

Global printing trends for 2016 in the face of digital

At the GAPP (Graphic Advertising Print Packaging) Conference, in association with Nashua, a panel of experts shared insights into local and global printing trends for 2016 and beyond.

Following the event, Nashua shares key trends, identified by speaker Laurel Brunner, founder of UK-based print consultancy, Digital Dots:

Uncertainty is here to stay

If there is one trend that can be identified from the last few years of changes in print, it is that nothing is permanent. The good news is, the more uncertainty and chaos, the better the printing industry likes it. As advertising and publishing becomes a multi-channel exercise, print remains at the centre, providing the most visceral of all augmented realities.

The constant disruption experienced by the printing industry – and publishing as a whole – creates a whole world of opportunities. New technology allows us to communicate ideas – it is up to the print industry to embrace it.

Your business is your world

It seems there is no economy in the world safe from the rampant recession. Even the most skilled economists cannot predict what is to happen to the global economy, let alone our own local economy, which creates further unrest for SMEs, particularly in a volatile industry such as printing.



However, the most important skill to learn in this climate is to focus on your own business and how it can function best. Ignore the hype and sensationalism and focus on your own standards, the potential of your own business and the (sometimes small) successes you can create. Be confident in your own business, or no one else will be.

People still pay premiums

When there is a small print shop on every corner, you might feel as if your printing business cannot afford to charge customers a premium for your high-quality service, because they will simply trudge on down the road to your competitor. This is not necessarily true.

If you can build up enough of a solid client base and a reputation of reliability, customers are still willing to pay a premium for quality and consistency. Trust is their insurance policy and they can rest easy in the knowledge that the final product you deliver will be exactly to their standards.

Customers want consultants

Your most valued customers might appear as if they are experts in their respective fields but most businesses – particularly in advertising – are changing so quickly and frequently that business owners themselves are just trying to navigate the unknown landscape. This gives you the opportunity to change the perception in the mind of the client of your role in helping their business.

Become a consultant – if they ask you to print one set of collateral, ask as much as you can about the whole campaign. Find out who is producing the rest of the campaign content and whether you can step in and help. Even if they might not appear that way at first, clients want a consultant, not a cashier.

Do not rubbish digital

Digital is here to stay and those who are desperately clinging onto a one-dimensional business model are going to hear their competitors go whooshing past them as they stagnate. However, what is most important to remember is that digital is not the enemy – it is simply another supporting channel to be incorporated into your business.

When you work in print, creativity is the only currency that matters and digital is just another way to display creativity. If you can be bold and brave enough to seek out the opportunities digital has to offer your print business, you will survive in an otherwise unforgiving climate.

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