



**GAMBLE PAYS OFF**

Risky move pays off for entrepreneur after he buys Versa Print and reopens as Allegra Print & Imaging. **G3**

## SMALL BUSINESS CORNER

# Print customers want marketing service, too

By Jeff McKinney

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**SHARONVILLE** – Unable to find a job for three years, Steve Kapuscinski became an entrepreneur and created his own.

The former manufacturing plant manager became his own boss in December 2005 after moving his family from Tennessee to Montgomery to acquire Versa Print here. Then he converted the print shop into an Allegra Print & Imaging franchise.

"The move was risky because I had no connections or safety net in Cincinnati," says Kapuscinski, Allegra's owner and president.

Kapuscinski, 57, turned his misfortune into a growing business.

Over the past four years, he's acquired four independent printing businesses with yearly sales ranging from \$100,000 to more than \$1 million.

The day after he bought Versa Print, Kapuscinski purchased another Allegra print shop in Sycamore Township. In October 2008, he acquired Corporate Printing, and this month he purchased A Printman, both based in Sharonville.

He says 2009 sales were just over \$1 million, down 10 percent from 2008.

He expects revenue this year to rise 10 percent from last year, helped largely by the A Printman purchase and a bigger sales staff.

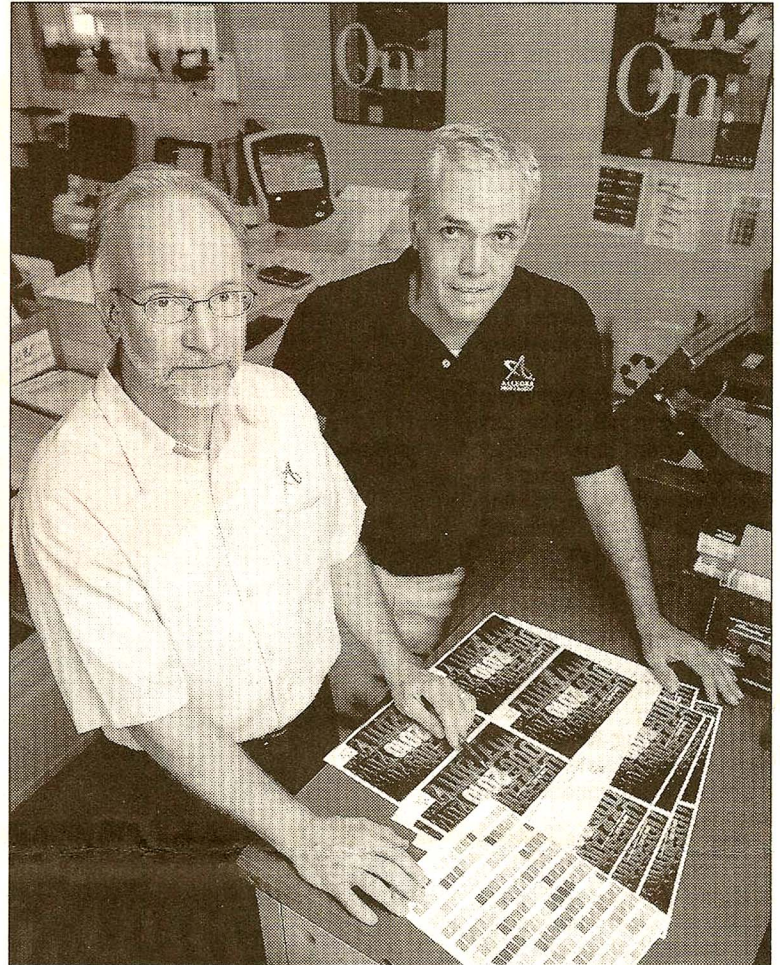
He also says some larger customers are now requesting marketing services such as full-color brochures and more direct-mail items.

The acquisitions may have been fueled by industry consolidation nationally in recent years, says James Cunningham, president of the Printing Industries of Ohio/Northern Kentucky, a Westerville-based trade association.

New technology such as digital printing and the weak economy have forced some smaller printers to sell.

Acquisitions have been a key part of Kapuscinski's business model because he says it allows him to quickly gain new customers, obtain new equipment and technology and pick up experienced employees.

He hired Joe Konerman, the former owner of A Printman, to help his



The Enquirer/Tony Jones

**Steve Kapuscinski** (left), president of Allegra in Sharonville, and **Tim Mazzone**, a digital specialist, check a full-color postcard mailer being produced on a Konica Minolta printer.

### Allegra Print & Imaging

- **Owner:** Steve Kapuscinski
- **Address:** 11137 Reading Road, Sharonville
- **Employees:** 8
- **More information:** 513-554-1797 or [www.allegracinci.com](http://www.allegracinci.com)

sales staff boost business, particular in Northern Kentucky.

A chemical engineer with 22 years of manufacturing experience – but no sales experience – Kapuscinski wanted a business with an established customer base.

Since taking over the business, Kapuscinski has tried shifting it from being a traditional printer to a marketing services provider that offers printing services.

Kapuscinski says more than 50 percent of sales come from marketing-related projects, including graphic design, printing and mailing services.

Remaining sales are split between digital and offset printing, he says.

Kapuscinski's growth plans include making more acquisitions and expanding into a larger space from his 3,600-square-foot facility.

"Depending on the acquisition, we may need to more than double our space," he says.