

drupa Essentials of Print



We deliver herewith a series a series of articles, from designers, brand owners, printers, converters, journalists and influencers. We look forward to working together with experts, who enrich our drupa Essentials with fresh impulses, sound expertise and remarkable experience. All these articles will allow visitors to understand a world that has changed dramatically since the creation of drupa in 1951 and will continue to evolve. Different observations and perceptions of an industry seeking innovation in a fast-changing world. Give free rein to your instinct under the adage: "to each his own drupa".

We are happy to provide you with this expert article and we would be pleased if you publish it.

Be inspired! _____

Good reading.

Sabine Geldermann & Team

Hadar Peled Vaissman: The most exciting design tool ever

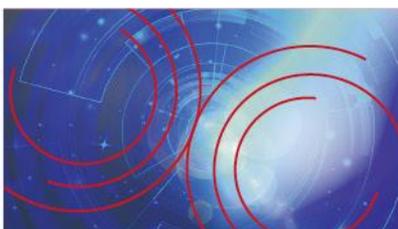


VITA

Hadar Peled Vaissman

Hadar Vaissman Peled is an independent international Art Director who helps brands to improve their communication mainly through customisation, personalisation and individualisation. She believes that these will elevate a company's relevance in a digital world.

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no. 1 for printing
technologies



Hadar Peled Vaissman: The most exciting design tool ever

I believe that the design community, to which I belong, should embrace digital print as their new design tool. And I also expect companies will address this community, or target audience, by catering to their needs with tools to actually make it happen.

As an art director looking at the world through a creative lens, print for me has always been a means to an end. I've always loved print as such, but I was ambivalent about it as I felt I had to compromise my creative ideas to get the best printed results. Whether this was due to colour or to production constraints, it was a limiting factor.

Over the last decade, however, I've had the privilege of managing the creative work done by HP Indigo and became intimately acquainted with digital print. I've fallen head over heels in love with it! Instead of limiting my work, it has actually enabled me to reach new heights of creativity and to stretch the limits of my imagination. I have discovered that digital print is the best, newest, most exciting design tool there is. It is my new paint brush, my colour pallet and my tool box.

The air-brush of today and tomorrow

The development of digital print is reminiscent of the advent of the modern air-brush: suddenly there was a new technology for releasing ink onto paper. It was easy to learn and use and it quickly became popular. With this new tool a whole new art form started, taking photo-realism and photo-retouching to a completely new level. Digital printing can do just that, too, and be the new air-brush for the graphic-design community; an exciting new chapter that easily expands design capabilities.

As designers, customers have also changed, and so have their marketing and branding requirements. This affects what is required from us – basically it changes our own product. In the past, branding was based on consistency with the psychological rational being that familiarity will lead to brand recognition, brand preference, buying and loyalty. When my own generation, so-called generation X, walked into a supermarket and saw the myriad brand options on-shelf, our hands would somehow instinctively reach for the one which was familiar, which looked the same as it always had been, reminding us of home, of safety and of predictability.

Then the millennials came along, who were brought up to expect personal service. Safety or predictability was less of an issue, familiarity was nothing to them – on the contrary, it was 'boring'. Millennials don't see themselves as 'part of a crowd' – they prefer to be seen as 'one of a kind'. They expect brand-owners to treat them as individuals and target their products specifically to themselves. Sustainability also became an issue and altogether, mass production and traditional advertising were not cutting it. As a response, marketing departments and advertising agencies started developing more targeted campaigns with

'activation' tactics to reach and appeal to these new consumers but still, overall, the personal touch was mostly missing. Millennials, who grew up with the internet, are certainly more used to sharing their personal data in exchange for content. They are happy to participate and click if this means the brand will acknowledge them personally. They expect the brands to use this data and get the product right.

Now comes generation Z, which is even more internet savvy in every possible way. To them the technology comes as naturally as the air they breathe, it's taken for granted. According to a recent report on customer trust trends from Salesforce "although a slim majority of consumers are still wary of companies' intentions when it comes to handing over personal data, Gen Z and millennials are more game to take that risk — as long as they are getting something in return".

So, how do we offer today's customers the right product in today's consumer market? The ultimate answer to this question is: with digital print! Digital print allows us to control and change the data on a print product, using information the consumer has given us to make it the most relevant product possible for them.

Mind the gap

At the moment there is a gap between the possibility or idea and what the design world is actually doing. In most cases, designers, being unaware of the potential of digital, still design 'for any print technology', being wary of color-limitations and definitely not using the digital tools potentially available to them for an improved brand experience. The ability to close this gap lies in the hands of the print-vendor (or print service provider). Proactive and agile printing firms can help their customers to achieve huge marketing success by offering them such design tools.

I once worked with a team on the development of such tools and had the honor of collaborating with big international brands who used these tools to deliver astonishing, impactful campaigns where digital print enabled the product itself to become the media. The first campaign was a collaboration with Diet Coke in Israel:

2 million different Diet Coke bottles

Coca Cola in Israel was looking to increase their Diet Coke sales and the brand manager, an innovative young millennial, was seeking something new, something different. Having experienced the power of digital print with the 'Share a Coke' campaign in summer 2014, a campaign which broke the boundaries of personalised mass-production, she realized that the staggering results of the campaign pointed to an obvious customer need or desire.

She then reached out to our marketing team and her brief to us was this: “We need 2 million bottles, every single one different from the other – doesn’t matter how. Just keep the logo and ingredients as they are. Everything must be on-shelf in 2 months”.

With a combined effort between R&D and design teams, we came up with ‘HP Smartstream Mosaic,’ an algorithm which manipulates the design result. It’s a plug-in for Adobe CC and is very easy to use. The result is one that manual labor could never achieve. How does the algorithm work? Well, in short, the designer supplies the ‘seed pattern’ and the algorithm manipulates it into different results each time a page is printed. Never repeating, always changing. The design work took 2 weeks, with 23 seed patterns created to then achieve 2 million different individual designs. Digital print allowed a fast turnaround and the product was on the shelf on time.

Save the elephants

A second such campaign example and a personal favorite of mine used the same algorithm and digital print technology to support an even bigger goal, namely ‘cause-driven marketing’.

“Millennials and Generation Z are continuously changing the way consumer experiences are being created. Cause-driven marketing plays a large role in this change, and brands and marketers should find a cause to stand for to impact these generations.” This has been concluded by many marketing researches, and Amarula, a liquor brand from South Africa embodies this by supporting the ‘save

the elephants’ campaign. Elephants are being relentlessly poached for their ivory and the Amarula brand has from the start been supporting the cause to save them – symbolised by the elephant on its label.

Using HP Smartstream mosaic, Amarula put 400,000 different bottles on-shelf, each with a differently designed elephant that represents a living one. Two seed patterns were designed and the rest was handled by the digital press and software. For every bottle purchased, Amarula donated money to a foundation they partnered with. Digital print enabled this emotional, big-issue message to get across on-shelf as every bottle could be as unique as every real elephant. Just as with Diet Coke, the message from the brand to today’s younger generation was carried on the product and was supported by a 360° campaign which drove consumer engagement and brand equity through the roof.

So, to re-cap my arguments – today’s consumer market thrives more and more on personalised, or individualised, brand communications; however, many brands are still confused by this fundamental consumer change and by how it affects their supply-chain; printers themselves hold the key to new digital print capabilities but don’t actually participate in marketing strategy talks with brands or their designers – and so the gap remains! The design-community has a real opportunity to unleash digital as their new ‘air-brush’ to create beautiful, personalised multi-channel campaigns and to enable a new kind of marketing. At drupa 2021 you will witness a world of almost endless possibilities. Visit drupa, get in touch and embrace the future!