

Record number of deals signed at drupa 2024

Celebrating the global print industry

drupa 2024 exceeded all expectations. It received top marks from visitors from all over the world, who left the trade fair with new ideas and clear prospects for the future. Numerous contracts signed and technological innovations inspired the print and packaging industry.

drupa 2024 in Düsseldorf, the world's No. 1 trade fair for printing technologies, drew to a successful close on 7 June after eleven days. It impressively demonstrated the progress of an entire sector and gave proof of the operational excellence of the industry. 1,643 exhibitors from 52 nations presented an outstanding showcase of innovations in the Düsseldorf exhibition halls and thrilled the trade visitors with unforgettable performances. The international share of the visitors was 80%, with attendees coming from 174 countries - a record figure. After Europe, Asia was the most strongly repre-



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sented region with 22%, followed by America with 12%. Asia as well as Latin America and the MENA region are markets with great growth potential, which was reflected in the significant increase in exhibitors' presence and order books. Many key players, such as Bobst, Canon, Fujifilm, Heidelberger Druckmaschinen, HP, Horizon, Koenig & Bauer, Komori, Konica Minolta, Kurz and Landa, reported having signed contracts that significantly exceeded expectations. In some cases, the sales targets set were already achieved in the first few days of the trade fair.

Erhard Wienkamp, Managing Director at Messe Düsseldorf, is highly satisfied with the course of the trade fair: "drupa has underpinned its position as the industry's leading trade fair and its unique appeal in a remarkable way. The impressive international flair and, above all, the high decision-making competence of the visitors ensured in-depth and well-founded technical discussions at the trade fair stands on the one hand and many direct investment decisions on the other. Our exhibitors

told us about large-volume purchase agreements."

Dr Andreas Pleßke, Chairman of the drupa Committee, emphasised the exceptional position and relevance of drupa: "drupa stands for new approaches and new technologies like no other trade fair. It is not only the largest, but also the most important global platform for our industry, because the entire printing and post-press industry meets at the world-leading trade fair. It has been invaluable for generating leads. Nowhere else offers the opportunity to make so many new international contacts from all over the world in such a short space of time in one place."

Exhibitors praised the high level of decision-making competence of visitors. They, in turn, gave top marks to the range of products and services on offer in the 18 exhibition halls. Around 96% of all visitors confirmed that they had fully achieved the objectives associated with their visit. At over 50%, most of them came from the printing industry, followed by the packaging industry,

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whose share has increased significantly and which was the focus of many exhibitors as a growth driver. Many well-known brand owners were welcomed at the trade fair stands. In total, 170,000 trade visitors attended drupa 2024.

Automation took centre stage at this year's drupa, with a strong focus on AI and smart workflows, including software solutions. It became clear that digital and analogue technologies ideally complement and benefit from each other. Traditional industry leaders presented a wide range of digital solutions, while digital pioneers integrated conventional components into their offerings. Robotics played an important role in the exhibition halls and illustrated the path towards the smart factory.

drupa made it abundantly clear that the industry has great potential for the future, even against the backdrop of many challenges, and that the prospects are promising. In the last financial year, the global printing industry achieved a turnover of around EUR 840 billion (source: Smithers) and continues to develop at varying pace worldwide.

"At drupa 2024, we experienced first hand just how relevant and resilient this industry is," summarises Sabine Geldermann, Director drupa, Portfolio Print Technologies. "The community is determined to set the course for the future together. Exchanging ideas with people from all continents and from all areas of the industry was extremely enriching and inspiring. We were able to welcome around 50 large delegations from various nations, and numerous globally active associations and organisations chose drupa as the ideal setting for their conferences and board meetings.

Together we are stronger. Many new strategic alliances concluded at the trade fair reflected the opportunities that are only possible in such a concentrated form at drupa: meeting market players from other countries around the world in person, using core competences as synergy effects, forming networks and driving the market forward together.

Technology is the key to achieving sustainability goals - exhibitors at drupa illustrated this with numerous practice-orientated developments and concrete solutions. Top priority is given to resource efficiency and the path to a functioning circular economy. In addition, Touchpoint Sustainability from the VDMA, the German Machinery and Equipment Manufacturers' Association, showcased current state of the art innovations, presented best-practice use cases and gave a far-reaching outlook into the future of a sustainable printing industry.

The extensive supporting programme with its five high-calibre special forums drupa cube, drupa next age (dna) and the Touchpoints Packaging, Textile and Sustainability was very well received. In times of constant change and the resulting new business models, they ensured an intensive transfer of knowledge and provided important guidance. Together with its partners, drupa focused on impressive industry expertise and the future topics of its target groups. Guided tours on various key topics rounded off the trade fair experience.

The next drupa will be held in 2028.

Eco Flexibles invests in second Jet Press FP790

Fujifilm announces at drupa 2024 that Eco Flexibles, a sustainability-focused flexible packaging specialist, has invested in its second Jet Press FP790, following the initial sale announced earlier this year. The second investment comes as a result of unprecedented demand from customers for work printed on the company's existing Jet Press FP790.

The Northampton-based printing company became the first outside of Japan to install the water-based inkjet digital press, which is located at its newly opened 40,000 ft² production site and headquarters. Now less than 12 months later, a second order has been placed. The first press forms the heart of an overall digital flexible packaging production environment, including slitting and lamination.

Mainstream digital flexible packaging production is a rapidly advancing market, being progressed by both new technologies and evolving market needs and demands. It is this market that Eco Flexibles has sought to target, and which it has successfully appealed to, having made its initial investment a little over a year ago.

Since completing the beta test phase with the first press and commercialising the production process, Eco Flexibles has experienced first-hand the level of appetite and demand from brand owners for the capabilities of the Jet Press FP790. These include customers big and small, operating in markets as diverse as confectionery, snacks, protein and fresh produce, where speed to market is paramount. Brands are using Eco Flexibles' digital flexible packaging manufacturing capability to produce runs from 1,000 Sq.M up to 20,000 Sq.M.

Simon Buswell, Sales and Marketing Director at Eco Flexibles said: "2024 is proving to be quite the year for Eco Flexibles. We made a significant investment in our first Fujifilm Jet Press FP790 last year and now, not even 12 months later, we have experienced such significant growth that it has put us in the position to order a second press."

Simon adds: "Our mission has always been to make recyclable monopolymer and paper packaging more accessible for brand owners, and we are delivering just that. We're reinforcing the fact that sustainable flexible packaging doesn't require compromise or sacrifices."

Manuel Schruett, Head of Packaging, Fujifilm EMEA comments: "We are delighted to see the significant growth Eco Flexibles has experienced since installing their first Fujifilm Jet Press FP790. It's exciting to be on the journey with them and share their success. A second order in such a short time frame is testament to the first-class work ethic of their highly skilled team, combined with our expertise in inkjet technology. It's a perfect match that is exceeding customer expectations for digital flexible packaging solutions."

drupa: Another Rapida 105 from Koenig & Bauer for Parksons Packaging

At drupa, Parksons Packaging, one of India's biggest Rapida printers, placed another order for sheetfed offset technology from Koenig & Bauer. The new Rapida 105 will be a combined conventional and UV press. It features a package for foil converting, fully flexible dryer equipment, measuring and control technology and non-stop equipment in the delivery. It will be raised for packaging production.

A Rapida 105 with seven inking units, coater and extended delivery is to supplement the current press fleet. It will be installed at MK Print Pack (Parksons Group Company) in Daman.

Parksons Packaging already has more than 150 printing and finishing units from Koenig & Bauer in operation. They are spread across a total of 21 presses. The company now has 13 production sites across the subcontinent. It also has a plant in Tanzania. A seven-colour Rapida 105 with coater was installed there shortly before drupa.

Owner and president Ramesh Kejriwal explains the new order: "The Rapida presses are the foundation of our extraordinary growth. They make us uniquely efficient."

Drupa 2024: Epson displays latest direct-to-fabric single-step pigment ink textile printer

The Monna Lisa ML-13000 is an innovative textile printing solution that requires no additional equipment for pre and post treatment, steaming and washing. The new direct-to-fabric printer comes equipped with three types of pre and post processing chemicals (pre-treatment, over-coating, and density enhancer) in addition to seven colour inks. This makes it possible to integrate pre and post processing in a single step printing solution and contrasts with other conventional textile printers that require separate processes. Pre and post chemicals are used only on the print area (dot-on-dot), en-

abling prints that bring out the texture of the fabric. The ML-13000 also enjoys a much smaller footprint compared with conventional textile printing equipment, allowing it to be installed in more confined and convenient working environments. The ML-13000 offers a far more sustainable approach to fabric printing. The traditional textile industry is responsible for approximately 20% of industrial wastewater worldwide, however the ML-13000 can significantly reduce water consumption by up to 97% by eliminating pre and post processes required by conventional dye-based printing methods. It is also estimated that 35% of all materials in the textile supply chain end up as waste however digital on-demand textile printing allows one to print just the right amount and therefore reduce stock waste and manage excess inventory. Epson's ML-13000 pigment inks and pre and post treatment chemicals meet environmental standards including ECO PASSPORT certified, bluesign approved, ZDHC MRS L Conformance Level 3 certified, and GOTS approved by ECOCERT.

The ML-13000's superior image quality is delivered through Epson's high-quality PrecisionCore print-heads. Epson precision-dot technology reduces banding and graininess, and its multi-layer halftone technology, which randomizes the halftone dot pattern on each layer, reduces image degradation caused by dot misalignment. The ML-13000 also features symmetrical colour alignment for consistent colour overlap during bidirectional printing, and accurate belt position control technology automatically detects the belt feeding distance to ensure highly precise fabric feeding. The result is optimal quality and productivity, with superb reproduction of color gradations, fine details, and complex geometric patterns.

Stable operation with unprecedented usability is realized with the advanced cleaning mechanisms and automated adjustment functions. Nozzle verification technology detects missing dots that indicate nozzle

clogging and adjusts ink delivery to maintain image quality and reduce printing errors. An easy-to-replace fabric wiper roll continuously wipes the printhead nozzles clean automatically, reducing daily manual maintenance work. An ink-mist extraction system helps prevent ink-mist from adhering to the nozzle surface. Thanks to high accuracy of printhead alignment technology and an automatic calibration function by an RGB camera, printhead replacement can be carried out including adjustments quickly.

Ease of use is enhanced by a 10.1-inch LCD touch panel that displays current printer status, operating instructions, and regular maintenance procedures, and by built-in & hot-swappable, dual 1.6 litre ink cartridges that allow uninterrupted production. GENESTA pigment ink and pre and post processing chemicals provide flexibility to print on a variety of fabrics such as natural, synthetic and blended fabrics for a wide range of applications.

Epson Edge Print PRO X series RIP software supports Adobe PDF Print Engine (APPE) - the industry's leading technology and new 16-bit rendering and includes step and repeat, hot folders, print cost analysis tool and colour adjustment for matching spot colours. Epson Cloud Solution PORT provides a live view of printer fleet production, equipment utilization, and service information to better manage efficiency and optimize printing workflow. Epson has sales offices, demo/solution centers and local service teams around the globe to support customers.

MASTHEAD

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