

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02] DD: Does your printing need some passion?

[0:00:04] NT: Your design, some dynamic dimension?

[0:00:07] DC: Are you stuck in a CMYK rut?

[0:00:11] DD: I'm David Drucker, Founder and CEO of Highresolution Printing and Packaging.

[0:00:16] NT: I'm Noel Tocci, Founder of Tocci Made, Bespoke Print Consulting.

[0:00:20] DC: And I'm Deborah Corn, the intergalactic ambassador to the printerverse. Welcome to Making it with Print, the podcast that takes a deep dive into the conception, creation, and production of amazing printed products.

[0:00:33] NT: If you can dream it –

[0:00:35] DD: You can make it.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:39] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your intergalactic ambassador. More specifically, we are here with the Making it with Print Podcast, which means, I'm here with David Drucker and Noel Tocci. David Drucker from highresolution Print and Packaging, Noel Tocci from Tocci Made. Hello, and happy new year, gentlemen.

[0:01:03] DD: Happy New Year to you, too.

[0:01:05] NT: Happy New Year. Nice to see you both.

[0:01:06] DC: Yes, excellent. Yes, we are on video, everybody, so we can see each other. I only release part of the audio file, because I'm a purist, right? A podcast is an audio file. Today's our first topic for 2024. We had a bit of a break over the holidays. If you haven't caught up with all of our episodes, please go back and listen to them. They all have some value, especially if you want to talk to creative people or be more creative and collaborative in your business.

Today, we're going to focus on actually, a post that I write for the last 11 years, which is called the CMYK Manifesto. I've taken it upon myself, gentlemen, to declare the mission of print and for print the industry and for print business for the coming year and try to bring just a different way to frame everything everybody's doing to make sure it matches with the current culture, with the people who are out there buying print or speaking about it in some way, so that, I guess, there's more of a connection to the medium, which is the space I feel that I occupy. I'm not occupying this mission as an analyst or an economist making predictions about where people will spend money, purchasing equipment, or buying print.

But there are economic factors out in the world. There are weather factors. There are war factors. There are a lot of things going on that will affect all of those decisions that people are making and you should pay attention to that from your resources to make your personal business decisions on that.

What I want to talk about are the three things that I think are really important. That is rewind, reignite, and represent. We're going to take them one by one. Rewind to me is that nobody in any business in 2024 can take their customer relationships for granted. This is a great time to circle back with all of your customers, remind them how you help their business, remind them of all the work that you do together, whether you did two jobs, or 200 last year, and really try to have a conversation with them and talk to them about their business goals for the year.

This is not about sending an email. This is not about a newsletter, or posting on social media, or anything like that. It's literally about meeting with your customers and just rewinding for a moment before you move forward to make sure that they fully understand what an integral part of your business success that you have been. That's my perspective on it. David, we'll start with you. What is rewind to you and what do you think about what I just said? You don't have to agree with me.

[0:04:26] DD: No, I look at it a little bit different, because my clients, the people that I work with, we have a trust for each other. People don't call unless they want something. What I've been doing is I've been actually going back a little bit deeper into my past relationships. For instance, I worked with in 2017, 2016 with a packaging company. Through time, they've actually released, decreased their company. But I went on to my favorite LinkedIn and began to look up the designers that I had worked with over time. I've been rekindling with them and letting them know, "This is what we're doing. I miss speaking with you. Check us out." Just trying to have a conversation.

Now, a lot of the conversations are not over the phone, because I find that one of the clients that was in New York City is now in Oregon, or they're in Wyoming, or they're in Colorado. To get a phone number for them is very difficult. You can after you have that initial conversation to keep lines open. But I think it's really important to begin to dig deep in the people who brought you to where you are.

Here's one as well and this has to do with me and I'm not the obnoxious salesman, but I've been calling on one person for 30 years. They're in pharmaceutical advertising. You don't have equipment, so I can't use you and it's a matter of the agencies of pharmaceutical companies and they have their own people. What I end is, well, if that project comes along, give me a call. With that, in August of this past year, the phone rings, I pick it up. She says, "David." I say, I knew who it was. We had this conversation. They had a project that none of their other vendors could do. The result of being consistent, reaching back to see people was the highest awarded project I got in 2023.

[0:06:56] DC: Excellent.

[0:06:57] DD: It's an important thing to dig and to – these people are the ones that you've been riding with and out of sight, had them on, right?

[0:07:07] DC: Yeah. Absolutely. You might have access to equipment, techniques, vendors that you didn't have access to last time you worked with them. It's a great time to just check back in and say, "Remember, we discussed that project that required this? Well, if it ever comes up

again, I now have a fantastic resource for that and I'd be happy to send you some samples.”
Noel, rewind. Discuss.

[0:07:37] NT: That's interesting. Some of it's going to mirror a little bit of what David said. But I always find in January, you know it's that time to regroup. One of the promises I make myself is to look back. At the year for sure, I like to see what I was doing in January 2023, what new kinds of work, or new capabilities, or different opportunities that we had during the year that we didn't expect, or we're not really thinking about it. We changed and morphed. I like to think about that. Then I like to think about all of the people, like David said. For me, it's what? 43 years. I know it's a long time for David as well.

What were the relationships I enjoyed, where we did lots of work? Time happens, right? You don't work with each other anymore. David hit it on the head. People have moved. They're in a new career. They're in a new location, regrouping. I find that the reason I like to do that is because those relationships are forever. I'll take it a step further. Sometimes when we rekindle, they'll say, “Oh, wow. I was thinking about you. I forgot.” Kind of out of sight, out of mind, right?

Especially the bigger brands, and so forth, they have lots of people that they can work with. If they don't hear from you, they forget. You rekindle, and I've had several this year where I've done that. Also, what I do in January is reach way back. It's been amazing that what I find is most helpful, not everyone says, “Hey, that's great. I want to work with you.” Most say, “Oh, I miss it. We did great stuff together.”

What I always ask is, “Who do you know? This is what we're doing, a little different from when we worked together. This is who we are.” Sometimes they take them through a presentation, so they can see, because they say, “Oh, let me see the cool new stuff.” I'll take them through a hundred images. We shoot our work, right? Then ask them. I don't even have to ask them. Like David said, no salesman. I never sold anything in my life. It's about relationship.

But it's their idea and it's what I want is a referral. Almost a 100% of my work is referral. When it comes from someone who trusted you and obviously, people don't like to give out referrals, unless they feel really strongly about it, that's the new year's worth of work. I don't even think, “Oh, great. Now, I'm going to have a lot of work in 2024.”

I want new opportunities. The things that changed in 2023, that means, I can learn even more new stuff. I don't think that's proper English, in 2024. That's exciting, because we're continuing like a shark, right? Got to move. Got to keep moving. For me, it's looking back, because I miss the relationships and you get referrals. Like David said, you can get a really nice surprise, too, which wouldn't have probably have happened if he didn't reach out.

[0:10:19] DC: Yeah. Do you ever check back with your customers that you do work with all the time just to say, “Hey, I thought last year went great.”

[0:10:28] NT: I find the first week, sorry, the first week of January is the time to say, “Hey, how were the holidays?” Talk and go, “Listen, you be honest with me. What went right? What went wrong this year?” “Well, remember in June, you thought it was going to – but we pulled you out. Are you happy? Are you good? I love working with you, but I want you to be happy.” It's a chance to like, if you're not physically doing it, it's a chance. I always tell people, pretend we're sitting. I'm going to talk to you. Pretend we're sitting next to each other, having a beer, or a glass of wine. Nobody's listening. What do you really want to say? In the heat of the work week and year, when you're getting stuff done, you have those proofs. “Hey, let's talk about how it's going.” They go, “No, what are you talking about?”

[0:11:07] DC: Exactly.

[0:11:09] NT: It's here. Everybody's just breathing after the holiday and they're more open to discussing, to talking about the relationship. Usually, it's good or it's bad. If it's bad, or something went wrong, also a good time to address it. Hey, it was that hiccup in July. Let's talk about that. I feel really bad. You move on. That's a good time to do that.

[0:11:31] DC: I love that. There's also, if you're a printer and you've invested in workflow software, or online systems, or portals for your customers, this is a great time to rewind with all the people not utilizing those services and really promote the fact that you've made investments in your print shop to help them, the customers, get their work out faster, more optimized. Dare I say, even for if there's less human touches, there could be less money, but I'm not going to – It's not my focus. I think, if there's less human touches, then the printer should keep that margin to

themselves, but they have more wiggle room. David, did you want to address anything that Noel said before we move on to the next one?

[0:12:19] DD: No, no, no. I think that we both represent the same thing. I do call clients. Let's say that I have a consistent run of 20 clients that I'm always running business with. You know if things aren't going right. I haven't seen it. I base that relationship on that. It's going to continue. What I have found is that a lot of the more prominent designers don't even know what digital foils are. That's a great entree into saying, "Hey, I need to show this to you. Do you have something coming up?" You print just little things that you can mail out and –

[0:13:05] DC: Okay, I'm going to stop you there, because we're going to get into that in our topic. Okay, so we'll be right back with topic two.

[MESSAGE]

[0:13:13] DD: Are you a frustrated creative and want a print partner that takes an artisan approach? Do you want to be inspired with techniques that will enhance your next printed or packaging production? Or are you a printer that has unique abilities and need a liaison to enhance your exposure? I'm David Drucker, owner of highresolution printing. I am an independent creative consultant with access to every printing technology out there.

I work hand in hand with creatives and printers, creating projects that are complex, require meticulous detail, and precision from concept to completion. Want to see what I mean? Go to guruofprinting.com and get inspired.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:13:56] DC: Everybody, welcome back to the podcast. I should have mentioned in the beginning that the link to the post that we're discussing is in the show notes. If you want to push pause and go read that, or read it later, enjoy yourself. It's down there. The next topic is reignite. It is exactly what you were just speaking about, David. Reestablishing your mindshare with your customers by showing them the work you do and have done with them literally, whether it's mailing them a sample, or meeting with them if you have that ability, creating a sample kit of all

the work you've done for all your customers during the year. Maybe that'll spark some ideas in the customers that you're sending it to.

Even in the cases of printers, more so than you guys, but even creating a little swatch book of – not getting crazy with every stock from every mill that's out there, but basic things. This is soft touch acquiesce. This is a glitter paper. Anything that might be new and trending out in the world, just to show them that you're on top of the latest and greatest and that you can help them be design-relevant and creative-relevant. A new font's come out, Pantone has new colors of the year, there's new designs. Last year was all about a retro 80s, 90s thing coming back. Anything you can do to reignite the passion and creativity in your customers is the second thing on my mission for print for 2024. Noel, let's start with you this time.

[0:15:41] NT: What I do and I do it every year, but I'm doing more of it. I think about what I want to see, because I spent so much time in the design community and speaking to designers and sometimes in an educational role, and they can't always visualize what you're saying would really happen, right? You're talking about a new technique, or a new finishing, or embellishments and they don't really get it. For me, I love embellishments, but I'm more of an eye-splitting – if there is such a thing – color on paper, particularly uncoated in different substrates.

A couple of times a year, three times last year, I've got a couple in the works on my own time and with the collaborating with certain vendors, I actually get content from a lot of my clients, or this guy of a lot of photographers and artists. I take their content. Then in one case, I'm not going to get into what mill, doesn't really matter. I did a 44-page piece, a couple thousand of them on four different finishes, like an egg shell, a flat, regular.

Then someone said in my ear, “Well, you can't put jewelry on uncoated paper.” “Yeah? Watch this.” I got some images and I did this on my own dime and I put production notes on the back. A lot of times, what I'll do is a comparison, right? I'll do a white, an off-white, an eggshell, one mill, another mill. I use them like a tool. What I find, designers look at them and what they do is they go, “Oh, wow. I never imagined that. Who would ever put that on this paper?” You show them and they go, “This is beautiful. It's this, right?” No, it's not. It's off-white. “Wow.”

What I find is it helps you talk the talk. I'm pretty transparent about how it's done, what the substrate is, what the press is, what the rotate, I mean, right into the nitty-gritty if they want it. It's really to inspire and not even to educate, but also, to drive them to drive their people to do something, push it a little bit, right? Why not? Instead of you – It can be expensive, but it's really good. In the mills, everybody picks it up and everybody's got their credits on it. Everybody's happy. The artist gets seen. The work gets seen. The people go, "Well, I can only go to Tocci Made to do this." Well, you would hope that's the case. In my case, if people are going to get inspired to do more print and push it and go, "You know what? What if we," then my work there is done.

[0:18:04] DC: Yeah. It's good for everybody. A rising tide lifts all boats. I mean, there's a reason why that's an expression, right?

[0:18:11] NT: Comes back. It's what I'm saying.

[0:18:13] DC: I just want to echo something you said and then we'll move to David. Uncoated paper and digital printing seems to be like this knowledge gap that is a ridiculous knowledge gap. I have been told by people that you can't use specialty finishing on uncoated paper. I want everybody out there to know, that is not true. Let's scream that from the rafters. I don't want to get too loud, because you probably have your volume on this podcast at a certain level. If I could scream at the top of my lungs that that is incorrect.

Now, it is correct that certain finishing techniques don't work with certain ink and presses, because they haven't worked together to formulate the relationship so it works together. That's why it's really important if you have a press or you have a sheet of paper, they know who their approved media partners are and their approved finishing partners. Ask somebody. If you don't want to ask your printer, ask your paper rep, find your local merchant, call the paper mill.

You don't have to rely on printers to give you information. Now, no offense to the printers out there. But the reason I was told I couldn't use uncoated and a digital finishing process is because that particular manufacturer hadn't gone through the testing. If I was not me and I didn't have access to not only the finishing company that they said it didn't work with, but all the paper mills that they were discussing couldn't work. I might say, I might accept that as fact. Now, I'm

repeating it to people. Super important topic for 2024. Make sure your freaking customers understand possibilities, and if possible, try to myth bust. David?

[0:20:12] DD: Going back to reignite. I've always been under the theory of the KISS theory, keep it simple, stupid. The means of being able to get in front of somebody and saying something in an elegant way, as well as for them to have a keepsake, a reminder, I mean a tchotchke to put on somebody's desk.

What I did after – this is going back to maybe October, is we want to educate people. We want people to read. We want them to know about the processes that we use, but we also want to remind them, they've been running the saddle stitch books off of a digital printer for so long, and maybe they just forgot about the elegance of a fine line that's engraved, or using an embellishment, embossing something and using heat and getting a different feel from it. What I've been doing is I've been focusing on that and I produced a bookmark, and it's really simple. I'll hold it up and no one's going to be able to see it, but it's got letterpress engraving, debossing, hot stamping, gilding on the side, and the QR code on the back. But it's simple to be able to send out. It remains with the people and it starts a conversation.

I also do it with a digital embellishment, where I produced a small piece and it's got a celebrity's name on it. It just happens to be. I can send that with a note and that one little piece and that starts a conversation. The one thing I don't want to get is I don't want to get a rush. I don't want to have to answer 20 people at one time. I want to be able to work with them. I'm one person. I want to be able to work with them one at a time and have some meaningful conversation. That's why I'm keeping it simple. It's easier for me and for them. It's just a means of, wake up, I forgot about this guy.

[0:22:28] DC: Yeah. Nobody could see what David was holding up, but just to briefly describe it, each of the techniques that he mentioned were illustrated on this bookmark. There was, where it said letter press, it was letter press. Where it was engraving, it said engraving, and all of that. What a simple way of educating people so quickly with something that they will most likely keep and not just look at and toss in the garbage. I love that. Noel, any comments on what David said?

[0:23:00] NT: No. I think it was in a different realm, exactly what I'm doing. You're putting stuff in people's hands and you're guiding them. Instead of them going, "I think I want to –" They go, "What did you do here? I like that." What he's doing, all those processes on one piece. I mean, who doesn't want a bookmark, right? Especially in that world, David, you know right? Well, they're confused. Well, letterpress, engraving, this is that. When you say, keep it simple, stupid, I love that. This is it here. You want that? One from A, one from column B.

[0:23:26] DC: Exactly.

[0:23:27] NT: I think it's great. Again, it's the same thing I was talking about. You're putting something, an actual finished thing in someone's hand. You can explain everything all day long and nothing equals holding and feeling something. The haptics behind. I mean, I know what he's holding up and when he pointed to a letter prompt, I'm going, "Oh, that's going to feel like this. That's going to feel." You want guys when they get that, David, right? They're probably, their hands, it takes half a second for their hand to be on every one of those three or four examples.

[0:24:00] DD: Yeah. You know what? I also feel that getting in front of a younger crowd that might not know these processes. I mean, they know what they know, or even a web designer that's not as familiar with printing, you're at least going to, hopefully, start a conversation. What's this? What's that? How often are they getting something that's as elegant that they're keeping?

[0:24:27] NT: I'm sorry, but too often in the old days, it was, "Oh, this is the new – we have a jam of 9,000, a picture of a press for a piece of machine." I mean, it's nothing to somebody.

[0:24:36] DC: Here's a trifold brochure.

[0:24:39] NT: Yeah. That someone who's making something in –

[0:24:40] DC: On 60-pound stock. It's like, what is this? It's a print sample.

[0:24:45] NT: Making and when I'm making, people grab them and run to another department and go, "This is what I was talking about."

[0:24:50] DC: Mm-hmm. No, 100%. The last thing I want to say about reignite is to remind your customers why they work with you. Tell them about awards you might have won last year. Tell them about speaking engagements you had. Show them testimonials from your customers, social posts that have mentioned you and been amplified. Maybe even things you've shared about them, the piece that you just did for them and you shared it on social media. It had some traction to it. Reignite that partnership on all levels. This is the best time to do it. When we come back, we're going to talk about our final mission for 2023.

[MESSAGE]

[0:25:36] NT: Hi. I'm Noel Tocci, Founder of Tocci Made. The printing industry has changed quite a bit and I've learned a lot since I joined my brother's small but mighty printing company in Newark, New Jersey back in 1980. Over the years, while focusing primarily on the design and creative communities, I've come to understand and believe wholeheartedly that powerful, effective, and impactful print communication always lives at the intersection of great design, appropriate materials, and thoughtfully curated execution.

Making beautiful work is a journey, from concept to idea to desired result, Tocci Made is here to help you find your way and create work that is not only effective but something you can be proud of. Head to toccimade.com and find out how we can help.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:26:23] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome back to Podcasts from the Printerverse, more specifically, the Make it with Print Podcast with David Drucker and Noel Tocci, who sound a lot alike. It's not you guys listening out there. It's them. Trust me.

The last thing on my mission and I actually misspoke before the mid-roll, the commercial. This is the last thing on my list and then we're going to add an item from each David and Noel at the end for their missions for print this year. But my last mission is represent. What represent means is at all times, be your authentic self. Make authentic offerings. You cannot be everything to everybody. If you've never worked with a bank before, now – the bank doesn't want to work

with someone who's just pretending that they can, "Oh, of course, we can do that," and then you can't do it.

There are specific needs that certain people out there have. For example, I didn't even realize how complicated it was to serve chains of retail stores. Let's just use a 7-Eleven as an example. My God, it is not the printing. It is the shipping, the distribution, the inventory management. This is not something that a regular person on the street, "Hey, what do you got coming up 7-Eleven?" Can make those phone calls.

Represent your best selves, the best work that you do, and go after the customers that will help you with everything else on the list once you have helped them in the manner that is your best way of helping them. David?

[0:28:24] DD: Okay. I'm not focusing on any industry. I'm focusing on creativeness. I'm focusing on my experiences and what I can bring to the table. The best tool for me – and I've done over the course of 40 years so many different types of marketing campaigns and very limited campaigns and send out 20 newsletters and follow up with those people then send out 20 more, and so on and so forth. But I've found, for me, what works best in finding the work that I want to do is LinkedIn and other social media, but mainly in LinkedIn. Because I can put a piece up on LinkedIn, I can explain its production values.

In that, my audiences will say to themselves, "I see myself in this production." When it comes back and I have seen it in the last three years, come back, maybe I posted something in the beginning of the pandemic, and somebody will come back and say, "I saw that post and I want to do something similar to it." I'm relying on that. Once again, the KISS theory. I don't want to get out of that. I don't want to spread myself too thin in doing a lot of different marketing campaigns.

Prior to, I did a lot of different marketing campaigns. I was all over the place and now I leave it to networking and I leave it to what I do on simple social media. It does come back. It does establish who you are, but it also gives you a referral. If I see somebody has liked, I go to their site, I see who we might have in common and it's a web. You can just keep going through it. It's simplistic on that. That also goes back to number two is reignite.

It's all of these that you have mentioned are all related to each other. It's like, a drummer once said, it's like doing a dance. You get all that creativeness and you put it out there, then it comes back. I'm not looking for the kill and I never was looking for the kill. I'm looking for satisfaction and that's what I've gotten from LinkedIn.

[0:30:53] DC: Before we go to Noel, I just want to ask you a follow-up question. You've set the stage immaculately, and the fact that you let your work speak for yourself, you're representing yourself by posting out there, so people understand what you do or what you're capable of doing, or at least to ask you the question. My question to you in this represent is, do you ever say to someone who comes to you, "You know what? I'm not the right person for this, but I might know somebody," or "I'm sorry, I can't help you."

[0:31:27] DD: All the time. There are certain productions that are, let's say, it's a coaster. It could be bought on the internet for 30 cents a unit. I will then even help them to find a vendor. If it's something that is more intricate where the coaster needs die cutting or some embellishment, then I will take it and say, "You don't want to go elsewhere. You want to remain here because we're going to see it through."

I also have a great, great referral source for myself and that's been Noel. He and I have been going back and forth, referring vendors to us that I think have made a tremendous difference with us personally. But what a difference that makes to our client base now to then be able to go in, you go into a vendor and you're blown away by what they do, because they're dealing with a very certain community. Now, you see that you're capable of taking a hold of that and representing that as well. Well, hey, that just very clearly opened up a new door for him, for me, for our clients.

[0:32:48] DC: One of my favorite things is when Printerverse partnerships come out of meetings on panels and speaking with each other in this podcast. That makes me so happy that you guys are working together behind the scenes. Noel, represent.

[0:33:05] NT: Yeah. It's been great. That's my nod, too. I find it's really interesting because David and I do things very much the same, but in very different worlds in a lot of ways. It's good

to, just like, you want your customer to trust you. Our business has a couple of unscrupulous characters in it from time to time, I'd say. But it's nice to have people that you can trust, or you can send somewhere. I know the stuff that David does and vice versa. I mean, and it's been happening a lot and it's really been beneficial, as far as the clients and business and keeping it going and that. Exactly what David said, except I'm really into the process, right?

I like to explain the process over and over, and how we work within that process, and what processes we recommend from a concept, or an idea, all the way to the desired result and everything along that journey. I try to show that even when I comment, LinkedIn is great and his Instagram has been great for us. Also, when people comment on pros, my own work, or someone else's work, I like to jump in and talk about that process. It's interesting who responds to it.

When I'm looking for people that understand, or that is important to them as well, right? Because that's really the difference between something going well and something not going well, right? I mean, I talk about it all the time. Everybody does, "Oh, we're going to do a postmortem. We're going to do a postmortem." Hello, the patient's dead. Maybe we should talk about stuff before it dies. I don't have any more room in my garage. That's what I joke about. Someone says, "I hope you do a good job." I'll go, "Oh, this will come out good. I have no room for this to fit in my garage, so it's getting done right." You know what I mean? Why not beforehand?

All of those tools David talked about, particularly LinkedIn, because you can look at it exactly like he said. I love to see it's a friend of a friend. I get referred all the time. The best compliment I can get, I've had a couple in the last month, beautiful projects. I'm like, "Where did you come from?" They actually go, "I'm not sure. I heard your name a couple of places and I have this problem and they told somebody about a problem and they go, just deal with this guy." Not, this is what he's going to do. That is where we want to live, right?

I think, like David said, in getting involved and seeing where those people come from and who they know and the work they do, you can very quickly ascertain, this would be great. We'd be great for each other if they don't already have somebody good. That's the other thing. I don't want to take somebody and I know about everybody, right? I don't want to go, "Oh." Then I see,

because maybe they give credit to who they're working with. Unless, they come and say, "I need help. I'm done with that." I don't want to. Why would I want to do that, go take someone's work? Because that's wrong.

It's not only wrong because you're taking somebody, but if they're doing a good job, it's so hard to get things right in this business. If someone's pleasing you, why would you go date somebody else, right? If you break up? Let's have coffee.

[0:36:11] DC: No, I agree. The reason why both of you get so many referrals is because you're your authentic self, and people know what they're referring. The referrer also has some responsibility in the referral. When I refer people, I am very clear to the person who asked me, whether or not I've ever worked with these people or not. I will say to them, if I haven't, "That I have not worked with them, but everything you're asking me, I've been told they can do."

I ask every single person to follow up with me and make sure that it worked out that, they were treated correctly, that there weren't any problems, because I do not want to be the, "Oh, don't ask her. The last five people she referred me to didn't work out." I'm the self-proclaimed intergalactic ambassador to the printerverse, so that wouldn't be such a great lane to be in for my reputation at management. Noel, I think I know the answer to this, but just in case, do you ever turn away customers just because their work wouldn't be authentic to you?

[0:37:26] NT: How did you know to ask that question? I have an issue. I like to help people. I like to, you know, you hire me, we figure the money out, and I roll up my sleeves. It's a joke. I'll come paint your living room. I'll cut your grass. I'll keep going. But I don't belong doing, especially at this advanced age and point in my career, I need to turn things away. There's a way to do it.

It happened, I have somebody, like a junior partner, someone who's worked with me for a long time, knows me really well. I got a really great reference. It was a huge job, but I don't know that it was a good fit for us. She said to me, "Noel, you want me to handle this? This isn't going to take advantage of all your skills. It's going to take you hours and hours and hours to figure out. It's probably not a fit. It's going to come down to money. It's going to end up somewhere else." I

said, “You know what? You're right.” I've made a conscious effort this year to do that, because I'm a big guy about opportunity costs, right?

If I went down that rabbit hole, spent 72 hours figuring this out, you're talking about 5,000 to 10,000 case-bound books, several hundred pages, multiple types, but it's really kind of, forgive the phrase, more slap and go. It'll be done excellently by somebody who does that all day long. You don't need a lot of advice. It is what it is. What's the opportunity cost of not doing that? It's spending time where someone goes, “Listen, I got a couple of months. I need help.” We got to talk about substrates. We got to – you help the design, we're going to work on a – That's where we belong.

Yes, I have started to do that. I go, “No, who would turn work away?” But then, I do it and I feel so good. Because otherwise, I wake up at night going, “I got to do that. I got to do.” No, why do I?

[0:39:06] DC: Yeah. I actually turned down two engagements in Europe already this year, because the amount of time, the travel time, just the general situation with the airlines. You just know you never know if you're going to get there, or if your bag is going to get there anymore. I'm like, “You know what? I'm going to focus on other things this year,” and saying no is not such a bad thing, as long as you have income coming in in other places that you can handle it. David, what do you want to add for the mission of 2024 from your perspective?

[0:39:47] DD: Yeah, this is a good one. It's creating your own luck. Especially in sales and getting your name out. It's the little things that you do that will help to expand you. You say to yourself, “Oh, that guy's so lucky. Look what he does. Look what she does. It's so beautiful. Oh, yeah, they're doing a lot of speaking engagements.”

Well, what it really comes down to is that you have to put it out there. When you put it out there in little dribs and drabs, or let people know what your intentions are, then it becomes, I'm going to say, I think like Deepak Chopra, you become one with the universe and your message gets out there, with what he calls natural law. I do that a little bit every night, is I just try to dig in a little deeper and make my little list and see if I can follow through the next day if time allows me to do. It does. Maybe not right away, but it does in time.

You're going to be doing one marketing campaign in a direction and something is going to come from a different direction that you did four months ago. Well, if you didn't do that, you wouldn't have that now. What you're doing now is going to help you in the future. It's a matter of just keeping true to yourself. Not to listen to what everybody else is saying, the good or the bad. Just be true and be yourself, and you will benefit from that.

[MESSAGE]

[0:41:24] 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 28th through June 7th 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 Teuckmantel. drupa dna offers 11 days of sessions, interviews, panels, co-located events, global networking, and of course, a little fun awaits. Visit drupa.com and get your ticket to the future of your business today. Links in the show notes. drupa long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:42:30] DC: When I find myself saying, why is this so difficult? Why is this so difficult? I've stopped looking at why it's so difficult as in, let's blame the other person on the other end of this thing that I think is making it difficult, right? When and then I say, is this the thing I should actually be focusing on? Or, am I trying to put a – just make it work for whatever reason? That's why it's so difficult. When things aren't like that, when it's smooth sailing, when I send a proposal and I get a “hell, yes,” right after. I don't have to make a meeting to make a meeting, to make a proposal, to write a proposal, then I know that these are the right partners for me.

This year, I've actually pulled back on even who I'm reaching out to. Looking at the time suck that has been going on for the last five years and saying, why am I still – I'm not on the path of least resistance. I haven't gotten to a point where anybody over there who I may or may not

know anymore, there's a lot of that going on. I don't want to convince anybody of the value anymore. The value is there and the right people see it. I agree with you. Noel?

[0:43:47] NT: I want to take it up a notch, next level. I always try to take that 30,000-foot view. I'm thinking about the 100,000-foot view. Start to see the curvature of the earth, right? You can see further. I like to say, so I can predict to prevent. I think about what stumbles I've had. Yeah, you can write that down. I'm going to put it on a T-shirt. Predict to prevent, right? Because everything that happens –

[0:44:15] DC: Great presentation name. Just saying. You should go on the road with that one.

[0:44:19] NT: I had some bumps this year and I've been thinking hard. I try to ignore that, but you have to look back and I go, “How did I get there?” It happened so easily. But I could have predicted what was going to happen. By seeing further ahead this year and remembering, I'm one of those guys who learns by sticking my hand in the flame, right? Well, if it's bad enough that you burn your finger, keep that band-aid on. Every time you go to cook, just look at your band-aid, right? I'm like that. I think you can see further.

I spend so much time going, “Oh, yeah. You've got to see ahead.” We do this so that doesn't happen. Or still make mistakes. Get further up, or find a way to see more. Or sometimes it's not seeing. I see everything that's going to happen and don't do anything about it, right? If you drive and then this isn't literal, but it's like, driving and you go, “I don't understand why I crashed. Oh, yeah, I forgot to not text while I drive.” You know it, but you don't do it. Practice. That predict to prevent is something – That's this year's motto. We'll see how we do it.

[0:45:20] DC: I love it. I would love if we could do a podcast on that next time. I think that's a great topic.

[0:45:24] NT: It applies to anything.

[0:45:25] DC: Yeah. As a production manager in advertising with that experience and listening to what you just said, I completely agree with you. Obviously, saying no is not a reason. You can't really say no. You can say, “Well, we can totally do it, but this is how we can do it.” Then let them say yes or no. But you don't just go, “No, we're not doing that,” because that doesn't fly.

But I would have at least three or four options, because if they said, no, I had to have another one and you had to have another one and you had to have another one, all based on if they say yes to this, what is the next obstacle that we're going to face? Making sure that you had a way around all of those things before you even presented the next option.

Otherwise, you end up screwing yourself in the end, because you get to a point where you can't do it, or you can't – you have to change what you're doing, or worse. Now, it costs more money, because you forgot to include postage on that envelope size that you've changed to. I mean, it could turn into a complete nightmare. Experience is the best teacher. I have PTSD over Swatek paper, and I mention it all the time. It's the only time I ever yelled, "Stop the presses!" and I still blame the printer for it, which we can talk about next time.

But now I know, do not use that type of paper if you need something to be color critical, because it's going to suck all the ink in and it's never going to let it go. I'm not saying you need to go through that experience, but once you have that experience, you had better call upon it and make sure at least the other person understands that this is a possibility that could happen. Because quite frankly, with a different design, Swatek would have worked perfectly. But showing the Caribbean water, sea, no. That's not what you – you don't want the ink sucked into paper on that. Any final words of encouragement, wisdom for 2024, David?

[0:47:40] DD: Ah. First, I think this is a great podcast. It had great flow to it and I'm really happy. I'm looking forward to the next one already. Let's get that together for everybody.

[0:47:50] DC: David's a fan of his own podcast, everybody.

[0:47:52] DD: That's right. That's right. I'm a fan of this conversation. That I can imagine, I listen to these as soon as they come out and you forget. You forget statements that you've made. Statements Noel made. Statements that you've made, and it's rekindling. Then I've listened to it a second time or a third time. I hope the audience out there is hearing the same thing because a little bit of inspiration goes a long way. That is my goal for 2024, is the more I can inspire people, the better my productions are going to be because I'm going to see that come back to me.

[0:48:38] DC: Excellent. Noel?

[0:48:39] NT: Yeah. I'm all about inspiration, but I'm also all about trying to take more control and staying in my lane and doing the things that really inspire me more and fulfill me more and give me a little less agita, right? Listen, that's going to happen. We get a stomach ache sometimes, right? That's the way it is. It doesn't have to be self-imposed. I'm that guy sometimes, right? I'll leave you with this. I think some of us are this way. The guy is standing in a room and he just keeps banging his head off the wall. The guy walks in and goes, "Why are you doing that?" The guy says, "I feel so good when I stop." Sometimes I think that's me. Sometimes I need to know, well, it's a hard wall and my head's going to probably – that's not a good idea, and move on.

It sounds stupid and elementary, but yeah, that's really my thing is to try to not only make the work better but make the experience better. Because if it's better for you, it's better for everybody around you. Just pass the love and I hope we all prosper.

[0:49:44] DC: Excellent. Well, just to circle back for one second, I just want to thank everybody who listens to this podcast and all the podcasts from the Printerverse. Last year alone, there were almost 37,000 downloads of Podcasts from the Printerverse. In total, there were almost 250,000 downloads of the entire series. Listened to in 146 countries, 172 platforms host Podcasts from the Printerverse, we rank now in almost 20 countries. It's just really a success in general, the podcast.

Thank you, everybody out there. Thank you, gentlemen. I agree. This conversation is one of my favorites, because, yes, there is some commodity to it. I'm not going to deny that. But I come from the craft side of things. So, speaking with you guys really does everything that I hoped to do this year. We rewind, we ignite, and represent. Thank you so much. Until next time, everybody, print long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:51:01] 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 broadcast. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

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CMYK Manifesto 2024: Rewind, Reignite, and Represent the Printing Industry: <https://printmediacentr.com/cmyk-manifesto-2024-rewind-reignite-and-represent-the-printing-industry/>

David Drucker on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-drucker-b1b5946/>

Highresolution Printing and Packaging: <https://high-res.com/>

Noel Tocci on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/noeltocci/>

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