

Inkjet as Change Agent for the Printing Industry: A Vision of Digital Printwork

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The printing industry is changing faces. Printers are under pressure to become more efficient, more productive, and more responsive. They need to create additional value and complement their businesses with other types of services. The results of this are consolidation and globalization. This drives standardisation and specialisation, tending to favor big, consolidated printing plant investments. But it also tends to reduce the gap between the printer and the end-user, hence shorter runs, print-on-demand, more versioning, customization, and printing closer to distribution sites. Now that "prepress" is a vanishing profession, we will also see "printing" disappearing as an art of its own: printing will become just a particular step in the complete converting, finishing, or fulfillment process.

Inkjet printing is an excellent tool for this conversion. Better than any other digital printing technology, it allows high-quality cost-effective printing on nearly any substrate, right where the customer wants it to be printed and in quantities just enough for his current use. While inkjet printing today mostly deals with traditional screen, flexo, or variable data applications, we will see the competition with offset growing and we may expect inkjet presses to take over a reasonable amount of all printed volume.

The speaker will show how major companies take part in this revolution and are committed to become full-fledged system suppliers, offering comprehensive solutions: equipment, consumables, workflow software and

customer service. The primary focus is large-format roll-to-roll and flat-bed, packaging and labeling, decoration, transactional printing and direct marketing applications with the introduction of even faster and more powerful industrial presses in the near future.

Biography

Jan Van Daele is senior vice-president within Agfa's Graphic Systems Business group, Agfa-Gevaert (Belgium) and heads the Inkjet Printing Solutions Business Unit.

After receiving a master's degree in electronic engineering and a PhD in digital image processing from the Catholic University of Leuven, (KULeuven). Van Daele began working at Agfa-Gevaert in 1980 as project leader and later team leader of different development projects for graphic arts and medical imaging devices. In 1989 he became R&D manager for Agfa's medical equipment business unit. From 1993-2001 he worked at Xeikon as SVP R&D and later, in addition, as managing director of Xeikon-Nipson France.

In 2001, he returned to Agfa, first as an executive consultant to outline future strategy of Agfa's Graphic Systems Business Group, later taking the operational responsibility as SVP of all "upstream" marketing and CTP equipment technology, finally moving into his current position.