

# printmarket

Trade journal for the printing industry

Issue No.4 | October 2025

**TRADE FAIRS**

**TECHNOLOGY**

**SUSTAINABILITY**

**INTERVIEW**

**TRENDS**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**INDUSTRIAL PRINT INNOVATION 2025**

**QUALITY CONTROL WITH AI**

**RISK OF INVESTMENT BACKLOG**

**PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION 2026**



We are happy to offer you the use of the front page:  
The price for the motif on the front page is 3.000,- €.

Advert size examples – print

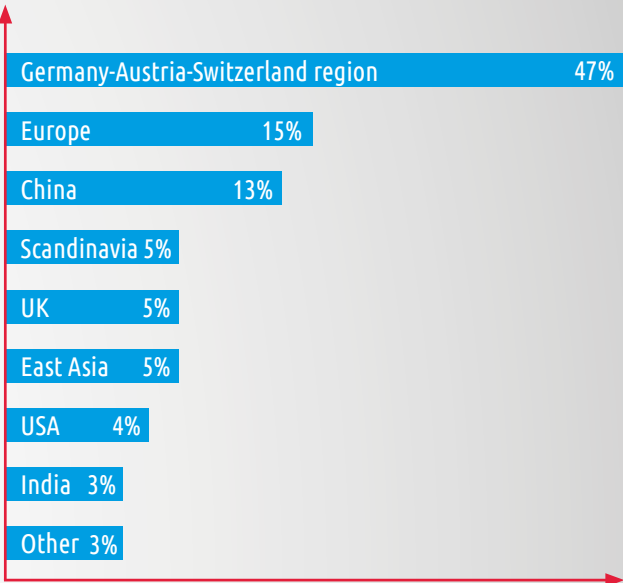
Title	full page	3.000,- €
Cover 1/2/3	full page	2.750,- €
1/1 page	210 x 297 mm	2.200,- €
1/2 page	210 x 148 mm	1.200,- €
1/2 page	102 x 297 mm	1.200,- €
1/4 page	210 x 75 mm	650,- €
1/8 page	85 x 85 mm	350,- €

\* All adverts must be created with an additional 3mm bleed

Combo-Offer

Print and online ad reduced by 10 %

Main catchment areas 2024



Advertorial size examples – Print

Double page	386 x 252 mm	2.500,- €
Full page	176 x 252 mm	1.500,- €
1/2 page	176 x 126 mm	800,- €

Banner Ad size examples – Website

Gold-Advert	Full width	2.950,- €	4.950,- €
Silver-plus-Advert	1/2 width - Top Position	2.500,- €	3.950,- €
Silver-Advert	1/2 width	2.000,- €	3.600,- €
Bronze plus-Advert	1/3 width - Top Position	1.750,- €	2.900,- €
Bronze-Advert	1/3 width	1.500,- €	2.400,- €



Editorial



ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING, OEM PERSPECTIVES AND INKJET TECHNOLOGIES

The history of OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) began with the rise of mass production, when companies started sourcing components from specialised producers. Starting with a low level of vertical integration among earlier manufacturers, who produced many things themselves, to modern practices, where specialised suppliers (OEMs) manufacture components to exact specifications. In the printing industry, for example, OEM manufacturers produce print heads and electronic components for other printing machine manufacturers, or components and modular printing systems as a complete package for OEM partners.

Industrial Print Integration (IPI), Europe’s leading conference for specialised printing technologies, which will take place in Düsseldorf on 12 and 13 November 2025, brings together an international community of suppliers, OEMs, innovators and technology users from various industries, accompanied by more than 50 specialist presentations and 60 networking stands. Printing experts will advise on best-case options and open up perspectives for new developments. Among other things, inkjet, spray coating, aerosol and jet technologies will be presented, including software, system integration, process optimisation and sustainability.

Technology suppliers provide information on components, print heads, UV LED systems, precision coatings, fluid handling units and new hardware and software integrations. The focus is on printing and functional applications in the electronics, packaging and automotive sectors. Technical sessions promote networking and partnerships in applications such as direct-to-shape, 3D printing, printed electronics and 4.0 smart factories.

OEMs have access to new developments in print integration, modular systems, data path optimisation and printing press design, and can exchange ideas with other companies about inkjet and other technologies for packaging, decoration, additive manufacturing and electronics. The interdisciplinary approach of AI, robotics and sustainable practices is also supported.

*‘An informative event to learn about the latest trends in the inkjet sector.’ Christian Maas, Koenig & Bauer Kammann.*

Smart labels, printed sensors, personalised packaging and sustainable textile production are further topics covered at IPI. Brand owners and end consumers will learn how digital manufacturing and industrial mass production can be used to reduce waste, increase flexibility and meet compliance requirements.

Technology and economic opportunities come together at IPI. Join the discussion with technology developers, suppliers and integrators.

Udo Schulz  
Udo W. Schulz



# Content

printmarket – Issue No. 4 | October 2025



The IPI is considered one of the most important events in the field of speciality and industrial printing, bringing together OEMs, technology innovators and industry experts.



## TRADE FAIRS

- 5 **IPI Keynotes**  
Robotics, human-machine interfaces and industrial printing
- 8 **Transformation into the future**  
PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION
- 9 **Vliesstoff Kasper**  
Cleaning cloths for the printing industry
- 10 **Brand experience from head to toe**  
Daiber at A+A 2025

## TECHNOLOGY

- 13 **New quality control from EyeC**  
AI for inline inspection
- 14 **All-in-one pad printing set**  
'Made in Italy' by Keygadgets

## SUSTAINABILITY

- 15 **Sustainability by EcoVadis**  
Sun Chemical receives silver rating

## INTERVIEW

- 16 **ESMA**  
Advances and innovations shaping the screen printing industry

## TRENDS

- 18 **Economic telegram September**  
Slight improvement in the business climate
- 19 **Grünig SignTronic AG**  
Grünig and SignTronic merge
- 20 **swissQprint**  
with new building in the USA
- 21 **Investment backlog in the printing industry**  
Risk to competitiveness

## TRADE FAIR DATES

- 22 **Preview of national trade fair**
- 23 **Preview of international trade fairs**

## IPI 2025 Keynotes: Robotics, Human-Machine Interfaces and Industrial Printing

The Industrial Print Integration (IPI) Conference 2025, the leading event for functional and industrial printing, has announced its keynote programme. IPI will take place from 12 to 13 November at the Crowne Plaza Düsseldorf-Neuss and will offer insights from global research institutes, technology users and analysts on disruptive trends shaping the manufacturing of tomorrow.

### KEYNOTE-SESSIONS

Wednesday, 12 November, 9:25 a.m.  
**AI-assisted robotics: market and technology trends**

Dr Werner Kraus, Head of Robotics at Fraunhofer IPA and Head of the AI Innovation Centre for Learning Systems and Cognitive Robotics.

From model-free gripping to cobot welding to imitation learning. The keynote examines how AI-enabled robotics is changing production and logistics. Dr Kraus will present the vision of 'automation of automation' for highly flexible small-batch production and show how digital toolchains can reduce engineering effort by up to 50%.

Wednesday, 12 November, 9:50 a.m.  
**Dead fronts, fibre optics, hidden-tilt displays: How inkjet printing is finding its way into human-machine interfaces**

Manuel Klemens, Plant Manager, CCL Design, and Dr Andreas Willfahrt, Head of Development, Intelligent Labels, CCL Design.

This session will highlight the role of inkjet printing in the development of next-generation HMIs for automotive, electronics and industrial applications. Using real-world case studies, the speakers will demonstrate how inkjet printers offer design freedom, precision and adaptability, opening up new possibilities for advanced interface design.

Wednesday, 12 November, 10:15 a.m.  
**A new direction for inkjet printing: Why is chemical kinetics accelerated in microscopic droplets?**

Prof. Ronan Daly, Professor of Advanced Manufacturing Technology in the Department of Engineering at the University of Cambridge. He heads the research group 'Fluids in Advanced Manufacturing'.

The unique ability of inkjet printing to precisely control the volume, speed and placement of droplets opens up possibilities beyond printing. Professor Daly will demonstrate how this capability can be used for drug delivery and to accelerate chemical reaction kinetics, highlighting the potential of inkjet printing as a powerful tool for advanced manufacturing and biomedical applications.

### Editor / Graphics & Layout:

ISSN 2942-8831  
büro oeding, Husumer Straße 68, 24941 Flensburg  
Tel. +49 461 - 318 51 75, kontakt@printmarket.online  
[www.buerooeding.de](http://www.buerooeding.de) | [www.printmarket.online](http://www.printmarket.online)

### Subscriptions / Adverts:

Katharina Sabarathnam  
International  
Tel. +49 4521 - 797 410 30  
[k.sabarathnam@hoelter-media.de](mailto:k.sabarathnam@hoelter-media.de)

### Editorial office:

Udo W. Schulz  
Tel. +49 - 176 993 999 64  
[udo.schulz@printmarket.online](mailto:udo.schulz@printmarket.online)

Gabi Rasch  
National-North  
Tel. +49 4521 - 797 410 30  
[gr@hoelter-media.de](mailto:gr@hoelter-media.de)





The Industrial Print Integration (IPI) conference focuses on AI robotics, human-machine interfaces and innovative printing technologies.

Thursday, 13 November, 3:15 p.m.

**Keynote & Zusammenfassung:  
Die Zukunft des funktionalen und  
industriellen Drucks**

Jon Harper-Smith, Printing Consultant  
at Smithers

The printing industry is diversifying far beyond paper, using specialised processes to develop components and functional materials for electronics, packaging, textiles and decoration. In this keynote address, Smithers will present an overview of the global market outlook and identify both opportunities and risks for the next five years. Based on exclusive insights from 'The Future of Industrial and Decorative Printing to 2029,' Harper-Smith will highlight the technologies driving change, the applications with the greatest growth potential, and the challenges industry leaders will face as printing moves into new functional areas.

**ORGANISER'S PERSPECTIVE**

'Our keynote programme reflects the most pressing and exciting topics currently being discussed in industrial

printing – from robotics and automation to sustainable inks and next-generation applications,' said Peter Buttiens, CEO of ESMA. 'IPI 2025 is about more than just technological innovations; it's about designing the roadmap for the manufacturing of the future and bringing together the experts who will make it happen.'

**BEYOND THE KEYNOTES**

In addition to the keynote programme, IPI 2025 will feature nearly 60 technical presentations showcasing innovations in printhead design, functional inks, 3D applications, auto-

mation and sustainability. For the first time, the conference will also include OEM perspectives from SPGPrints, MicroCraft and C-marx, offering practical insights into new applications and production challenges.

**EXHIBITION & NETWORKING**

The table exhibition brings together more than 60 industry leaders and academic partners, including Agfa, Fujifilm Dimatix, Konica Minolta, Ricoh, Sun Chemical, the University of Cambridge and others. The exhibition space is almost sold out, with only a few spaces still available.

**ESMA**

ESMA has been active in the industrial printing sector since 1990 and has developed from a European association for screen and digital printing manufacturers into an organisation representing industrial, functional and speciality printing. Over the years, ESMA has developed the concept of the Knowledge Hub, which today provides cross-technology expertise to nearly 70 European manufacturer members and technology partners. Every ESMA member enjoys favourable conditions at major trade fairs and ESMA's own conferences. Further benefits include access to technical seminars and committee meetings. Partners and members receive support and publicity in relation to health, safety and environmental regulations and participate in setting industry standards.

Europe's biggest  
conference on  
industrial printing  
technology



# INDUSTRIAL PRINT INTEGRATION



12-13 November 2025  
Düsseldorf-Neuss  
**[ipi-conference.com](http://ipi-conference.com)**







The PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION is organised by the Fachverband Medienproduktion (FMP) in partnership with Messe Düsseldorf and drupa.

# Transformation into the future

## PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION

The PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION (PDC) will send a clear signal for change and further development in 2026. On 16 and 17 June, the congress fair will take place for the first time in the foyer of Hall 1 at the Düsseldorf Exhibition Centre – with a new brand identity, a modernised website and a refined communication concept.

### THE PRESENTATION

Media production, agencies, brand communication and publishing companies will find inspiration, business contacts and technologies at the PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION. Around 1,000 square metres of exhibition space and strong industry partners create space for exchange on an equal footing with a focus on the DACH region.

### A DRIVING FORCE IN THE INDUSTRY

The 2026 trade fair is all about transformation: a revamped corporate design, a new logo and a fresh digital presence mark the change. The new look brings diversity and innovative strength and strengthens the PDC brand, an abbreviation that has become established in everyday language. 'The new brand identity reflects the diversity, creative drive and innovative strength of the industry,' explains Rüdiger Maaß, Managing Director of the Fachverband Medienproduktion e.V. (FMP). 'The abbreviation "PDC" has long stood for more than just a congress trade fair. It stands for an attitude: solution-oriented, user-friendly, open to the future.'

### COMBINING MULTICHANNEL AND CONTENT

In terms of content, PRINT DIGITAL CONVENTION remains true to its concept. The focus is on the strategic combination of print and digital media with the aim of presenting communication solutions that create added value for brands, agencies, media companies and service providers. The format combines a trade fair, congress, practical best practices and high-quality networking opportunities. Instead of the previously separate thematic areas, in 2026 relevant content will be presented in a networked manner on site – application-oriented, dialogue-oriented and open to new perspectives.

Tickets and further information are available at:  
[www.printdigitalconvention.de](http://www.printdigitalconvention.de)

### Professional Association for Media Production

Based in Rhineland-Palatinate, the FMP brings together knowledge and expertise on a wide range of aspects of the communications industry under the umbrella of a strong association. In addition, the FMP works on the development of industry trends and is supported in this by over 30 renowned strategy partners.



# Vliesstoff Kasper:

## Cleaning cloths for the printing industry

As a long-standing partner to the printing industry and a specialist dealer for Sontara® PrintMaster, Vliesstoff Kasper offers wash-up reels for automatic cleaning for all common printing machines (Heidelberger, KBA, Komori, Manroland, Ryobi). And with the Mönchengladbach-based company's winding station, wash-up reels can also be produced from a 500 metre roll.

For manual cleaning tasks, the range extends from high-performance and solvent-resistant Sontara® cleaning cloths to various machine cleaning cloths.

The manual cleaning wipes are particularly suitable for removing dirt or for sensitive equipment. According to Kasper, automatic high-performance wipes fulfil maximum requirements in automatic surface cleaning for pre-treatment or direct integration into production chains and process and cleaning sequences. Non-woven and cleaning paper rolls round off the range.

### Vliesstoff Kasper

Vliesstoff Kasper GmbH was founded in 1984 by Dipl.-Ing. Michael Kasper and a subsidiary in the USA was added in 2008 with Kasper Consumables Incorporation. The Mönchengladbach-based company has been selling and manufacturing high-quality nonwovens for cleaning applications for more than 40 years. The product range includes wet and dry wipes and extends from fine cellulose wipes from the pluck can to various microfibre qualities and special nonwoven rolls for automatic cleaning processes in the printing and electronics industries.

Only clean machines produce  
**sharp prints!**



**InkJet 512  
Cleaning  
wipes**  
Size:  
19 x 19 cm  
Content:  
25 wipes

**YOUR PARTNER  
FOR OVER  
40 YEARS**

for manual and  
automatic  
cleaning  
applications  
in the graphic  
industry.

**Sontara. PrintMaster**



- highly absorbent
- tear-resistant • lint-free
- solvent-resistant

Rönneterring 7–9, 41068 Mönchengladbach  
Tel: +49 (0) 21 61 - 95 1 95 - 0 • Fax: -23  
info@vliesstoff.de • [www.vliesstoff.de](http://www.vliesstoff.de)







The Workwear Pants Slim Line are made from a robust, elastic blend of recycled polyester, organic cotton and elastane. Slash and tool pockets ensure that work tools are always within easy reach.

## Brand experience from head to toe

### Daiber at the A+A 2025

Gustav Daiber GmbH offers the perfect corporate fashion for every occasion, with crossover designs that can be worn in a variety of ways for both work and leisure. In addition to styles with functional details, durable materials and modern cuts, Daiber will be presenting a new workwear bestseller catalogue at this year's A+A in Düsseldorf from 4 to 7 November, and visitors can look forward to exclusive insights into the new 2026 collection.

#### SNEAK PEEK AT THE A+A

Ahead of the official launch of the 2026 collection, Daiber will be offering an exclusive preview of its new products at this year's A+A in Hall 15, Stand A04. These include over 30 new products, workwear items and fashionable crossover styles, ranging from clothing to accessories.

#### CORPORATE FASHION BEST-SELLERS

At the trade fair, Daiber will be presenting new products and its existing wide range of expressive and fashionable corporate fashion. These include the Fleece Jacket Corduroy Look, one of the new workwear items from the

current collection. The unisex jacket in corduroy look impresses with a structured, soft polyester outer fabric and keeps you warm with an inner teddy look and a stand-up collar. Reflective elements on the front and back also ensure greater visibility on shorter days.

In addition, visitors to the trade fair can also discover some of the best-selling workwear items, including the Men's ORGANIC Stretch-T Work – SOLID – OCS Blended. The T-shirt is made of soft elastic single jersey, consisting of combed, ring-spun organic cotton and viscose, and is available in ten colours in sizes XS to 6XL. Elastane neckband and neck tape ensure a comfortable fit. The women's version

is slightly tailored.

The Craftsmen Softshell Jacket – STRONG is ideal for layering in the cooler months. This professional softshell work jacket with warm inner lining offers impressive functionality. According to the manufacturer, it is rainproof thanks to taped zips and is also breathable and water vapour permeable. For comfortable wear, the softshell jacket is equipped with a removable, adjustable hood, inner cuffs and a lined zip with a wind protection flap. The CORDURA®-reinforced shoulder area makes it robust and durable. Reflective elements on the back and sleeves ensure increased visibility, and various pockets can keep everything in place.



# FROM COOL TO COSY

## New caps and beanies – discover them now!

[www.daiber.de/en](http://www.daiber.de/en)

daiber



The same applies to the Workwear Pants Slim Line – STRONG, which are made of robust, elastic blended fabric, recycled polyester, organic cotton and elastane.

Several pockets and tool pockets on the sides ensure that important work tools are always within reach. Thanks to tear-resistant triple stitching and CORDURA®-reinforced knee pad pockets, these slim-fit work trousers are particularly robust.

All Daiber products are characterised by an extensive range of colours and sizes. As part of our full-service approach, they can be customised to suit your individual requirements. As a constant companion, personally designed, they are textile advertising ambassadors that connect brands with people. In addition, they can be combined in many ways with coordinated collections and can ensure a professional and expressive appearance; a textile business card that creates identity.

Daiber meets the highest quality and service standards and attaches great importance to treating the environment and employees fairly. Gustav Daiber GmbH has been a member of

the amfori Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) since 2012 and is committed to fair working conditions throughout the supply chain. All suppliers are BSCI-audited and the products presented are OEKO-TEX® certified for textiles tested for harmful substances.

### NEW WORKWEAR BESTSELLER CATALOGUE AND FINISHING STAND

In addition to its products, the corporate fashion manufacturer will be presenting its new workwear best-seller catalogue at A+A. The themed catalogue showcases highlights and bestsellers from the existing workwear collections and provides corporate fashion inspiration for work and leisure.

#### Daiber

Gustav Daiber GmbH offers more than 800 timelessly designed products in 160 colour variations for the areas of promotion, sports, leisure, business, workwear and headwear, and is considered one of Europe's leading corporate fashion platforms. The focus is on comprehensive consulting, individual textile finishing and tailor-made concepts. The company is managed by Kai Gminder, a fourth-generation member of the family, and Christof Kunze. Around 170 employees work at the main location in Albstadt in the Swabian Alb. Another location is in Hong Kong.

Another highlight at the trade fair is the finishing stand. There, Daiber brings its print finishing range to life with various transfer motifs that are ironed on directly on site using a heat press, and visitors can take the finished giveaways home with them.

In addition, Daiber is once again collaborating with 'Pimp your Logo' this year to show how customer logos can be modified and enhanced with embroidery. Customers submit their logos to the puncher, who reworks them and prepares them in an alternative design. The puncher then creates an embroidery card and the redesigned logo is embroidered directly onto a textile item that the customer can take home with them.



AI-based error classification for the EyeC ProofRunner Web is available as an integral part of the basic configuration and is included as a standard feature with every new system.

## New quality control from EyeC Inline inspection with AI

EyeC GmbH, a global provider of automated artwork checking and print image inspection systems, has announced the market launch of its AI-based defect classification system. The innovative technology was unveiled at Labelexpo Europe 2025.

EyeC's new AI solution marks the shift from simple defect detection to content-based classification. The system automatically categorises defects into the following classes: material, dust, stains, streaks and miscellaneous. An expansion to include additional classes is planned. A key advantage of the technology is its ability to distinguish between critical defects that require immediate correction, such as colour leaks and material defects, and irrelevant deviations such as dust particles or substrate inclusions.

'With our AI-based defect classification, we are setting a new standard in the industry,' explains Nico Hagemann, Director of Product Management at EyeC GmbH. 'While conventional systems only detect defects, our AI understands them like an experienced expert and distinguishes them from irrelevant deviations. This enables our customers to perform precise inline inspections at full speed while saving time and resources.'

### SUSTAINABILITY

The use of AI-supported defect classification is of interest to companies that must comply with requirements and regulations for reducing packaging waste and promoting a circular economy. The image processing functions take into account the different optical properties of sustainable materials, and the system can reliably distinguish between acceptable surface irregularities and genuine defects in recycled substrates during inspection.

#### EyeC

EyeC GmbH, based in Hamburg, Germany, has been offering user-friendly artwork checking and print image inspection systems worldwide since 2002. According to its own information, EyeC is the only provider on the market that ensures product quality throughout the entire manufacturing process. More than 3,000 EyeC inspection systems are now in use worldwide by pharmaceutical companies, printing companies and brand manufacturers. The company currently employs over 70 people in Hamburg and has international sales partners in more than 100 countries.

*The Craftsmen Softshell Jacket is made from softshell fabric and features a warm inner lining, taped zips and is breathable and water vapour permeable.*





# All-in-one pad printing kit 'Made in Italy' by Keygadgets

According to Keygadgets, the pad printing machine they have developed is more than just a simple tool; it is the result of technical research and Italian passion for craftsmanship and innovation.

## MANUFACTURED IN ITALY AND DEVELOPED IN-HOUSE

The details of the machine are based on a design developed by Ennio Baglioni with the aim of ensuring practicality and precision. Production takes place in Italy, while final assembly is carried out at the headquarters in Pescara in order to have complete control over quality and workmanship. The value of 'Made in Italy' is reflected in the robustness and choice of materials for each component, from the hermetically sealed ink cup with ceramic ring to the precision guides.

## THE KIT: PRINT IMMEDIATELY, WITHOUT WORRIES

Everything needed for printing is included in the scope of delivery. From the manual machine with adjustable printing system to the professional UV exposure unit for cliché engraving. Inks, photopolymer plates and pads are also included. The set comes with a video course and instructions that guide users from assembly to the first print.

Keygadgets' approach is based on the principle of offering professional printing tools that are developed and manufactured in Italy and are characterised by high build quality, reliability and customer support. 'Made in Italy' is not just a label, but stands for Keygadgets' commitment to controlling every stage of production and emphasising robust materials, first-class components and innovative processes.

Keygadgets puts the customer first, both during and especially after the purchase. The company offers specialised technical support to minimise machine downtime and operational uncertainties. This focus continues with training courses, tutorials, practical video instructions and direct contact.



The all-in-one pad printing set by Keygadgets.

## Keygadgets

Keygadgets, based in Via Giuseppe di Vittorio in Pescara (Italy), was founded in 1973 as a screen printing workshop and has been an online company since 2008, developing and distributing e-commerce key gadgets worldwide in the field of typography, screen printing and pad printing. Its portfolio includes accessories, spare parts, consumables and the latest generation of screen printing machines, as well as high-performance pad printing machines.



# Sustainability by EcoVadis Sun Chemical receives silver rating

Sun Chemical has received a silver rating for its sustainability performance from EcoVadis, the world's largest provider of sustainability ratings for companies. This award places Sun Chemical among the top 15 per cent of companies in its industry.

The EcoVadis rating reflects Sun Chemical's commitment to key areas such as the environment, sustainable procurement, ethics, and labour and human rights.

'At Sun Chemical, sustainability is not just a responsibility, but a catalyst for innovation,' said Mike Simoni, Global Sustainability Director at Sun Chemical. 'This recognition from EcoVadis confirms our efforts to integrate sustainability into all areas of our business, from product development to global partnerships.'

The silver rating supports ambitious goals for reducing CO2 emissions, circular economy initiatives and transparent stakeholder engagement. Sun Chemical's sustainability performance is divided into the pillars of sustainable operations, collaborative

sustainability initiatives, and sustainable products and services. Guided by its proprietary '5R Framework' – Reuse, Reduce, Renew, Recycle and Redesign – Sun Chemical addresses upstream and downstream environmental impacts.



EcoVadis is recognised globally as a leading provider of sustainability ratings for companies and has assessed more than 150,000 companies using a methodology based on international sustainability standards, including the Global Reporting Initiative, the United Nations Global Compact and the ISO 26000 standard on social responsibility. The ratings cover more than 250 issue categories and 185 countries.

Learn more about Sun Chemical's approach to sustainability at:  
[www.sunchemical.com/sustainability](http://www.sunchemical.com/sustainability).

## Sun Chemical

Sun Chemical, a member of the DIC Group, is a leading manufacturer of packaging and graphic solutions, colour and display technologies, functional products, electronic materials, and products for the automotive and healthcare industries. Together with DIC, Sun Chemical is working to develop sustainable solutions, and with over 21,000 employees worldwide, the DIC Group companies serve a wide range of global customers.





# ESMA

## Advances and innovations shaping the screen printing industry

An interview with Peter Buttiens, CEO of ESMA (European Specialist Printing Manufacturers Association), who provides deep insights into the development and integration of screen printing technologies.

### Can you give us an overview of your professional background and your role as manager of ESMA?

When I joined ESMA in 2007, it was a relatively small and less well-known association of about 30 members. Within two years, we managed to double the membership, striking a balance between digital and screen printing companies. This growth naturally created a demand for more content and networking opportunities. Organising one or two conferences per year proved to be the right strategy, particularly for niche industry segments. Events such as GlassPrint, Membrane Switches, and

later Advanced Functional & Industrial Printing positioned us in the right direction. On the digital side, we launched a conference dedicated to industrial inkjet technology, which has since evolved into Industrial Print Integration, reflecting the industry's ongoing development.

### What was the biggest challenge you faced last year and how did you overcome it?

Last year was both challenging and exciting because we organised ESMA's very first own exhibition. Instead of the usual venues, we chose Messe Essen to host Screen Print

Innovations (SPI) – a small, focused exhibition designed specifically for the industrial screen printing community. It turned out to be a great success. Exhibitors were particularly pleased with the quality of visitors, who were a perfect fit for their businesses. Screen printing plays a vital role in many niche sectors, yet until now there had not been a dedicated event bringing together all aspects of high-tech screen printing. With strong support from our members and leading European companies, we created a new platform that will continue to grow – with the next edition planned for June 2027.

### What is ESMA doing to ensure that its business areas are in harmony with sustainability and environmental aspects?

Our Health, Safety & Environmental Protection (HSEP) committee plays a leading role in guiding members through complex regulations, such as REACH and the EU Green Deal. These meetings help companies understand and adapt to new requirements around chemicals, sustainability, and product lifecycle design. Topics such as digital product passports and the Environmental Sustainable Product Regulation (ESPR) push the industry toward repairable, recyclable, and resource-efficient products – the essence of the 9R's.

Sustainable production is becoming increasingly complex, and we make sure these issues are regularly addressed at our conferences. The textile sector, in particular, faces pressing challenges under EU Green Deal regulations, which is why our Textile Printing and Sustainability conference has been so well received. Its third edition will take place in September 2026.

### How would you describe the most important future challenges and growth areas for ESMA?

The pace of technological innovation brings both opportunities and challenges. Printed electronics is a clear growth area, especially with the rising demand for sensors and the rapid transformation of the automotive industry. These advances impact not only screen printing but also inkjet, as printing evolves into a versatile material deposition technology. At Industrial Print Integration 2025, we will introduce a dedicated track on emerging printing technologies, addressing the market's need for ever-greater precision, functionality, and flexibility.

### How does ESMA ensure the quality of its products and services?

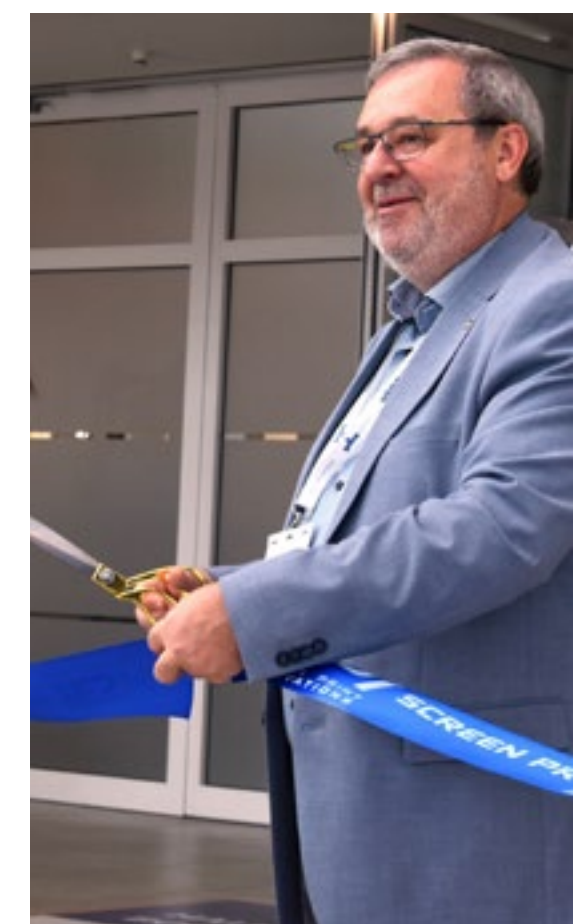
We continuously evaluate and refine our conferences, academies, and projects to maintain the highest standards. This is not always easy in a fast-changing environment, but our members and board provide strong support. Being a relatively small organisation of around 65 companies allows us to maintain close communication, involve members directly in decision-making, and ensure that we grow together with the industries we serve.

### Can you name some innovative solutions developed by ESMA to fulfil specific customer needs?

Between 2010 and 2013, ESMA coordinated an EU-funded research project focused on developing cost-effective conductive inks for inkjet and screen printing. These inks were suitable for applications such as RFID antennas, packaging, and diagnostic kits for disease testing – precursors to today's advanced "lab-on-a-chip" solutions. At the time, RFID antennas cost around 50 cents per piece. Through this project, we reduced the cost to 20 cents, and today they can be produced for nearly 1 cent each.

### What major trends are you seeing in the printing industry and how is ESMA positioning itself to capitalise on these trends?

Printing is increasingly integrated into industrial production processes, delivering solutions that are highly reliable while using fewer materials and less energy than traditional manufacturing methods. Combined with automation, this positions printing technologies at the heart of the "Factories of the Future," enabling more sustainable and flexible production. ESMA's role is to help our members navigate this transformation and seize the opportunities it presents.



Peter Buttiens

### And finally, what are your plans for the future?

We are already exploring new markets that may not be traditionally associated with printing but are showing strong demand for advanced deposition technologies. One promising area is micro- and sub-nano printing for biomedical applications. Beyond that, there are many industries that have yet to fully discover the potential of printing technologies – or, more accurately, material deposition – and our goal is to help them unlock those possibilities.





### Economic situation in the German printing industry 9/2025

Index values (2015=100), seasonally adjusted | Calculation/graph: bvdm, source: ifo Business Survey



## Economic Telegram September

### Slight improvement in business climate

September 2025 saw a slight improvement in the seasonally adjusted business climate in the German printing and media industry. The seasonally adjusted business climate index calculated by the BVDM showed an increase of 4.2 per cent compared to the previous month. At 89.4 points, the index was around 0.8 per cent higher in September than in the same month last year. While companies rated the current business situation slightly worse than in August, expectations for the next six months improved.

In September 2025, the decision-makers at printing and media companies surveyed by the ifo Institute rated their current business situation slightly worse than in the previous month. However, their assessments for the next six months were significantly more optimistic this month.

The proportion of companies with a positive assessment of their situation remains unchanged at five percent, while the proportion of companies with a negative assessment fell to 30 percent. The assessments of the order backlog are predominantly negative. Only two percent of companies assess their order backlog positively, while 38 percent give a neutral assessment and 61 percent a negative assessment. The earnings situation is also viewed critically. Only one percent assess the current earnings situation positively, 47 percent give a neutral assessment and 52 percent a negative one. A more optimistic picture emerges when it comes to expectations for the future earnings situation. Eleven percent express confidence.

The business expectations of companies in the printing and media industry for the coming six months improved in September 2025. Just over two-thirds of the companies surveyed expect business to remain stable over the next six months. Around four percent expect the business situation to improve, while 24 percent expect it to deteriorate.

#### BVDM

The German Printing and Media Association (BVDM) is the umbrella organisation for the German printing industry. As an employers' association, political trade association and technical association, it represents the positions and objectives of the printing industry vis-à-vis politicians, administrators, trade unions and the supply industry. Internationally, it is organised through its membership of Intergraf and FESPA. The printing industry currently comprises around 6,300 predominantly small and medium-sized companies with more than 99,000 employees subject to social insurance contributions.

## Grünig SignTronic AG:

### Grünig and SignTronic merge

After more than a decade of trusting cooperation, the two Swiss companies Grünig Interscreen AG from Schwarzenburg and SignTronic AG from Rüthi are merging to form Grünig SignTronic AG.

#### FROM A SMALL WORKSHOP TO A TECHNOLOGY LEADER

The history of Grünig began in 1967 in a garage workshop. At that time, Hans Ulrich Grünig founded the company with the aim of making screen printing processes more efficient and reproducible. In 1978, the first automatic coating machine was developed. Grünig continuously expanded its product range and developed tensioning systems, cleaning and decoating systems, and fully automatic in-line solutions. Today, there are over 7,000 machines in print shops and industrial companies worldwide. SignTronic later entered the scene with a focus on digital direct exposure. In 2004, the company built its first CtS system. Three years later, modular, individually configurable systems followed. From 2008 onwards, SignTronic high-resolution systems, XL formats, modular in-line systems and LED light sources were added, and the company established itself as a leading manufacturer of computer-to-screen systems.

#### TWO LOCATIONS – ONE BASE

The merger will retain the production sites in Schwarzenburg and Rüthi, with their regional roots, high vertical range of manufacture and Swiss quality. 'It's more than a merger, it's a clear commitment to the efficiency, quality and sustainability of our industry,' comments Marcel Grünig, CEO of Grünig SignTronic AG. Ferndrager and Grünig also expect the merger to increase efficiency and reproducibility. Standardised workflows and integrated data interfaces are expected to shorten production times and improve process controls. "The merger will create synergies at all levels: development, design, sales, training and service will work even more closely together in future. This not only creates internal efficiency, but also added value for the market," emphasises Andreas Ferndrager.



The two managing directors, Marcel Grünig and Andreas Ferndrager, aim to offer comprehensive solutions from a single source.

#### Grüenig Signtronic

The two companies began their collaboration in 2011 as a technical and strategic partnership. Grünig's proven screen preparation systems were to be combined with SignTronic's digital precision. In 2013, Andreas Ferndrager and Marcel Grünig jointly took over SignTronic AG. Ferndrager, who had previously worked for Grünig, gradually expanded the cooperation into an integral collaboration. In the following years, numerous in-line concepts were developed in which tensioning, coating, exposure and development were coordinated.





With the new building, swissQprint aims to improve and continuously expand its services for North American customers. © Heitman Architects Inc.

# swissQprint with new building in the USA

The Swiss manufacturer of large-format printers is building in Illinois to pave the way for future growth in North America. The new premises are intended to improve customer service and presentation opportunities for swissQ products.

Kilian Hintermann, CEO of swissQprint, said of the project: 'We continue to view North America as a growth market. The new headquarters of our US subsidiary is proof of our commitment to providing the best possible service to our North American customers.' swissQprint America is based in Elgin, Illinois, from where it provides sales and service support. A second showroom is located in Irvine, California.

## IMPROVED SERVICE

The new building is being constructed on a 12,000 square metre site in West Dundee, Illinois. Erik Norman, Managing Director of swissQprint America, explains: 'The heart of the new building will be a spacious showroom for our large-format printers and their applications. There will also be more space for our application and service teams. Everything is designed to offer our customers an unparalleled experience and above-average service.'

## SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The new building offers 2,300 square metres of floor space. The showroom and reception area occupy around 400 square metres of this space. Training rooms and a workshop for technical work such as machine overhauls take up around 200 square metres. In addition, larger

storage capacities and office space are planned than at the Elgin site. In line with swissQprint's sustainability policy, the installation of around 400 solar panels is planned to supply electricity from renewable resources.

## SCHEDULE AND OUTLOOK

The ground-breaking ceremony took place on 9 July 2025, and the new building is expected to be ready for occupancy by mid-2026. While swissQprint will be giving up its Elgin location, the showroom in California will remain open for interested parties on the US West Coast and in Western Canada.

## swissQprint

swissQprint is an independent public limited company based in Kriessern, Switzerland. Its headquarters is also the development and production site for high-quality digital printing systems used for professional lettering and imaging on a wide variety of surfaces. swissQprint employs 220 people, has six branches and a sales network in 40 countries.



High costs, strained supply chains and the uncertain geopolitical situation require companies in the printing and media industry to act flexibly.

# Investment backlog in the printing industry Risk to competitiveness

Gross capital expenditure by printing and media companies declined significantly in 2023. According to the industry report published by the German Printing and Media Association, early indicators point to a continued reluctance to invest.

Investments amounted to around €436 million in 2022 and fell to €326 million in 2023. At three per cent, the ratio of gross investment to industry turnover is well below the long-term average. And data from the Federal Statistical Office show that this is the lowest investment ratio since the time series began – an alarming signal for an industry that is in the midst of profound transformation processes.

## LEADING INDICATOR

The DIHK's economic surveys provide an insight into the investment intentions of printing and media companies for 2024 and 2025: the downward trend continued throughout 2024, with the average investment sentiment for the year around five per cent below the previous year's figure. Stricter lending standards, lower profit margins and uncer-

tain economic conditions are causing investments to be cancelled. The outlook for 2025 is also negative: in the latest BVDM survey on the economic situation in the printing industry, more than half of the companies surveyed stated that they would be postponing or cancelling investments.

## INNOVATIVE STRENGTH

In 2024, respondents cited rationalisation and replacement investments as the primary reasons for investing. There is a high demand for innovation in printing and media companies: advancing digitalisation, cost pressures, technological advances in artificial intelligence, increasing sustainability requirements and changes in consumer behaviour are presenting companies with new challenges.

## BVDM

The Federal Association of the Printing and Media Industry (BVDM) is the umbrella organisation for the German printing industry. As an employers' association, political trade association and technical association, it represents the positions and objectives of the printing industry vis-à-vis politicians, administrators, trade unions and the supply industry. The BVDM is supported by eight regional associations. Internationally, it is organised through its membership of Intergraf and FESPA. The printing industry currently comprises around 6,300 predominantly small and medium-sized companies with more than 99,000 employees subject to social insurance contributions.



# National & international trade fairs

A selection on the topics of screen, digital, pad, large format and textile printing

*As at October 2025. Due to the current situation, dates and information may be out of date or not up to date.  
Please contact the respective organiser to confirm dates. You can find more international trade fairs on our website at:  
[printmarket.online/en/fairs-en/](https://printmarket.online/en/fairs-en/)*

## National trade fair dates in 2025/2026

### Paperworld

*Leading trade fair for paper and office supplies*  
12 and 14 November 2025 in Frankfurt

### Industrial Print Integration

*Conference for speciality and industrial printing*  
12 and 13 November 2025 in Düsseldorf

### Formnext

*Leading trade fair for industrial 3D printing*  
18 and 21 November 2025 in Frankfurt am Main

### PSI

*Trade fair for advertising and marketing technologies*  
6 to 8 January 2026 in Düsseldorf

### Viscom

*Trade fair for advertising, multimedia, printing and graphics*  
7 to 9 January 2026 in Düsseldorf

### wetec

*Trade fair for advertising technology and digital printing*  
3 to 5 February 2026 in Stuttgart

### LOPEC

*International trade fair and congress for printed electronics*  
24 to 26 February 2026 in Munich

### EMPACK

*Trade fair for innovations in packaging technology*  
25 to 26 February 2026 in Dortmund

### ICE Europe

*Leading trade fair for finishing and processing*  
9 to 11 March 2026 in Munich

### AM Forum Berlin

*Conference with exhibition for industrial 3D printing*  
10 to 11 March 2026 in Berlin

### rapid.tech 3D

*Trade fair and conference for additive technologies*  
5 to 7 May 2026 in Erfurt

### Interpack

*Trade fair for packaging*  
7 to 13 May 2026 in Düsseldorf

### Print Digital Convention

*Congress trade fair for multichannel marketing*  
16 to 17 June in Düsseldorf

### Fakuma

*International Trade Fair for Plastics Processing*  
12 to 16 October 2026 in Friedrichshafen

### glasstec

*World's Leading Trade Fair for the Glass Industry*  
20 to 23 October 2026 in Düsseldorf

### Creative Paper Conference

*Fine paper trade fair for printing and finishing technology*  
29 and 30 October 2025 in Munich

## Trade fair dates International 2025/2026

### International Screen Printing

*International exhibition for screen printing, industrial inkjet printing and digital printing*  
10 to 12 November 2025 in Guangzhou, China

### Odisha Propack International

*Packaging and printing trade fair for investments*  
26 to 29 November 2025 in Bhubaneswar, India

### Pharmapack Europe 2026

*Congress and exhibition for packaging technologies*  
21 to 22 January 2026 in Paris, France

### Impressions Expo

*Trade fair for the printed clothing industry*  
22 to 24 January 2026 in Long Beach, USA

### RemaDays Warsaw

*International Trade Fair for Advertising and Printing*  
27 to 29 January 2026 in Nadarzyn, Poland

### C!Print Madrid

*Event for printing and visual communication*  
13 to 15 January 2026 in Madrid, Spain

### PAMEX

*International exhibition for printing machinery*  
27 to 30 January 2026 in Mumbai, India

### EMPACK

*Trade fair for innovations in packaging technology*  
14 to 16 April 2026 in Gorinchem, Netherlands

### FESPA Global Print Expo

*Leading European trade fair for the printing and visual communications industry*  
19 to 22 May 2026 in Barcelona, Spain

### Labelexpo Americas

*International trade fair for label and packaging printing*  
15 to 17 September 2026 in Chicago, USA





**printmarket**  
[www.printmarket.online](http://www.printmarket.online)



ISSN 2942-8831