

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:04] 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 create 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]

[0:00:32] DC: Hey, everybody, welcome to Podcasts from the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. Today, we are beaming to our kind and lovely neighbors in the north. We have found Steve Cussons, the CEO and Co-Founder of MiniGiants in Toronto. MiniGiants are an ecosystem created to get your ideas off the ground and amplify them through creative branding, customized packaging, printing, merchandise, and web development. You can find everything you need to know about MiniGiants at miniGiants.co, the link is in the show notes, but for now, Steve, welcome to the podcast.

[0:01:19] SC: Well, Deborah, thank you very much. I'm very excited that I'd be hanging out with you.

[0:01:24] DC: I love telling our origin stories, and we have a lovely origin story, which is that Dscoop actually put us together before the Edge St. Louis event. I was helping them do some interviews with attendees and board members, and first time – you were actually a first-time attendee, that's why you were tapped. All I actually got was the name of a person to speak to and a link to the website. From the moment I clicked over to that website, I fell in love with Steve Cussons.

I think we spent a fair amount of time speaking about your website because it is a shining example of what every printer if I can even call you a printer, website should be. I can find anything I need there, and I can understand how you can help me, and it's speaking to customers. By the way, everybody out there, I saw the previous version. There's actually a new

version up that's even more spectacular. Let's start there and the thought about the ecosystem and really, what does it take to make such a comprehensive and user-friendly experience?

[0:02:39] SC: For sure. Thank you for that, Deborah. We're excited that we've looked at some of the cutting-edge technologies to present ourselves. It helps in exactly what you were talking about, making it palatable for somebody that's not sure what they need or who they should be talking to; see us and see where we could be of benefit to them. That's actually why we started Mini Giant. You ask, what is this ecosystem?

We, like most other people that probably listened to your podcast, our printers in some form, and that's where we started. We were both a, we were a commercial printer, both an offset digital and all the normal things in between; like most of us in that industry, as the time is crept by us, it gets harder and harder to get a return on our investment, not knowing what the next steps are going to be. We as a group, we made a very clear decision that we needed to step out of our comfort zone and figure out not what we could do with what we have, but what we should do for our clients.

I guess that's where the Mini Giant became a reality. We got outside just our commercial print and moved into the packaging side of thing. I'm talking not the label or the flex but in the folding carton in the corrugate side because there was a massive demand. We had expertise in art. We had expertise in layouts, etc. We just knew we needed to invest in that side. We created a second company at the time that was purely packaging. So, we had this commercial printing company. Now we had this packaging company, and our client base kept clamoring for more. We like to think we're personable and asking a lot of questions.

Then we decided to get into the promotion side of the business. Some people will call it promotional products. We call it promotions. It is a massive industry. It's part of every brand's moving everyday culture. If you think about any company out there, their brand is on things more than just their products they sell. It's on their merch. It's on the wearables. It's on the giveaways, etc. We started adding that feature and that skill set and that availability to our clients. Then we realized that we had all these great things going for us, but there was a massive – one of the really other big piece missing and at the time, that was the technology side.

We'd already started to jump into the space about making everything we produce, whether it's on a sheet, whether it's on corrugate, or whether it's on a piece of garment smart. Taking that static production and bringing it to life. We started off with augmented reality and NFC. We continue to grow. So that now we are offering whatever we produce, we can actually bring it to life for you. We can make it immersive. We did all these things and it sounds all wonderful, but we screwed everybody's brain up. We weren't sure who the heck they were talking about anymore and who they were talking with.

We created MiniGiants as a brand culture now and that's our ecosystem. We like to think of it as your brand has to grow, whether it's because you're starting up or you're scaling up, based on the size of your business. It has to be on anything and everything that is relevant to your industry and your client base. That's what we can do for you. That's really what our ecosystem has become. It's that touch point for our clients.

[0:05:44] DC: I am on the advisory board of the National Print and Sign Owners Association that gets me an invitation to, they have a monthly, what they call owners happy hour. We all get to go on Zoom and have conversations. There was actually one last night and something came up that you might have a really great strategy for. This is common with a lot of printers that their customers don't know everything that they can do.

Usually, in the regular print world comes up with a wide format, somebody has one printer that they get postcards from, but when they need that banner, they've got to go to the special printer. They don't even think. As you have this ecosystem, you also have customers that may only be in certain aspects of it or not understand the whole thing. How do you bring that information to the market and to your customers without overwhelming them?

[0:06:41] SC: That's a great question. That's what – actually, we had that problem really if you heard me really, a bit in reverse. When our commercial printing company was just a commercial printer, it was very easy to talk to our prospective, and current clients about what we could help them with. When we added the packaging, it threw some of our clients off, “Well, wait a minute, are you a packaging company? Are you a manufacturer, or are you a printer?” Then when we added promotions to it, that really threw things into a tizzy.

We needed to create that mechanism in which we had to have that higher level brand to have that conversation so that we could say, “We are a solutions company.” I think it's the naming conventions about who we are. A lot of our peers and probably some of the people you were on that call with last night, do actually multiple things. They are not just white format, maybe they could be commercial or digital printers. They could be in the promotion space.

It's very hard. So, you need to create a higher-level conversation, and you need to change the wordage, that verbalization of who you are. You're no longer a printer. You're a solutions provider. I think that's – when we actually did that, it made it so much easier. Now when we talk to a prospect, we present ourselves as MiniGiants and we talk about this business ecosystem and we say to them, “You have a pain point today and that's usually how we get to know a person for the first time,” because they have pain somewhere.

“Take a hold of that piece of our ecosystem that's going to help eliminate your pain. Let us show we can do that, because once that's accomplished, then it's probably time for you to grow.” That's where you can then look at our ecosystem and say, “How can you have help excel our growth?” It's the wording. It's how you present the bigger picture is for us really. That's where MiniGiants became that real catalyst for us.

[0:08:24] DC: I think that's fantastic advice. You have an umbrella of being a solutions company. Basically, if you don't see what you're looking for, ask us.

[0:08:34] SC: Absolutely.

[0:08:35] DC: We might have it. I think that's a great strategy. One of the companies in your ecosystem, I love, called Y Simple. The tagline is, “We ambitiously sit at the edge of the horizon where the new and the next intersect.” I mean, my love for you grows every day, Steve. You mentioned you talk about augmented reality to QR codes and things like that. I'm assuming that falls within the Y Simple division. I might be a little early for this question, but where are you looking as far as artificial intelligence to come into your company at this point, if you are?

[0:09:16] SC: We are. We're going to be very much involved in that space because I believe that is going to be one of the next big things I think our world is going to have to just understand

it's here to stay. I don't think it's a fad. When we talk about technology in the web and all of those things, the ways we've always done things are to be mindful of the wording that you use, the wordsmithing that's put onto a website, the questions in a form, or whatever. AI is going to take control of all of that for us. It's going to be so much better. Whether it's on your website and the forms that you use, you should be looking at AI. You should be looking at AI as a chat in your technology integration with your clients.

When we talk about augmented reality, the idea of augmented reality is immersive. It's whether it's gamification, bringing that image to life and having fun, or whether it's educational or just marketing. AI becomes part of that play too, because based on the interaction, AI will help drive more effectively to maybe that next answer, that next viewing, etc. that's more relevant to where you want to go to. AI doesn't have to be scary and you start small.

My recommendation where we've started as a company, we're using it in our marketing plans and everything else. We're using AI as a tool. Not the answer, but as a tool to learn how AI can certainly be manipulated to give things that are more geared towards your very specific niche. Use it as some of your marketing tools. Spend some time on. It's free. I mean, that's the other exciting part about even in the initial phases, it's free. Learn about it, because it's going to be part of everything we do.

[0:10:54] DC: Do you feel that there is a role for artificial intelligence to play in the printing process beyond processes and workflow software?

[0:11:05] SC: I also think that's coming. I don't know if it's really fast or it's just fast, but I think when you think about automation in our industry about how we receive a file or an opportunity from a customer and automate it through our system into whether it's a digital press, an offset press, some finishing equipment, whatever it is, we're already building those automation tools now, but the automation right now is very defined as two very definite steps.

If you are asking for this. You only get two solutions, right, or one solution and it helps you maybe automate or it cuts you off. With AI it's going to – and they're building these pieces now into automation. I think AI is going to be a very big component of our future automation of how

we automate production, so that we're more efficient because that's all – we're all going to have to be there.

[MESSAGE]

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[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:12:44] DC: Okay. I'm going to ask the same question frame in a different way because I think I'm going to tell you what I meant, what I really meant to ask you.

[0:12:51] SC: Sure. Absolutely.

[0:12:52] DC: Okay. Let's look at the work that you do with creative branding because this is where of the wheelhouse. Okay.

[0:12:58] SC: Yeah.

[0:12:59] DC: Somebody comes, business comes to you right and they're like, "I need this thing." In the world we live in right now, you would say, "I'd love to help you with your copy and your images and that, but I don't have a copywriter. You might, and I don't have a photographer to shoot that image of people doing yoga for you." But with AI tools –

[0:13:21] SC: Absolutely.

[0:13:21] DC: You actually could get into the creation business that way. Again, as I said, I might be a little early for that, but are you making any considerations for any of that or on the flip side, how are you going to receive files that have art that was generated from these tools, which are not exactly set up for printing?

[0:13:44] SC: Wow. Okay. I'm going down the path, but I did it from an automation, a cost reduction, whatever way you want to look at it.

[0:13:50] DC: Yeah. I know. Totally valid.

[0:13:52] SC: Absolutely, on the revenue side, because that's revenue. We can become a better partner to our customers by delivering more in-house through AI. Again, I was, as mentioned, we're starting to play around with it now just internally for us to see our copywriting, our wordsmithing about who we are, sometimes we're not that good at it. Sometimes it takes a long time to get a copywriter to come back to you with what they need.

We're already doing a lot of testing in AI right now. I've spent some money in it. I've spent some time in it. What we're doing is we bought a whole bunch of some of them are a little corny, I must admit. You throw your 50 bucks or 100 bucks out, you get really nothing back, but there's a lot of tools out there that are key phrases that you get to start working with an AI to help you get more defined and relevant responses, both in wordsmithing and in imagery.

I would recommend every printer just starts playing with it, even if it's just for fun. Learn how robust AI actually, really is. I know it's scary, but if you use it for the right reasons, you actually will deliver much more value for your customers. And in return, you'll probably get good revenue from it, too, right?

[0:15:00] DC: Yeah, definitely.

[0:15:02] SC: It keeps your customer longer. The more you become that true, honest solution, those aren't buzzwords. Those are real things, right? The more you become that real solution to that client that they can focus on their business, rather than the areas that they don't have the expertise in, which is what we all have, the harder it is for them to walk away from you.

[0:15:22] DC: Yeah. I also think it's a tremendous thought leadership moment for the printing industry. If we think about it, what we're already doing, what needs is going to be coming from the metaverse. We're already taking somebody's photo of a mug online and making it real, or a poster, or a t-shirt, or a print, whatever it might be. If you spend some time now, like you are investigating, there are prompts for the image creations that I've just started learning about where you can get art created at a certain DPI and a certain orientation and to be able to be the go-to for customers on that or even designers to open up a door and say, "We are having a lunch and learn about creating images in artificial intelligence that need to actually manifest in real life."

It can't just be like, "Well, I made an image on a computer and now the printer has to figure it out." We've already been through that with Canva and everything, but they have everything under control now. This next moment, I think, is pretty important. Printers, I don't know if I should call you a printer. Businessmen like you who see that bigger picture and that long-term opportunity, I think really have an opportunity to help all of those people create correctly, so it also doesn't ruin your life in the long run.

[0:16:56] SC: One hundred percent, a hundred percent. I think, like you talk about Canva and the time it took for them to really get under those covers, they created a great user experience and that front-end simplicity that made it so much more effective for non-graphics people to help themselves get a result, but the internal result was never that good in the beginning. It took a while. The pace, I think, that AI is going to move forward at is probably 10 times that of what Canva did. As you say, we are printers, I don't like to think of us – I say, I love being a printer, but I don't want to be thought of as a printer. We are a solutions provider.

I don't care what part of the print industry you're in, whether you're in book manufacturing, whether you're in digital print, offset print, specialty print. We're all now finally seeing what they keep telling us is coming. The generation of buyers that we have to deal with is getting younger and that younger generation expects a whole different way of deliverables. If you don't stay current with the technology, such as AI, and such as automation, and autonomous conversations where that takes technology.

We all have to have technology now. If we don't have technology in our business today, we may be surviving, but it's going to get harder and harder and harder. You're going to get pushed aside. I think that's just a reality of the way we live today. That's for every single printer out there, no matter what area print you're in.

[0:18:23] DC: Yeah. I mean, I think just like when the internet disrupted the world and once the current version of the smartphones disrupted the world, this is the next disruption. I feel that service providers, printers, whatever people out there calling themselves, there's going to be a time that it was before the metaverse glasses, whatever you want to call them, were democratized to the point, where everybody could afford them and after.

If you're not already prepared, when everybody can put something over their eyes and walk into a store and it needs to manifest in a package coming to their door, if you're just figuring that out at that point, you are so far behind that I don't see it. I'm happy that there are people like you out there leading the charge and I really want to follow your journey through this as much as possible. Any final words on artificial intelligence?

[0:19:27] SC: Really, I think you said it very well. It is going to be part of our business. It doesn't matter whether it's from a revenue side or an efficiency side. It's going to be a requirement. We actually at some point, just like other things in that sustainable world right now, we're being forced to do things that we've never wanted to do. I think these things will also come to that fruition at some point in the reasonably near future, as well.

[0:19:52] DC: The other opportunity that there is with, especially with a business like yours is that it is way more attractive to young people to see technology and play for them to actually be in many cases more expert than the rest of us with, I mean, I go to my nieces and nephews when I was trying to figure out some of these image generation tools. I mean, I was like, "What is going on here?" I have to admit, they helped me a bit with that. Of course, now I'm the expert, everybody, so calm down. But that is also another reason why I was very much thrilled to death that Dscope introduced us.

I want to get to the students, but first I want to focus a little on the fact that you are a giver in every single sense. You give back to the industry. You give back to your community. One of the

things you have written on your website is that we believe that our mini-actions today will have a giant effect tomorrow. That's why you support the charities that you support on your site. Can you first talk about why this is important to you? I want to stress this. This is not a marketing strategy for Steve. This is something he lives.

[0:21:16] SC: Wow. Thank you for saying that. It's probably the, if I look at all the things I do in a day, the one that excites me the most and gets me, usually the most tears and the most big smiles is what I do for our community. It just happens that we're in the print world in some form, but I think every business needs to realize the world keeps changing at such a fast pace. There's a big, big need for people like our industry. I think that we're special because I think we can do so much. It's in our time. It's in our people because our industry is creative.

If you think about what we are as an industry, we're all creative. Every single one of us are creative because we're taking something that is an idea and putting it on something, all the time. That means we've got a special brain in my mind. I think we're a very cool group of people in the print, in the solutions print industry. So, there's a lot of charities out there that have always struggled and the world has gotten really tough, like really, really, really tough now. They need help. They need help. That's sure.

Some of them need money. They'll all need money, but they need passion. They need the people passion to help them deliver what they need to deliver. Then they need in-kind support quite often. I think we as printers can deliver all of those things to our communities and the communities that are close to where our people, our employees live, where our businesses live. I'm a lucky guy. Our business has been very successful. I got to tell you. We do a lot of work in the charity world. It excites me to no end.

It doesn't mean you need to help a million people. You can just help one person. I think it's very, very important that you do this. It's not for economic benefit. I have no expectation on what we do for our communities around us. I have no expectation that I'm going to get anything in return. I quite, don't even care whether our name is out there, because the internal part of that is when people realize somebody's helping the charity and they're part of that charity, quite often they go, "Who did that for us?"

The next thing you know, you're getting a phone call. "Did you do this print for us? Did you invest this money with us." And you go, "Well, yes." "Man, you don't know how much of a difference you made in our lives." I actually am a volunteer and I run this business. The next thing you know, opportunities come your way. It's the old story. What you give out is what you give back. If you're not willing to give anything out, don't expect anything back, but if you give out, I don't know how long it's going to take, but it will come back in 10 times what you've given out, always.

For me, that's my passion. My passion is supporting our families by our employees. We ask our employees, are there charities that are important to you? We get involved with all of that. Then we put our human time into all of our charities. We're not just financial givers or in kind of product givers. We actually bring our human resources. we supply our graphics people to our not-for-profits to help them rebrand themselves. All of that stuff. Those are things we can all do.

It doesn't have to cost us a fortune, but I think it's certainly made our staff. If I look at our family, and our business here, soon as I mentioned, we're doing a charity job. It's like big lights. It's like big lights. They all just get so excited. They feel like they're part of something important. That's why I do it. That's why I make sure our company is in the same thinking process.

[MESSAGE]

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[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:25:36] DC: You're absolutely right. It feels good to help other people. When it's part of your job, it really is an opportunity, like you said. Well, you know how important things, actions like that are to me. Thank you so much for all you do for the world. How many employees do you have over MiniGiants?

[0:25:55] SC: Right now, we're not a large company. We're at about 70 right now.

[0:26:00] DC: Okay. Well, that's a fair amount of people.

[0:26:02] SC: Yeah.

[0:26:03] DC: I ask you that, because now we're going to talk about, what are we going to do when you need more employees or when some of your amazing people have decided to retire to Florida or something like that. Workforce development is very important to you. It is also one of the reasons that although the name is Print Across America, we opened it up to Canada, because of you, and because of the amazing – one of the amazing universities you have in Canada. Currently, their name is Toronto Metropolitan, but they were formerly Ryerson, which many people might remember that name, but they have over 800 students in their graphic communications program.

Print Across America is a program to invite students to printers, print shops, and of course, solutions, provider businesses, and let them truly embrace the amazingness of the industry and all we can do, and as well as understand all the job opportunities and certainly being able to give back in the world is super important. You have embraced this in a way that I guess I should expect from you at this point. Can you just talk about why you were so enthusiastic to be involved with the program and what your intention is for the day?

[0:27:30] SC: Well, for sure. I am enthusiastic, because our industry, it gets tougher and tougher all the time to find good quality candidates for the positions that we need, whether it be in our technical and trade side of our industry or in the administrative and sales side of our industry. There's no better people to look for than those who obviously have some interest. That's why they're at Metropolitan in this case.

What we need to make sure of as an industry, why I want to be part of this is, so that if they actually want to see what the real world is like in the print industry, they need to be given all of the right information, and to have a place where there is interaction, so that the unanswered questions for them that we don't know what they are, a place that will provide honest responses so that it helps them make good decisions, but more importantly is to encourage them that this industry is not going anywhere.

No matter what anybody wants to say, I'm a big believer that we might be different in the years to come and how we deliver, but our job hasn't changed. We are brand ambassadors. All the time. It just is how we deliver that. These young people that are, in this case, at Metropolitan are learning everything from administration to the actual design, to the background, file management systems, to the literal functioning of the new presses that are coming to the world and they're all becoming very technical.

They need a place to go to get firsthand education on what the real-world part of this industry is like, but they need to also be able to have set that interaction. That's where hopefully, our team is actually very excited to have these students show up on that day and multiple timelines which we think at this point, and get a real true look at all of the pieces. Whether it's in pre-press, we want them to watch the live jobs that we're producing that moment, so they can ask questions of our great staff that we have here and they all want to share, because we would love to have interns come to us.

We'd love to help educate these young people, so that when they do graduate, they want to stay in our industry and that's not going to happen if we don't embrace them. We have to embrace the young generation, even though we know sometimes we think, "Oh, my God. They're so different to what we used to be like." Yes, they are. But we have to embrace them. This is who they are. They have a different set of needs than we did when we were looking into the workforce. We need to embrace them and make them feel like this is a great industry because otherwise we're going to be in trouble. That's why I want to do it because I want to make a difference. Again.

[0:30:03] DC: Yeah. It is a great industry. We just have like really bad public relations with the public. Print Across America is not just for students, but you probably don't need help getting

prospects and your customers to come and see you. As you know, we've had discussions about this and I'm working with a woman named Mary Lee Clark from Inkwell Collaborative. She's really – we're gathering intel from the schools. We're learning such interesting things from the educators.

This is for everybody listening to this podcast, because like I said, Steve and I, we discussed this already, but there's two things that the students were really interested in seeing in these open house tours or events. The first was to understand and see the process. Okay. Somebody sells somebody a piece of print. Then what happens? Literally, they don't understand what it is. They asked to see position software, they asked to see MIS systems like they've heard of these things, but they've never seen them in action. They want to see the press. They want to see the finishing equipment.

The other aspect of it, which I thought was really interesting is they want to understand why that print application was chosen for its use and what the use was, which I thought was really an interesting concept, because it seems that they have a disconnect. There's all these different things you can make, but why would you make that one instead of that one? Why would a charity want to do it that way and not this way? Very interesting. Thoughts on that?

[0:31:55] SC: For sure. I think that goes back to that whole, if we're going to want to attract this younger generation who have obviously an interest, we've got to engage them. The first thing is they've got to be immersive. It's not just learning in school, the software that they might use, but as you say, it's their real-life experience. What we want to do, and hopefully others will mirror what we do, where our team is actively in discussions right now about this process of this very special day that we're going to have. We want to be able to do is we want to quickly walk them, and I say quickly because we'll stop where there's a big interest, but actually give them exactly what you said.

What happens? How does a customer call us? When they call us, what do we do? Once we have an order, is that an automated order? Is that a manual order? Depending on what that is, how does that already become a file? Then, how do we firm up that file, right? Then how does that file get to a press, right? Then, who touches that finished piece of print? How many steps does it take to get that coil bound? Is it one, two, three, or five? Then we got it all done now, got

to send it to a customer. How do we ship it? Were there automation tools for that? All of those things.

We're going to try and push everybody through the hole, and those who want to stop will be able to stop and focus on an area that's more important to them, but then we've got to be interactive with them. I think that's the other big key. It's not a one-way conversation. What does MiniGiants do to get an order out the door? It's what does the industry do? What don't you understand about it or what excites you about that part of it? Then ask those questions and our team has to be prepared to share the good, the bad, and the ugly of our industry because there is all of that, but you want to encourage them to go – just think, we're creating every single day.

That's the thing that excites me about our industry. I think we've forgotten that a lot of times. We're creators. We really are creators and a brand comes to us because they don't know how to get there. They come to us to make their brand stand out all the time, whether it's their business card, or a box that they make, or a shirt they're going to wear, or everything in between that big sign at the trade show. We actually make their brand relevant by all the things that we do. We should be very proud of that as an industry. So, these young people, if they get that feeling, they're going to get that enthusiasm to stay on in their courses. When they graduate, stay in our industry.

My peers, if you're listening and wanting to do something, you should do what we're doing and embrace these young people for all they are. Not get caught up in some of the things that we hear and know that they're at Ryerson or any other university in the US or Canada, that's in this industry, they're there because they have some passion. Let's make sure they don't lose that passion. Let's embrace them for the type of person they are today and what their wants and needs are because they know technology is coming and they might just be able to help us along the way.

[MESSAGE]

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[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:35:26] DC: Yeah. I'm smiling, because when I worked in advertising, you tell somebody you work in traffic and production, they just look at you and they're like, "What?" You can't have you explain traffic to somebody. You can't explain it. What I used to say is, I bring ideas to life and people understood that. I was like whether it manifests on the side of a truck or billboard and billboard in Times Square or in a grocery store, chances are if it was this particular brand or this particular client, I had something to do with that. It's very interesting.

The other aspect that is interesting when you speak with the educators is that there's a lot of students in some of these programs and there's a disconnect after they graduate for them to actually, come over to the printing industry in any capacity, whether it's at a solutions provider or a traditional print shop or even a manufacturer of equipment or somebody who sells mixed paper, whatever it might be. There were two reasons for that that the educators now are staying with.

The first is that, sorry, but the digital marketing people pay more entry level salary to begin with. That's something that every business has to obviously decide what their tolerance is for anything like that. The second thing is something we all collectively have control of, which is that they don't understand what is the entry level job at the print shop. If I take it, where does it lead me? How do I become the estimator? How do I become the owner? How do I become the press operator? How do I become the salesperson? These are all things job titles that they we asked the educators what jobs they were going to be looking for. How are you going to tackle that during Print Across America on October 25th or just thinking about it, what are your thoughts on it, as well?

[0:37:28] SC: Well, that's a pretty big comment and question and an issue. I guess, it's a lot about our industry. I think we have to change not just the idea that technology is going to have a more important role in our production and our sales process, etc., but we also have to realize

and we're all feeling the pain right now that the traditional way of getting employees, never mind retaining employees, is so hard now than what it ever was before. We are all experienced in young people coming in and leaving very quickly. Some of it's just the nature of who they are and how they've been taught to think and act.

I say, not in a respective way. I'm talking about, they keep their resumes out there now. They're always looking for that better job. That's how they're taught to do things. We hire them and their resumes out there, somebody else calls and they get a little bit more comfortable with the industry and someone offers them more money and they're gone. We hear all this, right? What do you do to combat that?

I think it's exactly what we're talking about is, we need to provide them with a roadmap for their success in this industry and not to be afraid that they want your job. I welcome anybody who wants to become an owner of a business to take those steps. I'll mentor them along the way because it's the way it should be, right? The world isn't like it was 50 years, or 40, or 30 years ago. People don't just stay at the same job forever.

If you embrace the idea that you will always have some rotation going on, if you're allowing and giving these younger people the tools to become better in the trade that we're in, they will always be part of what you do in some way or some form. Give them those chances, because it won't hurt you, it'll help you. Because they're going to talk to other people and say, "That guy, that company gave me a chance." It does always come back.

It goes back to the comment about charitable work. What comes around goes around. If you don't provide any support mechanism, value proposition, and education for your staff as they come through the system, don't expect much out of them. If you're not going to give them much, you can't ask much from them. They're going to look, always look for somewhere that's going to give that for them because that's what everybody looks for. Why not you become that person, that company, that deliverable, right? I don't know if that makes sense, but –

[0:39:53] DC: Oh, totally makes sense. Yes, of course it does. I mean, one of the ultimate goals of the Print Across America and Canada Initiative is that, let's say, you do get – I mean, there are other businesses out there who are going to outreach to their local community to say, "Hey,

the florist, hey, the car wash owner, hey, the restaurant person, we're having an event. Just come on over. Have a beer, whatever it is. I'm local, you're local. Let's make friends with each other.”

My hope is that the next time they're walking down the street with their friends or their family and someone, they pass a print shop and people are like, “Oh, my God. Could you imagine having to – that's your job,” and have that person say, “Hold on a second. You should be lucky if you could ever one day work in there and you should want to because you just don't understand everything that they're doing in there.”

As a follow-up to this initiative this year, next year, I want to create a media kit for the printing industry to send to the high school guidance teachers, because they're the ones who are going to actually, “Well, Jane or Joe is a little creative, they're a little crafty. Maybe they could do a little math, or they're proficient in writing.” The printing industry has a lot of opportunities for someone with those skills. Or, they like chemistry, or they like to be a creative person, or they're technical.

I mean, we're filled with technology. I would love to work with you on that next year as I also turn Print Across America into Print Across the Planet, but we have to start with just America and Canada because of you, Steve. Thank you for everything you do for everybody out there. Any final words to wrap this up?

[0:41:48] SC: Yeah. I think I'm very excited about Print Across America, Canada. I think it's going to be a great day. I think you've got a great movement and I really encourage anybody listening to this podcast that's in our industry to pay attention to Deborah. She's quite the girl. She loves to push the buttons and push our industry forward. Those are all the things that we constantly need. We need to change who we are, our reputation, and what we are going to deliver in the future.

Please, stay focused on this stuff. If you can, talk to Deborah and find out if you can do an open house because I think it's really, really valuable for sure. I can't thank you enough, Deborah, for everything you do for us.

[0:42:26] DC: Thank you so much. Just to clarify, anyone can do an open house. If you want to participate with us, just fill out a form on the printacrossamerica.com website. That's just so we can add you to our find a open house near me directory. Then everybody will be able to come and visit you. Then, of course, it will live forever.

Thank you, Steve, so much for everything, as I mentioned before. Everybody out there. Until next time, print long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:42:58] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through printmediacentr.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:

Steve Cussons: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/steve-c-6a932415/>

MiniGiants: <https://www.miniGiants.co/>

Y Simple: <https://www.ysimple.co/>

Dscoop: <https://www.dscoop.com/>

National Print and Sign Owners Association: <https://npsoa.org/>

Toronto Metropolitan University: <https://www.torontomu.ca/>

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/>