

# MASTERING MOUNTING

## Sales, Pricing, And Pay Off Potential

by Chris Paschke, CPF



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**T**here's more to mastering mounting than acquiring the mechanical and technical skills. Even with state-of-the-art equipment at your fingertips, you need to know the tricks of marketing and sales to avoid being the proud owner of the largest paperweight on the block.

### Pricing

Pricing is the burr in every framer's saddle. It sometimes seems that all we really want is for someone to tell us exactly how much to charge for everything we do. There are numerous articles available on various theories and price setting formulas; there are both regional and national price comparison lists published annually; distributors often offer pricing graphs and charts. Whichever format you use as your pricing structure, be certain to include adhesives, boards, labor time, and other overhead expenses. And don't forget to figure in some profit!

### Approach To Selling

It should be a simple task to sell your mounting skills. Never ask a client if they would like a piece mounted. If you allow them the option to say no, they might just take it.

Instead, use an assumptive approach, such as, "of course this price will include the required mounting and fitting charges". Then, if necessary, reinforce this suggestion with examples of the possible

problems with pieces that are not mounted.

These samples can be a valuable sales aid. Half mounted posters—with the other half allowed to cockle and warp—is one of the best visuals possible.

Mounting, when done under controlled conditions, under the right circumstances and with the correct materials, is sometimes the best way to present many commonly framed items, such as posters. When mounting, make certain that the elements of time, temperature, pressure and moisture are noted and that the materials selected are designed to work well together.

There are other ways to meet customers' objections. You could agree to frame the piece unmounted with the option to mount at a later date. Be sure to explain that there will be a base mounting charge plus a charge for unfitting and refitting. My point is that 90% of the pieces that enter your store that can be mounted should be.

### Expansion

Consider other potential markets for mounting as well. You may only need to look closer into the jobs you may already be completing. My creative design article this month on object boxes is one example where using your press will increase your profit potential.

Lamination provides another op-

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portunity to use your press. Mounting and laminating can even be accomplished in just one step, saving you time while earning you money.

There is a plethora of possibilities: laminating for schools and day care centers, engineering and architectural firms, city, county and state government offices, sporting goods stores (for maps), nursing homes, hospitals and doctors' offices. How about anywhere glass is not allowed or considered a hazard, as well as simply subcontracting to other framers who haven't yet invested in a press? There are many creative options as well. Wrapped mats alone (of both mat board and foam) are a source of additional mounting revenue. Creating them in a press

means less time spent and a cleaner wrapping procedure. And don't forget those designer tiered mats!

## Price Comparisons

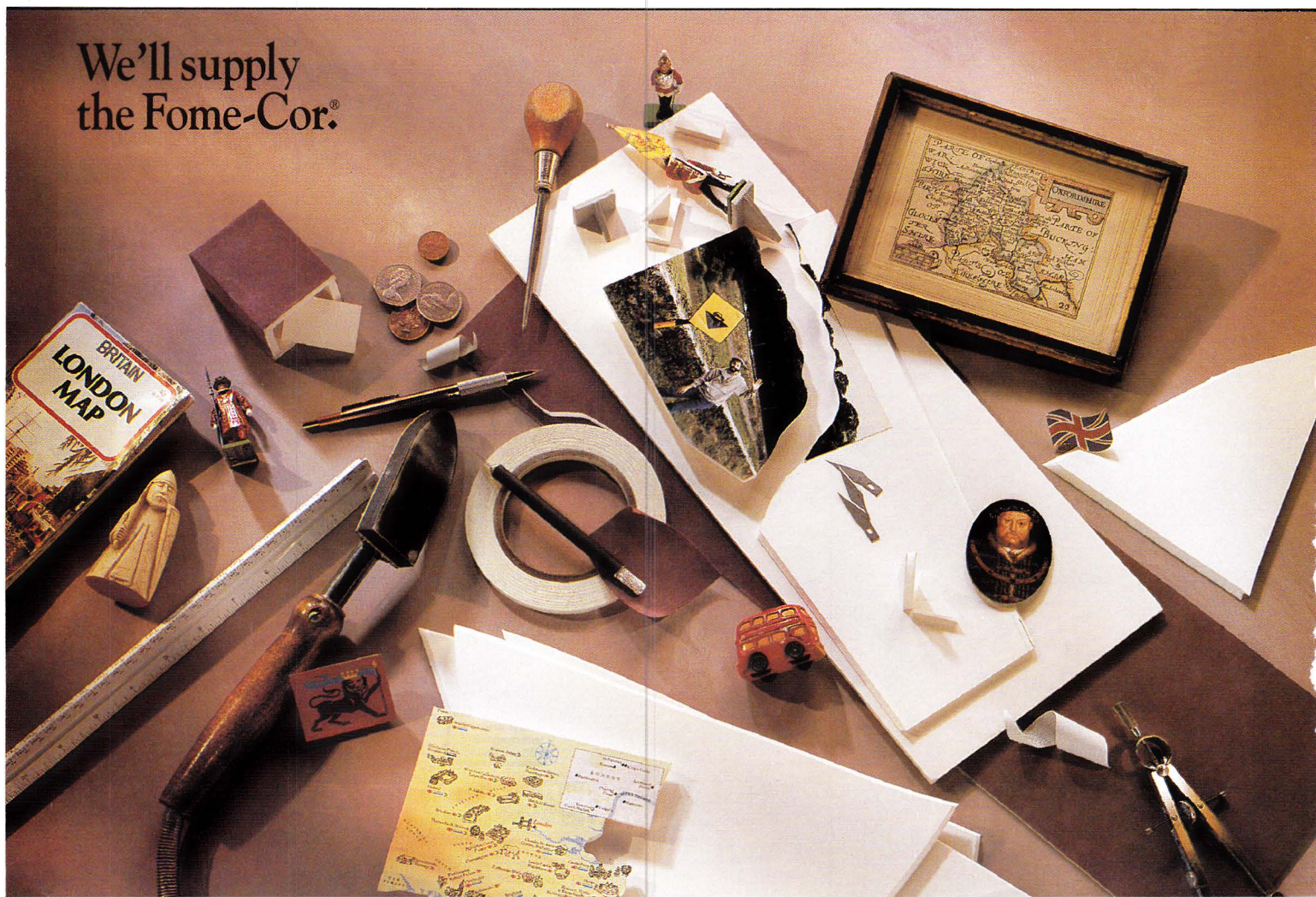
The different mounting procedures (dry, wet, vacuum) all incur similar costs when you consider the materials needed and the labor involved. In some national averages, wet mounting results in the highest retail price, followed by dry mounting and vacuum mounting, respectively.

Manufacturers favor square foot pricing over united inch calculations for mounting charges. This is because square foot measurements give the total surface area of the piece and are therefore a more accurate measurement of size than united inch is.

(united inch measurements are determined by adding the length and the width.)

Consider a 16"×20" mounting at a UI charge of \$.28 for a total of \$10.00. Using this same UI charge, a 32"×40" mounting would cost \$20.00, only twice the amount of the smaller mounting. In actuality, a 32"×40" piece is four times the size of a 16"×20" board. So then shouldn't it cost four times as much? Using square foot pricing eliminates this discrepancy.

Suggested price calculations cover the costs of larger pieces, creating a greater markup on smaller pieces. For a 32"×40", the materials cost would be about \$6.00 to \$8.00 (adhesive at \$.30 per square foot plus





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board costs). A mark up to account for overhead and labor costs (usually 3x) would bring the cost to between \$18.00 to \$24.00, well within the national average.

A 16" x 20" piece at one fourth the cost would be between \$4.50 and \$6.00, below the national average of the \$10.00. Using suggested pricing makes the smaller pieces more profitable.

It is also important, when setting prices, to keep in mind what the market will bear. Consider the market you are targeting and what your competition is charging. Stay competitive, but make sure you are making money at what you do. Consider volume production versus single projects and price accordingly.

### Payoff Potential


Any investment in an expensive piece of equipment should be considered in relation to the period of time required to recoup that investment.

If you use your press for mounting only, it will take you much longer to "earn back" your investment than if you use it for laminating and creative applications also. A calculation of gross income shows how much more quickly you can recoup your investment if you take advantage of all your press's applications.

If you mount 20 pieces a week at \$10.00 each, it will take you ten weeks to gross \$2000.00 with your press. If you also laminate ten pieces a week at \$20.00 each (in addition to

your mounting) it will take you only five weeks to gross \$2000.00. Add other creative applications (tiered mats, wrapped mats, object boxes), say four pieces a week at \$50.00 each, and it will take you only three and a half weeks to gross \$2000.00.

Of course, these figures do not take into account your fixed and variable expenses. They do show, however, the difference in pay off potential depending on how you use your press, and are only for comparison.

We all realize "it takes money to make money". But don't hesitate to buy that press for lack of profit potential; the market is out there waiting for you to turn that giant paperweight into the potential gold mine it was meant to be! 

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