

MASTERING MOUNTING

Multiple Mountings And One-Step Mounting And Laminating

by Chris A. Paschke, CPF



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Being concerned about time efficiency, it is important for framers to realize that any of the allotted shop time we can trim from a project, while still maintaining full suggested retail pricing for that job, increases the profit margin.

Though both cold vacuum frames and dry vacuum presses benefit by multiple mountings, heat systems allow laminating films to be incorporated into the daily repertoire, as well as increase profit margins through single step multiple mounting and laminating.

I have discussed the use of various types of presses in past articles, and next month will discuss the differences of mechanical vs. heat vacuum presses in our Shop Equipment Issue. But I am concerned with the profit margin potential of large heat vacuum systems this month.

Simple Mathematics

Consider for a moment that if a 40"×60" vacuum press is capable of mounting one 40"×60" poster in a single step, it could also mount two 30"×40" pieces, four 20"×30" pieces, eight 15"×20" pieces or sixteen 10"×15" pieces in one step too (diagram 1). The greater the number of pieces mounted at one time, the more dollars will be derived from the manual mounting process, and the more efficiently you will be using your press if turned on throughout the day.

It is true that labor time must be calculated into the individual placement, tacking and trimming of multiple mounting. But when the extra

time has been calculated, you will come out ahead financially by mounting as many pieces at one time as comfortably possible. There will always be waste and endcuts when mounting multiples, but by trimming you will also be cutting off the compressed outer edges of a foam board substrate often created by vacuum presses.

As illustrated in my article "Mounting For Matting" (PFM, March 1993) the best way to expedite the mounting process is to mount the print with *tissue based adhesive* on a slightly oversized board. This eliminates the time involved in the alignment process. Then trim the mounted print to size from the substrate or align the window mat to indicate where the outer edges of the actual mat will end up prior to trimming (diagrams 2A/2B).

Calculate adequate allowances for final trimming. The actual number of pieces possible from a 40×60" board will vary upon the size, shape and whether the mountings will be trimmed exactly to the print dimensions or readied for an added window mat.

Profit Potential

The bottom line of this entire discussion is this: on a full sized 40"×60" substrate a large quantity of 12"×16" poster art or photographs are all mountable simultaneously. Even one step further: they can be mounted and over-laminated using a vinyl laminating film such as Seal PrintGuard-UV or Drytac Laminat-

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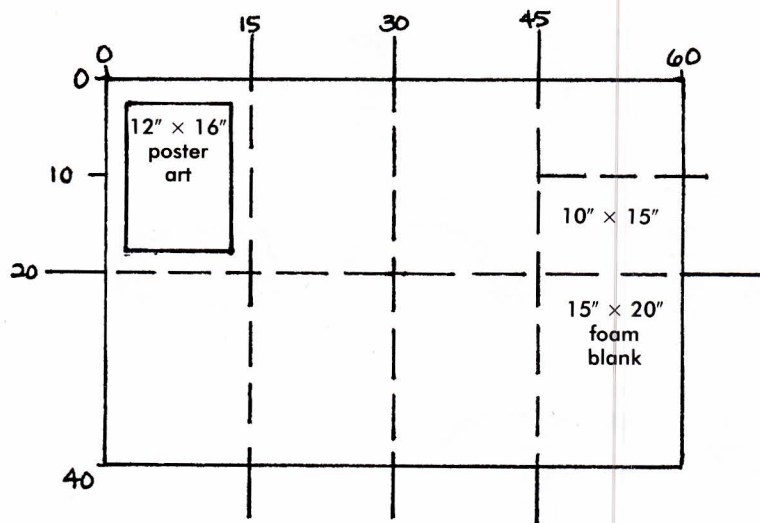


Diagram 1

A 40" x 60" foam base can easily be sectioned into eight pcs. of 15" x 20" to accommodate a 12 x 16" floated poster for later matting or trimming.

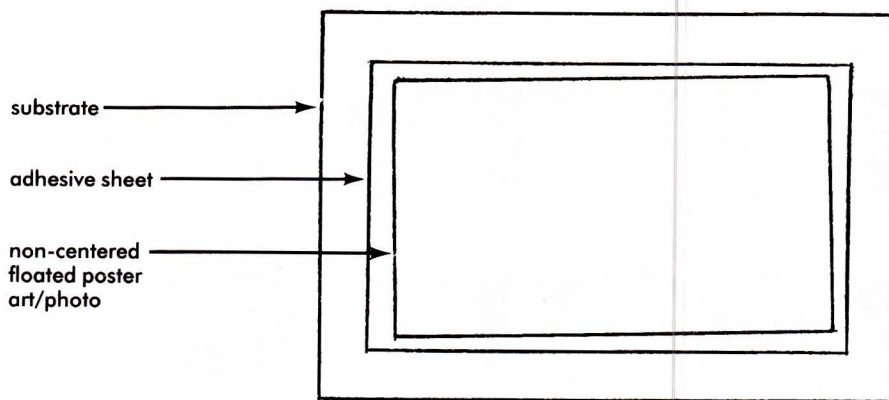


Diagram 2A

On an oversized mount board the adhesive and art may be freely floated for proper trimming or alignment after mounting.

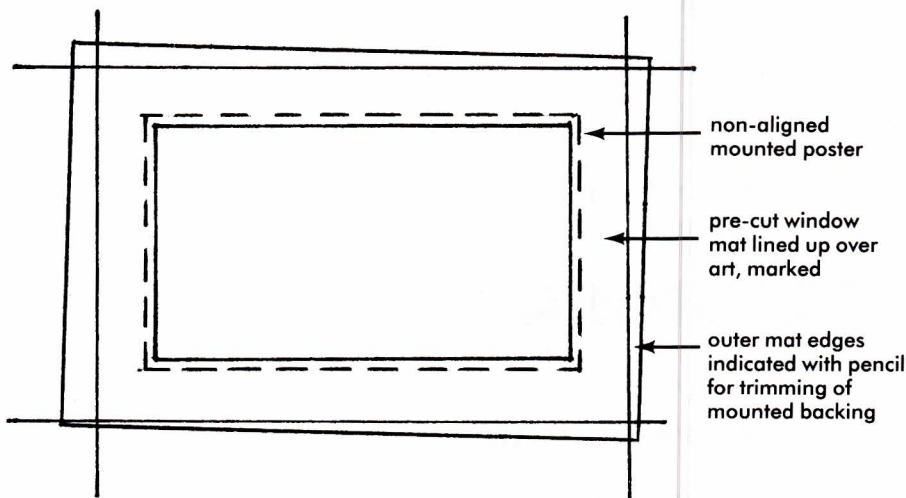


Diagram 2B

Either trim the floated multiple mounts to exact size or ready them for mats by allowing adequate surrounding space to mark and trim as indicated. Even a misaligned poster quickly mounted is easily squared up with the pre-cut window mat. Mark the edges and trim the backing to fit the OD of the mat.

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ing Film ("Laminating Basics: Polyester vs Vinyl" PFM, July 1993) all at the same time.

Select an average mounting price of, say, \$10.00 per piece (for example) of a 12" x 16" poster. That means with eight mounted pieces per board, the mounting potential would reach \$80.00 of mounting revenue in a single trip into the press.

I have previously noted that pricing for the laminating process should generally run the same as a mounting charge. Though laminating film runs slightly higher per square foot than adhesive, all basic materials costs (including the substrate) are already covered in the original mounting charge. Using this method, the above \$80.00 worth of mountings (eight pieces @ \$10 each) would be doubled to \$160.00 with the additional laminating.

Benefits

Once the practice of multiple mountings is initiated, it is easy to plan for clustering "like" projects to be mounted on the same substrate. The point here is to *save time*, not waste time, attempting to come up with multiples or mounting groups that are not obvious to you.

Multiple mountings for a day-care center or pre-school would be an obvious job to cluster, since the prints are often small and similar in size. Posters of assorted sizes for the new ice cream parlor walls would be another opportunity.

If you mount only on Thursdays then it would behoove you to think in groupings for the same substrate. If you are considered a "production framer" (meaning one who mass produces mounted items, even if for your own stock inventory) saving time and total press usage is to your advantage.

This additional market potential for mounting and laminating in multiples will also allow the freedom

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to bulk price or volume price/bid a potential job quote for a school, hospital or restaurant. When mounting a larger number of items in less time for the same established retail price, small offered discounts are easily absorbed. The profits will still remain high and the client senses the "bargain." It's all called "marketing."

Tacking

When tacking multiple pieces for a single trip into the press, it is *mandatory* to tack all pieces *and* to tack them on the same edge or side. This is even more important when layering laminating film in final preparation for single step mounting and laminating in the press.

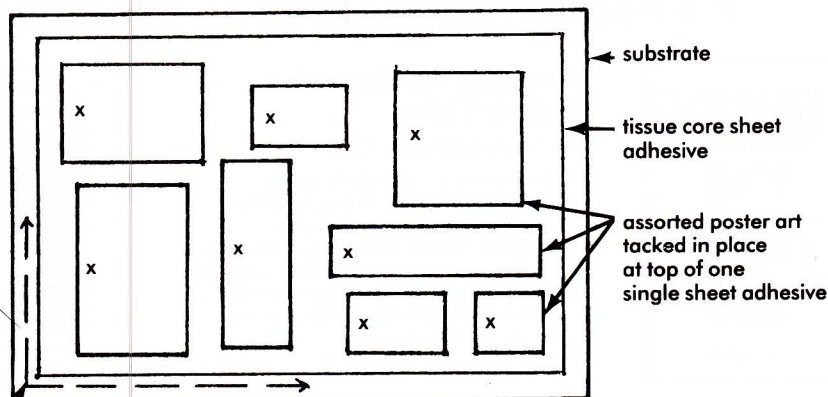
Begin by cutting a piece of tissue based adhesive, such as ColorMount or Trimount, smaller than the board

Laminating film should be smaller than the board and larger than the adhesive.

but large enough to accommodate all the pieces for the multiple mounting (diagram 3).

By tacking all of the pieces on the same side there will be a commonality to their placement. Slipping, sliding or simply laying the release paper or board over the top will be less likely to catch or fold over any loose

Diagram 3



The "x" indicates the tack point all on the same side so that a laminating film may be applied without the fear of slipping or shifting unmounted posters. When applying the film make certain the film covers all of the adhesive around the edges. Otherwise the adhesive will mount to the overlay foam where it is exposed.

sides prior to mounting.

Check the time and temperature ratios for the heat vacuum press to verify adequate time in the press for the full sized sheet being used as a substrate. You need not make any modifications for the pressure and moisture elements of the TTPM (time/temp/pressure/moisture) mounting equation since a vacuum press is being used, rather than a mechanical press. 180°F for 5-7 minutes for a full sized 40" x 60" foam sheet is about average, but be familiar with suggested manufacturer procedures for your particular adhesive selection and specific press times.

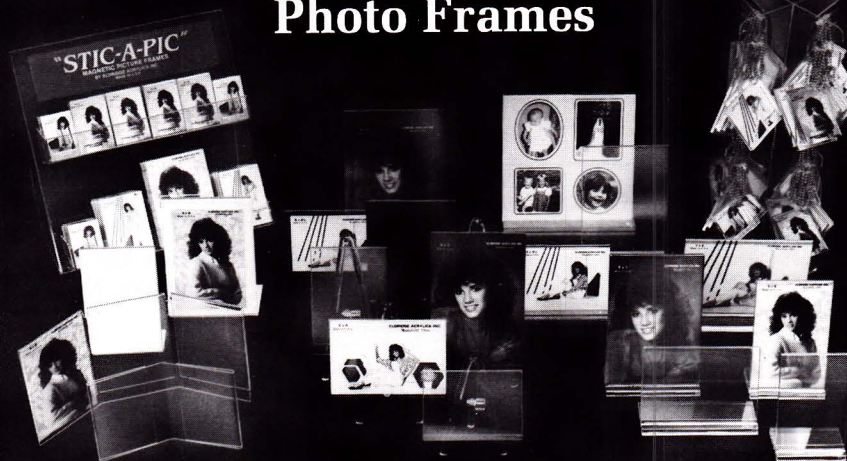
Laminating Procedures

If laminating is also to be initiated in this complete process then the time/temperature ratio needs to be addressed for the new materials being introduced. Laminating films will mount between 180°F-225°F depending upon the manufacturer. The times may also vary for the substrate in the example. The process will also be altered if a perforated sheet of laminating film is required for the over-laminating of a non-breathable item, such as a photograph. Again, the time/temperature ratios may vary depending on the specific materials being used.

When "multiple laminating", as with "multiple mounting", charge for each of the pieces as though they

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were being fed into the press for individual lamination, although you may be physically laminating all eight pieces at the same time. This is when the profit margin will again expand: you will save time by laminating as a multiple and still charge for *each*

on the one-at-a-time basis.

All At Once

When mounting and laminating in a single step, tacking all the pieces on the same side is extremely important because of potential problems when pulling off of the release paper backing. The static electricity often

created during the removal of the release backing of the film can easily shift untacked or poorly tacked prints.

If tacking has been done on alternate sides of the prints to be mounted *and* laminated, print corners may be accidentally turned over, slip from under the edge of the film or pushed on top of an adjacent print during removal of the release backing. Since all of the items being placed in the press remain loose until the actual heat application, care must be taken in each preparatory procedure. Don't get sloppy!

Do not forget that the overlay foam must be used over the film, yet beneath the top sheet of release paper, protecting the platen. If the foam is misaligned the film will not mount evenly (visually); the finish will be modified anywhere the foam is not in contact with the film. This also means checking the foam for tears, wrinkles, divots and adhesive residue remaining from previous laminations. All physical deficiencies will be transferred onto the finished product.

As with any short cut procedure, maintaining technical efficiency and excellence will assist in initiating any new time saving measures. Equipment limitations do exist: smaller vacuum (32" x 40") and mechanical presses have overall size limitations based on the actual platen dimensions, and the use of cold vacuum frames eliminates the possibilities for over-lamination and of using heat at all.

By carelessly rushing in an attempt to simply eliminate a mounting step without a clear understanding of the process could easily land you a trip to "Nightmare on Frame Street"! You must understand your equipment and know what to expect in order to regularly produce a predictable end result. Multiple mountings or simultaneous mounting and laminating can expand your market, increase your mounting potential, save time and produce greater profits through efficiency.

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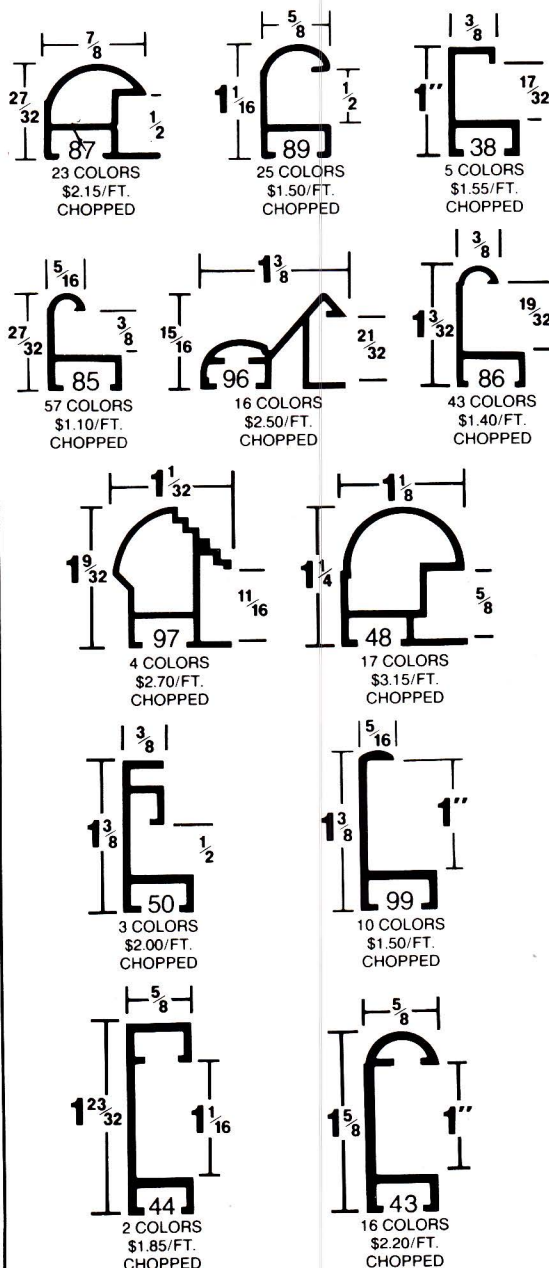
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