

# Digital Printing Association DIPA founds Academy

by Herbert Kindermann\*

In addition to the familiar business models with analogue printing solutions, digital printing enables companies in the printing industry to respond to megatrends such as individualization, neo-ecology, urbanization and others. With its undeniable advantages and progressive diffusion, it enables new value propositions and business models. To maximize the potential of digital printing, education is one of the key factors. This will be provided by the newly founded DIPA Academy which will educate the skilled workforce and specialists for digital printers.

In a time of ongoing continuous change, the printing industry is facing numerous challenges:

- increasing customer segmentation due to expected individualization demands by consumers,
- consumers want to be involved in the design of their products, which leads to increasing production complexity,
- the never-ending stream of innovations (in production, logistics, software, etc.),
- increasing legislative and consumer demands for environmental protection and sustainability,
- increased time-to-market and innovation demands to stay competitive,
- shortage of experts and trained staff, attracting talent for the printing industry, especially for graduates starting their careers.

To answer these trends DIPA (Digital Printing Association) was founded and introduced at the trade fair LIGNA 2019. DIPA is an industry association including as members the whole chain of digital printing from the machinery manufacturer to the user. It takes a holistic view of the individual design process and wants to make digital printing accessible to as many users as possible as an innovative process. DIPA sees itself as a "common future workshop" for topics such as consulting, knowledge transfer and standardization or certification.

With the above-mentioned goal in mind, the DIPA Academy is being created. At the beginning the DIPA Academy will focus on digital decor printing education. In the second year of operation the content and the trainings will be expanded to other printing industry segments as packaging, textiles and wallpaper.

The academy will support the development of experts in digital decor printing, which will gain skills in digital decor printing technologies and processes, colour management and inks, post-production processes, quality assurance and environmental and sustainability matters. The whole value chain will be covered. Courses are also intended to address current topics such as digital transformation, value proposition design, business model innovation, design thinking, change management and agile methods. Practical hands-on sessions will ensure that theoretical knowledge will be solidified and ultimately create results in everyday life.

Other important aspects of the courses will include current market data and trends, and news from research and development labs as well as showcasing innovative and successful applications displaying that digital surface decoration has reached consumers and become a reality.

All training content will be provided in modules, which will be delivered to students in on-site university and online sessions or a mix of the two (hybrid). This will minimize travel costs and expose students to the latest video conferencing and collaboration tools, further enhancing their skillset.

DIPA Academy and Carinthia University of Applied Sciences in Villach, Austria will cooperate ensuring certified quality standards. All training participants will be extraordinary students of the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences for the training period and can obtain ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) Points. ECTS points are awarded

for successfully completed training courses and can be used for later studies at a European university.

The first two courses are scheduled for spring 2023. The first course will be tailored to employees of the decorative printing industry. Typical participants' professions would include designers, pre-press, print, production and quality assurance operators. This course will run over a period of three months and include 160 hours of training, of which three full days will be practical hands-on training.

A second course will be tailored to managers and decision makers working in related industries. It will provide in a 28-hour intensive course a comprehensive knowledge of digital surface decoration including market data, trends and latest state-of-the-art methodologies. For both courses a more detailed curriculum will be provided in January 2023.

To kick off the Academy it will focus in the beginning on digital decor printing. A step-by-step expansion of courses is planned for other industries such as packaging, textiles, and wallpaper, based on market demands identified in the second year of operation. Training of management in leadership in digital business transformation will complete the education programme. From the third year on, the Academy will also provide courses at higher levels, based on the demand from the market.

(For further information, contact DIPA at [direction@dipa-surface.com](mailto:direction@dipa-surface.com))

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