

An Invisible Germ Shield



David Gintzler, owner of Bovie Screen

Long before fears of swine flu had people fastidiously reaching for hand sanitizers, hospitals worried about germs of all kinds, especially MRSA, a Staph skin infection resistant to some antibiotics. Such concerns led to **Bovie Screen Inc.** receiving an unusual request last year: "Can you put an antimicrobial coating on our medical equipment?"

One year later, the Bow company is now producing Germ-Gate, an invisible nano particle silver-based coating that can be applied to graphic overlays on touch plates, x-rays, dialysis machines and other devices to repel germs. While Bovie Screen has produced graphic overlays, membrane switches, plastic fabrication and decals to order since its founding 60 years ago, this is the first product it has developed that was not commissioned by a client. The company has 38 employees and produces up to 1,000 individual items per day.

"It's this very small hidden industry. It's not famous, but it touches almost everybody's life," says David Gintzler, owner of Bovie Screen, of the industry, which includes touch plates and graphic overlays for ATMs, microwaves, computers and thermometers. His newest product, Germ-Gate, is literally invisible—but also, he says, invaluable.

The technology is not new. Gintzler says silver has been used in professional wound care for years, but the market for passive, permanent germ repellent has grown with the rapid transmission of swine flu (also known as H1N1). A lot of big suppliers of hospital hardware can now put silver nano technology in their products, but that doesn't help businesses looking to retrofit existing applications. And that's where Gintzler comes in. He says Germ-Gate is proven to kill 99 percent of common microbes, is completely transparent, can be coated on flat or rounded surfaces and does not lose strength over time. Also, it's cheap, costing only an additional five or 10 cents to apply to items.

"We keep finding more applications for this technology," he says, adding that it will likely increase Bovie's revenue (now \$3 million annually) by 3 to 4 percent. For more information, visit www.bovie.com.



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