



The Imaging Depot Ogden, Utah

Ron and Mat Inkley

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Bill McCurry: History is about to repeat itself in Ogden, Utah when the Inkley family rejoins the imaging industry in a very active way. Ron Inkley, when were you president of PMA?

Ron Inkley:1972.

Bill McCurry: A couple of days ago. You retired from the imaging industry when?

Ron Inkley: Never. I haven't yet, but I slowed down in 1996 when I sold my stores to Ritz.



Bill McCurry: And now you're coming back with a vengeance?

Ron Inkley: No, with Mat, he's my son.

Bill McCurry: So what are you and son Mat, going to do in Ogden, Utah?

Ron Inkley: We're going to try and prove to ourselves that there is a way to be in the photo specialty business with profit, with fun and a new beginning to photo specialty.

Bill McCurry: How long have you been thinking about this?

Ron Inkley: Many years, many years. I've been watching the industry for several years, from a distance, not being involved right in the center of it. And I found some things that looked to me like opportunities, so we put those together and we're going to try and show how this is a viable formula, a business plan that might lead new people into the industry in the future.

Bill McCurry: Now I heard a rumor that when you started your business, your father helped bank roll you and sent you on your way?

Ron Inkley: That is correct. I was 18 years old, had no money, my dad had an old home that he had almost paid for, he took out a second mortgage for \$2,500, gave it to me and that started my business, in two years I had it paid back.

Bill McCurry: And you're going to invest \$2,500 in this business?

Ron Inkley: \$2.500 a minute. Yes, it'll be at least \$2,500 and probably a whale of a lot more. But today the reason that you can get into a business that everybody else doesn't necessarily follow you into is because the threshold's a little higher. Hopefully the rewards will match the investment.

Bill McCurry: Now Mat Inkley, you've been around the imaging industry all

your life, but you've been doing a lot of other things. Tell us where you've been the last few years.

Mat Inkley:

Literally



growing up in the imaging industry, after my dad sold the stores, I ended moving into the commercial side, with the grand format industry. For several years I was part of the Ferrari Color team and oversaw their professional services as well as last couple years part of a company called LAgraphico out of Burbank, California that we were working with the movie studios and had a lot of fun learning and being challenged by that fast paced element of our business. And now being able to take the experience that I learned from my dad and then growing up in the stores and as well now the commercial side and then taking all of those things and applying them into this new project.



Bill McCurry: You've got your own career, which you're in essence abandoning, to open up an imaging store in 2010, does that make sense?

Mat Inkley: Every time I tell somebody that, I think they kind of cock their head funny and think what am I doing and sometimes I think what am I doing, but I'm convinced that somebody can take experiences that have been learned elsewhere,

in my case within the commercial industry and apply them back into a retail business. that combined with a lot of passion for what we're doing and looking for something fun as well as something that I've grown up with in a family business, that's something that's very important to me personally and taking all of those things and putting them back into something that's very rewarding for me and for my dad and for my family.

Bill McCurry: So tell us about the new business, what's the location you've found?

Mat Inkley: You know that's one of the most fun things about this is that we are right downtown Ogden, Utah, Ogden was, for a lot of years, kind of an area that was in



need of redevelopment. Years ago it had quite a history of where the railroad came in and brought a lot of negative elements into the area. Ten years ago if you would have asked me if we would have done something in downtown Ogden I would've laughed and would have said no, but there is one location that we found down on historic 25th Street. It's an old bus station that was renovated a few years back and

we had the opportunity to latch onto that building and are making a gorgeous facility.

Bill McCurry: The name of the new company is The Imaging Depot, is that because of the building you're in or did you have the name before you found the building?

Mat Inkley: You know, we played with a lot of different names, and ultimately what started the conversation about The Imaging Depot was it being an old bus depot. However, we felt and very strongly feel that The Imaging Depot lends itself well to what we we're building this business to be, the one stop shop for all of your imaging needs, whether it's needing hardware, but more importantly what we can do with and for your images.

Ron Inkley: It's going to take awhile to get all of this put together, because it's very

complicated. Much more complicated than I would ever have imagined.



Bill McCurry: What is more complicated about running a photo studio, a camera store, whatever you've done for the last 50 years, why's it complicated now?

Ron Inkley: Well it's so much different. We're focusing on the products that we think are needed and desired by people who are looking for solutions to their digital imaging problems.

Bill McCurry: People have problems with the digital image?



Ron Inkley: No, they have opportunities.

Bill McCurry: Mat, what's your take on all the things you have to do, is there that many, will it take that long?

Mat Inkley: I'm a little more optimistic I think, but there's a lot to do. What we're putting together is so different than what we see's been done so far and so taking elements from the past and then combining them with experiences from other industries, putting them all together, it makes it fun and it makes you think.

Bill McCurry: Okay, so I'm a customer in Ogden, Utah, I go walking into The Imaging Depot, what am I going to see that's different?

Mat Inkley: Everything. We're building this to be fun location. Growing up, I've



always been a fan of Walt Disney, and whether or not somebody agrees that that's the best amusement park around, the one thing that you can say about the Disney Parks is it is a destination location. They have

done a great job at attracting people from wherever. So taking a page from Walt, we are building the store as a location to where we'll draw people in from outside our immediate area and when they walk in, we want that "Wow!" factor, we want them to say "This is a really cool store" not only say "Well yeah I can buy my camera here" but learn everything that they can do with that and have fun doing it. I have worked really hard at making sure that our store doesn't look like a traditional camera store. In fact, my dad and I have had some very long conversations about the lack of slat wall and then other merchandise merchandising techniques in the store. And in fact our store will have little to no slat wall.

Bill McCurry: Isn't it against the law to have a camera store with no slat wall?

Mat Inkley: Well I guess we're breaking a lot of laws then, because I finally had to back down a little bit, we will have six pieces of slat wall in a 4,300 square foot building and that's it.

Bill McCurry: So what will you have?

Mat Inkley: We have been creative on all the different ways that we will display not only product, but then also the examples and the displays. One example is on our sample walls, we created a display that has a hidden shelving system on the sides of it with a piece of sheet metal over the top for then with magnets we can actually put all of our products up as well as incorporate shelves. It gives us the versatility that we need in a camera shop, but we get rid of that ugly slat wall.

Bill McCurry: Who designed it?

Mat Inkley: Most of that was me. We came and spent a lot of time traveling around to other stores that not only in the area, but then also national chains. some of these ideas we took



we visited the Apple stores, there was a store that's called See Jane Run (www.SeeJaneRun.com) that specializes in women's athletic sportswear, and we took some ideas from them. we also took some ideas from like I said before the Disney store, the Disney Parks and then all of our friends, David Guidry was

gracious enough to let us walk through his store and see some of his ideas and so what we've come up with are bits and pieces of all of those.

Bill McCurry: What would you guess your percentage of hardware sales verses services will end up being?

Mat Inkley: Hardware sales to services will definitely be . . . probably it'll be a 60/40 split in favor of services for hardware. Our hardware, while we would love for somebody to buy a camera from us, we know that we're in a small market and most people are going to buy from the big box or the online retailers. So we have built our store



and our business model around being able to focus and for our business to stand on its own on services alone.

Bill McCurry: Now you're going to be aggressive on your camera pricing or do you care?

Mat Inkley: A little bit of both, we will still be very aggressive on select models, but as we're analyzing what products we'll even have in the store, we are

being very selective on what we're bringing in. We will still find the high margin products and those will be our core elements. Being a PROMASTER member, the accessories will be a huge element and being able to offset what we don't sell in camera equipment, but with the accessories and then ultimately with the imaging services.



Bill McCurry: Frame department at all?

Mat Inkley: We will have a large selection of readymade frames, as well as mats. That's something that's very important to us, in fact our goal is we'll see how much space that is that we end up with, but our goal is is to have the largest readymade frame and mat selection in the state of Utah. But then on the backend, we're going to try something that's fun, and we're going to put in a digital mat cutter and again evolve the custom frame business. We're not going to be a custom framer. But we are going to have framing on demand and be able to have a recipe put into place to where somebody can walk into our store, select and make a choice from selection of frames, custom create their own mat and leave the store with their product, with what they feel is a custom product.

Bill McCurry: Did you write a business plan?

Mat Inkley: We did, and I chuckle with that because if you read our business and from where we are today, it's probably a little bit different, but that's one thing that I definitely learned from my dad is that planning and going through and putting things on paper is very, very important and so he made sure that we had a business plan put into place.

Bill McCurry: What did you find as you wrote the plan? Anything change? What did it help you do or not do?

Mat Inkley: Actually it really helped us to address some of the issues and ultimately not make some of the mistakes down the road. When we first started and we started thinking about what we were going to do, a lot of



it was brainstorming. My dad would take out his paper and he would write down all the ideas that that we would come up with, and then as we got ready to form the business, we took a lot of those ideas, put all of that together and documented it, but if you look at our first draft, to where we are today, it's definitely evolving and

it needs to evolve for us to be able to make sure that we're going down the right path.

Bill McCurry: How many total services do you think The Imaging Depot offers?



Mat Inkley: There were 18 different categories, but there were hundreds, if maybe even

thousands of services. While we did categorize each of the potential services and hardware is not one of those 18 categories. Each subcategory could be divided out and is designed to be very, very creative and we can create products and services on the fly. We've invested a lot of money and a lot of creative effort into having the ability to if a customer comes in and says "Hey look, I would like this look on my wall" we can figure out how to get it produced.

Bill McCurry: So you've got potentially thousands of services, how do you explain to the customer, what you've got?

Mat Inkley: You know, that's going to be the biggest challenge that we have. First off is we will need to train our people and our associates to be as energetic as my dad and I in explaining what we're doing. So that's number one is making sure our people are there. Number two is our displays within the store, we want to make sure that if somebody walks in that just what we have displayed on the walls or on

the counters or even on the floor, it helps their creative juices to start flowing, because ultimately they're the ones that are going to create some of these products. and then in addition to that, we've put together some fun multimedia pieces to where we have one wall that's dedicated that we're calling our manifesto wall that will have a 60" LCD up there that will continually play, show different ideas, show some historical pictures to be a part of the community which we feel is very important, as well as you know, tips and tricks. If somebody is watching this, they'll not only see what can be done, but then also learn how to do Photoshop tricks, better photography tricks, if you use this accessory this is what you can do, so all of those types of elements.



Bill McCurry: Your dad said he's been pondering this years and years, how long have you been thinking about it?

Mat Inkley: Oh years and years as well. Ever since he sold the store I think both of us have thought about what we could do, but probably three years ago is when I started getting more and more serious and a little over a year ago is when he and I really started putting the pencil to the paper and getting answers to all of our

questions that we would to answer to be able to move forward. We're about eight months into it of actual feet on the street and getting ready to open the doors.

Bill McCurry: What's your plan for marketing the business once you're past the grand opening?

Mat Inkley: Several different elements, our primary customer is going to be the soccer mom, and so social media is going to be very, very important to us on getting out,



so the Facebook page, the Twitter page and then other elements like Four Square and some of the different programs and sites that are out there that that these people have a lot of fun with, and we're willing to do the exact same thing.

Another very important element is that no order will leave the store without some sort of a stuffer in there. If they bought a book, they will have something in there about a poster. If they bought a poster they'll have something in there about a framing, so every order has to make sure and leave the store with some sort of piece in there showing what else can be done.

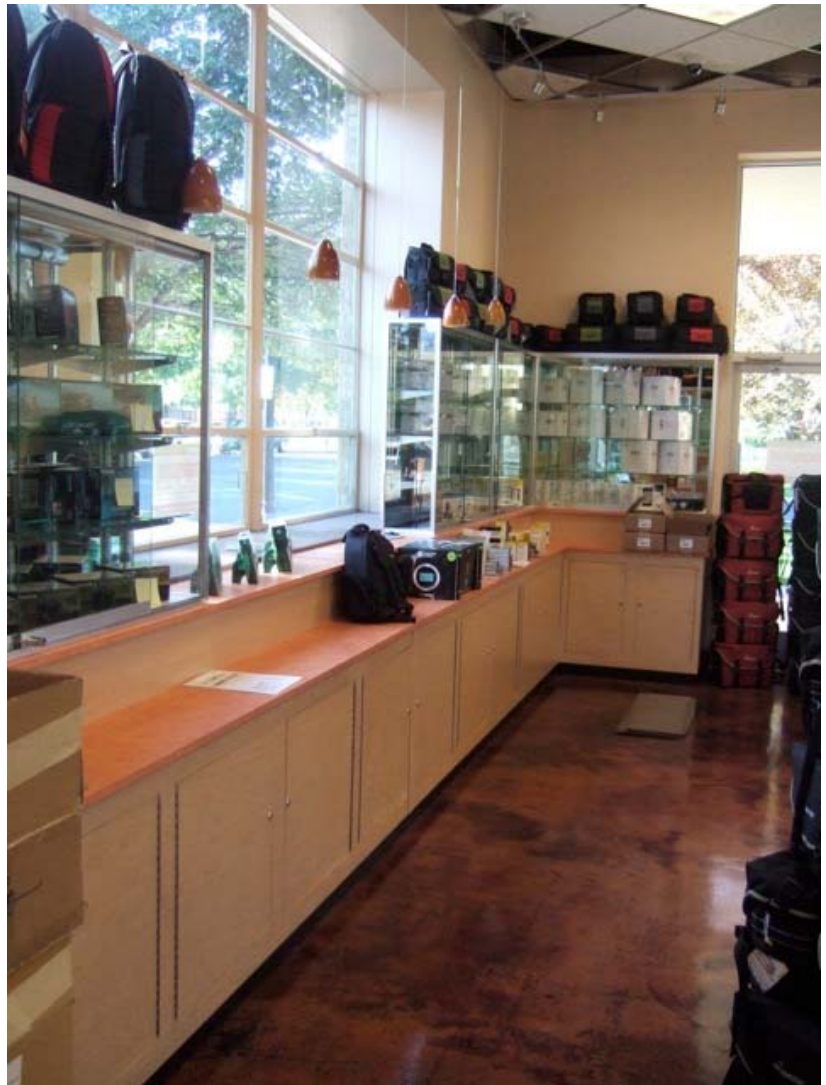
Something else that's very important is coupons and gift cards, those will be distributed in a variety of different ways, through our newsletter, which we'll do

every other week, we'll do some direct mailing, and that will be very targeted, we'll be very selective on the direct mailing that we will do.

And then we will take advantage of some of the traditional media, because of our hardware sales, we take advantage of how the manufactures will still help us and still do a little bit of newspaper and in our market, TV and radio isn't going to help us too much, but we may consider a few of those other options.

Bill McCurry: Ron, what's your biggest worry about this?

Ron Inkley: My biggest worry is the complexity of the operation and the difficulty of getting it going. When you talk about hundreds and hundreds of services, and when you think of all the work that has to be done to put it into play, by using



display and by using stuffers and using advertising material, it represents a major challenge.

And I guess the thing that's most disappointing is it doesn't go together overnight, it takes it takes time and it'll be several months, I'm sure before we're too a point where we're really happy with what we're doing. And as a matter of fact, it may be a year before we have everything clicking, but the important thing is is that you have to start, you have to get it ready, you have to put every effort into to make it happen and that's where we're in the middle of right now.

Mat Inkley: Through this whole thing, I've learned a lot, but the thing that's most important to me is first off how important it is what we're doing, not only for us, but then also for the photo industry. I know my dad is excited, I am excited as

well at learning and sharing our experiences with PMA and organizations like that are invaluable for us, because we can share. But then finally I've got some personal gratification here.

I'm having a lot of fun and I get

to learn from one of the greatest influences in the photo industry and my dad and I have a great relationship because of it.



Bill McCurry: Mat Inkley, thank you.

Mat Inkley: Thank you, I appreciate everything that you do for the industry as well.

Bill McCurry: Mr. Ron, good to have you back, thank you.

Ron Inkley: Thank you.

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We would love to hear from you with your ideas, suggestions and comments . .

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