

BUYER'S GUIDE

FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU BUY A FLATBED APPLICATOR TABLE

The flatbed applicator table has become one of the most essential pieces of equipment in the modern sign shop. With prices ranging from entry-level to significant capital investment, here are the five questions every buyer should ask before signing the purchase order.

1. What power and air supply does my shop support?

Flatbed applicator tables vary between single-phase 110/230V and three-phase 400V service, and most require compressed air at 6–8 bar (87–116 psi). Some electric models eliminate the compressor requirement entirely. Audit your shop's electrical panel and air infrastructure before you specify any unit — a compressor upgrade or panel modification adds real cost that won't appear on the spec sheet.

2. What working area and substrate thickness do I actually need?

Working surfaces range from roughly 5×10 feet (1,524×3,048mm) to 13+ feet (3,962mm+) in length, and substrate thickness limits vary from 65mm (2.56in.) to 87mm (3.4in.). Be honest about your current production requirements and add a buffer for growth. The cost of sizing up one model is almost always less than replacing a table two years later.

3. Does the roller system use compressed air or electric motors?

Pneumatic systems require consistent air supply and pressure regulation at 6–8 bar (87–116 psi). Electric motor systems use pre-set pressure levels that reproduce the same result every time without a compressor. Know which category your shop falls into before you evaluate models.

4. What are the floor load, delivery, and installation requirements?

Net weights range from under 400 lbs (181kg) for entry-level units to over 1,100 lbs (499kg) for full-production models. Confirm your floor rating, lifting equipment availability, and shop access before delivery day. Some units ship flat-packed, some disassemble for tight access, and some arrive fully assembled.

5. What is included as standard versus optional?

LED illumination, cutting mats, roll holders, casters, and height adjustment are standard on some units and priced as options on others. Build your comparison on fully configured costs, not base prices — a table that appears more expensive on paper may be the better value once everything is accounted for.

Top Ten Manufacturers: Web Details

World Imaging News is pleased to bring you web details for the Top Ten Manufacturers of Flatbed Applicator Laminator Worktables, listed below.

Colex Finishing Solutions Made in: USA
W: www.colex.com

CWT Worktools Made in: Sweden
W: www.cutworxusa.com

GBC Made in: USA
W: www.gbc.com

Graphic Finishing Partners (GFP) Made in: USA
W: www.gfpartners.com

KALA Made in: France
W: www.kala.systems

Neschen Made in: Germany
W: www.neschen.de

Rollover AS Made in: Norway
W: www.rollover.no

ROLLSROLLER Made in: Sweden
W: www.rollssroller.com

SIGNROLLER USA Made in: Sweden
W: www.signrollerusa.com

Vivid Laminating Technologies Made in: UK
W: www.vivid-online.com

WORLD IMAGING NEWS is gearing up — here's what's coming the next six months:

AUGUST — Pro DTF EcoSystem: Components

OCTOBER — Medium & Small Format UV Printers, Braille EcoSystem: Components

DECEMBER — Pro Textile / Dye Sub EcoSystem: Components

JANUARY — SOHO Hustle: DTF, Dye Sub, UV EcoSystem

Would you like to participate? Please contact Dan Barefoot at dan@worldimagingnews.com.