

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:02.4] DD:** Does your printing need some passion?

**[0:00:04.5] NT:** Your design some dynamic dimension?

**[0:00:07.4] DC:** Are you stuck in a CMYK rut?

**[0:00:10.9] DD:** I'm David Drucker, Founder and CEO of highresolution printing and packaging.

**[0:00:16.3] NT:** I'm Noel Tocci, founder of Tocci Made, bespoke print consulting.

**[0:00:20.3] DC:** And I'm Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. Welcome to Making It With Print, the podcast that takes a deep dive into the conception, creation, and production of amazing printed products.

**[0:00:33.7] NT:** If you can dream it.

**[0:00:34.7] DD:** You can make it.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:39.2] DC:** Hey everybody, welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse, this is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador, more specifically, we are here with the Making It With Print Podcast series, which means, I am here with my very crafty and creative cohost, David Drucker from highresolution printing and packaging. Hello, David Drucker

**[0:00:59.2] DD:** Hi, good afternoon, glad to be here again.

**[0:01:01.7] DC:** And Noel Tocci from Tocci Made. Hello Noel.

**[0:01:05.9] NT:** Hello, friends. Good to see you.

**[0:01:08.6] DC:** Good to see you as well, and hear you, since we're on an audio program. Okay, today, I wanted to tackle how people who don't necessarily go to, like, printing equipment trade shows but still are dealing with printers and print customers, how you guys learn about new printing technology, new capabilities, new ways people are doing things or you know, whether it's new or just something you've never seen before, and you know, assess it and bring it back to your customers.

Certainly, someone like me has an advantage, I go to a lot of printing equipment shows so I see a lot of the new things. I'm also technically a media person, so I get a lot of press releases. I might not understand, you know, all the benefits to the equipment but I certainly know it's out there, whether it is a printing press, a piece of finishing equipment, a printing press, digital or offset, whether it's a piece of technology, a software.

So, I do get a lot of information, and the other day, I was talking to somebody who doesn't go to print shows, and they were asking me for resources where they can learn about all of these new offerings, and it's a really difficult thing to wrangle because it really depends upon what they're looking for. So, I decided to bring this conversation to us because you guys are actually the perfect people to ask this question to.

You live in these two worlds but what you're out of is the purchasing of equipment, let's say, funnel there, so that makes things a little different. So, David, I'm going to start with you. What are some of the new capabilities you have seen in printing technology and how did you become aware of it?

**[0:03:06.4] DD:** Well, you know, there is many different ways to get information now. I am one who is a newcomer to this, at least within the last four, or five years, and you know, being on a quest to find out this information. So, you know, the first thing is word of mouth. I begin to hear about a certain type of machinery that's out there and then I begin to ask questions. You know, it's surprising, you might be speaking to somebody who might not know the answer but knows somebody who does.

You know, as we always say, you don't know what you don't know, and that leads on a quest, and the quest is, "How do we gain more information?" Eventually, you're able to find this

technology and hopefully, it's within your area so you can go and visit it. The other is, you know, publications. There are a lot of online publications for the printing industry, for the design industry. You know, by not reading these, you won't ever be subject to that.

But all you need is one little piece of information that sparks some inspiration and curiosity, and then there is a plethora of information that will follow then afterwards. It's as we say, create your own luck, and as long as you keep on going down that road. You know, I've attended a good amount of seminars, you begin to hear people speak about the technology that's out there or where that technology is going, or the foresight of seeing five years down the road.

And you know, there, as you say, in the funnel, there's a lot of other machinery and techniques that will back that particular – those particular pieces of equipment. So, you know, to maybe be ahead of the curve but you know, I find it mostly by asking questions, attending webinars. You know, I popped into one the other day, it was about digitally printing bottles. Great, great, great idea because now, you can prototype all these unique types of bottles. And going with that, you know, you begin to ask questions and those questions lead into ideas.

Now, those ideas, you might not be able to use now but you know down the road, somebody's going to ask you a question, or you're going to be amongst the group of people and it's going to come up and you're going to have a little bit of insight and you never know where that's going to go. So, you know, I would recommend, really, to everybody who is listening, to number one, seek your vendors, seek your clients, begin to ask questions of what they're looking for, directions that they're going to go in and then, do a little bit of research. A little bit of education actually goes a long, long way.

**[0:05:57.9] DC:** Quick question before we get to Noel. Have you ever seen something that one of your customers did or you know, maybe you went to meet them in the office, you saw something hanging in the wall, there was a sample and you were like, "Okay, what is that and how did you do it?"

**[0:06:13.4] DD:** The answer is yes, but it didn't really have to do with printing. It had to deal with technology, which was augmented reality, and I went up to a client's office, and they were talking to me about pointing your camera at an object and it moves around and I began to really,

really look into this. You know, the trail that I found by asking questions, doing everything that I said, led me to somebody who is in the Israeli Army.

One of the people that originally tested this, and now, lives in Sweden, and at that point, she was just trying to get all the software manufacturers to talk to each other, and that led me, you know, full strength, into trying to sell it. Personally, I was very early in the industry to do it but you know, there again, it can go for a piece of equipment as well. What can this equipment do? On the other end, now that we're talking about that, there might be a piece of equipment that I might suggest you use this equipment in a slightly different way.

And you know, you get a lot of resistance because everybody likes to fit within the box but once you begin to look outside the box, now you know that you might have different abilities with the same equipment. It leads to, what I call, you know, the toy land of manufacturing.

**[0:07:39.7] DC:** Noel, what are some of the new capabilities you've seen out in printing technology and how did you become aware of them?

**[0:07:47.3] NT:** Well, let me answer your question directly first because it's weird. Well, I tend to stay with what I know and do the same kind of things over and over but what I find is I get pushed. When people come to me, they know what they want to do but they know what they didn't like or they know what was bad about the process and they know what, "Could we make this better?"

So, I'm always trying to build a better mouse trap and some of the new technologies I've seen, you know, there's a lot of earth-shattering stuff out there, particularly on the three-dimensional and wide format, you know, where my buddies are you know, I've done a lot of second surface Plexi in my career. You know, you see them in hospitals, they're off the wall. What that means is they're just mounting, they're gluing the image to the back of it.

Now, that can print on glass and then put another piece of glass against it. We touched on it before, the backlit technology, which I never even thought of until you go in a room of this three-dimensional wallpaper, which I do some of but I didn't really have a use for but I'm getting back

to my original point, I do a lot of books, and I've always been frustrated by being able to do a case bound book.

Ask our clients. "Oh, I want to feel it and see it." Well, you're not really embossing, and then wrapping a board. A traditional case-bound book is not that way. You can do it but it's very difficult. So, the three-dimensional, I see things like that and David just touched on it on the end, I'm looking at equipment that is new technology and I think, "How can I incorporate it into what I do?" Because let's be honest, all of it is just imaging, right?

On some substrate, with some kind of visual prowess, and then what I also see and someone else touched on it, and I don't want to get all over the place is that – and I think I just touched on it, I like to see something and, of course, I want to do what is implied or what the manufacturers wanted that machine to do but I know they're very excited if someone sees it and goes, "Hey, couldn't I?"

That's why I like to take designers into shops too, because they often go, "That machine does that? Well, could I?" And you're going, "We'll just stay up all night." "Why would you say that?" And I go, "Well, that's pretty cool." So, and I talk to the manufacturers but really, what I do is, I talk to my vendors and ones I don't even know, and I'm constantly looking at what people are advertising.

"Hey, we got a new Wamma-jamma 5,000." Well, I want to know all about that and what it does but I break it down, even more deeply, like I will say, "Oh, okay, so, well, that's an inkjet machine, so it can do this or it can do that." I'm on a constant – I'm instantly thinking, "Well, what kind of substrates would it work on? Well, that's what they're advertising but would it work on this?"

So, I try to keep up with it, and you go to the really big shops and a lot of times, they've done what I've said, right? They'll take a piece of equipment and they might be in the label business. Well, they might use it differently than, you know, a traditional mom-and-pop shop might but there's a million uses for everything, and I find – and I hope I'm answering your question. So, I really go – I see what's being marketed.

But more than that, I see what people are buying and then I want to know, “Why did you buy that? Do you have enough work to choke that, and what is that work?” And they think about it in a silo, right? Well, why not, right? If they’ve got, you know, a customer with \$300,000, and this machine is going to do it more efficiently, and more beautifully on the substrates they want, great but I look at it and go, “Well, if it does that, it could do this.”

So, I find, that’s the best spot also because the people who buy it are constantly playing with it and I like to talk to the manufacturers too but it’s a sales pitch, right? And I don’t know that I’m always looking. I want to know how it’s made and how it images and everything else. So, manufacturers first, but secondly, who is buying that manufacturer’s equipment and what are they doing with it?

You might find that new Wamma-jamma 5,000 is bought by 15 different people across the country, and I guarantee you, there’s at least three or four different uses for the same equipment, or they’re approaching different verticals. So, a vertical being that customer, you know, maybe in medical, maybe in design, and then there’s that, and then you can never forget the creatives.

You almost don’t want to tell them what something does because they’ll think of stuff that you never thought of that will keep you up all night but I think it’s a little bit, like David said, of everything, everywhere, but to me, it’s just – it sounds stupid but it’s all print. It depends on what you’re printing, it’s all imaging but it comes down to what someone has a need or perhaps, more importantly, what can we make better with this technology?

Like, in other words, maybe what we’re doing in it was good but this thing came out and no one thought of this, they’re doing it for A but if I – like, I just said with the wallpaper, you start doing case bound books with this thing and I – we got to work some of the kinks out but it solves a problem. You know, it not only – it doesn’t solve a problem as much as it allows us to bring it to the next level.

**[0:12:51.8] DD:** You know what? It brings it to a different technology, the use of a different technology. Something more that you can now offer a client. Sometimes, you don’t know what

the end result is going to be but knowing that is out there and discussing it might now become an application for you somehow.

**[0:13:10.3] NT:** I mean, obviously, the manufacturers, they're pushing their equipment and they're marketing it, but I think they do a lot of R&D that they can on the new technologies but they could never possibly know. I think they love for people to take it and try to push the envelope or do something different with it, right? They're just looking for the thing that there's the most of that they can sell the most machines to do it.

**[0:13:33.3] DD:** Right.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[0:13:35.0] DD:** Are you a frustrated creative and want a print partner that takes an artisan approach? Do you want to be inspired with techniques that will enhance your next printed or packaging production? Or are you a printer that has unique abilities and need a liaison to enhance your exposure? I'm David Drucker, owner of highresolution printing. I am an independent creative consultant with access to every printing technology out there.

I work hand in hand with creatives and printers, creating projects that are complex, and require meticulous detail, and precision, from concept to completion. Want to see what I mean? Go to [guruofprinting.com](http://guruofprinting.com) and get inspired.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:14:17.0] DC:** To your excellent point, they're either developing printing technology for where they believe the vision of the market is heading, or they're developing technology that helps serve the verticals or the needs of the current print customers and if it's new, probably in a more energy efficient, they might move a little into assisting ability talk, or a more automated way. So yeah.

It is all related but I have to go back to something you said, Noel, because it is genius in so many ways. Looking at who those manufacturers have sold those processes to, I think could

uncover a lot of information. Just as an example and I don't have anybody specific in mind when I say this, other than, you know, if there's a press maker that is traditionally in the, let's say, more in the transactional space than the graphic art space and they're trying to move or vice versa, they're more in the graphic arts space and they're moving into transactional space, like, what are they buying? Or, in other words, are they using the presses as the manufacturers are suggesting the buying group should be? In other words, we've made this really fast inkjet press and they have transactional printers in mind, long runs, bills and statements, and things like that.

But when they start moving into the graphic communications market, they're probably looking at more personalization, more touch points, smaller runs, more customization, and things like that. So, it could help somebody who is looking specifically in a graphic way to look at a more efficient way of maybe doing the work they're already doing. So, there's probably more research that has to be done.

And to be fair, not all manufacturers tell everybody, everybody who has the presses that they have out there in the world. Usually, it's the printing company that doesn't want people to know for whatever reason but I just thought that that was genius. Any comment on that before I move on to another point?

**[0:16:36.2] NT:** Anybody making things now, especially since the pandemic, they have a very varied mix of equipment because they have their clients and they have the clients they want, and if they have a sales force, they have the ear of the customer saying, "This is what we want." and no, what I was going to say is they have holes and they plug them in the funniest ways sometimes, you know what I mean?

They start to build it, and they realize, "Well, we need this." Or they get a machine and they go, "Well, you know what? We've been doing that on that one over there, but what this does that, and we didn't know it, it's an added bonus." So, the next thing you know, you have three or four groups of manufacturers, they're all making the same widgets but they're doing them a different way and whether a lot of that gets back to the manufacturer, that, I don't know but you can never think of everything but it's a very interesting time that I see a lot of.



**[0:17:27.8] DC:** I also just want to go back to two things you mentioned, Noel. First, you mentioned backlit display. I always think of them as displays.

**[0:17:38.1] NT:** I actually didn't say that correctly. I said backlit, which is a thing but I was really talking about the black light.

**[0:17:45.3] DC:** Oh.

**[0:17:46.0] NT:** It looks backlit.

**[0:17:46.7] DC:** Oh, I had a good backlit story for you.

**[0:17:49.0] NT:** Good to know. Oh, go ahead, tell me because that's [crosstalk 0:17:50.7]

**[0:17:50.4] DC:** Okay.

**[0:17:51.6] NT:** It used to be Duratrans and that was it.

**[0:17:53.0] DC:** Okay. Well, I have a really great backlit story. You know, it's really cool when your own inspiration program inspires you. I used to learn so much and still do, when I do shoot Project Peacock when I have those events, I learn so much because it's only about inspiration. So, I see the applications, the really cool ways that the customers are using the equipment, or I see samples to inspire the creatives to use the equipment.

And I saw the coolest sample that Canon used to bring to our agency visits, which was a day-lit backlit Duratrans. So, picture this, you're walking down the street, in front of a McDonald's, it's 8:00 in the morning and the image in the lightbox, which is not on because the sun is out is a hot steaming cup of coffee and an Egg McMuffin and it says, "Come on in." As the sun starts going down, and the light comes on in the lightbox, the Duratrans is printed on the other side as well with the white layout in between.

And your Big Mac comes up there now, because, "Come get your dinner," or whatever. So, you don't have to do anything, it changes for you, and then there is actually a possibility to, let's say

I have the McDonald's app, right? And the app knows that I am within a certain walking distance of a McDonald's. At that point, they could be like, "Hey, we know where you are, if you come into this McDonald's two blocks up the street, here's a coupon for a Big Mac."

And when you go there, that promotion could be in the signage, just a very cool application that's out there. The other thing I wanted to mention is that there has been an arc, and still to come, significant upgrades to book finishing. This is the new topic of the printing industry, digital finishing, meaning that, the digital things that bind the books work like digital presses. They could be all different, they can have different colors, they can match things differently.

It is absolutely incredible. I just did a podcast with Stefano Formantini from Meccanotecnica. In America, they call it Book Automation, and it is just incredible. Hunkeler, Muller Martini, they all have amazing new technology that enables you to print three different-sized books at the same exact time, it trims it correctly, all in the same run. So, you could use the same sheets of papers as many as you can get that. Now, those sizes are set but who cares if you can utilize the technology correctly?

It also enables you to pull chapter three from here and chapter four from here, and this book is only going to have these five chapters, or which, might not make it a novel or something like that. It could be a workbook or it could be an educational book or it could be some vocational thing that I don't need to know how to fix an air conditioner from there to learn how to fix a server.

I don't need that all in my book, I don't have to print all of that. So, I just – you know, we always talk about presses but for you, Noel, this finishing movement might be really interesting for –

**[0:21:24.6] NT:** I'm fascinated by it because I have hit some dead ends lately because of the design part of it, and I'm not going to bore you with one I had today for a huge company. I mean, I have to do 15 different books, same guts but 15 different covers and then I have to stamp 15 different logos for like, a hundred. It's insane and I know there are ways and I'm looking into it.

The new technology saves you when you want to do the – because you're starting to see more kind of personalization and stuff. It's one thing with the printing but the finishing has been so old-school, right? It hasn't really caught up, and there's no reason it should not, right?

**[0:22:06.3] DC:** It's actually pushing the market now, yeah.

**[0:22:09.6] NT:** People are pushing.

**[0:22:10.9] DC:** I have the most fortunate, you know, ability to go to an event called, Hunkeler Innovation Days every other year. It happens to be next year, to where you see all of the new and amazing digital finishing equipment that comes from Hunkeler and now, that they work – they're partners with Muller Martini and Meccanotecnica is there now, and a whole bunch of other people but you're absolutely right.

They have – now, by the way, they all still make offset finishing equipment that works like offset equipment. You know, you want to do a million of the same things, enjoy yourself. There's still plenty of that out there, but to your point, they've recognized there's a change in the market, you can't use that other equipment for that. These finishing lines, first of all, they could be configured in a million different ways.

And they almost work like, if you see in the movie like, where like, "This letter goes here and this letter goes here." I mean, they move the belt, it moves things to different areas depending upon, "Is it going to be finished this way or is this chapter going in this book?" I mean, it's fascinating and when I saw some of these at Drupa, it was just one person putting the sheets on the press, pushing go.

And they were at the other end, just making sure that everything was trimmed as it was supposed to be. Unless there was a problem in that line, and it's a line, you could adjust it depending upon how much you need but no more people involved.

**[0:23:44.3] NT:** Right.

**[0:23:43.9] DC:** And in this case, it saves you time and money, Noel. I'm just saying, and you could do a lot more funky things with your books.

**[0:23:52.2] NT:** Yeah, because books are expensive, that's the other problem. So, this technology going and advancing like you're saying, equals efficiency and efficiency equals being able to make something really beautiful without, you know, the cost of like a piece of artwork, which is what some of these things are.

**[0:24:07.6] DC:** You can also change or rethink what goes on the inside because you don't have to be married to the static pages anymore, you can print, you can customize, you could personalize. The finishing doesn't care either, is the point. Just like it doesn't care on the PDF, how many you may customize, as long as you're within the parameters of the trim, it will pick up what needs to get married into that. It's crazy.

I mean, I sit there fascinated sometimes by how the cameras can read things that fast and sort things off to where they need to go and put them in the right envelopes, and in this case, they're putting them in the right book covers it's – which could say, "This is Deborah Corn's book." "This is Noel's book," you know? My insurance benefits are different than your insurance benefits because we don't have the same ones.

The finishing equipment doesn't care, it just knows take these pages and bind them here, take these pages and bind them there. It's freaking amazing. Okay, David, I cut you off, go ahead.

**[0:25:16.2] DD:** Yeah, it's becoming very standardized, isn't it? It has to be standardized for robotic equipment and that's kind of the direction we're going in. I mean, from the things that I've seen over the last year or so, you know you need an operator but who is loading the paper? Well, the robots loading the paper and the press times and the make-readies have become shorter and shorter because as you say of the cameras and the readings and getting everything, you know, ready to go with the first few sheets that come off. So, now, what are you wasting? Ten sheets.

But you know, a funny thing, maybe about 20 years ago, I would say to everybody, you come up with a new means of binding and you'll be a multimillionaire because back then, we had stitching, perfect binding, wiro, spiral binding, and the screws, you know, the Chicago –

**[0:26:03.6] DC:** Chicago screws, I love this.

**[0:26:04.7] DD:** Right, but you know, they were only a few ways to bind unless you got into books and then books, as long as they were hand-tooled and such, you can get quite extravagant with. But you know now, you're having all these companies that are coming in and realizing, you know, it's the kind of business I think that you and I have done from the beginning Noel, which is you know, really pinpointed customized work and the machinery now. [cross talk 0:26:33.7] We're addressing a need instead of – equipment.

**[0:26:36.8] DC:** Exactly, so are the finishing manufacturers.

**[0:26:40.4] DD:** Right, they're listening, right, exactly.

**[0:26:41.8] DC:** They're like, "The printers are not going to be printing eight million books a week anymore." They might print eight million books a week but it's not going to be for one customer anymore. It might be for a hundred customers and how are they supposed to deal with that? And by the way, with those hundred customers, you could now have more than one customer on the same sheet that you're printing. It doesn't matter, the cameras will make it correct.

**[0:27:06.0] DD:** Crazy, the innovation, and the innovation is catching up to be far more customized and I'm saying with any piece of equipment that's out there now, any new technology can do the most minute change to it on the fly and will be put into the correct envelope in the end.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[0:27:29.3] 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](https://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 watchlists. Ready for your close-up? Get your Peacock show on air by visiting [ProjectPeacock.TV](https://ProjectPeacock.TV) and request your partnership proposal today. Peacock long and prosper.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:28:21.5] DC:** Noel, I'm going to ask you this question now, how does doing your research and learning about these new applications, new tools to use, how does that give you an advantage in the marketplace?

**[0:28:36.1] NT:** Well, you know, I found out it gives me an advantage after the fact, right? Because I get knee-deep in it, they come in and they go, "No, we want to do this thing." And I just go nuts trying to figure out how we're going to do it and I don't really care how it's been done. I'm just thinking and studying and how am I going to put Humpty together? When Humpty is together and he looks, you know, he's in his finest and he's ready to go clubbing and he looks great, people later go, "How did you – ?"

And so, it inspires creatives to not just do exactly what I did but to not stop, not be annoying, and demand something that's impossible but to work with partners, and I don't just mean David and I. I mean, I love printers, I've worked with some of the biggest ones in the world in my career, it's how I got going, and to get out there and to get in and that's the end of our talk but to go get people inspired to push or to make things that can be made, not what's already been made.

So, I think it's really, really important. So, what I do with it is I get people inspired because once we do it, now there's a whole other world that opens up, right? Because if it's a book that says something and again, we're back to verticals because I do a lot of work for photographers. So, that demand is one thing but then you know I, believe it or not, do a lot of work for large law firms and so forth, so they're doing something else.

It's, I shouldn't say it, what I call boring but they are looking to make their stuff sexy because it's lawyer stuff, it's boring. You know, photographers, the best photographers in the world is just like, "I know that picture, that's amazing." So, to make – you know what I mean? So you can inspire people to use the available technology to do what they want or push it a little bit. I don't know if I answered your question directly.

But I think that once you do it, you need to do something with it and share it. So, the best, like we all have our coolest pile, right? And I encourage people to do that even the clients, show me your favorite samples that – or my clients, over the years they come to me and they go, "Noel," I go, "Oh." Walk into a conference room and there's a pile of crap this big and they go, "Go, let me guess? Well, I love this piece."

But I encourage people to do that, "About this book, I hate the whole book but in here, I love that. And then this piece, see how they've done that? How do we image this and do that?" The good ones drive you when you're like, "Oh, my head is going to explode." But it's out there, right? And you just hit it on the head before, manufacturers with their equipment, they'll do what you're going to use, you know what I mean?

There's a lot of things we could have done in this country to fix problems but if there's no pressure on it to get them fixed, if there's no pressure to do this, well, people like David and I going out and doing stuff and sometimes I don't know how we get to the end, to the finish line, but when we do and someone sees it, they're like, "Well, there's a market for this." And we're just doing it because I think we're listening really hard, and are both the kind of people that want to please.

We're not trying to show off. We want to go, "Well, yeah. Well, let's try, I got an idea." And I know that's not practical for somebody with you know, half a million dollars worth of notes with X kind of equipment and they want to run it and pay their bills, keep their electric on, right? But I think you have to push the envelope and you have to push your clients to push you.

New equipment is opportunity as well. So, you see a new piece of equipment, I'm going to go back a few years when the digital foil first came out. Well, only a few handful of printers knew what digital foil was if you were lucky enough to be associated with one of those printers, that's

number one. Number two is, where do you get the tools to begin to show that to the creatives? You know what we did is we were a salesforce of three and we just tried to hit everybody at one time to at least introduce it to them and hopefully, their next design or whatever they were designing will come back.

So, it really has a lot to do with how we're going to push it in the market. I don't necessarily, you know, I listen to designers and what they want but I also tell them what I want as well and that leads into possibly a new direction, maybe using a new piece of equipment. How else are you going to be able to get on it unless you are helping to push it, to create the excitement?

**[0:33:11.8] DD:** A hundred percent. Yeah, generally I want to hear, "You know, don't tell me what to do." Just forget that I do anything. Don't tell me what to do because I am not going to tell you how I do it because I don't really care for you to know and you don't care. Just tell me though what it looks like, what it feels like, what it smells like, what do you want it to do, and then it's up to us to go do it, right?

You know, because you'll talk for three minutes and explain what you did and they go, "Oh, okay, I don't understand but it's beautiful." But yeah, I was going to think something else but I forgot and I didn't mean to cut you off but you're a hundred percent right, you have to hear what's possible in your mind and then go try to figure it out but I don't know, that envelope is meant to be pushed.

And the other thing really fast that I do and I do it more with crazy printing ink on paper is I do a lot of playing on my own and testing. I get different papers from different mills. I'm fortunate enough to have a pipeline of amazing content from some of the best photographers in the world, "Hey, I'm making some of this, just give me some of this, give me some of that, give me." And I go in and I try different things, you know what I mean?

I try to print it different ways on different substrates and then do what you're not supposed to do, you can do that with finishing in all the other equipment as well, and that you also get to find out does it costs a little money. Well, sure. I mean, I get paper from the mills, if you're working with printers they'll go, "Yeah, sure. I'll give you a couple of hours of press time." Because they get to



figure out, you know, they get to see new things too, and if you don't try, you don't know because as someone says, you don't know what you don't know.

**[0:34:40.2] DC:** I'm going to go back to Project Peacock for one more second. When we used to do the agency visits, I used to bring samples of Scodix for everybody, and some people knew what it was. This is you know, back in the day, it was like 2018 or something like that, and some people knew what it was and some people didn't, and most of the time, I was actually met with a little bit of aggression that it's not specifically related to Scodix because they had never used it.

But in general, they're feeling that, "Once you start adding embellishments, it's going to be too much money, and we already can't, you know, get anything we want to get done with the clients, and why are you showing us things that we can't do?" Right? And I would say because you still want to be the first person who tells your clients about something that they're not doing because if you're the second person to tell them, why do they need you?

So, my pitch is always, "Whether or not your customers are going to use it, you can say put it away in your inspiration draw and maybe one day, we'll be able to use it but I wanted to make sure you knew it was out there because the opportunity might arise and I don't want you to not know and someone else tells you. I want to be the one to tell you." If that makes sense, yeah?

**[0:36:15.2] NT:** Yes.

**[0:36:16.3] DD:** I feel anxious when I hear something new. I have to begin to talk to people about it. Being able to talk to creatives, designers on that leads to new ideas. Being able to printers about it might have them include a piece of machinery on their next round of funding and such. So, you never know where that's going to go. It benefits everybody.

**[0:36:43.8] DC:** Absolutely.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

**[0:36:47.0] NT:** NT: Hi, I'm Noel Tocci, founder of Tocci Made. The printing industry has changed quite a bit, and I've learned a lot since I joined my brother's small but mighty printing company in

Newark, New Jersey, back in 1980. Over the years, while focusing primarily in the design and creative communities, I've come to understand and believe wholeheartedly that powerful, effective, and impactful print communication always lives at the intersection of great design, appropriate materials, and thoughtfully curated execution. Making beautiful work is a journey from concept, or idea, to desired result. Tocci Made is here to help you find your way and create work that is not only effective but something you can be proud of. Head to [toccimade.com](https://toccimade.com) and find out how we can help.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:37:32.4] DC:** And also, the people you speak to might not be able to use that technology now but they can use it later on and also, they have conversations with other people who don't work in their companies. Maybe they're like, you know, they're talking to a colleague at an event or an Advertising Production Club of New York meet-up or something, and they're like, "Oh, I just something or heard about something that could do that exact thing."

"I couldn't do it but it sounds perfect for this project. Call this person who told me about it." That's who the referral is going to be to, not to go on the website and do some random search, not at that point. At that point, you have trusted people, word of mouth, and all of that other you know – that which being the strongest recommendation, at least in my opinion. Okay, last question, gentlemen, and we'll start with David on this one.

What is your advice for printers to educate and foster collaboration with the creative community? We've touched upon this a little in our conversation but let's just encapsulate it as a final call to action.

**[0:38:39.2] DD:** Right. Well, you know the first thing is, you know, to think of the type of equipment that you're going to get that's going to be new equipment and what that equipment is capable of doing and for the sales reps for these printing companies to get out there and to have conversations. These conversations lead to new ideas as well and it also might lead to, "Wow, this company can now do it this way."

“Let’s change our design, let’s begin to gear it to what’s coming down the road.” I think a lot of what’s happening in the sales industry is that they’re – reps are just talking about their equipment and what their equipment is capable of doing, but to begin to speak about what is coming in the future, what capabilities are, just starts new conversations. As far as designers are concerned, well, we have to be the people who are introducing it to designers.

I think very rarely will a designer come to us and say, “I want to use a particular piece of equipment.” I think they have to know about it first and I also think that, you know, we need to plant seeds. These seeds, I mean, this industry is changing so fast. It’s changing so fast that unless you get information out now, get your clients active into – in that information, it’s going to pass them and they’re going to be playing catch up on the backside or there’s going to be another company, another design firm that knows about the technology and is going to win the bid for that advertising or whatever that print campaign is because they didn’t know the information.

So, information, anyway that you can get it, is important. Having conversations between designers and printers is really important, and also, you know, if you have the opportunity to speak with manufacturers directly and just have an overview of what’s coming down the road and where to apply it and who to introduce that technology to.

**[0:40:41.3] DC:** Noel?

**[0:40:43.9] NT:** So, I was going to start at the end to give you an example but, really quickly, I mean, this is really my career is with designers. Early on, I wasn’t in it and I’m not going to make it too long-winded if that’s possible for me but I realized I had a creative side, and all my print buddies back and starting in 1980, you know they were all making a lot of money and they would sit in a restaurant everyday drinking and making deals and going to –

I go, “This isn’t printing” and I was the guy to go, “Tocci’s crazy.” I would take stuff – and I’m talking about before computers. I would talk to – take stuff that shouldn’t have been done. I know you’re laughing because I’m getting off on a tangent.

**[0:41:18.3] DC:** No, I'm laughing because you're like a mad scientist over there. We're on video, you're right, you're scratching your head, you are – it's –

**[0:41:25.5] NT:** Past story, no names, and this is how it was, and I'm going to tell you where we are today what I'm about to do in September and I think it's the answer. So, I suppose have been 1986 or '87, I did a lot of work for Prudential and in those days, Prudential had their own printing shop in New Jersey. There was a guy there, old school, finger missing, he was an amazing printer and those are the good guys.

He had a printer and he goes, "Oh, get in here, I need to see it." So, I came in and I go, I go, he had in those days they were Bainbridge boards, right? There were no disks, right? He was holding a huge job, like a book for like kind of an annual book for Prudential, which I've done for them, and I go, "What's up?" And he goes, "Yeah, take this job." I go, "Well, I don't understand." We're standing next to a brand new two-million-dollar HEIDELBERG.

Well, I'm not going to do anything different than you are. You know what he said to me? "This job is too stupid to print." And it was that moment when designers started to push the envelope. I mean, it was all kinds of crazy stuff going on and it was all photo-mechanical in those days, and I bet get buried in the design community because creative thought is intuitive. Equipment is binary. It's on or it's off, you know what I mean?

What do you want, honey? I'm going to print it and back then, you know, they didn't – designers and I can say this, I'm going to have to tell you, the printers would go, "She's crazy. Forget about it, honey. Have a Danish." You come to sign a sheet. And you know, she'd go, "Well, what do you think? You have to sign one of these?" And they go, "Well, I think it's good but what if..." And they go, "Oh, I didn't know that. Well, next time, go ahead, let's go, have another Danish, goodbye."

And then, the designers they won't listen to me and I found the design community to be really smart, well-educated, and you know, and it went from there when I realized I want to be that guy in the middle, that conduit, right? Almost like an interpreter because I was fascinated with what was possible and the designers really weren't dangerous, they were just smart, and they just never stopped.

But the other thing that's not happening is that, and you touched on it, just the printing companies and the salesforce are not embracing and educating them about what's possible. I mean, I have a big client, I've done this for a number of years, they have all new people. They're not big. It's probably seven designers, three account managers, they keep designing this crazy stuff that you can't necessarily be done and the client buys into it, and I've got to get it done.

For some of the top brands in the world, they go to three printers, they got three different kinds of specs. So, I'm taking them and I've done this before in September to three print shops, they are going to get this printer van, I'm going to get paid for the day. I mean, I used to teach, right? At NYU and the design schools, we're going to have a little curriculum and then we're going to take them into the print shop, the designers, and show them.

The first thing we do is go into prepress and go, "Watch what happens with your files. That thing you've designed, you know, all backlit and shiny, fake comps and everything else, and we're going to go through three kinds of shops." We're going to do letterpress and all that kind of stuff and then we're going to do, you know, a traditional offset shop and talk about prepress and how we do it, and then we're going to do the bells and whistles with events because they do events.

And they're begging me to get their people because they just keep designing in a vacuum, and so for the print salesmen out there, for some of these printers who do a lot, they don't – you're right, David's right, they talk about equipment. They shouldn't care, designers, how it's getting done. They want to care that it is possible and that they're creating something that fits right into what's available.

And if these printers got in there and educated a little bit and got them excited and inspired, not showing them something that was done by a paper company in a vacuum, you know, that was hundreds of thousands of dollars, a job that was like a job, but the job you do, David, I bring my own work just to inspire them and they're like, "Well, what did you..." And that's what you want because someone paid for that job, someone specified those materials, someone shows those processes.

It's real, so it's possible. I don't know, I didn't mean to get this fired up but I just get really frustrated and I think since the pandemic especially and I get it, printers, a lot of them have gone

back to just, “We just want to print, I just want to get paid. This is what I do, this machine is \$10,000 a month, I want to run it, I got to run it 9.22 hours today, you know?” And you don’t have to lose money but you do have to have an ear open and you do have to encourage people to come through that door, right? And teach them. Good, bad?

**[0:45:48.6] DC:** Yeah, no, it was amazing. Just to tack on to what you were saying, and again, I’m coming back to Project Peacock because this just happens to have been where this conversation sort of is resonating for me but Project Peacock is about showing print customers the new possibilities with print and new things that they could do and I like to describe it as bringing new ingredients to a chef, right? It doesn’t matter the brand, okay? Here’s a new spice, here’s a trending thing.

Here’s something – here’s something to add a little, like, right now, there’s like a Tajin little explosion. You know, that spice, I’m like, putting it on all my fruit now, I’m completely obsessed with this thing. I didn’t know about it four months ago, I didn’t even know it existed. So, what I used to say to everyone who participated in Project Peacock was put your samples on the table, speak in value propositions, back away, and let the creative people and the production people decide how to use it.

Give them the parameters, give them some information about things they might not know it could do, such as customization, personalization, changing out the imagery. Personalization is not just “Dear Deborah.” It could also be, I get a turtle and you get an owl on your postcard, you know? Or whatever that might be, and then not selling the print but selling the possibilities and sharing some basic information of why you feel it could be of value to their business or a value to the customers that they serve if they happen to be an advertising agency or a designer who has clients, who are a marketing agency.

So, I thought, great advice shared all over this podcast. Thank you, gentlemen, so much. For everybody listening, everything you need to connect with Noel and David are in the show notes. The other thing I want to mention is if you are a funky printer or if you are a manufacturer, you really should be working with people like David and Noel. Let them help you push your equipment.

You know, as long as it's relevant to their world and their business and their clients, we've had these conversations before, Noel just said he has access to an amazing library of images that he can reproduce. I mean, why not call in the experts who will then turn around and tell their people about new possibilities? So, thank you so much, gentlemen. Until next time, everybody, make it with print long and prosper.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:48:29.3] 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](http://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.

[END]

### **Mentioned in This Episode:**

Duratrans: <https://duratrans.com/>

The Print Report: Book Your Future with Stefano Formentini, Meccanotecnica – drupa part 2: <https://podcastsfromtheprinterverse.com/the-print-report-book-your-future-with-stefano-formentini-meccanotecnica-drupa-part-2/>

Meccanotecnica: <https://www.meccanotecnicagroup.com/>

Muller Martini: <https://mullermartini.com/>

Hunkeler: <https://www.hunkeler.ch/>

Hunkeler Innovation Days: <https://www.innovationdays.com/>

Scodix: <https://scodix.com/>

David Drucker on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/david-drucker-b1b5946/>

highresolution printing and packaging: <https://high-res.com>

Noel Tocci on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/noeltocci/>

Tocci Made: <https://toccimade.com/>

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