

Asahi Photoproducts post-drupa blog post

by Dr. Dieter Niederstadt, Technical Marketing Manager of Asahi Photoproducts

drupa 2016: Worth Waiting For!

A great deal has happened in the printing industry since 2012. Following drupa 2012, the industry was looking forward to the next big leaps we could expect to see four years later at drupa 2016. Now that the show has come and gone, we have to say it did not disappoint, and we are already eagerly looking forward to what drupa 2020 might bring!

For Asahi Photoproducts, drupa definitely met our expectations. Our pre-show campaign to encourage visitors to our stand delivered results, as evidenced by heavy booth traffic and great discussions daily with visitors.

drupa 2016 operated under the theme of *Touch the Future*, and visitors were looking to the future of their businesses, but they were also interested in what they can do *today* to make their companies more productive and profitable. We had wonderful discussions with visitors about Pinning Technology for Clean Transfer, a newly engineered flexo plate that brings higher quality and more uptime to flexo presses. In fact, tests we ran with a press manufacturer partner reflected a 26% improvement in overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) with fewer press stops for plate cleaning and more consistent overall quality. For a 24-hour operation, this translates to the ability to process at least two additional jobs per day at a higher quality level with more print contrast and less environmental impact.

Another hot topic of discussion at the show was fixed color palette printing. Using fixed color palette printing solutions as shown with the Bobst M6 printing press, the breakeven between flexo and digital printing is continuing to fall to just a few hundred running meters, in fact as short a run length as 350 meters. This means that flexo is competitive with digital for all but the shortest runs, and there are many benefits packaging converters can gain by moving to this model, including very short job changeover times with minimal or no wash-up and limited waste due to the fact that inks do not have to be changed. And the really good news is that more than 90% of Pantone colors can be accurately rendered using fixed color palette printing.

We had many discussions on this topic with visitors to our stand. They were delighted to learn about the possibilities, and, of course, how Pinning Technology for Clean Transfer delivers the precise registration required to effectively use a fixed palette.

We also saw many robots at drupa! No, they weren't the type from Star Wars, but we think they were equally exciting. As the cost of doing business continues to rise in Asia, Western countries are working hard to automate – including increased use of robots to automate production lines – and the balance is rapidly changing. However, we see growth for all regions in packaging production due to the global growth in this segment.

If you weren't able to attend drupa 2016, we'd be happy to speak with you about what we saw and learned, and how that can be applied to the future of your business today!

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