



EVENT SUMMARY FROM HERBERT FORKER

The European printing ink industry met April 26 to 27, 2018 in Hamburg, Germany, to discuss the most critical issues of the sector and the latest trends in both industry and politics. Special emphasis was devoted to the digital transformation currently underway in business and the impact it has had on the printing ink industry. Participants were also pleased to learn the downward trend in sales has slowed compared to the previous year.

To set the stage, I kicked off the conference with a political overview. It has been a turbulent year in terms of elections, countries moving away from democratic principles and with Brexit planning to move the UK away from the EU. Nevertheless, the European industry is in a state of dynamic development and, in particular, flexible packaging is experiencing steady market growth. Although the current raw material market is volatile with rising costs, the volumes continue to remain robust.

Managing Director, Dr. Martin Kanert, informed us on matters that have kept our association busy in 2017. These were external developments such as the EU's Circular Economy, printing ink for cosmetics and food contact materials, operational safety and risk assessments, as well as hazardous mixtures and substances. The Photoinitiator "369" situation was discussed in the context of the EuPIA Exclusion Policy. In addition, EuPIA has worked on a lean, new logo which was presented in Hamburg. As a special service, EuPIA introduced a dedicated "conference app" to allow participants to stay connected throughout the conference and experience the theme of the event -- digitalization.

Whereas we already use new digital tools to communicate, the question going forward is: How do we prepare our businesses for the digital transformation that increasingly disrupts industry? Our distinguished panel of guest speakers discussed upcoming trends, innovative solutions and possible new ways forward.

Matthias Giebel, Berndt+Partner, presented the global EuPIA survey on digitalization 2018. The survey identified packaging converters are still in the starting stages of digitalization. While time and strategy are no longer issues, the lack of in-house expertise is the greatest problem facing us today. Risks aside, 40 percent of the 155 respondents understand digitalization as a big opportunity.

Jan De Roeck from ESKO challenged us to examine: How "digital" are our product go-to-market processes? To reduce project time and stay competitive in the digital age, full workflow automation and e-connectivity in workflows is of critical importance.



The latest developments from the new world were shared by Tracy Huang, Shanghai Flamesun, via livestream video from Shanghai. As the largest e-commerce market in the world, China is setting trends for global retailing with one third of the Chinese GDP already digitalized and more expected. Digitalization has opened a new era of consumption which in China is based on trust in digital payments, innovative social commerce models and a mobile-first consumer behaviour. As a result, digital printing will likely have a profound impact on our industry.

As the Wipak Group gears up for this new era of consumption. Stefan Gutheil reported that digitalization for converters translates into “Interactive Packaging – Smart Shopping” where QR codes on products create a link from advertisement directly to home delivery.

Digitalization is equally important for Bayer Consumer Health. Guido Schmitz explained that digitalization facilitates the information exchange with consumers which feeds into their approach of a holistic product design. In the future, packaging will likely contain digitally-adapted product information and advertisement.

We hope the EuPIA 2018 annual conference provided attendees with valuable insight into where the world and our business is moving.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Forker, CEO Siegwerk
Host of the EuPIA 2018 Annual Conference