

drupa Essentials of Print



We deliver herewith a series a series of articles, from designers, brand owners, printers, converters, journalists and influencers. We look forward to working together with experts, who enrich our drupa Essentials with fresh impulses, sound expertise and remarkable experience. All these articles will allow visitors to understand a world that has changed dramatically since the creation of drupa in 1951 and will continue to evolve. Different observations and perceptions of an industry seeking innovation in a fast-changing world. Give free rein to your instinct under the adage: "to each his own drupa".

We are happy to provide you with this expert article and we would be pleased if you publish it.

BE INSPIRED! _____

Good reading.

Sabine Geldermann & Team

The future of label printing - drupa is even more important than you think



VITA _____

Isidore Leiser is CEO of Stratus Packaging, one of the leading European label converters using both conventional and digital technologies to transform the label industry.

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**drupa
content
contributor**



The future of label printing - drupa is even more important than you think

“The digitalization of our world and of our lives is everywhere and is rapidly entering into the print and packaging industry. Digital may be a competitor but it can also be part of the solution for printers and converters to be more efficient.”

When I think about drupa, I think about it as the World Cup of Printing. The World Cup too happens every four years - but contrary to drupa my own country is usually not a qualifier there. People told me when I first joined the printing industry “don't go there, it's too big, you'll get lost”, or “don't go there, it's not focused enough on your business”. Since my first drupa visit, I can't wait to visit again and I certainly won't miss it in 2020.

Yes, it's true that drupa is huge and I did get lost there more than once. Yes, it's not just focused on labels-printing, but to attend the biggest print show in the world gives me an overview of the complete printing market, the latest innovations and the trends that we can expect in future years. The different printing sectors within the industry are related and some trends that occur now in one category will also evolve in another. For example, inkjet technology was first introduced for wide-format applications but it is now playing a major role in label-printing. To gain knowledge about competing printing processes at drupa gives me more insight and adds new perspectives to my own business.

So, what can we expect from the next drupa in 2020? First and foremost - innovation! Printing, including packaging, is under intense pressure to transform itself. Brand owners are upping the pace and have new, different requirements. The industry is more competitive than ever and innovation is what our clients - brand owners - are looking for.

One very important aspect is sustainability. Printing, and especially packaging, is under huge pressure to improve its carbon footprint and to limit waste. Today's younger generation participates in regular demonstrations to put pressure on governments and brand owners. They don't know why packaging is important but many think it's something inherently evil. Most don't understand the benefits of packaging and look only at the waste generated. Even if today some more sustainable solutions are available, a lot of them are not implemented - simply because they are not yet economically viable. Yes, everyone wants a better, cleaner planet but nobody is prepared to pay for it! Packaging customers are out to cut cost, whatever it takes. Our group has, for example, developed many new solutions and brought them to the market. We are certified PEFC, FSC; Imprim'vert did a carbon footprint

analysis. But today our green turnover is still very small. Maybe we are not good enough in promoting or selling our solutions, but the resistance to change is also still very strong - too strong in my view. I really hope to see more sustainable packaging materials coming through, and more environmentally friendly inks, with print-machines able to print and process substrates in a more environmentally friendly manner.

At the World Cup of print, the biggest contest is the confrontation between printing techniques: flexo, offset, helio and the new digital rising star. In the context of increased demand for more sustainability, quality, shorter delivery times and reduced costs, all printing technologies are improving and innovation can move applications from one printing technology to another. But like at a World Cup, watch out for the hooligans - those who only believe in one printing technology (their own) and don't appreciate or understand the advantages of others.

Nowhere else can you be as close to the evolution of printing technologies as at drupa. Here an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages is essential in order to better serve your customers' needs. I expect major changes to come for all printing processes as they need to improve efficiency, waste management, quality and also reduce their environmental impact significantly. Something to have in mind is that traditional print techniques are becoming more and more digital, with sensors all over the machines and taking away time-consuming tasks from the operators. For example, digital set-up tools enable printers and converters to be more efficient; cameras and sensors can reduce the set-up time and increases productivity significantly - and all without replacing your current operators.

The digitalization of our world and our lives is everywhere and is rapidly entering into the print and packaging industry. Digital may be a competitor but it can also be part of the solution for printers and converters to be more efficient, to calculate in a more precise way their real costs and to integrate physical products into the digital world using, for example, augmented reality. RF-ID and printed electronics are also opportunities for the print industry to connect with the digital world. Digital in general, incorporating pre-press, printing and converting in one system, is on the rise with the automation of all the steps of the print-workflow, thereby helping to optimize the entire production floor and not only the printing part. And it also links printers and converters better together with their customers and suppliers. In a digital world print can be seamlessly integrated into multichannel communications offering personalization (individualisation).

And what about my expectations for drupa 2020?

Well, I don't usually have specific expectations - most of the time I get surprised by visiting a booth I didn't intend to visit, which then informs or even inspires me about something unexpected. In the end, you will get a different view on your investments or on the market trends and dynamics. So 'expect the unexpected' and be open-minded! As mentioned, drupa is the best place to understand that the printing world is made of numerous applications and that with all the innovation and new technologies being made available, the changes happening are in fact opportunities for printers and converters to reshape their future.

Finally, think beyond the printing-press; it will take more than a new press to be successful. At drupa you need to look at the entire production-chain for print and packaging. Substrate innovations are going to be critical in the coming years. The digitalization and the automation of the entire workflow will change your organization. New technologies will require the hiring of new staff and development of new skills. The way you will engage with your clients will change significantly as they are all soon going to be digital natives. So rather than resist the changes, be ready to embrace them.

Like the World Cup, drupa is an event you really shouldn't miss - the biggest meeting place for the world's leaders in printing and packaging, a place where all the latest innovations will be put under the spot light. So, see you at drupa 2020!

drupa cube: eleven days of vision and inspiration

To provide participants with the best possible visitor experience, drupa invests in top-class knowledge transfer through its five special forums, the drupa cube being one of them. "educate - engage - entertain" is the slogan of the cube, designed to provide a broad spectrum of highly relevant content that is motivating, very stimulating and interactive for visitors thanks to the various talk formats. World-renowned speakers are set to create a buzz with a visionary range of topics. Amongst others, best-selling author Michael Gale will look at the future of the industry and will offer concrete recommendations for activities that will secure a successful digital management as well as important background information on how to take the plunge into digital management.
