



FIERA MILANO

PRINT4ALL

More than the sum of the parts.

**Press Office
Fiera Milano**

Rosy Mazzanti
rosy.mazzanti@fieramilano.it

Mariagrazia Scoppio
+39 024997.6214
Mariagrazia.scoppio@fieramilano.it

Fiera Milano S.p.A.
+39 02.4997.7134
info@fieramilano.it
fieramilano.it

Press office

ROAD TO PRINT4ALL: FROM THE FUTURE FACTORY A DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

Digitisation, sustainability, innovation, people: these are the core values of the future industry on which the various representatives of the supply chain have agreed and that will be the basis of Print4All's exhibition and training programme, from 3 to 6 May 2022 at Fiera Milano

Milan, 11 October 2021 - The journey towards **Print4All 2022**, the event to be held at Fiera Milano **from 3 to 6 May**, continues, marked by numerous meetings and training events organised by Acimga and Argi, the two promoter associations of the event. Future Factory 2021, the annual event organised by Acimga, was held on 15 and 16 September to bring together all the stakeholders in the printing supply chain, together with experts in economics, trends and regulations, to initiate an open discussion on the potential and new trends that the market is called upon to pursue.

The two-day "The Future at human service" event, **attended by more than 150 operators in the auditorium and 700 connected via streaming**, turned the spotlight on sustainability and the role of people in the world of printing, highlighting sensitivity, needs and potential, which will then be the focus of the **Print4All 2022** exhibition and training programme.

THE SCENARIO: TOWARDS NEW ECONOMIES

The change under way, indirectly accelerated by the pandemic, must be tackled by all supply chain stakeholders, by focusing on values - sustainability and people - that consumers now consider decisive in the purchasing process.

This development must be monitored and managed with a new collaborative logic and continuous dialogue. An example of this "open" approach is the collaboration between Acimga and VDMA, the two associations that represent manufacturers from Italy and Germany - the expression of manufacturing excellence. The two associations' willingness to cooperate has led to the creation of a round table and an **export deal** to guide manufacturers, associations and service providers in the two markets towards a single approach to recovery.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND THE ITALIAN PATH TO INNOVATION

In less than five years, **digitisation will have a major impact on the way we do business and manufacture**, by replacing routine tasks and enhancing human intelligence and inventiveness. With the development of Industry 4.0, we will grow from the current 35 billion to 75 billion networked devices.

This does not mean that the number of resources employed in the sector will change, but the way they work will have to change. Meeting the challenge of digitisation means training people to **work differently**, because there will no

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longer be any physical or temporal boundaries. Machines will be connected and queryable 24/7; a **tremendous competitive and productive advantage if we are ready for it.**

At this point in time, Italy has the opportunity to become a leading player in the change, but to do so it must adopt its model, which cannot be - because of our cultural characteristics - either the American model (extremely competitive) or the Chinese model (very top-down). **We need an Italian approach to innovation**, oriented towards a broader participation of all supply chain stakeholders in the change we are experiencing.

Today, the concept of a successful company has changed. We have moved from petrochemical giants to large digital platforms, which are the new top companies in our economy. This new way of doing business will affect all sectors, **removing barriers between manufacturers, distributors and consumers.** It is a spiral economy, in which we need to reinterpret relationships.

THE CHALLENGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Together with digitisation, **sustainability is the biggest change to be monitored**, because it impacts all levels of the supply chain, from manufacturer to final consumer. This is an urgent challenge, since **corporate responsibility is increasingly becoming a credibility lever** for stakeholders, especially investors.

Consumers today are also increasingly aware: according to Ipsos data, in 10 years the number of consumers who are aware of sustainability has risen from 7% to 39%, but there is also greater sensitivity and commitment among individuals in the increasing search for “virtuous” practices.

Achieving sustainability goals - which is no longer just about impact on the environment, but extends to the concept of well-being and inclusion of diversity - requires constant collaboration between the various supply chain participants, but also among competitors. The individual's model will have to intersect with the work of others.

The transition will be expensive, which must be taken into account, but it can no longer be postponed and technology can become the best ally for managing resources and processes.

According to Nomisma, **packaging**, the first contact point for consumers looking for sustainable products, could **make the difference** in increasing sustainability levels. In fact, 55% of consumers are looking for products without over-packaging and 41% want them to be made of recyclable material. Moreover, 81% of consumers look at the label for information on how to recycle packaging correctly.

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The world of packaging can and must aim to be increasingly sustainable - in Italy it currently accounts for 211.2 kg/capita, against a European average of 174.6 kg/capita - but at the same time it is what best illustrates the sustainable commitment of our companies, given that the recycling rate in Italy is 66.3%, putting us in third place among the most virtuous countries in Europe (source: Eurostat).

This is a challenge that the sector must take up, considering the **centrality of sustainability in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan**: 69 billion will be allocated for the ecological transition and the word sustainability is mentioned 465 times in the document.

THE ROUND TABLES: THE ROLE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE CHANGE
The visions and efforts of all stakeholders in the printing supply chain were presented in various round tables during the two days of the Future Factory. Producers, brand owners, retailers and printers all took part in a series of discussions.

What is the role of machine **manufacturers** in this complex environment? Technological scenarios are changing the way we do industry. Four key words emerged in the debate: digitisation, sustainability, servitisation and people.

Digitisation is revolutionising the way we do industry, we need a different mental approach, continuous investment in R&D, but also a propensity for open innovation. Connecting machines not only drives efficiency, but also changes the way we manufacture and sell. **Servitisation** and the possibility of hybridisation transform the relationship with the customer into an on-going and reciprocal connection, in which feedback is essential to create new and increasingly customised solutions and where maintenance is part of the basic sales package.

As far as **sustainability** is concerned, no single answer is absolute and valid for everyone, it is a question of balancing production needs, optimising resources and saving energy. This means making the best choices for each individual context, choices where people often make the difference.

This is where the fourth buzzword that emerged comes in: **people**. Because continuous evolution makes interrelationship essential. Nowadays, the answer to progress is supply chain collaboration, a sort of synergy between specialists involving everyone, from those who supply the raw material to those who make and customise the packaging and those who recycle it. This is the only way to transform the industry into a virtuous learning ecosystem, where the advantages of eco-sustainable materials, low-impact technologies, such as water-based technologies, and virtuous practices are combined.

Also, according to **brand owners**, innovation without sustainability cannot exist. However, a myth needs to be dispelled if we are to make informed choices: **the**

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cost of sustainability cannot be passed on to the consumer, who is not prepared to accept it at all. So, for brands, sustainability is first and foremost a choice linked to their own identity, a sort of code of ethics that they adopt, in the knowledge that today's consumers and investors increasingly reject the idea of a company selling a product without calculating the consequences.

For this reason, **efforts are massively concentrated on the end-of-life**, on the possibility of having 100% recyclable packaging, of developing new creative uses for waste, such as cellulose derived from beans, of proposing new packaging that, while integrating different materials, makes it easy to recycle and, therefore, to dispose of correctly.

Sustainability is also a business value for **retailers**, a choice that, especially in the large-scale retail sector, takes the form of a **concrete contribution to the recycling of packaging, but also extends to the search for new packaging** (for example, the bioplastic chosen by Esselunga for the packaging of its branded milk) and **food waste**, with specific projects such as Penny Market's "Ancora più buoni" ("Even more good"), with the goal of selling fruit and vegetables that are partially ruined and are, therefore, still perfectly suitable for consumption at a discounted price, with part of the proceeds going to the Food Bank.

On the other hand, **printers** approach **sustainability** by focusing on two elements: the **production method**, i.e. the type of inks, but also the reduction of water needed for washing and the **materials they use for their customisations**. The issue of proper disposal and end-of-life management is central.

For example, single-materiality helps, since with so many materials it is difficult for the consumer to differentiate everything.

How to propose a recyclable product? By working with paper and inks, reducing the number of machine passages for finishing and concretely orienting customers towards a sustainable choice. The concept of warehousing is also changing and welcomes technologies to optimise the quantities produced.

Finally, to understand whether their industry is truly sustainable, printers suggest measuring the sustainability value on raw materials at the very least.