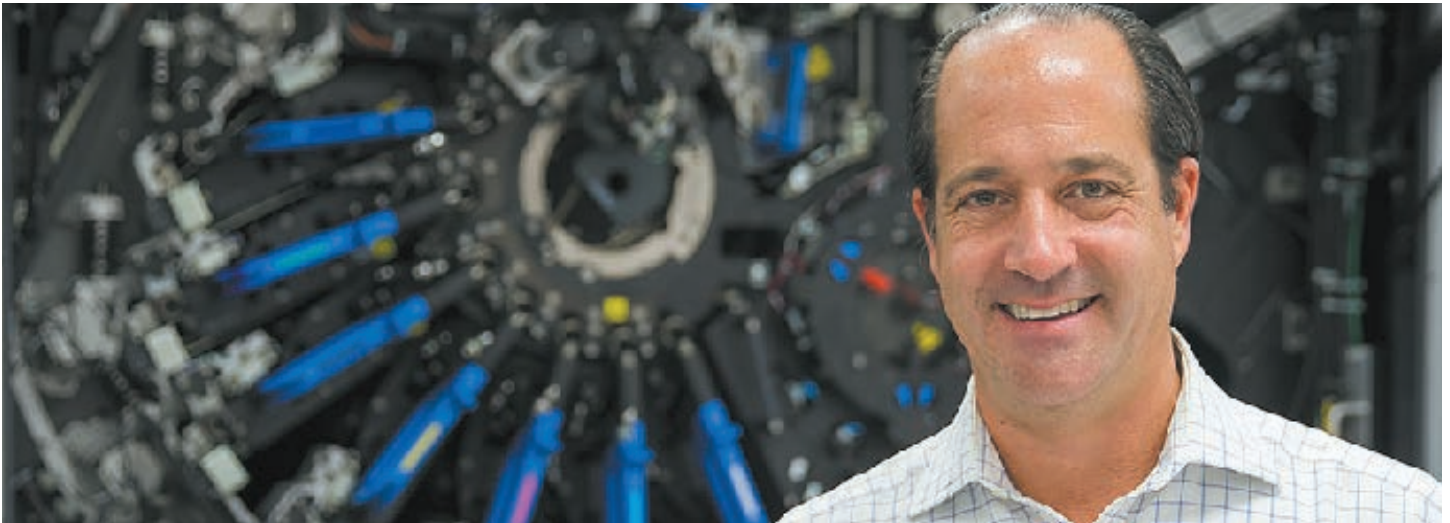


# EXCLUSIVE: Local competitor buys Multi-Craft

BY ROB DAUMEYER – EDITOR,  
CINCINNATI BUSINESS COURIER



**Eric Kahn**, Graphic Village CEO and owner of private equity firm Revitalize Capital.

**A** Blue Ash-based firm has purchased Multi-Craft – one of Greater Cincinnati’s largest women-owned businesses – making the combined company one of Greater Cincinnati’s largest locally based printing and marketing firms.

Graphic Village CEO Eric Kahn bought Newport-based Multi-Craft through his private equity firm Revitalize Capital. The firm will continue to operate as Multi-Craft, but its 45 employees eventually will move into new space that Graphic Village is currently seeking to handle its rapid growth.

Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

“This is a big one,” said Kahn, who with Graphic Village president Larry Kuhlman



**Debbie Simpson**,  
President, Multi-Craft.

Multi-Craft president Debbie Simpson said she and her two younger siblings with whom she co-owned the company (Tom Gibbs, executive vice president,

and Pam Lasita, secretary/treasurer) have been approached by “many firms for many years.”

Kahn, Kuhlman and the Multi-Craft siblings met over a long dinner at the Metropolitan Club and were able to keep the negotiations secret for 11 months.

“We were never for sale until now,” Simpson said. “We’d known and respected Larry for years, and when we met Eric ... we knew right away it would be a good fit.”

The reason for the fit, according to both Simpson and Kahn, was this: While the two firms were in the same industry, they’d staked out different sectors in the size of their printing runs and types of machinery they use. Kahn convinced Simpson that he wanted to own and grow Multi-Craft and keep its employees.

“This company is our family,” Simpson said. “It was critical to us that people would keep their jobs and get to work for a new company that was growth-oriented.”

Multi-Craft was founded in 1955 by Simpson’s father, Bill Gibbs, who, she said, is in great health at age 92 and “thrilled” about the deal. Simpson and her sister both plan to retire soon. Tom Gibbs will continue on with Graphic Village. It’s the 25th-largest women-owned business in Cincinnati with 2016 revenue of \$9.5 million, according to Courier research.

“We knew we needed an exit,” Simpson said. “This felt right.”

Kahn came to Cincinnati eight years ago from his career as a San Francisco investment banker and has since purchased 11 local firms in printing, packaging, marketing, manufacturing, fulfillment and mail services. His biggest purchase before Multi-Craft was Bramkamp Printing in 2012.

Kahn made three of those acquisitions in 2017 alone:

- Crest Graphics
- Advertising firm EMI Network
- Everything’s Image, a screenprinting and embroidering firm.

With Multi-Craft he’s boosted employment by about 50 percent and set up Graphic Village to dominate more sectors of the local printing and marketing industry. He declined to disclose Graphic Village’s revenue.

*“This deal is shaking up the printing world here,” Kahn said. “It changes the entire landscape in Cincinnati.”*



9933 Alliance Road | Cincinnati, Ohio 45242  
513.241.1865 | [GraphicVillage.com](http://GraphicVillage.com)