PRINT & CUT TO A SEPARATE PRINTER AND CUTTER

Use this workflow to send print & cut jobs (contour cut jobs) from SignLab to a locally connected printer and cutter.

A "print & cut" job is a print job that includes at least one contour cutting line, such that the printed image can be processed through a vinyl cutter to cut the contour lines. For example, stickers are commonly produced by a "print and cut" process. If the "print & cut" job is sent to a hybrid printer (one that supports cutting functions), then the printer will automatically cut the contour lines after printing.
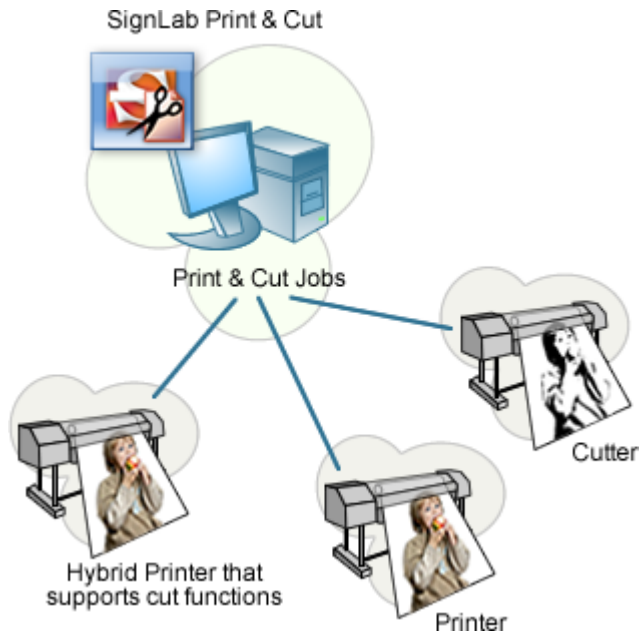

Fig 1 - When printing and cutting via SignLab Print and Cut, you can either print & cut to a hybrid printer that supports cutting functions, or cut the printed media using a stand-alone cutter.

1. From the **Start** menu, launch **Print & Cut Manager**.

2. From the **Printers** menu, choose **Manage Printers** to open the **Manage Printers** dialog.

   □ The **Manage Printers** dialog lists the printers that have been installed.

   □ Verify that the **Port** setting is correct for the printer you intend to use.

   □ Click **OK** to close the **Manage Printers** dialog.

3. On the Print & Cut Manager toolbar, make sure that the **Start Queue** button has been clicked (i.e., the **Start Queue** button should be gray, and the **Stop Queue** button will show "red" and can be "pushed" to stop the queue at any time).
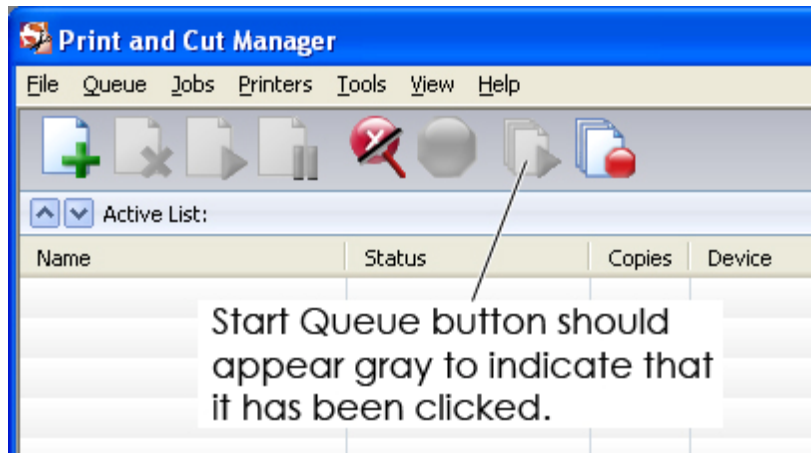
Fig 2 - Starting the queue in Print & Cut Manager, so that jobs will be sent immediately to the printer.

4. Minimize the Print & Cut Manager window.

5. From the **Start** menu, launch **SignLab Print and Cut**.

6. From the SignLab **File** menu, choose **Print and Cut Setup** to open the **Print and Cut Setup** dialog.

7. On the **Printer** tab, left-click to highlight the printer you wish to use.

> *Note:* If your printer is not listed, click the **New Printer** button and follow the wizard instructions to add a locally connected printer to the list.

8. To the right of the **Print Mode** field, click the ellipsis button (three dots) to display the print modes that are available for your printer. The print modes are arranged according to manufacturer, media and inks. Choose the print mode that corresponds to the media and inks that have been loaded into your printer.

9. Click the **Cutter** tab to display the device that will perform the contour cut operations. In addition to selecting the cutter, this tab specifies the registration marks that will be used for aligning the contour cut lines with the printed image.

    For contour cutting using a hybrid print & cut device:

    ☐   If you are using a hybrid printer that supports cutting operations, then the printer will automatically align the contour cut paths to the printed image. As such, the name of the hybrid printer should be listed here.

    ☐   For "print & cut" jobs, set the **Printer Cutter Alignment** to **None**, which indicates that the printer will automatically align the contour cut lines with the printed images.

    ☐   For "print-laminate-cut" jobs, where the printed job will be laminated and loaded back into the hybrid printer for cutting, set the **Printer Cutter Alignment** to **Printer's own registration**. The printer will automatically print the registration marks that it needs in order to align the contour cut portion of the job.

    For contour cutting using a cutter with an automatic optical eye alignment tool:

    ☐   Some cutters have an optical eye that will recognize specific types of registration marks. The Operator's Manual for the cutter will specify the type of registration marks that should be used, and the **Printer Cutter Alignment** may be set according.

For cutters with no auto alignment tools:

☐ For cutters that do not offer optical eye alignment, it is recommended that the **Printer Cutter Alignment** be set to **Three point automatic**.

10. On the **Cutter** tab, click the **Setup** button to open the **Plotter Setup** dialog.

☐ Click the **Port** tab. Note that the options are restricted to the Print & Cut Manager option.

☐ If the printer is being used in combination with a stand-alone cutter, then verify that the **Port Location** correctly indicates the port to which the cutter is connected.

☐ Note that the **Port Location** is hidden for hybrid printers that support cutting operations.

☐ Click **OK** to close the **Plotter Setup** dialog.

11. Click **OK** to close the **Print and Cut Setup** dialog.

12. From the SignLab **File** menu, choose **Import** and select the file you want to bring onto the SignLab workspace. Select the complete image by dragging a marquee around the graphic.

13. Apply a "contour cut" path to the selected image:

☐ Choose **Contour Cut** from the **Cut** menu.

☐ Set the **Offset** to **0.01** inches.

☐ A dashed line will appear around the image to indicate the "contour cut" cutting path. This dashed line will not be printed, but it will be cut by a cutter.

☐ To accept the contour cut settings, left-click an empty portion of the SignLab window.

☐ Drag a marquee to select both the image and its "contour cut" path.

14. At this point, you are ready to send your print & cut job. Ensure your local printer & cutter are connected to the correct ports, and that they are "on" and ready to print/cut.

15. From the **File** menu, choose **Print and Cut** to activate *Print and Cut Preview* mode.

16. In the SmartBar, confirm that the **Printer** and **Cutter** are as you had selected.
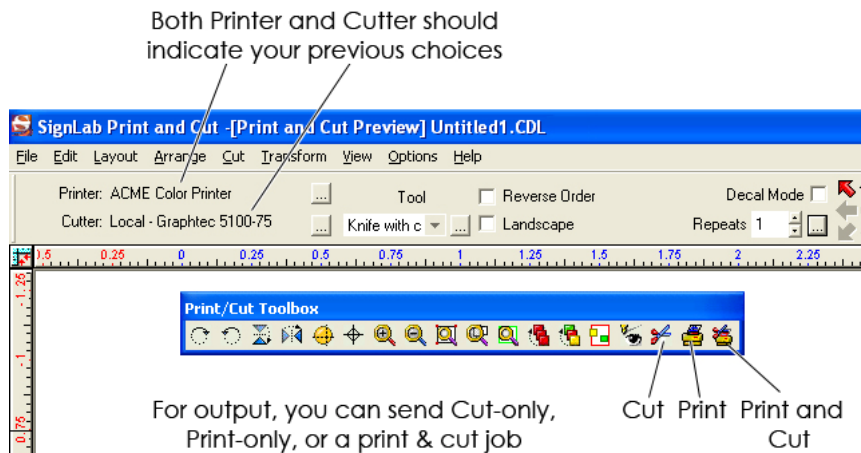

Fig 3 - The print & cut job will be previewed before being sent, and the SmartBar will indicate the destination printer (and stand-alone cutter, if selected).

17. At the far-right of the **Print/Cut Toolbox** are output buttons for **Cut**, **Print**, and **Print & Cut**. Click the **Print & Cut** button to send the print & cut job.

   □ **Cut** – Send only the cut portion of this design.

   □ **Print** – Send only the print portion of this design.

   □ **Print and Cut** – Send both the print and cut portions as a combined job.

   > *Note:* If you are printing to thermal foil printer and your package includes the *Spot Color Printing* module, then sending either a print or print & cut job will open the **Spot Foil Browser** dialog. This dialog is used to review the spot foils that are being output.

At this point, your printer should have automatically received the print data and begun printing. When the job has finished printing, it is ready to be cut.

If the print job did not begin as expected, then check the following:

   □ Solution 1 – Maximize the Print & Cut Manager window to verify that the job appears in the **Active List** with a *pending status*. If so, then ensure that the queue has been started by clicking the **Start Queue** button, as per step (3), and the job will begin processing immediately.

   □ Solution 2 – If the job appears in the **Active List** with a *holding status*, then the **Scheduling** settings in the **Queue Properties** dialog have been set to hold all jobs before printing. In this case, right-click the job name that is in the active list, and choose **Print** from the context menu. This will release the job.

18. When the job has finished printing you are ready to cut the job.

   For contour cutting using a hybrid print & cut device:

   □ Back in step (9), you would have set the **Printer Cutter Alignment** to **None**.

   □ In this case, your hybrid printer should print and cut the job automatically without having to manually set the job to cut.

   For contour cutting using a separate cutter:

   □ Back in step (9), you would have set the **Printer Cutter Alignment** to either the type of registration marks specified by the cutter Operator's Manual, or to three-point automatic.

   □ If you will be cutting the contour cut path on a separate cutter, remove the printed image from the printer and load it into your cutter. Maximize the Print & Cut Manager window, and you will see your job in the **Active List**. There will be a scissors icon next to the job name, and the **Status** will be "holding." Right-click on the job name and select the **Cut** command from the context menu. The cut data will now be sent to the cutter.

   □ If your cutter has an optical eye cutter, it will begin to "hunt" for the registration marks that were printed onto the media. When it locates the registration marks, it will begin to cut the contour cut path.

   □ For a cutter that does not have an optical eye cutter, you need to manually align the cutting tool with the registration marks that were printed around the job. In Print & Cut Manager, right-click the job and select **Cut** from the context menu. Wizard instructions will guide you in aligning the cutting head.

   For print-laminate-cut jobs using a hybrid print & cut device:

   □ Back in step (9), you would have set the **Printer Cutter Alignment** to **Printer's own registration**.

   □ In this case, the printer will stop after printing the image. You may now laminate the media and then reload it into the hybrid printer. In Print & Cut Manager, right-click the job and select **Cut** from the context menu. The printer should automatically locate the registration marks and contour cut the job.