

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04] DC: It takes the right skills and the right innovation to design and manage meaningful print marketing solutions. Welcome to Podcasts From The Printerverse, where we explore all facets of print and marketing that creates stellar communications and sales opportunities for business success. I'm your host Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. Thanks for tuning in. Listen long and prosper.

[EPISODE]

[00:00:33] DC: Hey, everybody, welcome to Podcasts From The Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador, and I'm in the HP, HP, HP booth with one of my favorite people in the printing industry, Thomas Wittenberg. Hello, sir.

[00:00:47] TW: How are you? Good to be here.

[00:00:50] DC: Good to be here. As I like to say, they try to keep us apart Tom. But it's impossible. We find each other. We're like – did you ever see the movie Hancock, where they keep finding each other? It's like, I think we've been travelers in different lives. No matter where I am, if I see my Thomas –

[00:01:06] TW: Karma.

[00:01:06] DC: It is. Well, you're being punished then, if I'm always in your face. So sorry, you've must have done something bad in a previous life. We are in the HP booth at Sign Expo, as I mentioned in Las Vegas. As per usual, it's been jam packed in here of the entire time. And also, I had a lot of really interesting conversations with, I guess, the managers that are at each station, and they were telling me that the people here, the printers coming up are really educated about your equipment, and all it can do.

So, first of all, I want to give you and your marketing team a shout out because that is not an easy feat with printers. It means they're paying attention to you. It means that they're asking the

right questions, and that's what they're saying, your managers are saying they're asking the next level question. So, great job, pre-educating everybody and keeping everybody up to speed. Tell us about some of the things that you're showing here in Las Vegas.

[00:02:10] TW: Okay, so obviously, our first thing is the sustainability. We're carrying that theme forward. It's a real strength of our product. We've got our new 2700 printer here that we introduced back at Printing United. So, we're getting a lot of hits on that. We've got our next, I'll say, youngest products that are out. We've got an 800 W here. And then we have our tried and true R series out on the main aisle and our PageWide XL Pro 10000.

[00:02:43] DC: What is this giant thing in front of us?

[00:02:45] TW: That's the Latex 2700.

[00:02:47] DC: Okay. That is really cool. I didn't realize. Do they – how many rolls are on there? Three rolls?

[00:02:54] TW: you can do two rolls.

[00:02:57] DC: Oh, two giant rolls, okay.

[00:02:58] TW: Yes, two jumbo, or you could do dual roll on there, single roll, so it gives you a lot of flexibility.

[00:03:06] DC: Wow, that is really cool. I've actually never seen two rolls. I've only seen one that's really cool. And it happens to be silver paper as well, which is also pretty cool.

Okay, so tell me about the new machine that you have over there. There's a lot of people standing around it.

[00:03:22] TW: Okay. Yeah, the 700 and 800 series which came out, I believe, it was last year, or a year before. I can't remember exactly. But really, a whole reinvention of our low volume Latex line, completely different ink systems, more pigment, just a lot of new, different features

on it along with white ink. It's got the chamber so you're not wasting the white ink, like you would with maybe some other products. So, a lot of really cool things out there with that.

[00:03:57] DC: A lot of times I hear the printers upset about white ink. They said it clogs their machine. Is that true?

[00:04:05] TW: It does. I know when I was in the industry, yes. We had white ink, you had – it was use it or lose it. We've developed a system where it recirculates constantly so it doesn't plug up the lines, and you're not purging all of that into a bucket and throwing it in the garbage. So, that's really one of the advances that we've come up with. It's very similar to what we have on the R series. We now have it on the 700 and 800 W's and we also have it on the new 2700 W.

[00:04:37] DC: Excellent. So, we're coming – obviously, we're out of the pandemic now. Thank God. As far as I understand from printers, obviously, I'm not a printer and I don't buy supplies. But they said that the media substrate supply chain has sort of righted itself at the moment. But just looking back on that media flexibility big came so critical. Let's talk about that as far as HP's offerings and your vision of that and any importance, you think that there.

[00:05:08] TW: Yes. A couple of things, a couple of thoughts in the media and the flexibility. One of the things with the Latex printers has been really focusing on the media flexibility. I can't remember what the number is. I know we had 1.5, 600, or more different medias that had been tested and run through our printers. So, there's just an absolute plethora of things that you can run through those printers with the latex inks. Plus the fact that with some of the newer pieces of equipment, we've modified it, so that you can actually cure at a lower temperature, and you can now add in some more heat sensitive materials and print on those. So, that's another advantage with the new equipment.

[BREAK]

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUES]

[00:06:44] DC: So, a lot of times what was happening is that, I mean, there were instances where maybe it wasn't material sensitive, and the printer is like, "Okay, this is what I got, this is what I'm going to use." In other cases, sometimes it is material sensitive, and someone's like, "Okay, you might be able to use whatever you want, but it can't be coated. It has to be uncoated. Or though it needs to be silver or whatever like that." With 1,500 or 1,600 media options, how are the printer supposed to know what is approved or tested in your machines and what isn't?

[00:07:15] TW: So, we've got our media webpage out there where you can actually go find the different levels of classifications we have on the media, whether it's just basically been tested, or it's actually certified for latex inks. You can see what are the uses that it's recommended for. So, it gives you an opportunity, the media library gives you that opportunity to go in there and say, "Okay, I'm looking for something that's going to do X, Y, Z." There may be multiples of, let's say you've got an SAV, you might have an –

[00:07:51] DC: What's an SAV?

[00:07:53] TW: Self-adhesive vinyl. So, you might have an Avery in there, Artful, a 3M in there, so you'll have multiples, and you can see. Okay.

[00:08:05] DC: If I can't get this, I can –

[00:08:03] TW: Get this, I could use that.

[00:08:06] DC: Okay. Well, that's what everybody had to do and I think it's super important. So, look, HP always has a vision for the future, and not only talk the talk, but walk the talk. As you mentioned, the first thing you mentioned in this podcast was sustainability. I know that it is super, super, super important to HP. I want to let you know that through our discussions, I have communicated the three pillars to everybody, as the way to communicate this to customers. Let's talk about HP's commitment to this, and specifically, how it would affect the sign people.

[00:08:46] TW: So, yes, HP is very, very committed to sustainability. At a higher level, and I'll give an example, the company actually started a company in Haiti, hired a bunch of the locals, so they're on the payroll, and their job is to go and clean ocean bound plastic out of the ocean that is then recycled, and it's used back into HP products. So, our 700 and 800 series have roughly, I want to say, 20% somewhere around there of ocean bound plastics, recycled in those printers. We're looking to expand that. They're also using it in the desktop printers, laptops now. That on a high level, at a corporate level, everything is focused so that we are sustainable going forward. We have very definite goals for carbon neutrality that we're looking to hit. So, it's not just a lot of greenwashing and talk.

[00:09:51] DC: It's not a marketing line for you people.

[00:09:53] TW: Right. It is absolutely very serious and taken very seriously. Now coming to down to the sign producers, there's a lot of changes going on in the marketplace, a lot of changes going on in the laws. As I was telling you earlier, we had to go through all of our copy for our messaging here for this show, because the states of California, Colorado, and Maine, were going to be changing their environmental law sustainability laws, both this year and next year. So, we wanted to be ahead of the curve and make sure that what we were saying was good now and at least a year from now.

I think the other thing too, for the average sign guy out there is extended producer responsibility EPR. If you haven't heard of it, look it up, start looking into it, because it may not be today or tomorrow, but it's certainly coming down the road, where recycling and recycling taxes are being considered in a number of different states, in different forms. It's a lot to wade through. I'd try and stick to your own state. Don't try and figure out what's going on somewhere else, unless you've got a production facility there.

[00:11:13] DC: Unless if you got national. But what if you have national customers? I mean, you can't ship stuff over there.

[00:11:19] TW: It's something that you need to keep – just keep an eye on it. It's important, but then, you can also take steps of your own and start to work slowly into the sustainability or quickly into the sustainability world of different medias. I was going to say, even in our booth, we have representation of a lot of things that are made with recycled content, are fully recyclable.

[00:11:44] DC: Yes, reclaimed wood on displays.

[00:11:46] TW: We have reclaimed wood on the walls.

[00:11:47] DC: There are corrugated – is that corrugated, technically? What is that?

[00:11:51] TW: That's called Xanita board. It's actually like a corrugated board.

[00:11:56] DC: Okay. Do you have tables made of that?

[00:11:59] TW: We got the tables made of that, the flooring is completely recyclable. That's an Ultraflex product, and then it can be returned back and made into acoustic panels.

[00:12:09] DC: Just so everyone knows, it looks like tile, like cobblestone.

[00:12:12] TW: Yes, cobblestone, and we printed that on the back. So, you can print whatever you want on the back of it.

[00:12:16] DC: Oh, wait. That's printed on the back of this?

[00:12:18] TW: That's printed on the backside.

[00:12:20] DC: That's so cool.

[00:12:22] TW: So, you can do a lot of really cool things. And when you're done with it, you can go on recycle it. The carpet, we've been using carpet made out of reclaimed ocean bound plastics and those can be recycled.

[00:12:35] DC: So, you bring it with you?

[00:12:36] TW: We order it up, and then the carpet company comes back and they take it back and they recycle it.

[00:12:41] DC: Really?

[00:12:42] TW: Yes.

[00:12:43] DC: Wow.

[00:12:44] TW: So, there are a lot of pieces and parts in the booth. The fabrics are recyclable, the wallpaper. The wallpaper that we're using is made with 30% recycled content, and so it's completely recyclable itself.

[00:12:58] DC: Amazing. Okay, I'm going to give you a suggestion. Okay? If I were you, I would put a little booth map up showing like little circles of everything that you just mentioned. Because how's anyone supposed to know all that amazing story you just told me? So, that next time I see your booth –

[00:13:18] TW: That's a great idea.

[00:13:18] DC: – I want to see a little chart that lets me know. All right. Speaking of stories, we're sitting in front of a fountain, a working fountain in the middle of a tradeshow booth. I'm getting splashed with water here. Tell me the story behind the fountain.

[00:13:34] TW: So, the them here is water, because our ink is water based. So, water, it represents a purity cleanliness, and it is kind of a same thing for air. So, Latex promotes not

only clean water, but also, you're not spouting hazardous air pollutants and things like that when you're printing.

[00:14:01] DC: Okay. That wasn't very clear to me, just so you know. I didn't get the water theme. I mean, I love the fountain as we spoke before. I was like, I thought we're in Savannah, Georgia sitting on a park, because we are sitting on a park bench in front of this fountain of water running behind us.

[00:14:16] TW: We'll be sleeping here tonight too.

[00:14:19] DC: You will be, unless you've got to go to the gym. I heard this a rumor you might be going to the gym tonight.

Recently, I was at the National Print and Sign Owners Association Conference and a literal riot broke out in the room over the right kind of ink for wide format printing. Everybody had a very strong opinion about it. I think I know where you stand on this, but I don't want to trash – this is not about trashing other manufacturers. I just want to know why you chose this line.

[00:14:55] TW: Chose the?

[00:14:55] DC: Latex line.

[00:14:57] TW: Latex. Yes, it's water based, no hazardous air pollutants, minimal VOCs. It's odorless prints, GREENGUARD gold certified, at the lowest emission levels. Those are really big reasons, and going forward, if you're using those, it's just that much easier for you.

[BREAK]

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUES]

[00:15:59] DC: Now, I agree with you 1,000%. If you're looking towards the future, you should be looking in the lane where you are making the least environmental footprint, 1,000%. But you've been in latex way before this was a topical subject. So, is it application based that people are making choices? In other words, if we remove sustainability from the conversation, why have you been in latex?

[00:16:26] TW: I think, people are realizing that there is a value of the latex. There are some unique properties that come with the latex inks. It's not to say that the competitive products are bad, because they do obviously a very good job. One of the other things is we're finding customers are very loyal to a brand, which is great.

[00:16:50] DC: Or their process.

[00:16:51] TW: Or the process. They've gotten used to it. It's ingrained in them. One of the things that we learned about some of our customers is that the company that they bought their first printer from that made them successful, they feel a kinship with that company. They become very brand loyal to that and that's a good thing. Everybody, I think, being loyal is great. So, I think it's going to be an evolving process here. There are other technologies that are coming online or have been online that have some good potential. But I think we look at it and say, we're the original one. It's water based, and it can do all of these things that do right by the environment.

[00:17:35] DC: I remember panels in there printerverse where the riots broke out there, two over the ink. Printers are very passionate about this subject. I find it very fascinating. Speaking of processes, one of the major goals of besides sustainability, of course, is to help printers get it in and get it out as fast as possible. And get to – I'm going to use a word that I don't necessarily like to use all the time, but sellable faster. Because by the way, that fits into the sustainability story as well, less waste, less time, let's electricity. How is HP addressing that?

[00:18:12] TW: Our products come out dry. So, when you come off the printer, you can immediately go to finishing. You don't have to wait for it to off gas or cure or any of that. So, you're going from point A to point B, almost immediately, finishing it, and out it go. It gives you better productivity, it gives you faster turn times, and allows for a lot of flexibility. You don't need space all over the place to store stuff until it's cured.

[00:18:45] DC: That would be –

[00:18:46] TW: Yes. I mean, so you have a smaller footprint, and you're servicing your customers better. So, that's really were are the advantages to these fast drying inks.

[00:18:58] DC: What about software wise, optimization, automation?

[00:19:02] TW: We've got PrintOS. We've got, I'd say, the next version of PrintOS that's just come out. A lot of different programs. There is a cost associated with those, but it's a lot more robust and it gives you some very good insights into your production, helps you make more productive decisions. And it also allows you with the phone app, to be able to run remotely to get any alerts or whatever if there's something going on that you need to know about.

[00:19:34] DC: Right. So, a while ago, I'm talking years ago, I visited the Experience Center in Alpharetta and I could swear that there was like a robotized thing lifting boards onto big presses there. You're not really in the robotics game, but it seems to me like you should be, if any company out there is. So, talk about that.

[00:19:57] TW: Yes, I know which printers you're talking about.

[00:20:02] DC: That thing, it was like a hover lift. It lifted all the boards for them.

[00:20:05] TW: Yes, corrugated – lifting corrugated sheets, to really automate that process of box printing, box making. We have not expanded that. I don't know. I can't say now if we are or we not. But it was a really nice design, especially if you're trying to really go for some high throughput.

[00:20:28] DC: Yes. And plus, who can lift those boards? You need four people. They were gigantic. So, you don't even have like that stuff here. That's a different type of price. Okay, because that was a really big one.

[00:20:40] TW: If you're doing something like thousands of signs or whatever, yes, something like that. It's good. Where it gets a little different is if you're getting into different versioning, and then you're having to separate it out into, okay, this is version A, and version B, et cetera. A little bit tougher.

[00:21:01] DC: Yes. Okay. So, how can people follow HP's sustainability story? Where can they find your amazing information that's educating the sign printers for other applications?

[00:21:14] TW: So, there are really two areas. If you want to look at the higher level and where HP is headed, we've got a huge sustainability page with all of our statistics, goals, you name it.

[00:21:26] DC: Just on the website? Hp.com?

[00:21:28] TW: It's just hp.com. And then, we have another area that's dedicated just to large format, our Print Hub, and Print Hub will have a whole section in there on sustainability and what we're doing on the sustainability side. So, either way, you can find out high level, or take that deep dive down into what's going on in a large format.

[00:21:49] DC: Do you guys keep a list on the site of all the events you're going to and things like that so people can find you?

[00:21:56] TW: We have not. We do have different places where we have the different events. Our resellers know about what our plans are coming up per se, webinars. Those are really the ones that are available right now.

[00:22:13] DC: I mean, you're also –people sign up for email lists for mailing lists to get information. You can come see us.

[00:22:16] TW: Exactly.

[00:22:18] DC: I mean, that's how I find out.

[00:22:20] TW: There's a lot out there in Print Hub, that's where you can sign up really for just about everything.

[00:22:24] DC: Excellent. Well, thank you so much for taking the time, in the middle of the show, to speak to me, and on this lovely park bench in front of your fountain. If you come to see HP's event and there's no fountain, demand one. Demand one next time. Thank you, Thomas.

[00:22:42] TW: Thank you. Have a great show.

[00:22:44] DC: Thank you. I'm almost done with my show. I guess, I'm flying home with a red eye tonight.

Okay, everybody. Until next time, we're signing off from Vegas. Print long and prosper.

[OUTRO]

[00:22:57] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcasts From The Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars and leave us a review. Connect with us through [printmediacenter.com](https://www.printmediacenter.com). We'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

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Mentioned in This Episode:

Tom Wittenberg: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/tomwittenberg/>

HP: <https://www.hp.com/>

HP Media Guide: <https://support.hp.com/id-en/document/bpp01917>

HP Sustainability: <https://www.hp.com/us-en/hp-sustainability.html>

HP Print Hub: <https://www.hp.com/us-en/printers/large-format/print-hub/print-hub-home.html>

International Sign Expo 2023: <https://www.signexpo.org/>

Deborah Corn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahcorn/>

Print Media Centr: <https://printmediacentr.com>

Project Peacock: <https://ProjectPeacock.TV>

Girls Who Print: <https://girlswhoprint.net>

Print Across America: <https://printacrossamerica.com>