

[EPISODE]

**[0:00:00] DC:** Today on The Print Report, drupa is back, and you should be there. Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. All the print that's fit for news.

[EPISODE]

**[0:00:16] DC:** Hey, everybody. Welcome to The Print Report with Deborah Corn and Pat McGrew. I am Deborah Corn, which means –

**[0:00:21] PM:** I am Pat McGrew.

**[0:00:24] DC:** You are Pat McGrew. Pat McGrew, drupa veteran. How many drupas have you been to?

**[0:00:33] PM:** Lots of them, because I started going back in the late eighties.

**[0:00:39] DC:** I was a mere pup working in an advertising agency, not even yet. I wasn't even working in advertising agencies yet.

**[0:00:46] PM:** I was there with clients. For the first, I guess, three or four, I went with clients who were using software my company made. Then, I was there as an analyst, I was there as a writer and then I was there for a hardware company I was working for. When I went in 2000, it was funny, because I was working for Pitney Bowes for the management services team at Pitney Bowes. Mostly, I was working in Europe. I kept saying to them, "Hey, shouldn't you go to drupa?" And they didn't know what it was.

**[0:01:23] DC:** Wow.

**[0:01:24] PM:** I ended up taking a bunch of engineers to drupa. I was there as a writer too, which was kind of fun. But I mean, I took a bunch of engineers and started walking them through the halls. And you think that the people who kind of invented the mailing machine and

inserters would understand how print happens, but it turned out they didn't. That is the value of drupa.

**[0:01:48] DC:** Well, that is actually the topic of our podcast today. It is a drupa year after a long, long absence due to COVID, and not wanting to interrupt what they call the Olympic cycle that they have with the trade show, which is every four years. Which is also, coordinates with other trade shows in Europe that have a two-year cycle, so that everybody is allegedly off the year that drupa is on, because everybody realizes how important that is. And because it is a drupa year, we wanted to kick off our first podcast for 2024 with a road to drupa conversation.

Pat is the veteran here. I had been to only one drupa, so we definitely have different perspectives on it. But we really wanted to talk to everybody out there about why drupa is different. Pat, let me turn it over to you.

**[0:02:53] PM:** Look, drupa is the place where it's one-stop shop. It is a place to not only see the vendors you know and love, and talk to them about their futures. Because most people who go to drupa, they know that there are some things you'll see there available for sale today. But there's an awful lot of futures at drupa. Go talk to your vendors, the people you know and love, they bring their best and brightest. It's a chance to get a sense of what they're doing, and what their roadmap is, and to talk to a lot of people you might not get to see, the people who are behind the scenes. You get to meet a lot of the engineering people who are typically working in the stands.

But a good drupa attendee, and A plus drupa attendee does not only visit their own vendors, they go and walk the halls, and they look for the vendors they don't have a relationship with. Now, sometimes it's a vendor you used to have and you kicked out for some reason. It's still worth going to visit their stand. It's worth walking into the halls for the types of equipment that are outside of the kind of print you do. If you're a transaction mailer, go look at the wide format people, go look at all the bookbinding equipment, go look at offset equipment, and the solutions that – folks like Heidelberg, and Komori, and Miyakoshi, and Mitsubishi are bringing.

There are all sorts of things that you can learn. For me, the reason you go to drupa is to learn, and to buy eventually. But to learn what you need to know to make the smartest decisions you can so you can keep your business growing.

**[0:04:46] DC:** Now, not to be contrary, but one-stop shopping is pretty much a value proposition of any trade show or user event, things of that nature. So I know if you said it, you must have a deeper reason for why that is.

**[0:05:06] PM:** Because if you look at a typical regional print show of any kind, there is a limited amount of crossover between printing technologies and segments. You can go to a show that says it's a print show, but it's really looking at office-level and mid-tier equipment. The kinds of things that sit on the end of an aisle in a large office campus. It's printing equipment, sure it is. But it's not quite in the same category, as if you're looking at a 500-foot-per-minute roll-fed inkjet web press, or one of the high-speed cut sheet presses, or an offset like a Speedmaster 52. The categories are different, or the wide format presses, or the textile presses, or the DTF devices.

The thing about drupa is that there's something for everybody, and there is something for everybody to learn. If I go to a big regional print show in Australia, or a big regional print show in Japan, or a big regional print show in Southern Europe, you don't get nearly the versatility and the range of not only hardware for print but devices for finishing. Whether you're talking about wide format, or you're talking about folding and cutting, and the origami stuff you can do to make really cool, direct mail, or other marketing collateral. The things that will do flexo, that will build your pouches, and put spouts on them for you. As well as the things that will print on fabric and textiles, and the things that go into finishing, those devices, but also the software.

The other thing that's happened at drupa in the last 20 years is that the software people who support the print industry started bringing their solutions as well. Every year, since 2000, really, there have been more and more software vendors there who can help people become more efficient, help people create more interesting types of print output, and create workflows that will work no matter whose hardware devices are sitting there and what they print. Whether they print fabric, or they print paper, or they print corrugated. So, I love it.

**[0:07:43] DC:** Yes. I mean, I want to address what I refer to as the discovery aspect of it. That's when you're walking through the halls of 18 halls. Now, there's 18 halls. Picture yourself going to one of those national regional trade shows, your giant trade show hall, filled hopefully end to end. Now, put 18 of those in a space, include a giant soccer/football stadium in the middle of it, a parking lot that is probably just as big as the fairgrounds. There is a lot to see there.

I want to tell this story of something that happened to me at the last drupa. I was there with you and with team HP. We were working with PageWide Press, which is what they were called at that time. We were there early because we were doing some color management and setting up the presses to be ready for hundreds of thousands of visitors over the 11 days at drupa 2016. Occasionally, I had the opportunity to run out of Hall 17 and go look around drupa. I will never forget going into one of the halls and seeing a fully functional true packaging press. It was the entire size of one wall of one of those halls. You needed ladders to get up to where the ink was. This was – I don't mean stairs. I mean ladders. I'm saying this purposely. There were actually multiple layers of this press.

Somebody could be on the lido deck, and you were up on the observation deck. I stood there, and I said, "Ah, this is why the packaging people think they have nothing to do with the commercial people, and this is why it is so difficult to get a conversation with these people about digital printing packaging. But Pat, if I hadn't seen it myself, I never would have understood what was going on. Now, obviously, I'm not a printer. But I guarantee you, there are plenty of people unless you've been to somewhere that needs a press, or however many, God knows what was hooked up to that thing. But it was the entire – it was hundreds of feet long.

Then, from that, even seeing a machine that makes tea. Who knew that there was a machine that actually puts tea in tea bags? I didn't know that until I saw it. Now, it seems like a little thing. Well, do you really need that? I don't need that, but I know it exists, and it was really cool to see. It opened up my mind about how big the printing industry really was. I think a lot of us, I don't want to say we have blinders on, but we're drawn to the things that are most important to us. Because there's so much information out there, and you only have so much time to pay attention to things.

But if you love print, if you're in the printing industry, and you're going to drupa, which you should be. I'm going to say, set one day aside to just wander around and be blown away by these little – sometimes they're baby, like that tea-maker thing was not a big machine, and you would never have known what it was if you were just walking by it, and you didn't smell the tea that was in the bin. But it's just an incredible situation to be part of, and that was just two things I saw over the 11 days.

**[0:11:37] PM:** I can remember walking into one of the halls, and it was probably back in the nineties. It would have been 17, 18, 19 – probably would have been hall maybe 18 or 19. At the time, you still saw a lot of offset and gravure presses. In one of the halls, they had set up a newspaper gravure press that was just the most amazing thing you could possibly – I just literally sat there mesmerized for about 45 minutes watching them demonstrate. So the way they were demonstrating the press to potential buyers, is they had it looked like a carnival ride. That was basically a bucket that 12 people could sit in, there were chairs in it. It was lifted by a robotic arm, but it was being driven by a person. It wasn't automated. So that they could see the top of the press, and the end of the press, and they just moved all over in front of the press.

Then, they had a camera mounted on that so that you could see what the people in the – who were their best customers could see. They did that demo maybe four times a day. I kept telling people about it because it was the most amazing thing. The massive size of gravure presses, it's breathtaking when you are working primarily with digital presses. But for me, like in hall 17, it always tickled me that we were in hall 17. Because I can remember when Heidelberg used to run a full-on newspaper press in that hall. So, it was nice to be back in hall 17, it's a big hall. Of course, we were running a 40-inch wide –

**[0:13:22] DC:** Yes, that thing was gigantic.

**[0:13:23] PM:** – packaging press, and a 22-inch-wide press. I mean, one of the reasons I made HP let me bring you was because, as an engineering company, we knew the data of what print is supposed to look like. But you as a buyer have a totally different eye. Which is why you were essential for us to be able to print posters and magazines that had well-known international brands associated with them. So we didn't get in trouble with those brands. That's the value

[MESSAGE]

**[0:14:08] DC:** It's back. Citizens of the Printerverse, it is time to make your plans to attend drupa 2024, the world's premier printing event returns May 28<sup>th</sup> through June 7<sup>th</sup> in Dusseldorf, Germany. With 18 Halls filled with the products, services., and companies you need to drive your business forward. drupa also offers visitors a variety of topical daily programming with speakers covering packaging, textiles, sustainability, and trends shaping the industry. Stop by hall 7. I'm co-hosting the drupa next age forum with Frank Tueckmantel. drupa dna offers 11 days of sessions, interviews, panels, co-located events, global networking. And of course, a little fun awaits. Visit [drupa.com](https://drupa.com), and get your ticket to the future of your business today. Links in the show notes. drupa long and prosper.

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**[0:15:13] DC:** We did such a great job that we were accused the entire show of running preprinted materials through the press. Because no way could inkjet look that good. Like, well, we spent a week adjusting those settings.

**[0:15:25] PM:** Getting that dialed in, yes. We're getting that thing dialed in, and then readjusting it during the show. Because drupa occurs at a point in the calendar where it's right at that transition between spring and summer. Sometimes it's a little closer to the spring side, sometimes a little closer to the summer side. But it is always a period of changeable weather in Dusseldorf, which means, some days, it might be raining. When you get a lot of humidity in the air, paper changes. We had to constantly stay on top of that.

The reason I bring it up is because, another reason for you as a printer to attend drupa is to see the best that can be produced on the devices that you see on the floor. Because the people that the vendors bring to operate the presses are the best of the best. They know how to roll with every punch. Those are the people you'll want to try to have a conversation with, because you know where you live, you know what the environmental conditions are where you live. I've visited printers on the DMZ in South Korea, who run day in and day out with the garage doors on their Quonset huts open. Because they want to be able to see what's going on around them.

The humidity that brings in is kind of fun. It takes an expert pressman to make sure those things can run right.

**[0:17:03] DC:** Press person.

**[0:17:03] PM:** Press person. I'm kind of – I'm a guy, so guy, gal. whatever. I don't care.

**[0:17:07] DC:** That's okay. I was just, girls are printing it.

**[0:17:11] PM:** In the end, I think that to miss a drupa is to miss the most amazing chance to see everything that can be possible for your shop in the future. And to time, you'll meet people walking in the aisle, you'll meet printers who are already doing things you'd like to do, and you will meet people for whom you are doing the things they would like to do. It is networking. But it's so much more than that.

**[0:17:42] DC:** It is. You brought this up. There are consistent demos and presentations and speakers at the exhibitor booths, not just being offered in the forums that drupa offers. But that's even getting into what happens when you get around three, four o'clock, when it becomes happy hour in Germany. There's DJs, and parties, and happy hours all over the place. But during the day, even walking around, you can find an amazing presentation going on, or amazing speaker, or there's a lot of artists that come to drupa as well. That is because the manufacturers are showing off how they've collaborated with these people to make these giant photographs.

One of the most amazing things last time was the collaboration between Highcon and a paper company. Highcon is laser cutting. They created this living sculpture, paper sculpture that was hanging right where the train came out.

**[0:18:53] PM:** It was beautiful.

**[0:18:53] DC:** Just the collaborations, like everybody working with each other, it's really a compelling thing. To your point, if you're coming from Europe, of course, you have a lot more options than coming from America, where you're definitely getting on a plane to get over there.

Unless you're Frank Romano, and you're going to take the cruise across the ocean. But my suggestion is look around and say, "Do both owners need to go, and their spouses, and all these people?" Maybe it's time to look at your production director, or your IT person, and say, "You know what? The future of our business is really in the output of that press and the software that powers it." Can you believe I'm saying that, Pat? You've got that into me.

**[0:19:41] PM:** I do. I believe it.

**[0:19:43] DC:** My suggestion is, sorry to all the spouses out there, but meet up after. And I'm saying to the owners of the print shops, really look at investing in the future of your business by bringing your people over there. Thoughts?

**[0:19:59] PM:** Look. Let's be fair that in many print shops, the husband and the wife, or the two husbands, or the two wives, however they're configured as couples, they all participate. Maybe even the kids participate in the business, but that's not always the case. There are people who tend to look at a big trade show as an opportunity for a vacation. And God bless them if that's what –

**[0:20:23] DC:** I mean, it's Europe in the summer. I mean, I would say parlay that into a vacation, for sure.

**[0:20:29] PM:** Absolutely do it, but I think you're absolutely right. That some of the most interesting conversations I've had in all the years I've done drupas have been with the production managers who were allowed to come, production directors, press operators, color specialists, all sorts of people who are actually in the operational side of the various print businesses. Because they have very specific questions that they want answered, and they're not looking for the sales answer, they're looking for the technical answer. The smart vendors make sure that they've got those people on their stand.

I have some of the best conversations when I'm at drupa. Again, the difference between your average regional print show and a drupa is that, companies do spend the money to bring their best and brightest. Because they know that you only get one opportunity to really impress a potential new customer. There are more people walking by you per hour, than in any other place



on earth. To use that opportunity, you make sure you have your smartest people sort of in catch mode, as these people are walking by. It's really funny, after a show, every vendor sits back and they look through the badges they've scanned, and they look through their lead list, and oh, my God, what did we sell? It's sort of a silly way to do things, because drupa is a long tail. You may see equipment that has a sign, "Sold to. Sold to. Sold to."

**[0:22:17] DC:** And there are people that go there with a shopping list for sure.

**[0:22:21] PM:** And a checkbook, God bless them. They do make a decision to buy at the show. But that's not the vast majority of people. The vast majority of people are, they've got their shopping list, they're in research mode, they're using drupa like Google. But it's a smarter Google because it's a print-specific Google. They're looking at it, and they're talking to actual people, not a ChatGPT bot about what their needs are.

**[0:22:50] DC:** Right, or iOS software person will call you back next time they have time.

**[0:22:56] PM:** Yes, really.

**[0:22:57] DC:** Then, they call you, and they have no idea who you are because they weren't at the show.

**[0:23:01] PM:** And they don't know what you saw, and they don't know why. Because some of the questions that I know I've gotten that have caused the most thought, and the most innovative conversations have been with people who just came from someone else's stand. Who got told something that they aren't sure is right, and they want to know is it right. "Hey. Well, I heard this over here. Is that what you think too? Is that that how that really works?"

**[0:23:31] DC:** That reminds me of [inaudible 0:23:31] how they all just walk around and say, "Hold on –

**[Crosstalk 0:23:35]**

**[0:23:36] PM:** That's not what they said over there.

**[0:23:36] DC:** Thank you. They go next door and ask them that question.

**[0:23:39] PM:** You ask the same question everywhere you go.

**[0:23:41] DC:** I think that that's another compelling reason why divide and conquer. It's 18 halls. I don't know how we can keep saying this.

**[0:23:50] PM:** It's big.

**[0:23:51] DC:** You need a couple of days, for sure. Go visit who you want to visit. But dividing and conquering might be the best thing. Maybe you all walk together the first day.

**[0:24:01] PM:** And look at the education options, and weave that in. Walking 18 halls if you're not used to that, you might be looking for a chance to kind of sit and rest your brain for a minute. It might sound crazy that education might be the place to do that, but it actually is. So there would be –

**[0:24:20] DC:** Charge your phone, get some water.

**[0:24:22] PM:** All those things, and just kind of take a break, give your brain a rest for a second. There will be lots of those opportunities as well. I mean, I've talked to probably a dozen people who will be first-time attendees this time. They've never been. They are very excited to go in.

**[0:24:38] DC:** Yay. I know a couple too.

**[0:24:40] PM:** They are trying to figure out, "Okay. Well, where do I go first? Do I go to my vendors first or do I go to somebody else first?" If you're listening and you are going to drupa for the first time, and you don't know where to start, ping us, ask the question because we'll help. We can help you figure out for what you're looking for where to start, and then, where to kind of backfill with the extra time you might have to be there.

[BREAK]

**[0:25:09] PM:** If what you're doing isn't helping you grow, let the McGrewGroup help you fix that. Better sales talk tracks, more compelling print samples, and winning workflow strategies can be yours. With decades of experience in transaction, direct mail, and commercial print, as well as your marketing expertise, we can help with business and production strategies, CCM advice, and develop your content. McGrewGroup is ready to help you grow, expand, optimize, and thrive. Drop us a note on LinkedIn or on our website, [mcgrewgroup.com](http://mcgrewgroup.com).

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**[0:25:47] DC:** I'm actually glad you brought that up, because I have the ninth Global Trends Report from drupa. They put that out in November of last year. One of the sections that I was interested in or the investments that people are planning to make. There were a couple of interesting areas, and the reason I mentioned this is because, one of the advantages, or one of the reasons to go to drupa is to get in the front of the line of something. Whether it's a new press that they are just starting to make, or it's coming out into the market soon. Or to be in that early adoption stage of technology, because everyone else is going to get it, or it's going to be the buzzy thing, and they're going to be looking into it. Then, at that point, when other people jump in on it, you're either a leader or a follower.

There were a couple of things I thought were interesting. Something that I actually have been focused on in a weird way is flexible packaging. I think that that's really topical. If I were going to drupa, whether or not I was into flexible packaging yet, that would probably be on my discovery list. Let me just go walk around and see about that. The other thing is that, as much as we talk about digital printing, sheetfed offset is not going anywhere anytime soon. There's smaller machines in the marketplace now that are more manageable than those giant offset presses that I saw in some of the halls. You get to see the biggest presses and finishing equipment attached to it that you've ever seen in your entire life.

Then, of course, inkjet is pretty popular. Even if you're not in a position where you think you're buying something to your point made before. Everybody you want to ask about it is there including customers of the technology.

**[0:28:02] PM:** One of the things that you're going to see at drupa this year, which may be of interest to direct mailers, commercial printers of all kinds, is that you're going to see a lot more inkjet presses that are capable of printing on much heavier substrates, much heavier papers, and board stocks. We're finally – we're crossing another chasm, right? There's lots of chasms in the print industry. But we're crossing another chasm, we're getting to the point where handling heavier materials, printing on those materials, getting them dry, making sure that they don't become friable, that they don't break, and crack as you're putting them through finishing. We're making another leap there.

So most of your major vendors who are inkjet people will be bringing presses that are capable of doing these heavier weights. Now, what do you care? Well, if you're a commercial printer, and you're doing a lot of poster work, maybe you're doing a lot of display work, sheetfed display work, maybe you're doing a lot of un-mailed marketing collateral. But you're looking at options for maybe adding some packaging into what you will offer your clients. The big sheetfed presses that can handle the heavier substrates as well as some of the roll fit presses that are going to be able to handle the heavier substrates give you the option to not only get high-speed production and add capacity to the shop that you have with a single footprint. You could be doing both commercial work and some packaging work, expanding the range of what you can offer your clients.

I think we're going to see a fair amount of that at the show, and I think we're going to see more and more of vibrant colors coming off of – when we first brought inkjet to drupa a long time ago in a valley far away. It kind of looked like watercolor on paper. It wasn't the most brilliant in the world. When you compared it to toner or offset, it just wasn't the most exciting thing to look at. But today, you will see in stands across drupa, people comparing offset inkjet and toner solutions. And also, don't forget that there are really cool toner solutions come into drupa too, that had me really excited.

I agree with you that, if I was starting out today, and I had the option to include flexible packaging equipment as part of the shop I was building, I do it in a heartbeat. Because the press that can handle flexible packaging can also handle a whole lot of other things, in addition to the flexible package. So the answer is, amen, sister.

**[0:30:44] DC:** Yes. I see trending in my grocery store, there's like fruit in bags in flexible packaging now, There's just so many reasons for it. The other thing I wanted to mention was textiles. Now, you don't necessarily think of drupa as a textile show. But if you're 1-800 get me an embroidered hat or get me a dye sublimation t-shirt, or help me create fabric for one of my customers, or even t-shirts, or lanyards, or anything like that. I don't know if they necessarily put those all under textiles. But there are manageable ways of doing this now in small volumes, and large volumes, and industrial volumes. It used to be wide-format that was the missing piece in what I'm referring to as a commercial print shop.

You might get your ink on paper from one printer, and then for some reason, you're going to another printer to get your banner for the event or whatever it might be, or your sign, or something like that. Now, printers have consolidated that in many ways, the wide format people have gotten some digital printing equipment, the digital or offset, whatever they got. The commercial printers have invested in wide format. What is the next frontier? Well, there's printed electronics, which is a little tricky. There's 3D printing that is like, okay, it will have its day, but maybe not yet right now. What is the thing that could have its day tomorrow? Textiles.

**[0:32:18] PM:** I think you're right. I think one of the other things we have to change in our mindset is that the word hybrid has taken on eight million different meanings. Because you can be a hybrid printer if you print offset, and then post-print digital. You can be a hybrid printer if you on your floor have wide format equipment, textile printing equipment, offset equipment, and digital DM-type equipment. You can be a hybrid printer with every mix and match you can think of. There's probably not a list long enough to cover every possibility.

When you start looking at a lot of the new generation of wide format equipment is just as happy printing fabric as it is printing paper, and vinyl, and film, and all the other things that people put through the various wide format printers. This is the time to be walking the halls at drupa, and talking to the people who sell the equipment and say, "What's the range of substrates that I can print on? Can I print on fabric? If I can print on fabric, can I print on polyester or only cotton? Can I print on spandex? Can I printing – what can I actually print on?"

If you go and you ask those questions, you may uncover a whole new opportunity for your print shop. Because when you can buy a single device that can print a whole lot of different things,

you don't have to become an apparel printing shop just to be able to say yes to apparel printing work. You can be a versatile printer who can simply say yes to everything because you have equipment that can say yes to everything. Where else are you going to see it? If that's not really part of your world, where else are you going to see it?

[MESSAGE]

**[0:34:14] DC:** Print Media Centr provides printspiration and resources to our vast network of print and marketing professionals. Whether you are an industry supplier, print service provider, print customer, or consultant, we have you covered by providing resources and strategies that enable business marketing and creative success, reporting from global events, these podcasts, Project Peacock TV, and an array of community-lifting initiatives. We also work with OEMs, suppliers, industry organizations, and event producers, helping you connect and engage with our vast audience, and achieve success with your sales, marketing, and conference endeavors. Visit [printmediacentr.com](http://printmediacentr.com), and connect with the Printerverse. Links in the show notes. Print long and prosper.

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**[0:35:08] DC:** What we're trying to say here is that, okay, now you've had your meeting with the textile apparel printer, dye sublimation, whatever you're doing there. Does it fit into my workflow? Well, let's go find my software vendor who's in here and figure that out. What sort of finishing equipment do I need? Okay, they told me. Guess what? They're all here. Let me go talk to them and find out, do I need to transform my finishing department? Do they have suggestions on other companies that might fit what I already have? It just starts this domino effect of opportunity and possibility.

The other thing is that drupa recognizes this too. We've mentioned that just walking around, you're going to find presentations going on. I don't think the attendees can go into press conferences, but there's press conferences going on all the time. Sometimes they have them in their booths, and that's always a great time to show up if you want to see the real higher-ups at the companies. They are all there for those press releases and for those big sales. Everybody's

in those photos, because it's drupa. drupa has four different forums going on during the show. The drupa Cube, I would say is their big one, right?

**[0:36:34] JM:** That's the big one, yes.

**[0:36:34] DC:** That's the big one, where this might be an unfair comparison to drupa, but it's like the Printerverse. There's a multitude of topics, there's a multitude of speakers, and it's all geared towards the future of the industry, the future of new concepts. Very TED Talky, really high-end speakers from brands around the world, telling you how they're going to use print. Always interesting to see what's going on there.

Then, they have two forums that they call Touchpoint, which are focused on a single topic, although the breadth of it is completely different at drupa, because you've got access to the worlds of speakers, and analysts, and engineers, and everybody else. One of the focuses is touchpoint packaging, which will be going on the entire time. Touchpoint textile, which we'd be going on the whole time. I am actually co-hosting what they call drupa next age, drupa DNA, with Frank Tueckmantel.

This is a place for startups and people with new technology. Even if you're an exhibitor out in The Messe, if you have new technology that you're introducing at the show, this is part of next age. There'll be other collocated events there. One is an imaging conference, which looks really interesting to attract photographers, and artists, and people who are needing to create and reproduce their art for window displays, and galleries or just reproduce it. You don't always get the original of a painting. I mean, just ask Andy Warhol, that's how he did it with a bunch of people on their knees screen printing the whole time. It wasn't him doing it.

Eleven days of activities there. Lots of education and a place for you to sit down. Pat, a lot of times, and even what you just said before, well, I'll just wait till after drupa is over, and I'll go to my local – and by local, that could mean in your country or your city. I'll just go to my event, because eventually, that stuff will come to where I am. I would just like to say this, and I'll turn it over to you. Not all those companies come to America or to those trade shows. You find people that you can work with that are smaller companies or even big ones. You just never heard of them because they're not part of that big 10 that you see everywhere.

Now, obviously, not everybody sells into United States either, so there is some of that. But they usually have distributors and things like that. So can you address those vendors that aren't going to be as accessible after the show is, everybody believes they are or made to believe that they are by the trade show organizers who say, "Oh. We'll just wait. It'll be at my show."

**[0:39:38] PM:** The problem is that budgets are shrinking. There is no organization on earth that will tell you today that they have more money to spend on marketing and trade shows than they had two, three, five years ago. Everybody's been shrinking. The cost of moving people, housing them, feeding them, transporting them. It only goes up. An awful lot of people, a lot of the big vendors who are coming to drupa will not be staying in Dusseldorf. They will be staying in Cologne, or Bonn, or Essen because they're looking for cheaper ways to house 400 people.

When you start looking at what the draw is at drupa, the major vendors will be there. But it makes them reconsider their investment in other shows. The people who are suffering the most are the regional shows around the world. Those are the ones that are seeing vendors take smaller and smaller stands, not bring equipment to shows, only bring pictures of equipment, or PowerPoint presentations about equipment. While there's still some value in that. I think those shows are great for networking and catching up with your local teams, and your regional teams, and understanding what's actually available in your region versus what might be available in other venues.

The truth is that if you really want to get a sense of what's available, what's coming, and the potential impact on your business, a global show is where you go find that out. drupa is, for me, it's the place where you go find out what's really coming and what's going on. But I love the regional shows to understand local needs. The thing that I'm not a fan of is every vendor thinking they're going to fly you to their customer facility or their favorite site to show you what they want to show you. Because if I'm a printer, and I'm trying to make a living, I just don't have time to go visit seven vendors' favorite sites. I need one stop to see everything I need to see, and then I'll start making some decisions about where to do the deeper dive. drupa is the place I can do that.



**[0:42:06] DC:** Pat, the last thing I want to mention is that you and I have a side hustle going on at drupa. We are actually going to be podcasting The Print Report live from The Messe, or from the hotel, or from the currywurst stand.

**[0:42:22] PM:** Wherever.

**[0:42:23] DC:** You can get your vegetable soup, and I can get my currywurst and be very happy. But yes, if there's anybody out there that's interested in having a visit from Pat and I during drupa to do some reporting, please get in touch. Do you have any final words, Pat? We're going to be speaking about Drupa a lot until June. We are both obviously heavily invested in this show. Not in a – by the way, when I say that, I don't mean financially, I mean emotionally. I love drupa and that is because – I've only been one time, everything that I experienced there, some of it I can't even communicate about because they don't have the words for what the experience was like. Only to say that, for me, that was my world in print before drupa and my world in print after drupa. It just opened up so much literally of the world to me. Final words.

**[0:43:23] PM:** Deb, when you and I were getting ready for drupa 2016, one of the things I said to you was that it was unlike anything you've ever seen before. And you said, "Nah, it can't be that. I mean, I've been to this show, and that show, and the other show. I mean, it just really can't be that." But as we got there the week ahead to try and get ready, and I'd already been there for a while. And you started to look around, what you realized is that vendors were operating full-on print shops someplace that they wouldn't normally operate on a show floor. That's the value proposition of drupa, is that you get to see everything working the way it should. It is unique experience.

For people who have never been, I can't recommend it highly enough. If you've only been once, you need to go again, because it changes every time. What we know is that 2024 drupa will look different from 2016 drupa, and 2012, and 2008, and 2004. It will look different because our industry is different. We've had vendors buying and selling each other, and brand names coming together. We've had vendors getting into new areas. So bringing whole new things that way. It's going to be a learning experience for all of us, even those of us who've done it for a long time.

There is no such thing as walking on site and saying, "Oh, I've seen that all before." If you hear somebody saying, "Oh, there's no reason to go to drupa, I've seen it all before." They've clearly never been to drupa. Or if they've been, they didn't pay attention to the world around them. drupa is different every single time. You want to have a little bit of fun, go out onto Facebook, and look up the cult of the drupa song. Because every morning, they play a song, and that song is typically written by the team responsible for the Eurovision Song Contest in Europe. Sometimes it's really catchy, and sometimes it's terrible. It's usually cheesy no matter what. But it is a way to start the morning with a smile, and you should be going to drupa with a smile. We'll keep talking about this all the way until we get there and while we're there.

**[0:45:46] DC:** Yes, 100%. Thank you so much for your time, Pat McGrew. Everybody, get on your airline website, look up some tickets, get a hotel, get a hotel, get a hotel quickly, and hope to see you in Dusseldorf. Until then, drupa long, print long, and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

**[0:46:10] 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](http://printmediacentr.com). We'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcast. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

[END]

### **Mentioned in This Episode:**

drupa: <https://www.drupa.com/>

drupa Forums: <https://www.drupa.com/en/Program/Forums>

drupa Next Age (drupa DNA): [https://www.drupa.com/en/Program/Forums/drupa\\_next\\_age](https://www.drupa.com/en/Program/Forums/drupa_next_age)

The Cult of Drupa Songs: <https://www.facebook.com/DrupaSongs/>

drupa Global Trends

Report: [https://www.drupa.com/Exhibitors\\_Products/Global\\_Trends\\_Overview](https://www.drupa.com/Exhibitors_Products/Global_Trends_Overview)

Pat McGrew: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patmcgrew/>

McGrewGroup: <https://www.mcgrewgroup.com>

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

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