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## **VDMA Printing and Paper Technology Association Develops Mission Statement for the Years 2030 to 2040**

- **Future workshop brings together member companies, trend researchers, students and the drupa management team**
- **Participants discuss the influences of social and technological trends on printing & paper and develop a joint vision**

*Frankfurt/Main 14 September 2018* – Even in 2030, printing technology will still be used to create tactile, exquisite product worlds. This is one of the crucial findings of the Print “2030 – 2.0” future workshop. The following questions took centre stage during the future workshop:

- Which role will printing and paper technology play in a digitalized world?
- Will value chains and value propositions offered by printing and paper technology manufacturers remain relevant over the next two decades?
- And how is it possible to achieve that machinery manufacturers cooperate more closely with their end customers in order to be able to react even faster to social and technological trends?

“In the daily business routine, the companies often play too little attention to the future. Changes in the market are not only a challenge, but may also offer chances. The companies must identify them at an early stage,” says Dr. Markus Heering, Managing Director of the Association. During the workshop, representatives of member companies therefore analysed future trends and derived concrete fields of innovation and action. “Our aim is to develop a joint positive vision for the future of our sector,” Heering stresses.

### **Trend researchers list ten key future trends**

On the one hand, such a mission statement needs clear references to the status quo in printing and paper technology: On the other hand, it is necessary to identify truly relevant trends and to analyse their influence on the present-day value chain processes. For that, the Association called in external consultants: Hamburg-based TRENDONE GmbH maintains a global network of trend scouts and has analysed innovations in a variety of sectors and technological fields for 15 years. In the run-up to the workshop, the specialists

and the Board of the Association had identified ten macro-trends which will potentially have the strongest influence on printing and paper technology manufacturing.

These trends often point into diverging directions. The consumers will be permanently online and also move huge volumes of data while they are out and about, but, nevertheless, the longing for taking an offline break, for nature experiences and ethically justifiable consumption is growing. Smart factories, artificial intelligence and virtual reality pave the way for “hyper individualization“. At the same time, companies must familiarize themselves with the platform economy. Furthermore, there is a growing need for secure and, in any respect, reliable process chains. With methods like open innovation, companies can identify the needs and ideas of their customers and partners at an earlier stage and more precisely than before, and thus optimally adjust their portfolio and business model accordingly. For instance, with solutions in the form of a service package: Customers no longer pay for machines, equipment and vehicles, but the use of them.

Each of these trends bears risks and offers chances for the suppliers of printing and paper technology. During the workshop, five teams analysed them systematically, taking aspects such as B2C and B2B customer relations, value chain processes and value propositions as a basis. Inter alia, they found that for the machinery manufacturer, digitization can open up new opportunities for cooperation with their intermediate customers, but also a direct link to the end customers. These chances should be used systematically in order to be able to respond to market trends and changing customer wishes more rapidly in the future, such as to the fact that more and more customers demand transparency and a more careful use of natural resources. In the packaging market, this could, for example, be achieved by giving information about packaging production and recycling possibilities or, that would be even better, about the upcycling of packaging material.

### **Printed products will be relevant in many spheres of life also in 2040**

In order to expand the vision of the future, the researchers took the participants on a tour to the year 2040. Then and there, they were welcomed by a networked world full of drones and robots, mixed reality and artificial intelligence bumped up to superintelligence. Omnipresent touch surfaces in households, vehicles and public spaces permanently enable to interact with the environment. Printing is carried out with different materials up to cell tissue in three and four dimensions. Products can be individualized completely.

Inspired by these visions, representatives of member companies and a dozen students of different disciplines examined the key issue of the future: Which role will printed products play in this fully digitalized world? – The participants were in agreement that printed products will remain relevant in many spheres of life. Be it for the presentation of sophisticated products or the individual design of textiles, rooms, ceramic products as well as electronic decorative and operator panels.

“In 2040, the basic human needs will be similar to those of today. People will be dependent on the supply of fresh food and in their purchases continue to insist on undamaged products, which can only be mastered with packaging,” says Heering, going on to say that, at the same time, it’s only natural that every individual wishes to stand out from the crowd and leave something lasting – needs that cannot be satisfied digitally. By means of digitally networked process chains and artificial intelligence, the printing machinery manufacturing sector can, however, help ensure that exquisite, emotional and above all tactile consumption experiences will be possible in the future as well.

### **Print and paper create tactile, lasting products**

In the end, a trend that is already visible will continue: Print fulfils new decorative, functional and emotional tasks in addition to the pure transfer of information. Be it in the packaging

segment, in industrial printing or even as regards the traditional printing of books and magazines. They more and more reflect a clear premium character. In completely networked societies, people will be reliant on analogue refuges where reading and the transfer of information is a purely private matter.

In 2040, not only conventional printing technology will be used to create tactile and exquisite product worlds. Furthermore, there will be new applications in 3D printing and printed electronics which make it possible to implement analogue and digital methods with cost-favourable, highly flexible processes. In any case, the digital and analogue worlds will converge even more – also in the pressroom. The decision which technical printing and paper solution will be used will be made on a case by case basis. It is however clear that: Anyone looking for a combination of efficiency, beauty and gentle use of resources will be right with printing and paper technology even in 20 years' time.

“We will continue to use the technical possibilities of digitization consistently in order to enhance our solutions for the print and packaging market,” says Heering, summing up the results, and he adds that an even closer cooperation with users, suppliers and manufacturers of supplies is needed in order to be able to react to changing markets faster and in order to minimize the use of resources along the process chain. “If that can be done, I am not worried at all about the future of printing and paper technology,” he says.

With a view to drupa 2020, the workshop took place with the participation of the drupa team in Duesseldorf.

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