

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02] DC: Print Buying UKvUSA is a series dedicated to helping printers create stronger, more meaningful, and more profitable relationships with print customers on both sides of the pond. I'm Deborah Corn, founder of Project Peacock and principal at Print Media Centr.

[0:00:20] MP: And I'm Matthew Parker, the Champion of Print at profitableprintrelationships.com.

[0:00:26] DC: We may not always agree, but that's when it gets interesting. So turn up the volume, get out your notepad, and welcome to the program.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:40] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your intergalactic ambassador. More specifically, we are here with UKvUSA. That means Matthew Parker's on the other end of this microphone. Hello, Matthew.

[0:00:57] MP: Hello, Deborah Corn. How are you today? Are you ready to spar, to box, to get into some great, hopefully, disagreements during our conversation today?

[0:01:08] DC: I am, although it is a little bit of a fancy topic to get into a brawl over, but we shall see. I'm going to actually turn it over to you. Take it away Matthew.

[0:01:19] MP: Okay. Deborah and I were discussing before what we should do for this episode's topic. I wanted to hook into the fact that there's something that I call artisan print. I think it's becoming more and more topical, particularly because there's a lot of press manufacturers out there who are pushing their presses with their extra colors and their whites and their fancy finishing. And they're going, you can change your printing company and change your fortunes by using our new press. But they don't actually tell you how to do that a lot of the time.

I thought this could be a practical and inspirational episode, I hope. of showing a potential new set of markets to printing companies, telling you all about how to approach those markets from both mine and Deborah's points of view. Even if you haven't got a fancy new press that does all sorts of new colors and finishing, it's a market that you can benefit from.

I'm just going to kick off and explain my take on artisan print, and then I'm going to ask Deborah to come in and add her take on that and her reaction to that. But I think there's a big market out there that is often not exploited by printing companies. I'm going to use the example, I'm going to shamelessly plug my mate, Nick and his artisan chocolate company, Seven Hills Chocolate. In fact, it's so good that we're going to put a link in the notes to it, especially for the UK listeners, okay? But he makes chocolate, he doesn't have a huge turnover in his business. But actually, he spends quite a considerable percentage of his revenues in creating the right print, packaging, and look for his products. He wants help from printing companies. He's not just looking for cheap prints. He's looking for something that adds to the perceived value of his product.

He wants someone who can help them design, get the most out of prints, and make his chocolates really good because they are really good. But also, they're not the cheapest chocolates out there. So they need to look as though they're a premium product, rather than just having great chocolate in some cheap packaging.

When you think about it, there's a lot of companies like that out there. It doesn't have to be – the one thing I kind of worry about when I use the term artisan, is it we immediately think about artists and companies. Artisan companies can bring up that view that these are like small country, cottage businesses. But actually, there's a lot of bigger businesses and brands that are invested in the artisan field these days as well. It's all about your premium product that needs the right premium packaging with it. I've often found that the majority of printing companies out there are still thinking, actually, what can I do to get this person some cheap print. We're missing an opportunity to actually sell the power of print and make some more profit as well, whilst we're doing that. That's my take on artisan print.

Deborah, over to you. I mean, what do you think of that? Would you add to that? Do you think it's a good market for print? Tell me your thoughts.

[0:04:30] DC: Oh, boy.

[0:04:32] MP: Sounds like we're going to disagree?

[0:04:34] DC: Well, yes. I mean, we have two ways of going here. We can accept your premise and just discuss that or we cannot accept it. Which way do you want to go?

[0:04:50] MP: Well, you were just telling me before we press the record button that audiences prefer it when we have a disagreement. So let's not accept it from your point of view and go down that route, and let's see what happens.

[0:05:00] DC: Okay. In a practical sense, what you're talking about is branding. You're not talking about printing. You're talking about a company that needs the support of the printing medium to stand out in some manner, which is branding. Hershey's doesn't need to do that, because everybody knows what Hershey's is. So they don't need to have artisan labels, although they do specialty things for collections, or for the holidays, or for gift boxes, and things like that to make things special on top of the fact that they just make chocolate. I'm assuming you have Hershey's in –

[0:05:44] MP: We don't, but I'm well aware of the brand, and I think – w,

[0:05:46] DC: You don't? Really?

[0:05:47] MP: No.

[0:05:47] DC: You have Nestle, though, right? You have Nestle, yeah?

[0:05:50] MP: Yeah, we have Nestle. Well, while we are on the fighting bit, I don't like to talk about Nestle too much, because I don't like the ethical stance of the company. But yes, we have Nestle, and most people over here have heard of Hershey's. They know it's like a well-known brand of US candy, chocolate.

[0:06:04] DC: Okay, but they have a very branded label, just like a Coke bottle is a very branded Coke bottle. You know a Hershey bar by the shape of it, by the packaging. You don't need to do what you're referring to as cheap print, which I don't agree with either. Just because somebody doesn't want to spend a zillion dollars on shiny stuff doesn't mean that they're getting cheap printing. So I take offense to that, and to all the printers out there who are trying to help people get their products out into the market and do it in a way that isn't breaking the bank.

I would say that, if you're a company starting off, then using what I hear are embellishments, this is what I hear you discussing when you say not cheap print. Someone's just adding embellishments to a job. If you want to really get noticed for sure, that is a great way of doing that. But is it a sustainable business model for you? It's not going to be. Certainly in Europe, you guys are further ahead with getting all this foil and embellishments off shelves and recycling bins and things like that. So I'm just saying in the bigger picture, it is definitely a branding thing. So if you want to get noticed, get your product out there, have it be perceived in a certain way, and add embellishments to do that, go right ahead. But you can also do that without adding all of that stuff. I would just like to turn this back to you very quickly and ask you how you define cheap print and cheap packaging.

[0:07:51] MP: Okay. I've got a lot of things I want to say to what you said. But in answer to your question, first of all, I would say maybe the word cheap was slightly wrong, but it's what I hear. Maybe competitively priced, I hear a lot of from print salespeople. I feel that with a lot of brands, small brands or companies, people are missing a chance to show people what they could be achieving with print by spending a little more on their packaging and their branding. So I would define cheap or competitively priced prints as salespeople trying to sell the most cost-effective solution, rather than the solution, which might actually sell more products or help products be sold at a higher price. I don't know what your reaction to that is.

[0:08:45] DC: You're making a lot of assumptions there. Have you spoken to printers who spend their days doing this?

[0:08:50] MP: Yes. Otherwise, I wouldn't say that. I can go right back to the time when I was working at Future Publishing. Every single printing company – that's not fair. Ninety-eight percent of printing companies came to me and assumed that I wanted to buy on price. Yes,

there was a fair amount of print that I did want to buy on price. But I was very open to hearing how I could spend more money and make the business cost-effective, or create a better subscription business with better retention, or create a different style of magazine that could be sold at a higher price.

I actually had in some of my tenders, an element that said, we want proposals like that, and I rarely got them. I wouldn't say that if I wasn't talking to printing companies, and that wasn't what I was hearing.

[0:09:37] DC: I mean, again, I think that the printing companies that you're speaking of have missed the mark on this to begin with. If it's a small or startup artisan company, then first of all, they need a lot more than packaging. They need people to understand that they're out in the world, is spending a zillion dollars on packaging the most important thing, or is creating brand awareness the most important thing, or going to a fair and giving out samples of your chocolate? Where's the marketing campaign around it? Where are the loyalty cards? Where do I get it from, and what are the shipping items in there?

What I'm saying is that, if somebody's only focusing on the packaging, then it is a competitive conversation. If they're talking about, I want to help this business grow, I want to help you with your overall campaign marketing, understanding your production. The reason I'm saying that is because, one of the things that I found as very interesting, is that a lot of these startup businesses don't understand about scheduling, and the best time for product launches, and how far in advance things need to happen in order for them to be in the market or be in a certain place at a certain time.

Printers who invest in having consultants who can help people like that, then it doesn't become a commodity conversation. So I just think you're looking at this as one aspect of something that will always be commoditized.

[0:11:16] MP: I totally disagree. I totally disagree. Packaging doesn't have to be commoditized. Yes, it's one part of the marketing campaign and a good startup. By the way, I'm not just talking about startups for artisan print but established companies as well.

[0:11:30] DC: It's true, but if they are of any significant size, somebody's already dealing with them. If they're going to shop around, what do you think they're going to shop around for? Price. Go ahead.

[0:11:40] MP: They may well be shopping around for better ideas to make the brand better as well.

[0:11:44] DC: Correct. I agree with that. But then, you're not just having a conversation about "cheap packaging."

[0:11:51] MP: Exactly. That's what I'm saying. This is how you can move that conversation from "cheap packaging" into a better one. Now, I'm not saying that packaging is the be-all and end-all for this. But I am saying, it's an important piece of the puzzle. I think we've done the, should printers be MSPs conversation a bit. Yes, the industry has done that to death. I think the general consensus; the correct consensus is actually very few printing companies out there with the right culture to do it. Some have done it really, really well. But the majority of printers want to stay producing print, rather than becoming full MSPs.

I know there's some notable exceptions to that, but in the main, the printers that want to be MSP, and they're going to be successful at it have done it. We have to look at a piece of it, and bringing the packaging element in, is a really good way to show people how they can change, or how they can maintain, or put a product into a marketplace with the right perceived value. That is what this conversation is about. I think it's really important.

The other thing I want to say is, it doesn't have to be about embellishments. There's a number of embellishments out there that are recyclable now, that are a lot more environmentally friendly. But we don't have to make it about embellishments. A great piece of artisan print can actually be a really nice substrate and single-color prints on there. But done well with the right advice can still be a much more profitable piece of work than putting out a standard piece of full-color packaging on there. I can see Deborah nodding her head because we ran a video on this as well. I can see Deborah nodding her head for the first time in this conversation.

[0:13:29] DC: I mean, I'm not going to argue with that. But again, I'm going to say it's a branding conversation, not a printing conversation. Because, now I'm looking at making my brand on uncoated paper with one color, or white ink, or something. It's a branding and design conversation.

[0:13:47] MP: Sure, but shouldn't printers be part of that, and saying, "Here's what you can do with your brand, and here's some ideas that can either sit down with designers" or they can go to brands themselves and say, "Have you seen some of these things that we think you should be looking at?" That suddenly changes their perceived value as a supplier as well.

[0:14:08] DC: Correct. But then, we're not talking about artisan print. We're talking about a consultant, somebody who works at a printing plant, shop, whatever business, whatever you want to call it, and is also a consultant, and can help those people with their business. I'm all for that. But I just don't think that everybody can do that. And to your point, the people that can do it are doing it. And the ones that need to do it should probably partner with design agencies and things like that to begin with to grow their business because it's not what they really want to do. So we have two more points to discuss. We'll be back right after this message.

[BREAK]

[0:14:50] DC: Printspiration is streaming across the Printerverse on the Project Peacock network, and our mission to provide education and resources for print customers, students, and printers around the world has never been more accessible. Watch what you want, when you want, where you want. It's free. Visit ProjectPeacock.TV to access original programming, and replays from our online events, learn about the peacock partners and companies featured in our shows. Join our mailing list to learn about new episode premieres, and series launches, and create a free account to make watch lists. Ready for your close-up? Get your peacock show on air by visiting ProjectPeacock.TV and request your partnership proposal today. Peacock long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:15:43] MP: Welcome back, everyone. We're going to take this in a slightly different direction now. Clearly, Deborah and I disagree here, which is great. I'm thoroughly enjoying the debate, the conversation, and the challenges, and I hope Deborah is as well. What I'm going to do now is throw out, what should some printers do practically then, if they either want to get in the marketplace or are in the marketplace. Because I get the feeling that Deborah and I might say some very different things at this point. So I'm going to throw this over to Deborah first, and then I'm going to come in with an example of what I think some printers could or should do as well.

[0:16:17] DC: Okay. So just a point of clarification. I think standing out is really important, but I think there's more ways that our brand, whether it's artisan or not can do that than just their packaging. But I think we've moved past that a bit. Okay, this is not a new concept, but this is how you do it. You go to the local farmer's market, you look on the Etsy stores, you look on all the do-it-yourself designers and makers out there, and you order some stuff, and see what they're using for packaging. See if they're going to trade show, see if they are pitching their products to bigger entities, and then present a comprehensive proposal that addresses everything that they might need.

And then you cannot bid out for all of those things, as well, keep your lane very tight so you're not presenting yourself as the expert of every single vertical. But maybe you're the pet food expert. I say that because there are tons of artisan pet foods out there now, and startups, and organic doggy treats, and things like that, that I see in plastic bags in farmer's markets. Not even labeled sometimes.

Perhaps, you start with a good, better, best philosophy that it's just a label on something or a brown paper bag that's printed with your logo on it. Or during the pandemic, I saw that people ordered stamps, and we're just stamping their bags, so at least there's some branding on it. Then, what goes in that bag, how do you get people on your social media. So I think that there's a real opportunity out there to work with these artisan makers. But it's not only about the printing, the printing is just an extension of their entire needs of printing needs of their business, and marketing needs, and branding needs. That's what I would say. Approach it in the most comprehensive way possible. And then, those customers will not only see you as an expert in their vertical, but how can they possibly price that out with anybody else. They can't, because human knowledge is involved, as well as the expertise of the person who came to you.

At this point, this is actually – I rarely say this, but this is actually the opportunity where those customers may not realize where their pain points lie, and the printers are actually not only alerting them to it but compensating for it. For example, you don't need to worry about the volume of printing because all of this can be customized to digital print, personalized, regionalized, or however you want to do it. And we have a long time to go before we need to start thinking about volumes and shipping overseas and things of this manner.

Until then, we have a healthy ramp to grow your business and not change things for a long time. That's very relaxing for our print customer as I'm sure you know. Just to know that, okay, for at least the next two years, I'm good, I just need to focus on growing my business, and I've got this partner. Is it a printing partner? Is it a communication partner? Is it a marketing partner? Those are all just words. It's up to that person who's approaching that company, how they want to define any of this.

[0:20:26] MP: Okay. I love the idea of going niche. I mean, I'm a big proponent of going niche. So I really like that idea. I think, first of all, from my point of view, when you're doing this, is think about the type of company you want, not just, "Hey, we're going to niche into pet foods." But actually, what size of print company are you, are you going to be able to be happy just by going around the farmer's markets. So research first.

For some of you, being in the farmer's market is great. If you're a smaller print shop, it can get you a really nice raft of customers, some of whom will grow and become good accounts as time goes on. That's perfect. If you've got a larger printing company, you may not be well set up to do that. So it's time to start looking at other brands, maybe local brands that you can see, and just check out the size that they are, because I think there's still a really good opportunity for mid-sized brands. Clearly, the Hershey's and Coca-Colas of this world, they're set in their ways, and they've got procurement departments. But there's a lot of mid-range companies where that decision-making is a lot easier to get through to. Do your research and work out which is the right size customer for you.

[0:21:41] DC: Okay, Matthew. I have a question about that. What would get you to change your entire process that you already have established to work with some printer who walked in the room and showed you something shiny, I guess, on your packaging? What is the thing that you

think is going to make those medium-sized businesses upend their entire production process and go with your approach here?

[0:22:14] MP: First of all, unless you're using a very automated set of packaging, I would suggest that an awful lot of the packing is done by hand, or is done by products –

[0:22:29] DC: So cost? Cost is going to make them move. Is this where you're getting to? Price?

[0:22:35] MP: No, no. Not at all. The first thing I was just disputing was the fact that there's quite as big an upheaval as you're saying for many companies and what they're doing. But the thing that's going to make me change, and it really helps if you've got some case studies here. But the thing that's really going to make me change is someone going, "This change, changes the perceived value of your brand. Yes, you're going to be paying us a bit more for your prints. But you know what, you can put your end prices up at the end as well because it's the same as any supermarkets do. Okay?" Deborah looks like she's about to explode at the moment.

[0:23:08] DC: Because you certainly don't have to change printers to add some freaking foil to your package. So somebody comes in and shows me, "Oh, look, you could have a shiny package." And you don't think my first phone call is to my established system, saying, "Hey, I kind of liked this. Can we do it on our package?" Do you think that printer's going to say, "Absolutely not. We can't do that. So you're just going to have to change printers, change your billing system, change your POs, and formulate a new relationship with the new company. Because oh my God, it is so difficult and impossible for us to be in the embellishment business." I don't get it.

[0:23:51] MP: Well, there's plenty of printers out there that don't offer any type of foiling just as an example.

[0:23:55] DC: Oh for God's sake they are trade finishers. I'm just saying, it's a ludicrous argument to me.

[0:24:02] MP: There's also a lot of buyers out there at the non-procurement side. Yes, a number of them will talk to their printers about it. A number of others will go to their printers, "Why aren't you telling me about this?" And I see a lot of buyers out there now, an increasing number of buyers who want practice suppliers who come to them with ideas. And they're getting fed up with suppliers who are going, "Well, we're just going to keep on doing the same old, same old because that's what we've been told to do." So yes, people do change suppliers. And not all suppliers are capable of producing –

[0:24:33] DC: But that's a difference –

[0:24:33] MP: [Inaudible 0:24:33] come forward.

[0:24:36] DC: But that is a different approach than, "Hey, we can add shiny things." This is saying, "We can get you to market faster. We have more automated processes. We have less humans on the line. We have different ways of packing things." But it still ends up being a price conversation at the end of the day, Matthew. I cannot believe that you won't acknowledge that, because those printers are going to come back and say at the end of the day, "And we can save you this much money." They're not going to say, "And it's going to cost you more money." And then what?

[0:25:13] MP: I would argue that there is a space in the market for printers who are not focused purely on price. And of course, you've got to do things at a fair price and price is going to come to the equation a little bit. But you can increase your profit margins by offering people the right types of packaging out there, and the right print solutions or branding solutions. People pay more for it. Otherwise, why would anyone use an ad agency when someone can get it done directly cheaper?

[BREAK]

[0:25:47] MP: Are you fed up that all your conversations with customers seem to focus around price? Struggling to stand out from the competition? Or maybe you're just frustrated, at trying to put together a realistic sales plan or make the most of social media? I'm Matthew Parker, the Champion of Print, and I help printing companies with all these sorts of issues. What makes me

different is that I've been sold to by over 1400 different printing companies, so I know what works and I know what doesn't. Visit www.profitableprintrelationships.com to find out more and download free resources.

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:26:31] DC: I don't disagree with you, and those businesses that you're discussing are not using ad agencies, or most likely, they might have a designer, or design firm that they're working with. I would agree with that, or a small local marketing agency, which is totally fine. But I'm not disagreeing that there's not a space for printers to act as consultants. We want them to be consultants, but it's not this giant hole in the marketplace to add a freaking embellishment to a package. The hole is, I can help you with all of your marketing, all of your communications, customer communications, customer loyalty, helping you grow your social media following, helping get testimonials from your customers, and using them in your marketing. That's what is actually helpful to those size businesses.

A small marketing firm can handle all that with the right partners. I just don't agree with how you're approaching this. There's not enough of those people out there for it to be lucrative for anybody. The reason why I suggest going to the farmer's market and you echoed it as well is because, no, you're not going to get \$100,000 or pound account there. But you might get six accounts that add up to that during the year. That's what you're dealing with. If you want to get in early, prove your value and never be replaceable by other people who are just going to come in and say, "We can add a foil. We can do this a little cheaper for you." It's not going to put a wedge in that relationship, because you were there helping them grow from the beginning, you were an advisor, you're counsel, you brought them market research, you showed them what other packaging looked like in the market. You learned what they liked and what they didn't like. It's not, to your most excellent point, it is anybody who's not doing that is replaceable.

[0:28:46] MP: That is my main point, is that there's not as many printers as you think, actually doing that, so they are replaceable. That's my point, go out there and look, and see, you could be doing your packaging in a different way better, and the rest of your marketing, not the social media, because I've yet to meet very many printers who can manage their own social media accounts. Well, let alone somebody else's.

[0:29:07] DC: I'm not saying manage their social media. I'm saying, get people to their Facebook page, get people to their Instagram page as you can do that through print is what I'm saying. Helping their business grow, including their social media followers.

[0:29:21] MP: Okay. The main point is that, a lot of those smaller marketing firms, the small to mid-sized brands are still working with do not have the print knowledge to be able to bring the right advice to them.

[0:29:36] DC: Correct. That's who I'd be targeting, not the artisan, not the chocolate maker, but those small design agencies and say, "We need to work together and present a comprehensive package to all of these people. We can help you with the printing. You can help us with the branding, with the market knowledge, with presenting options to clients. Together, we can work together." If you can't do it yourself internally and be a marketing services provider, which hasn't worked out for many printers as we know. But I always say that printers are marketing solutions providers. Work with the design firms, work with the marketing firms. Together, come up with solutions, and then go out create a comprehensive package that is tailored to specific verticals. Pick one or two verticals, and just focus on those. Lather, rinse, and repeat into other verticals once you get some movement and some case studies to your point.

[0:30:42] MP: I'd happily suggest partnering with marketing agencies, but I think you have to go to end users as well, because they're the ones who often influence the marketing agencies more. Or they may not be using marketing agencies, as much as we think they are. Quite often, they're just telling the marketing agency what they want, and they're not giving the marketing agency enough freedom. I would try and influence the end user as well. I think it's important.

[0:31:05] DC: But it doesn't matter. Whether you're going to the end user or the end users in the marketing, or designers' radar to begin with, it doesn't matter. The point is, you have a comprehensive package that covers both things, including helping them with production schedules, and knowing when they need to be ready with. If they're going to have a full flavor, it all has to be coordinated. They're not necessarily – they're concerned about their business getting their full flavor out into the marketplace. But how much of a lead time is that? Do they have to actually start producing it six weeks earlier or six weeks later, because there's nowhere to store it, or they don't want to store it.

There is a lot of ways if you want to go this route in my opinion, and this is what the show is all about. It has to be consultative, but comprehensively consultative. Not just on one item. If you make it about one item, artisan print, and that artisan comprehensive branding, and marketing, and communication strategy, then, however you do that, whether it's internally with your own people, you have those people in place, or working with design agencies, and marketing agencies. For God's sake, printers print for designers and marketing agencies all the time. Look at your own customer list, and see who's the best fit for each protocol, try different things.

I agree with you a thousand percent that there's a space for this. I just think we are quite far apart on what is actually valuable to those people. To me, it's not just adding something shiny to a package.

[0:32:56] MP: Okay. Well, I think you're vastly simplifying what I'm suggesting by saying you're just going to add something shiny to a package. I can see by your smile, you're just trying to provoke me there anyway. But the last point you made will bring us very neatly into our third segment, which we'll be coming back with shortly.

[BREAK]

[0:33:17] DC: Like what you hear? Leave us a comment, click a few stars, share this episode, and please subscribe to the show. Are you interested in being the guest and sharing your information with our active and growing global audience? Podcasts are trending as a potent direct marketing and educational channel for brands and businesses who want to provide portable content for customers and consumers. Visit printmediacentr.com, click on podcast, and request a partner package today. Share long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUES]

[0:33:50] MP: Welcome back to Podcasts From the Printerverse. We're back with UKvUSA. It's certainly versus today because Matthew, myself, and Deborah are coming up with some very different points of view. That's a beauty when we do disagree because actually, I think I'm right. Deborah thinks she's right. Obviously, she's not because I'm right. But we both think we're right.

You have two strategies to think about from this that you can take away and decide which one you feel is right for you and which one will work best with your company.

We're going to carry on with the dueling now because I'm going to ask Deborah just to talk to us a little bit, and then I'm going to chime in with my own views, and we'll get back with the dueling, I think at that point. But I'm going to ask Deborah just to have a little thing about some of – we've talked about the advantages, some of the disadvantages of going with this strategy because we do need to go into these things with a sense of awareness. So Deborah, what do you think some of the disadvantages of this strategy are?

[0:34:49] DC: Scaring the print customers, being too aggressive with them. You don't know what you're doing, you know any of that that comes through. I think it has to be a very gentle approach, not like we know more than you. But we are invested, I'm just going to keep using artisan pet food because I'm telling you, it's very prevalent here. I mean, I was just – I remember the other day, they had like doggy bagels. I mean, I had to make sure I was buying like a human bagel, not a doggy bagel. But those doggy bagels were just like in a bin, and it came in a brown paper bag. I don't know who made them. I don't know the ingredients. I don't know if that's a problem with doggy stuff.

I would just say that you have to be really careful, but you have to know your stuff. I think if you don't have a good, better, best approach that you will also scare people, and some sort of manageable plan for them. In the first three months, we want to do this, and three months after that, we want to do this. At this point, after that six months, we want to assess the results, we want to assess the process, we want to make sure this is working for everybody, and just keep them very comfortable and don't freak them out. Certainly, don't talk that what they have is "bad," because they don't think it's bad. That's the last thing you want to do.

Something I've learned from my friend, Tobias, who was the former curator of the Nobel Museum, is you never say we want to come and change your product, your branding, your look. If you approach it, you want to make improvements. Most people are open to listening to improvements, but change is a scary word. So I would just say, you want to avoid those third rounds of freaking those people out and making them feel like they don't know what they're doing. You want to approach them with the, "I'm here to suggest some improvements." Here's a

good, better, best pricing of what that would look like. If you're interested in any of this, let's have a strategic new business planning meeting. Not a sales meeting, not a meeting about your print and your packaging, but a meeting about what are your goals in this quarter, six months in the year. What are your goals for all of the year, and how can we make a strategic printing marketing and communication plan to hit all of those goals? This is how we will report them. You don't want to ask questions to them.

This is how we're going to report, and this is how you're going to know what your money was used for. That is not guaranteeing results, but that is guaranteeing that there is a plan and that it can be adjusted along the way if things are not working out. If they're really working out in some manner, which could be, "Oh my God, we added a spot varnish to this packaging, and now it's flying off the shelf. Fantastic. What else can we add a spot varnish to? Can we add something else to it that will make it even fly off the shelf faster?" That would be my advice. Tread lightly, and approach cautiously in a very helpful manner. Don't scold, don't be like, "What you're doing is completely ridiculously expensive. We could do it better, cheaper, faster." That is just not going to work.

[0:38:28] MP: All good points from you there. I'm not going to add a lot to those. I think the key bit is making sure that you know what you're delivering on there. Also, when you said about knowing what you're doing in your doggy bagels if you said there weren't any ingredients on there. If you know a little bit about trading standards, and you're dealing with small startups, you may be able to help them quite a lot. Because if there's no ingredients on them over here, then you're going to be in trouble with the trading standards or authorities. So if you brush up a little bit on that, you can become a really good trusted adviser.

Two things I'm going to add to your list because I think they are quite important. Number one, do you think if this is the right route for the way you set up your production facility, these jobs take longer than more of a hassle to produce, and they do require more customer hand-holding. So if you just want to go down the efficient production routes, then by all means do that, an artisan print may not be the right solution for you. I'm not saying it's right for everyone. The second thing, and this applies particularly if you're going down Deborah's route of selling everything with partners. Have you got the sales culture to be able to sell all these solutions effectively? It does require a certain type of person to go in. I'm not a fan of using the word consultant because it

kind of makes it sound like someone in a sharp suit with a clipboard and a whole load of stuff. But to go in and do a consultative sale, that requires a certain skill set.

If you're also going to go in and sell a marketing partner, social media services for marketing, branding, and doing all the meetings that Deborah suggested, you better have a really good insight of marketing and how it works to be able to do that successfully. Deborah is nodding here. We've got an agreement at the end. This is worrying. Then, then you may be better off going in and selling just the print elements if that's what you understand.

Again, we've offered two different routes here. There's my route, there's Deborah. You choose which one's right for you. If you feel that you can go in with the right partners, and the full MSP offering, then by all means, go and do it. If you're just focusing on doing the print bits, then I would personally suggest doing a slightly less all-embracing sell, because you're going to find it harder. I think we're coming up to the end of this. But Deborah, do you have anything you want to add as the last couple of words?

[0:40:58] DC: I mean, there's no one way or is right, one way is wrong. I mean, the best thing to do is just to go to the farmer's market, look at people who have packaging. Just start asking them questions like, "Oh, this is really cool. How did you get started in your journey of finding a printer? How long do these take to produce?" You can ask them questions about whether they store things, or are they shipping? Are they shipping on demand? Is there a lead time for it? You can ask them things about what's important to them. I mean, basically focus group them, but buy whatever's on their table, by the way. Buy it, and try it, or give it to a pet, or whatever and try it. At least, you can come back, and when you come back, you can have already a more personalized experience with them. Because you bought their product, you used their product in some manner, or you fed it to your pet.

"Hey, Buffy loved the dog treats, or whatever it was. He usually never eats this stuff, but he just couldn't get enough of it." I mean, whatever the truth is of it, that's a great way to come back and then say, "It's so great, we really want to help more dogs enjoy this. Based on our last conversation, I'd love to – not now, obviously, you're at the farmer's market selling stuff. But hey, do you have some time this week? I can come to where you are, or you can come to our office, and want to talk to you about really making some improvements to your branding, which is

already great. But we think we can add a little more life to it and expanding your market share starting locally and growing from there. Would you be interested in that?" What small business owners going to say, "No, I don't I'm not interested in any of that." It's worth a meeting if there's meaning behind it. If it's only about sales, then I don't think it's going to work out. That's my final word.

[0:43:09] MP: I'll just add one thing in that. Don't make it just about the farmer's market. There are bigger brands out there. The farmer's market is an excellent place for some [inaudible 0:43:18]. You will find bigger brands that are open to that conversation as well. Not Coke and Hershey's, but there are some brands that are spending rather than more than the farmer's market, people who are very open to those conversations.

[0:43:31] DC: Okay, that's a fair point. All right, Matthew, I think we have done artisan print. It's due. Thank you so much for an inspiring sparring topic.

[0:43:42] MP: I enjoyed today. We haven't had a good disagreement for a long time.

[0:43:47] DC: We can have a disagreement anytime you want. Okay, everybody. Thank you so much for your time, for your attention, and we will be back with another episode soon. Until then, print long, artisan long, consult long, and prosper.

[END]

[0:44:06] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through [printmediacentr.com](https://www.printmediacentr.com). We'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

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Project Peacock: <https://ProjectPeacock.TV>

Girls Who Print: <https://girlswhoprint.net>

Print Across America: <https://printacrossamerica.com/>