

## PRODUCT CUSTOMISATION AND MATERIAL SUSTAINABILITY: PRINTING 4.0 ANTICIPATES NEW CONSUMPTION TRENDS

*The printing sector, with a supply chain worth over 24 billion euro in Italy, is undergoing a profound evolution and in the Internet Age it has confirmed its fundamental role in creating durable bonds between products and consumers.*

*Milan, 28 March 2019* - Consumers are changing. They are ever more in search of experiences to be posted on social media and want to establish emotional relationships even with the products they buy.

In this context, packaging is exploring new solutions to become more interactive than ever. By means of a code printed on the package, for instance, energy bars can send a workout playlist to a smartphone, the label on a beer bottle can activate a digital sobriety test, medicines can have a connected system printed on the blister to communicate any problems directly via the web to the manufacturer.

The principal supporter of this progress is Printing 4.0, the evolution that is changing one of the most ancient industries. Within the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which is deeply changing industrial processes and consumption habits by exploiting the possibilities offered by 5G, Artificial Intelligence and Industry 4.0, Gutenberg's 15th Century invention is becoming the driver of innovation. It is estimated that in the world there are over 900 start-ups dedicated to printing, which last year earned about 1 billion dollars.

The innovative and revolutionary potentials of the industry, with a supply chain worth over 24 billion euro in Italy (source: Acimga and Argi), were the subject of the **Print4All Conference** organised at Fiera Milano on March 21 and 22 ahead of **Print4All**, the event dedicated to the sector that will return to **Fiera Milano from May 4 to 7, 2021**.

Printing is an active partner in gaining new consumers who are no longer content with having what others have and ask to play an active part in creating the products that they buy. According to recent research, **more than 50% of consumers is interested in purchasing made-to-measure products and 1 out of 5 would be willing to pay 20% more for custom products**. It is estimated that the value of the market for bespoke products will reach **31 billion dollars** in 2021, which is a 55% increase on 2016 (source: Deloitte Consumer Review 2015).

It is precisely in *mass customisation* that brands have found the solution to be competitive and meet the needs of the Millennials, who have escaped market surveys for years, and those of the mysterious Gen Z, that is rapidly replacing them.

So, personalisation is one of the main guidelines of today's marketing strategies to satisfy customers because it can make even serial products unique, often precisely by using increasingly evolved printing techniques.

But there is more. The ever-higher focus of consumers on environmental issues and the stringent national and European regulations on packaging materials – including paper, plastic, glass and wood – increases the propensity for Circular Economy choices.

Technologies able to reduce the size and weight of packaging and the use of water-based inks and eco-friendly glues made of starch increases the percentage of packaging materials which can be recycled, in some cases, such as paper and corrugated cardboard, even in excess of 80%. It ensures an ever-smaller environmental impact, with the guarantee of being able to have safe products even in the e-commerce age which has strongly boosted the need for secondary packaging (the boxes of couriers which are delivered to our homes from e-shops of all kinds).

Once again, printing is in the middle of the evolution and is acting as guarantor in terms of low-impact technical solutions and communication strategies in which it is seen as the main vehicle of the "green" message conveyed by the product.

### **PRINTING INNOVATION ON THE WAY TO 2021**

The conference was the first step in the approach to the second edition of **Print4All**, the international platform for business and contents at the service of all the players of the printing supply chain, which will be held at **Fiera Milano from May 4 to 7, 2021**.

The show will provide a 360° view of printing, focusing on the three main vertical directives around which supply revolves, as well as the main fields of application: **printing & communication; converting, package printing, labelling and industrial printing**.

A project with a **growing international vocation** that is both a **showcase for new products, a business networking opportunity**, but also a real **training academy and laboratory for innovation and content**.

In this way, **Print4All** will be able to offer all operators with a vested interest in printing – manufacturing industry brand owners, creative minds, printers, processing firms, component developers, but also schools and educational institutions – an innovative vision of the current market and of future trends, scenarios and developments.

With a packed calendar of conferences and activities, **Print4All 2021** will be the opportunity to focus on new technologies and will become an incubator of innovative ideas that can bring new lifeblood to a dynamic market, creating a specialist dialogue that will allow operators to grow and become increasingly competitive.

Print4All is part of **The Innovation Alliance** and will run alongside IPACK-IMA, MEAT-TECH, PLAST and INTRALOGISTICA ITALIA, giving rise to the largest European event dedicated to instrumental mechanics and one that in 2018 brought more than 150,000 operators to Milan from all over the world. The numbers of the next edition are confirmed to be big: five trade fairs across 17 halls, covering nearly the entire surface of the Fiera Milano Rho district, to propose a sort of ideal industrial line.

The show will bring together the best manufacturing machines, a wide array of applications ranging from rubber and plastic processing to food processing technologies, packaging for the food and non-food sectors, customised graphics and finished product storage and handling. Machines which manage different stages of the industrial manufacturing process brought together by a very high level of innovation and major investments in research and development, especially in light of the huge changes which are investing all sectors.

#### **Fiera Milano Press Office**

Rosy Mazzanti - Mariagrazia Scoppio  
rosy.mazzanti@fieramilano.it, mariagrazia.scoppio@fieramilano.it  
tel. +39 02 4997.6214

*Print4All is a project developed by ACIMGA and ARG1, the two associations that represent, respectively, those Italian and international manufacturers of machinery for printing and processing, and 4IT Group, a company that has observed the Graphics and Communication Industry markets for more than ten years. The event is organised by Fiera Milano, Italian leader in the organisation of trade fairs.*