoon TV shows in Ottawa while doing some graphic design on the side. Now, as a full-time graphic designer, she brings her experience designing striking visuals and her freehand drawing skills to create eye-catching logos and designs for clients.

Mindy and Julia's designs are popping up more frequently than ever and can be seen all over town, from large business signs (Dragon Moon on Gore Street East) to posters for Studio Theatre Productions.

"We are very proud," Julia says. "It's a really great feeling when you look at a window and you can say 'This is ours and this is ours.'"

"I was even at a gas station in Madoc and three or four of the posters in the window were ours," Brown says.

Images Inter Alia has a wide range of printing equipment that can handle almost any job up to 10,000 copies – and for anything it cannot print onsite, Images Inter Alia will work with a contractor to get the best deal for its clients.

"It's a one-stop shop," Julia says. "Ninety-nine per cent of people who come here will get exactly what they want, from start to finish."

The shop features a unique vegetable-ink printer which uses safe, biodegradable ink.

"You could even drink it," Julia laughs.

The workhorse of the shop is a colour digital press that can quickly print thousands of copies at an extremely high quality of 1,140 dots per inch.

For bigger jobs, Images Inter Alia has a large-format printer that can print on paper or canvas surfaces up to 1.2 metres (four feet) wide. The business also offers a black-and-white printer, a laminating machine and an automatic folding machine.

An upcoming addition will be a plotter that prints architectural blueprints and schematic drawings, which Julia expects to purchase within the next couple of months.

"There is a lot of demand for it," she says.

New, faster computer equipment and the latest graphic-design software are helping Julia and Mindy work more efficiently than ever.

The number-one priority of Images Inter Alia is to complete jobs as quickly as possible, often within one day, Julia says.



"We never put work aside – we start on it as soon as we get it," she says.

With the holiday season on the horizon, Julia and Mindy expect to be busy creating photo collages and manipulations and restoring old or damaged photos for Christmas cards and keepsakes.

"It's becoming very popular," Mindy says. "You can say so much more with a collage."

Examples of all types of work the duo does are available at the shop to give clients an idea of the services offered and to provide inspiration for their own projects.

Drop in to the location at 50 North St. or call 613-267-0078 to get in touch with Mindy and Julia.

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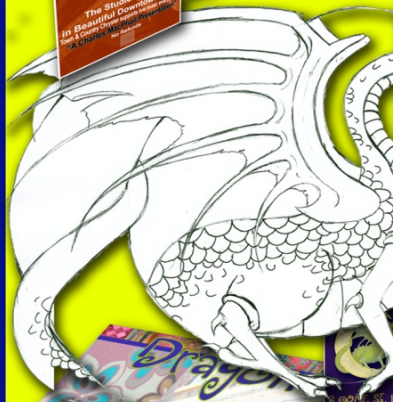
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