

19 OUTSTANDING PRINTED PIECES RECOGNIZED AS THE "BEST OF THE BEST" IN THE U.S.

The Americas Printing Association Network (APAN), which is composed of 10 regional graphic communications associations from across the country, has announced the winners of its 2024 Americas Print Awards competition. The winning entries were showcased during a live YouTube broadcast on October 17 that featured detailed video imagery and explanations of each piece.

For this competition all entries were first submitted to the regional printing competitions sponsored by APAN's members. The 120 entries that garnered top honors at the regional level were then submitted to the Americas Print Awards to compete nationally. It took a panel of three industry experts a full day to whittle these 120 entries down to just 19 winners. As Cathy Skoglund, Chair of the Americas Print Awards and co-emcee for the broadcast stated, "Judging was incredibly difficult!"



JUDGING WAS INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT!

-Cathy Skoglund, Chair of the Americas Print Awards

The winners are...

BEST OF SOFT-BOUND BOOK:

Tucker Castleberry
Member of Printing & Imaging Association of Georgia
Atlanta, GA

BEST OF VARIABLE DATA PRINTING:

Blanks Printing & Imaging
Member of Printing and Imaging Association of MidAmerica
Dallas, TX

BEST OF INVITATION:

MetroVCS
Member of Printing and Imaging Association of MidAmerica
Dallas, TX

BEST OF COLOR REPRODUCTION:

Print Trends
Member of Printing and Imaging Association of MidAmerica
Southlake, TX

BEST OF UNIQUE FOLD:

Cereus Graphics
Member of Printing Industries Association
Phoenix, AZ

BEST OF OFFSET PRINTING:

Lithographix
Member of Printing Industries Association
Hawthorne, CA

BEST OF INFLUENCER PACKAGING:

Precision Services Group
Member of Printing Industries Association
Tustin, CA

BEST OF FINISHING:

Graphic Visions
Member of Printing Industries Association
North Hollywood, CA

BEST OF PROMOTIONAL KIT:

Prisma
Member of Printing Industries Association
Phoenix, AZ

BEST OF DESIGN:

Kirkwood Printing Company
Member of Printing Industries of New England
Wilmington, MA

BEST OF HARD-BOUND BOOK:

Superior Packaging & Finishing
Member of Printing Industries of New England
Braintree, MA

BEST OF SPECIALTY SUBSTRATE:

The John Roberts Company
Member of Printing Industry Midwest
Minneapolis, MN

BEST OF CROSS-MEDIA MARKETING:

Quantum Graphics
Member of Printing Industry Midwest
Eden Prairie, MN

BEST OF DIGITAL PRINTING:

Bolger
Member of Printing Industry Midwest
Minneapolis, MN

BEST OF FOIL:

Wallace Carlson Printing
Member of Printing Industry Midwest
Minnnetonka, MN

BEST OF MARKETING CAMPAIGN:

The Imagine Group Charlotte
Member of The Printing Industry of the Carolinas
Charlotte, NC

BEST OF TWO-SIDED LABEL:

Multi-Color Corporation America's Wine & Spirits
Member of Visual Media Alliance
Napa, CA

BEST OF FLEXO LABEL:

Multi-Color Corporation America's Wine & Spirits
Member of Visual Media Alliance
Napa, CA

Visit www.AmericasPrintAwards.com to see the link of the recorded YouTube live announcement, which was sponsored by Canon, and also to view the honorable mention awardees.

NATIONAL NEWS

THE WILD WORLD OF PRINT & FINISHING AT DRUPA 2024



AI generated image

Whether you are an offset, digital or hybrid print practitioner, you would have found a cavalcade of exciting machines at drupa'24. It provided a glimpse into the future of the global printing industry. This year's event attracted 170,000 attendees, down from the over 250,000 in attendance in 2016. And after the eight-year hiatus, attendees had a chance to meet with their peers, and more than 1,600 vendors who put their best stories on display.

Most analysts and vendors expected the lower attendance, but the halls were still lively as visitors sought new technologies to empower their businesses now and for years. If you missed it, look for the Drupa Daily magazine at WhatTheyThink.com and an incredible array of drupa coverage videos at Inkish.tv.

HARDWARE HIGHLIGHTS

If you are used to print shows that are focused on a single segment, you would have noticed that drupa was catering to everyone. There were solutions for offset, gravure, flexo and digital in most market segments. Vendors came from around the world, including a large contingent of Chinese manufacturers looking for distributors.

Here are some notable hardware exhibitors in alphabetical order, not in order of importance:

- **Canon** brought machines for every segment, from sheetfed inkjet and toner presses to high-speed continuous inkjet production lines and digital label printers. They told an integration story, showing a variety of end-to-end solutions. They also announced the new VarioPRESS IV7, which was not at the show, and a new relationship with Heidelberg. The agreement with Heidelberg includes selling and servicing several Canon inkjet solutions under their JetFire brand.
- **EFI** made some noise with its series of new products, including the EFI Nozomi 12000 MP, a single-pass LED inkjet printer designed for direct-to-metal printing. They also announced the X5 Nozomi system that combines the

Packsize X5 system for right-sized packaging in demand with the Nozomi in a single offering. Other attention-getters were the EFI VUTEK X5r superwide roll-to-roll LED inkjet printer, designed for nearly independent operation with advanced automation capabilities for unattended printing, and the EFI Nozomi 17000 SD for sign and display.

- **Esko** unveiled the CDI Crystal Quartz Edition, an advanced version of their plate imaging and exposing solutions, incorporating upgraded optics for improved flexo plate imaging speed and quality. Additionally, they showed the new Varnish Inspection Module for the AVT Helios system, enabling simultaneous varnish and print inspection to enhance quality control.
- **Heidelberg** introduced a suite of highly automated solutions for the packaging and commercial printing markets. The new Speedmaster XL 106 was featured running live in a stand that occupied a significant portion of Hall 1.
- **Horizon** brought more than 400 pieces of equipment for its stand and partners. It introduced the inline cut sheet press and robotic arm book system, which integrates technologies to produce printed materials efficiently from start to finish.
- **HP** brought the PageWide Advantage 2200 inkjet press and an array of Indigo solutions for commercial, label and packaging. Occupying all of Hall 17, they augmented their story with an AMR demonstration featuring a solution from their partner, MoviGo.
- **Hunkeler** collaborated with Canon to showcase the Hunkeler Starbook Plowfolder solution, integrated with the Canon CS8200 printer. They also showed equipment in HP, SCREEN, Horizon, Muller Martini and Ricoh stands, demonstrating their network of collaborative partners.
- **Koenig & Bauer** brought a comprehensive array of digital and flexographic printing solutions, particularly for the packaging market. Their

display included the VariJET 106 for folding carton markets, a press developed in collaboration with Durst, highlighting their emphasis on digital transformation within the industry.

- **Konica Minolta** demonstrated its AccurioJet 60000 B2 UV single-pass inkjet press and AlphaJet for the luxury packaging market. They also showed the AccurioPress C84hc, which uses high-chroma toner for vivid colors.
- **Kolbus** showcased their next-generation solutions in packaging and converting industries, including the BX Motion Pro, which integrates box making and printing in a single pass, and the RD 115S flexo print die-cutter, among other innovations aimed at enhancing the flexibility and efficiency of production processes.
- **Kyocera** featured their KJ4B-EX1200-RC and KJ4B-EX600-RC recirculating inkjet printheads, the GENIX 1200 and LENIX 1200 inkjet print engines for industrial applications, and the new TASKalfa Pro 55000c entry-level cut-sheet inkjet capable of printing on offset coated media alongside the TASKalfa Pro 15000.
- **Meccanotecnica/ Book Automation** collaborated with HP, Canon, Ricoh and their customer LegoDigit to demonstrate automated book finishing processes. They showcased the new Universe Web book sewer and Sirio perfect binder, designed to enhance short-run book production efficiency down to a single book.
- **Ricoh** brought their VC8000 and Z75Pro for inkjet aficionados, as well as their ProC line of toner printers. Also on display were their industrial print heads for integrators.
- **SCREEN** launched the Truepress Jet 560HDX high-speed, roll-fed digital inkjet press and the Truepress Jet S320, an A3 sheet-fed digital inkjet printer.

Continued on back.

NATIONAL NEWS

Continued from front.

- **Tecnau** focused on book production efficiency, demonstrating the Tecnau Revolution 50 with SCREEN's printing technology and a seamless, automated line featuring Canon's varioPRINT series, illustrating their focus on streamlined book production processes.
- **Xeikon** introduced the TITON solution for food-safe flexible packaging and the IDERA technology for corrugated packaging, highlighting their commitment to sustainable printing solutions.

SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS

That leads us to the significant software-driven automation on display, which took many forms.

The printer network effect

In the realm of economics, the network effect asserts that the value a user receives is directly proportional to the number of users of compatible products. This principle holds true for modern cloud platforms, where the strength lies in the number of connected users and providers.

Platforms like Cloudprinter, Gelato and the newly announced HP+Canva at the show, are print-specific platforms that connect print buyers with a globally-connected network of print service providers for production and delivery. This seamless experience not only caters to the most demanding volumes but also offers the environmental benefit of producing the work as close as possible to the destination. For print service providers, this means simple connectivity to a stream of incremental print volumes for their printing operations, promising a bright future for the industry.

Gelato also launched GelatoConnect, a software suite to help improve procurement, workflow and logistics for print service providers. Today, the key benefit for print service providers is the preferred pricing for procurement of materials and shipping rates Gelato brings due to its size and negotiating leverage, which is passed along through GelatoConnect. A study commissioned by Gelato through the consulting firm McKinsey found that customers reported an increase in profit margin by up to 7%.

Platforms for connectivity and automation

Connecting the multitude of disparate vendor solutions in the printing industry is a worthy, ambitious and extremely difficult goal. System and data connectivity is necessary to enable automation in the printing industry. Increasingly, automation is happening between cloud-based systems using APIs.

Just before the start of drupa, Heidelberg announced a cease of operations for Zaikio that had industry-wide connectivity as its mission. Some of the principals involved with Zaikio are continuing the connectivity goal by launching CoCoCo, abbreviated from "Connect. Combine. Collaborate." The initial solution offerings focus on helping print service providers unify all job and machine data in one solution and fast-track integration across multiple industry-leading software solutions.

Atomyx from FourPees, born from years of integrator experience, is designed to solve many of the same issues with extra focus on prepress functions with its Manage, Prepare and Layout components. The cloud-based solutions focus on

optimizing job onboarding, file preparation and material usage with smart imposition by enabling connectivity and smart automation. These solutions provide the framework for simplifying the multiple points of integrations, allowing print service providers a time and cost-effective path needed for workflow automation.

WHAT'S NEXT

For print service providers, the key to improving operations and staying competitive lies in focusing on connectivity between business and workflow systems and embracing automation. The industry is evolving, and there are solutions and integration companies that can help you stay ahead. The days of competitive differentiation based solely on capital expenditures on equipment are over. The new competitive advantage is in continuous operational optimization and leveraging internal operational and financial data to power that feedback loop.

Source: Pat McGrew & Ryan McAbee, *The Print University*, www.ThePrintUniversity.com.

FOCUS ON CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN BUSINESS AND WORKFLOW SYSTEMS AND EMBRACING AUTOMATION

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

PLAN AND IMPLEMENT YOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES

With the fall season upon us, you might wonder if this is the right time to plan and implement your marketing strategies. The answer is that you should be planning and implementing your marketing strategies every season, all year round.

Lead time is key: Marketing isn't about immediate sales; it's about building a strong brand presence that customers will remember when they need printing services.

Plan your campaign: Develop a detailed marketing plan outlining the strategies you'll use – social media, email marketing, direct mail, etc. Ensure you have a mix of channels to reach a broad audience.

Create compelling content: Start designing your marketing materials. High-quality visuals and engaging copy will set your campaigns apart.

Engage your audience: Begin engaging with your audience through social media, blog, print and email. Share valuable content and updates to keep them interested.

Focus on 90 days: Plan your marketing for the next 90 days. After 90 days, evaluate, adjust and plan the next 90 days.

By taking action you're setting yourself up for successful sales. Don't wait – focus on your marketing efforts today and watch your sales soar!

Source: Patrick Whelan, *Great Reach Communications*, <https://greatreachinc.com>



MEMBER NEWS

EVERYDAY MEMBER QUESTIONS

Q: How can printing companies handle the font purchase issue to keep from being sued?

A: To avoid legal issues for your company, always ensure that the customer is 100% responsible for providing or paying for the fonts needed to run their jobs. Ask for press-ready PDFs with fonts embedded in the Acrobat file. If the customer supplies native files such as InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, etc. instead of PDFs, ask them to send you the fonts as well. If they cannot, purchase the fonts and add that cost to their invoice.



CONTACT US

ADDRESS

5800 S. Eastern Avenue,
Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90040
P.O. Box 910936
Los Angeles, CA 90091
Phone: 323.728.9500
www.piasc.org

KEY CONTACTS

LOU CARON
President/CEO
Ext. 274
lou@piasc.org

NORA WOLKOFF
VP, PIASC Insurance
Ext. 222
nora@piascins.com

EVIE BAÑAGA
Employee Benefits
Ext. 224
evie@pibt.org

KRISTY VILLANUEVA
Member Services
Ext. 215
kristy@piasc.org

RODNEY BOLTON
Human Resources
piasc@hrbizz.com

EVENTS CALENDAR

For full list of events, please visit www.piasc.org/events

Mail Design Consultant Workshop
October 21, 22 & 23 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM
and October 24 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM.
Via Zoom
bit.ly/MailDesign2024PIA

Book Arts Patch Day For Girls
November 9
9:00AM. – 3:00PM
Carson, CA
bit.ly/book-arts-day

Holiday Crazy Krafts Day
December 14
International Printing Museum
Carson, CA
bit.ly/crazy-kraft-day

SPOTLIGHT EVENT

BOOK ARTS PATCH DAY FOR GIRLS
Saturday, November 9, 2024
9:00AM. – 3:00PM
The International Printing Museum
315 West Torrance Boulevard, Carson, CA 90745

The Book Arts Patch Day for Girls is designed for girls aged 10-18 who want to explore the book arts through hands-on experience. If you are a Girl Scout, the BOOK ARTS PATCH DAY will help fulfill the requirements for the Girl Scouts Cadette Book Artist Patch. A truly unique and not-to-miss event for girls in Southern California!

THIS ISSUE:

NEW LOOK!

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MEMBER NEWS: EVERYDAY MEMBER QUESTIONS

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: PLAN AND IMPLEMENT YOUR MARKETING STRATEGIES

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Services for Graphic Communications
PIA
5800 S. Eastern Ave., #400
Los Angeles, CA 90040

