

# we create the future

28. Mai - 7. Juni 2024

Düsseldorf  
www.drupa.de



## drupa

no. 1 for printing  
technologies

### drupa 2024 – Press release no. 33 / 25 March 2024

## Positive future prospects for the printing and paper industry: packaging as a driver of the sector

*Digitalisation, demographic change, climate change – these megatrends are also having a significant impact on the transformation of the printing and paper industries. Nevertheless, paper and printed products will still be used and needed in many areas of life in the coming decades – the industry has a future. Playing a central role in this is sustainability. And this is also the central theme of the Touchpoint Sustainability special forum at drupa 2024 in Düsseldorf.*

With a comprehensive overview of the industry, various examples of best practice and a varied stage line-up, Touchpoint Sustainability from 28 May to 7 June 2024, as an independent, company-neutral forum, will show what is already possible today, where the industry is heading and that sustainability also makes economic sense for companies.

### High pressure to change – digitalisation and sustainability as drivers

The current challenges and increasing demands from end customers must be met with innovations in mechanical and plant engineering. This can create new business models, reduce energy and material consumption and lower the error rate.

“In principle, paper and packaging will continue to play a central role in people’s lives. However, there is massive pressure for change, driven primarily by two factors: digitalisation and sustainability,” explains Thomas Schiemann, Managing Director of the VDMA Printing and Paper Technology Association.

For years now, increasing digitalisation has been enabling new solutions to make processes more efficient in terms of the use of time and resources. An important trend here is also the gradual improvement of analogue systems, which are in direct competition with new digital



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machines. Machine learning and AI are also driving automation and impacting print and packaging products. As a result, actual production and printing costs are falling, giving companies that invest in this field a competitive advantage.

### **Focus on sustainability**

The second key driver for the transformation of the industry is the topic of sustainability. This is becoming an increasingly important decision-making factor for consumers. Which is why companies around the world are increasingly investing in more sustainable processes and products.

Two aspects play a role here. On the one hand, specific consumer expectations must of course be addressed in order to survive on the market long term and maintain or increase one's own brand value. On the other, more sustainable processes and products now offer huge potential, particularly in combination with digital solutions, to make processes more and more cost-effective, as it is basically mostly about the challenge of efficiency. The paper and printing industries are therefore already moving in the direction of a circular economy, also thanks to the considerable cost savings anticipated in the long term.

The role of the industry within this sustainable transformation will also be the key topic at the special forum Touchpoint Sustainability at drupa 2024. "The industry has good prospects for the future – but it needs to be prepared. Scarcely no other topic concerns us more at drupa 2024 and in the entire mechanical and plant engineering industry than sustainability – not just from an ecological but also from an economic perspective. We are therefore delighted, with the Sustainability Touchpoint, to create a cross-industry platform for dialogue, discussion and knowledge transfer on the future of the printing and paper industry," says Thomas Schiemann, who is responsible for this Touchpoint.

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The 400m<sup>2</sup> special forum at the trade fair is organised by the VDMA Printing and Paper Technology Association and showcases a variety of best practice examples and innovative solutions for greater sustainability across the entire value chain. Here, key industry players will present current solutions and ideas for the future by means of use cases and a varied stage programme.

### **Industry forecasts and trends**

So just what are the forecasts for the printing and paper industries against the backdrop of current megatrends and geopolitical upheavals? Overall, the industry is growing.

\*A recent study by Smithers shows: Demand has been rising for some time and growth forecasts are good. Overall, Smithers expects average annual growth of over 2.1% for the global printing industry over the next five years, adjusted for inflation, after 1.1% in the past five years. This development is expected to be driven primarily by the labels and packaging sector, where the growth of recent years will continue, albeit no longer at the same level. This sector currently accounts for around 60% of the global printing market.

### **Global production increases**

The overall growth of the global print market – even adjusted for inflation – is set to even accelerate slightly over the next five years compared to the corresponding previous years. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is expected to increase worldwide from 0.5% to 1.7%. For Western Europe, Smithers expects stable, almost unchanged development. Asia, by far the largest market, along with Africa are both expected to grow at a respective, average rate of around 3% per year until 2028, and thus post the highest growth rates. In North America, the market volume recently reported as slightly declining, is expected to stabilise again. This assessment is supported by the fact that the majority

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of global long-term investments by leading brands have been made in Asia in particular.

\* Smithers is a multinational provider of market intelligence and data, consulting, testing and compliance services. Smithers' market reports are recognised worldwide for their reliable market forecasts, critical industry analysis, in-depth insights into key industry drivers and trends, and much more. For more information, please visit [www.smithers.com](http://www.smithers.com)

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