

[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]

[0:00:38.9] DC: Hey everybody, welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. I am Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador, and I am here with David Drucker, the CEO of Highresolution Printing and Packaging, and Noel Tocci, the founder and president and CEO and everything else of Tocci Made. My two favorite print producers. Hello, gentlemen, and happy New Year. This is our first podcast of 2025.

[0:01:06.5] NT: Happy New Year everybody.

[0:01:08.5] DD: And Happy New Year guys, good to see you.

[0:01:10.3] NT: Great to be back here, seeing your happy faces.

[0:01:14.0] DC: Excellent. We are on video, so we could look at each other and make faces, and of course, you don't see the video because I'm a purist when it comes to podcasts. They are audio programs, just a note to everybody out there. So, this topic is going to breach a little 2024 and breach into 2025, and you know we want to inspire designers to do more with print in 2025 but more importantly, to do impactful and creative things that you're proud of, that your companies are proud of, your customers are proud of, and the consumers love.

So, let's start off with David, what were some of the coolest projects you produced or/and saw in 2024?

[0:02:08.8] DD: A couple of things. Now, we went over in the very beginning of this year a project that I had done for a pharmaceutical company, which is more towards fabrication and not the printing end. The end result is that everything got branded, so there was printing involved in there but as far as fabrication reminds me of the work that I started doing, you know, 30 years ago, where I would get the type of work that nobody else wanted to produce, or they couldn't produce it.

So, I was always challenged with it, you know, and you wake up at 2:00 in the morning with that aha saying, "Now I know how to produce it." You bring the right teams together, and then it gets done. The second project is something that we just recently finished, which was a safari book but it's a very limited book. It's eight copies of this particular book but the thing is I was given free reign.

The only thing I was given is the parameters that it's going to eight different people and all of their iPhone photos, their personal iPhone photos. So, we took those and I began to look at building the book and having textures that would reflect safari, colors that would reflect safari, and I wanted to go after something new, and I wanted to do something that I've never done before.

So, I happen to have a photo, not theirs, mine, that our friend took over a year ago of a family of zebras. When I first saw that photo, it was in color and I transposed it into black and white, and in that, I began to see a multilayer embossing. So, we went and I worked with Metal Magic in

making that multilevel embossing dye, and we pulled paper samples off of it but then I began ask, you know, I began to think about, “Well, we’re on the terrain.”

“The sun’s coming down, what can I do on the cover of the box that holds this book?” And I took the family of zebras and we did a copper embossing using that same dye, and I was warned that we’re more than likely going to break that dye working with it, and my standard answer to that is, “If it fails, I’ll pay for it.” But we at least have to go through the experiment of doing it, and for me what that looks like on the cover is the setting sun in copper.

That led to using copper ribbon, that led to using copper gilding. So, giving the opportunity to help in designing this book, and the end result of going back to old world, you know, there’s nothing really digital in there as far as embellishments. It’s all old world, and to me, that is really the most outstanding piece that I did and I’m currently using that to getting similar type of work where I can speak with the designers and give my influence.

[0:05:30.3] DC: Excellent. Noel?

[0:05:32.8] NT: So, I did a couple of – I did a lot of cool projects I think this year but one that you know, was not going to sound very cool but it really, really challenged my ability to figure stuff out. So, I was contacted and done a lot of work over the years, Miller Noelle, you know, they now own 15 companies of design within reach and all of that and Herman Miller and so forth, and they needed to do a VIP gift.

And you know, when someone calls you and they go, “We didn’t know who else.” Like David said, “We didn’t know who else to call.” I go, “Oh, here we go.” So, they wanted to do this beautiful crafted box, they actually – Herman Miller made the box. It’s a walnut, gorgeous box and we had to laser etch that with our logo but what needed to go in it was 15 little miniature notebooks, four by five, not even, four by five roughly, upright notebooks.

Every one of them represented a different one of the 15 brands. So, that was their logo, it was on the back of the little notebooks, and by the way, every one of the different brands they had their little notebooks sewn, and I’ll get to it about, I thought about 56 pages plus cover, a little soft notebook with quarter binding. So, fabric, natural book cloth, 15 different colors. They sit

proud in this wooden box, so they go straight in, face first, face edge first so what you got is this beautiful, just array of – it is just stunning.

Then, we did a shipper. We did a shipper, I don't know why it's here, I'm not talking about it but we did a shipper to hold it all, and what was really interesting about it is, you know, they wanted to get the mills involved. We got a mill involved, and we weren't doing a lot of them. They were VIP gifts but then we ended up making a couple of hundred extra, which people could then use internally.

At the holidays, they have like an internal store if they want to buy gifts, employees, and stuff, and they're going to be expensive. Then here was the trick, I must have cut four to 600 pieces of paper, I did every bit of paper math I've learned over the years, right? We were going to go, 80-pound text. What kind of finish did we want? Measuring this, and then putting the fabric on it and then fitting in the boxes, is it too loose, is it too tight?

And then, we had to do a poor man's box because they only made so many wood boxes, we did a turned-edge box, and to the point where I was sewing these books and we – all the best-laid plans, we got it to fit perfect but when we started sewing them live, it's like, it's too tight. We'd finally settled on paper, and we switched the paper, I bought the paper twice, they were too tight. So, we were ripping out signatures, while we were making it, like, putting it all together.

So, when you look at it, you just go, "Oh, it's really pretty, but they're just notebooks." But everything about it just fits and works exactly as this brief I got was, and they're very – as you know, they're modernists, right? So, there's not much there, and when I've worked with so many modernists, the best in the world, it's more difficult. You know, when it's stuffed everywhere, you know, it's what I call – it's not a good phrase, cheap and cheerful.

It's like, "Oh, look at that color." I do photographers' work all the time when it's bright and you can't tell if you're off by two percent or I'm not happy with it but when it is just not much there, man, you better be dead on with everything, like if this doesn't fit. So, that's one that I did that it sounds boring, it's a beautiful project, it's very clean. I actually raffled one off in an AIGA event I did. People were like, fawning over it.

The other one is an admiration. I like to think I can do the best books in the world and you know, I always like to – I don't think anybody does a bad job at anything. I don't think there's any bad printers, I don't think there's any bad – I think sometimes, it's not a fit or there, didn't maybe understand the brief or maybe, "Hey, wouldn't it been good if they done this?" I saw a book I'm working, I'll leave names out, with a big photographer we came across, a designer, rather.

He's done amazing books over the years, and he has done books for – and we're going to be working on a couple of books together and we're having a little love fest and I'm going to be doing a really cool book. David, you would like this, I can say – well, we'll talk about it after, I guess, some of the largest motorcycle companies in the world. It's not an American company, it's an English company, and we can talk about it.

But anyway, that's how I met this gentleman. So, he had done books, do you guys know who Rodney Smith is? He's a very famous black and white photographer. They did a book years ago, one of the paper companies called Book of Books, it's a little book, it's all black and white, these stunning photos of like, guys in a bowler hat or a guy in the middle of, you know, English bushes and hedges, you would know the work.

He told me about this book. He – I said, "Oh, I have those little books." He goes, "Yeah, those are the Book of Books but I did a book called *The End*." I ended up buying this book for a lot of money because when he told me about it, he did it up in British Columbia and he goes, "We just – they paid the money." I mean, the book sells for – it's 16 by 20, the book sells for \$800. There's a \$5,000 version of it.

I bought this book and I got to tell you I never do this. I went through it and I'm like, "This is just produced perfectly in every way." There's red and black throughout, there's these divider pages with these psychedelic patterns of red and black, double red, double black, all quad tones, and five colors with PMSs for the black. Just stunning in every way, and I – everything about it, the way it was packaged, the way I opened it up.

And then, I go, "Oh, finally, the case," it weighs like nine pounds, and then there's just this bible paper stamp laying on top for no reason, and then it just inspired me and made me think, "Wow," you know, like, how many books are you going to sell at, you know, \$800, right? But it's

just the idea that the reason I like it is because yeah, it's crazy, and very few people are going to afford to do that but there are things within that.

The production protocols, like I described, I'm running on a five, six, seven, eight-color press. It doesn't matter if double reds, double blacks, little things like that that aren't a big deal cost-wise, or anything else but you can feel it, even though you're not like you, and the three of us would notice, and go, "Well, what is this? Is it you get," you know? You don't know what it is, you're just touching it and flipping and I think that's the goal, and I like that because you're not going to do that.

Everybody can't do an 800-dollar book but they could probably maybe go over the top and do a 60 or a 70-dollar book, and just do some things that are – really make a difference. You can't do everything for that budget but if you're going to do it, not even correctly, go for what you're trying to do. So, those are my two. I always like to look at stuff that ticks me off that I didn't do and then give props and learn from it. Why not, right?

[0:12:27.6] DD: So, does that make you anxious? Does it –

[0:12:30.6] NT: You don't have any idea. I'm so ADD to begin, I'm doing some books. So, for us, we're doing a – I didn't want to get into it, we're doing this little thing and I'm like, yeah, it does make me very anxious. I just – it puts me back to the drawing board but that's a good thing, right?

[0:12:45.7] DC: It's an excellent thing. So, I want to echo something you said, Noel, and then, share a project that I worked on this year. You mentioned something so important that – the more simple something is, the more pristine it has to be, and the best example is I don't care what your level of chef is, they make you try out with an omelet because it is one of the most difficult things to get perfectly, and it's just eggs and maybe a little milk or if they put a little creme fresh in there or whatever they might put in it.

But that is what they test you on because there's no faking it, it's either a perfect omelet or it's not, and there's no bells and whistles and caviar and other things to distract you from the simple cooking of an egg perfectly.

[0:13:37.4] NT: Technique, you know how to do it, you know?

[0:13:39.3] DD: Exactly, exactly.

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[0:13:44.1] 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 and get inspired.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:14:25.6] DC: So, the project that I worked on was called the drupa Wall, #WeAreDrupa for the drupa exhibition that was in 2024 in Dusseldorf Germany. It's the biggest print trade show event in the world and I work with a software company named Antigro Designer, and what would happen is people would take a scan of a QR code, take a selfie of themselves, the software would basically die-cut their head out of whatever background it was in, and it could be multiple people.

Antigro Partner would roll in to give us a press that was die-cutting stickers as they came out of the press. The people who participated got a sheet of stickers and one of the stickers of them went on a giant mural that said, "We are drupa," and the concept was that the tradeshow comprised of people. It's not, we're not just badges to scan, we're not just potential customers and exhibitors but there's people that make up the printing industry.

And to celebrate the community, we created the, "We are drupa" Wall, and it was a great idea. I have to say other trade shows are doing it now, fantastic, we put something out into the world.

The next question we almost touched upon in Noel's answer just now, which is that you know, how can designers, you know, push the boundaries this year and I am going to skip this question but I just want to highlight something you said that's really important.

As a production person and advertising agency, there was, to your most excellent point, there was sometimes we saw things in their full execution and there was no way in hell we could do it but we could do some of the things in that execution, and I think that that is an amazing place to start. Don't just look at something and say, "We could never afford it." Look and see, what is it about? What is it about the thing that you love so much?

What is attracting you to it? And can you reproduce one or two of those things and slowly build upon, you know, your repertoire of techniques, so to speak? That said, what advice can we offer to designers in a way that would completely transform the way that they approach their products? David, let's start with you.

[0:17:02.4] DD: You know, you really need someone like Noel and myself to be the leaders and the educators of the equipment that's out there right now. Designers don't know what abilities are available to them, what pieces of equipment are maybe going to change a design, what's going to influence a design. So, you know, I was in a discussion yesterday with this exact thing of how do you set new trends?

How do you get it out there? And it's really for people like us to approach the designers and let them know everything that's out there. Experiment with ourselves, do some samples ourselves, bring them, show them, plant seeds. It might not necessarily happen with the next project you do with them but I've always found that when you do begin to educate, it does come back, that influence does come back, and then you can begin to build something different.

What it does is it also makes us part of that design team. That conversation of being able to redirect a design or to influence future jobs, and I think that's the most important thing that anybody in the industry, printing industry, can do right now is to show their clients, show the designers what is there that they might not know about because I'm really – I'm going to tell you there's a lot of equipment out there that we're on the cutting edge of that education.

There's no way that they could possibly have that education unless they are on the same webinars that we're on, unless they go to the same exhibitions that we go on, or they have the conversations with the people that we have the conversations with. So, that heavy influence will completely change a future design, and you know, like Noel said before, he was looking in this book and he saw the double reds, and maybe you can have an idea of how to produce it.

But that desire builds up, and you're never going to be able to produce that unless you introduce that first. So, that desire is leading to new techniques that are out there, and you know I think that's what the design community really needs now, and I've tested it. Now, I can tell you that it does come back.

[0:19:37.0] DC: Yeah, I was actually going to say to go to printing events, and I will say to any of the designers listening, if you ever wanted to know what it's like to be treated like a celebrity, walk up to a manufacturer's booth with a badge on from an advertising agency or that says, "Designer" or something, they want to talk to you. They want to understand what you think about the samples that they're showing, what you might want to use it for.

They want to tell you everything that you could use their equipment for, they will be your best friends and I suggest everybody tries to get to at least one once. Noel, advice for designers to push the boundaries with their projects this year.

[0:20:18.5] NT: Yeah. So, at risk of repeating some of the things I've probably droned on about in a bunch of these podcasts but for me, and everything you said, David, is spot on and I'm going towards that, it's really about partnering and trust. You know a long time ago, I made a career out of this, you've got a design, which is intuitive, it's creative thought, and you've got machinery, it's binary, it's on or it's off.

You can't slam on into the other, it's a mess. Always think of us as that conduit in the middle and partnering and trust is so important. I have really only worked at the design community and put myself there as opposed to print buyers because I can please them and I can do, and I think David does better with them probably, they just, you know, they get grinding out, doing the same thing.

“Well, I know all that, yeah, just do this, do that,” whereas in the design community, we talk about – it has to be trust, you know what I mean? It was unheard of for someone to go, “Noel, come in, we – I think it’s a book, I think it feels like this, we have these assets, we like uncoded paper, we love this about this job, we get this much money and this is when we need it.” You know, you got your idea or your concept and in your desired result way on the other end.

But what happens in the beginning, that back and forth, and not arguing but I challenge you to go back and forth and test and think about it, and then, yes, I lean more towards, you know, in my mind, what’s possible, and what David said why you need a good partner is because I don’t think about what I got in my shop and how I’m going to bend what they have to fit me, and there’s nothing wrong with that.

But I’m going to take what they’re doing and go, “Oh, uh-huh, all right. So, let’s put it here or work with it on this machine, or do this and then that.” And I think it’s just terribly important. I’ve been asked this when I speak to designers and when I taught in the design schools, it’s, “Where do I find –” It blows my mind.” Yeah, that’s great, you know what you’re talking about, but where do I find a printer like that? Well, where do you find a significant other? Where do you find somebody, you know what I mean, that you can understand?

So, I think and I am really harping on it but it is so important because, from that partnering and that trust, you will get honesty. What’s critical about this job? What’s it have to feel like? What’s it have to look like? What don’t you like? What went wrong before? What do you – now, we can formulate and pull something together and a good partner will be thinking about how to bring that to life and change mediums as opposed to, “Let me just get it done, we’ll put it on the air, it will be fine.”

Fine doesn’t work and I think the other thing you’re going to need to do and can do with designers and I have done it, get them in a shop. You know, their files are, “Oh, and you don’t understand.” They go, “Yeah, I know, I don’t understand. I’ve been taking your files like this for four years and I love you so I don’t charge you more.” You bring them into prepress with their files and sit down.

“This is Nick,” open their files, show them what you’re going to do, they will watch them repurpose them, you know, to lay them out, and with plates and everything. They go, “Oh,” the lights all come on, from them on because they’re very capable, and it’s not because they don’t know, it’s because nobody is talking with them and working with them and that used to be a barrier that you never crossed, right?

“Oh, no, don’t do that. Don’t talk to the printer, no, just do this.” It’s all in silos, it all has to come together, everybody should be talking. Now, you need control to do that, right? Otherwise, it’s a free-for-all but you know for me, it’s partnering, it’s trust, and it is finding people you can work with that can make. Like, I talked about with the reds and the blacks just – and it doesn’t have to kill your budget.

They need to understand, “Well, what’s really important to you about it, right?” They may go, “Oh, it has to have this.” “Well, your budget is 50 grand, you can’t have all that. You’re not doing a book for a mill where you have to show 90 different things. What’s the most important thing? Is it tactility, you know, is it the inquiry? You know, what about the substrates? Where do they lend their hand? What controls a substrate? What role does substrate play?”

And then be able to show them what the different equipment and what the different paper will do, and you can pretty much hone it in and what you find along the way and what you find near the end is somebody really invested in working with you, not will get your files and going, “It better be like this.”

[0:24:29.9] DC: Exactly.

[0:24:30.7] NT: And you’re pointing at their screen.

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[0:24:33.8] DC: Are you looking to elevate your game, take your bottom-line customer relationships, and events to the next level? Then, I want to work with you. I’m Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. I engage with a vast, global audience of print and marketing professionals across all stages of their careers. They are seeking topical information

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:25:34.8] DC: I mean, there are a whole bunch of jokes about working in advertising, and one of them is how many designers does it take to screw in a lightbulb, and the answer is, who says it has to be a lightbulb? And that is exactly my advice to all the creatives out there and you said it, Noel, I think it's a book. Fantastic, that is such an amazing place to start. I think it's a book but I'm not sure, I'd like to discuss possibilities with people.

I think that looking at things that way and also working with your production people also because what is it ultimately going to be used for, does it need to have longevity, is it something that people want sitting on a desk, or is it going to travel a lot, or be opened and closed, you know? So, there's always things designers want to do because they want to do them and I celebrate that.

Just make sure in the way that you think about the projects that not only is it produced for how you want people to feel about it and how it looks and engage with it but also that it serves the physical purpose it needs. "It has to stick to the wall this way, therefore, it has to be on this type of substrate. Therefore, to get the best results, I should do a little investigation on how the design for that substrate or that printing technique, which may be different than something you guys do."

[0:26:59.8] NT: It is really important that your partner has your back, right? So, as you're saying, "Well, it has to do this." You go, "Well, but wait a minute, it might, okay?" So, you know, and changing the production protocol along the way and also understanding. Somebody could say,

“Well, it has to lay flat.” I hate that term and some people will go, “Oh no, I don’t want it to just lay like a pad. I want it to drape, I want –”

Everyone has their – get that out of them. You know, they may go, “You know, the perfect book, and I have it in my mind how it opens. It needs to open,” but then, they show you something, and you go, “Oh, that’s very different from what I thought, and I may call it something different so it pools, and you know, what inspired you, what do you like?” Because they can’t describe it sometimes and we may call them something different, and it’s just really, really important.

It takes a village and that’s not a bad thing. People think that, “Oh, too much communication, you’re not going to get anywhere.” Oh, you will, you have to have control but you’ll get where you want to go.

[0:27:54.1] DC: Right. I was really fascinated over the holidays by envelopes. I decided that this year was going to be the year I started looking at all the envelopes and seeing if they were different, and I only received one envelope that made me go, “Huh, this is really cool,” and I don’t even think it’s that special. I just haven’t seen it in a long time or I forgot that I knew that they existed but it was a V-flap, I guess, if that’s what you call it.

[0:28:20.1] DD: Euro, yeah, euro.

[0:28:21.5] DC: But it went all the way to the bottom of the envelope, like all the way to the end of it, yeah, it was really –

[0:28:26.7] DD: Yeah, like euro they call that. Also, they call it other things but –

[0:28:29.4] NT: European.

[0:28:29.4] DC: What’s it called? A European flap?

[0:28:32.1] DD: Euro flap is what I call it, yeah, all the way down, right? That’s cool, right?

[0:28:35.0] DC: It was so cool and it doesn't seem to me like it's a big deal to make it although they might have been converted because I've never seen, you know, it's not a standard thing I see coming through my mailbox but I just thought there was one thing that really stood out, you know? So, it just goes back to that there are ways to make little changes.

You know, it's still an envelope but you could just up your envelope, think a little differently about the delivery device.

[0:29:04.1] DD: And somebody probably said, "Whoa, I love that flap." That speaks to our elegance. So, what? It doesn't really matter and it means something to them and look, it stuck out. You get stuff all the time.

[0:29:14.0] DC: Yeah.

[0:29:14.2] DD: And it stuck out, right?

[0:29:15.7] DC: Because most people use regular envelopes, they don't think about you know, what – during COVID with the envelope, when there was an envelope shortage, I was telling everyone to use coin envelopes. I would open that thing in two seconds getting a weird-shaped envelope in the mail. David?

[0:29:31.2] DD: The worst thing a designer could do especially now is to design whatever they're doing and then talking to their printer. Now, this is how things change, when your printer is part of your team, talking about just those envelopes, there are so many colored, non-coated stocks that are out there right now that we used to have in Manhattan the vendors knock on our doors and come in and give us a little education on the new stocks.

But that doesn't happen anymore because we're not in an office. Most are not in an office, most are all over the United States planted in their home, just like we are now. To look at a project, to have a discussion of a project right at the beginning is when we can begin to educate with papers that are out, techniques that we want to use. That might change the whole face of that production and you know how many times, you know, this has been in my past.

I don't allow this to happen anymore, getting a file, and then looking at it and seeing that whatever they've designed is not going to translate. It's dead. You know, I wish I would have three weeks of influence on this project when they first were putting it together. I'm going through that right now, they've already designed it, I looked at it, and I was like, "You know, you're going after high-net-worth individuals. This is not the cover you should be doing."

And they were like, "Well, what are you talking about?" And I said, "Yeah. Well, isn't that the reason why you came to me to begin with?" We're changing the design right now because you know, as we said here, you don't know what you don't know.

[0:31:28.4] DC: But David, that's because of trust and authenticity otherwise they wouldn't have even entertained –

[0:31:33.6] DD: Bingo, bingo.

[0:31:34.9] DC: – changing anything, they would have said, "Excuse me? Do you want this job or not? Next."

[0:31:40.3] DD: Right, they trust you.

[0:31:42.4] DC: So, they totally trust you or they do now.

[0:31:45.3] DD: They need to trust somebody.

[0:31:46.4] DC: If they didn't before.

[0:31:47.6] DD: Because it's a team, it takes a village, that's my point.

[0:31:51.1] DC: It is, and I'm not disparaging printers but they are salespeople. So, sometimes, they're like, "Sure, we could do it, we could, we'll do whatever you need us to do," and they don't always want to push back and say, "There's a better way you could do it." Sometimes, that's because they don't have the equipment that would be the better way and sometimes it's just because they don't want to rock the boat.

They just want the order and they want to, you know, honor whatever relationship they have with that customer but that's why it's up to the designers and anybody who buys print to know what's out there or at least try to figure it out, and if you can't listen to podcasts like these, go to industry events and there's certainly, I can if you need any help or guidance, just find me and I will point you in the right direction to get what you need.

Okay, last question but it's my favorite question of the podcast. This year if you could create a dream collaboration with either a designer or a brand, who would it be, and what would you want to produce? Both of you are looking pensive, who wants to take it first? And the winner is Noel.

[0:33:00.6] NT: Yeah. So, I actually kind of had this conversation this morning and it goes hand in hand with our previous conversation about wanting to maybe change or do more of the things I really like. I call it a – it's a cleaner level, right? More consulting and self-worth and I've been getting into doing some things and we're starting to publish for people and actually making some books that we're going to publish.

And I was talking with one of my long-time clients and photographer and we talked about creating, "I don't even really want to get into it and I think I'm going to do it," making what's not out there. In other words, what would I love to see? You know, I said earlier I was influenced by this book. Well, I love publications, I love magazines but I'm thinking what can we make. I mean, I know enough people, photographers and artists and architects.

And you know, we're going to make something I think I'm going to get behind it that will, you know, there'd been some great magazines out there that have filled, not a void but got people like the three of us and designers and print producers, you know, just going, "Whoa, wow," not like a bible but buy to be inspired and just to make stuff. For every job that I do that I love, it's not my job.

So, I go, "Oh, well, that wouldn't be my choice." And I am starting to think about, "Well, what would my choices be?" If I had a dream collaboration with a couple of people I know that are dear friends at this point, like a world-class photographer and a writer and what will we put

together? What will we make just to make? And that's what I'm doing I think this year and you know certainly, I don't want to lose money or anything.

But I just want to make something beautiful and useful with all the toys but I think it's more than that. It's we don't get to choose often all the different pieces, right? The big three for me are design, you know, appropriate materials, and carefully curated execution. I always talk about it and get everybody to make sure you're on board with all three, you know? Because lousy paper looks like lousy printing. It looks like, you know, a lousy designer.

But I want to put my money where my mouth is I think and I had a conversation this morning and like, "Are you really ready to do that?" I thought, "Well, what would we do?" And I'm not going to get into it but it was a really interesting take and I thought, "What the heck, why not?" And because everybody else is having the fun, right? People come to people like David and I to make their dream of really cool stuff, or live the journey.

I kind of want to be in that journey, I want to do something, and I always thought, "Oh, well, I can't make anything." We're making things for 44, 45 years. Yes, I can. I want to change my hat a little bit, you know what I mean? And I think that would be interesting. So, to kind of answer the question, so that's my –

[0:35:46.4] DC: You did with a lot of questions about what you might make, which was fine. My question was what will you make?

[0:35:51.7] NT: I know what I'm going to make, it's just more of a – well, number one, I don't want you to hold me until June.

[0:35:53.3] DC: That's okay, I like that it's a secret, Noel, this way we could talk about it later in the year.

[0:35:58.2] NT: Well, you know what I mean.

[0:35:59.2] DC: Of course, I do. You actually inspired me. I wrote down an idea that I am not going to share with anybody on this podcast, you know?

[0:36:04.9] NT: Going to make some stuff.

[0:36:06.4] DC: He's going to make some cool stuff, everybody.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[0:36:10.8] 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 and find out how we can help.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:36:56.1] DC: David?

[0:36:56.9] DD: Yeah, I've been thinking about this a great deal, and it isn't with any particular client. It's with clients in general, and the pandemic really changed the face of my business, or what I was doing prior to the pandemic and what I'm doing now because I kind of got out of a cocoon. I was very centered, you know, dyslexic, ADD, in my office –

[0:37:20.3] DC: These are my vendors, these are my projects, these are my papers, yeah.

[0:37:24.2] DD: In Manhattan.

[0:37:24.9] DC: Noel was like that too.

[0:37:26.9] DD: Yeah, and I've learned over that time that I have a desire as well. So, I began to speak to the right people about, "What else are you doing?" I mean, we could print, you know,

your brochures, or we could print your identity or if it's a startup, you know everything that's involved with there but I got into doing a lot of signage, metal work, just things that pique my interest, and I can begin to ask questions.

And maybe push the envelope a little bit in that, and you know they say, you know, be careful what you ask for but in that, you have to do that, you have to put it out there or you won't receive it, and you know just this morning when I was talking to a corporation that's completely redoing their identity. They have offices all over the United States and we talked about metal signage with lighting in the background, not just the printing that goes with it.

So, that is the kind of thing that I'm going to begin to look at the whole picture. The reason being is that I started working with a client, she had her work done in Italy. It wasn't done in Italy, it was done by a broker in Manhattan who said it was done in Italy. All the things, the shopping bags, everything came together and nothing looked consistent, and I said to her, "I don't want anybody touching your work anymore because once I start influencing what we're doing, it's going to become my work too."

And in doing that, that was like an "aha moment" and that was maybe about four months ago, and then, that's when I began to get in the safari book, which I had total control of the direction it was going, and then now, we're talking about you know, doing this light-up metal signage and it's not from one location, it's from many locations, and in me learning that, why am I educating myself if I can't move that forward?

So, for me, looking into this year, I'm going to do the things that I really, really want to do, and I'm going to be boisterous and speak up about what I want to do. I think that's the key too, is a lot of times, you know, you sit there and you say, "Yes-yes-yes." And they give you their work and you're like, "Yes-yes-yes, I'll do it." But if I can influence that, if I can help draw in something that's far greater, "Well, hey, man, that's great for me," you know?

[0:40:05.2] DC: Yeah.

[0:40:05.7] DD: I want to leave a mark in a different way.

[0:40:07.9] DC: If you're able in April, I'm going to the International Sign Expo, it's in Las Vegas this year, it rotates around. It is one of my favorite shows every year, especially since you know, I'm not usually immersed in signage like that but it is a whole different animal on that side of the printing industry, and electronics and all of that stuff is – plays a major role, it's really cool. If you can't go, I'll be – I always do a social media takeover for the organization.

So, you could follow me on social media and see what's going on there. So, for me, this is very simple, I have the same three answers. I've had the same three answers because I've never worked on any of these projects. The first one is the Hammacher Schlemmer, and that is a real name of a thing, catalog. I'm not sure if they're still around but they used to have the coolest things that literally only millionaires could afford.

Like, this was a store for people who, you had no idea what to get them, so you got them like a little Mercedes that was actually remote controlled that like, animals could drive around in. I mean, it was just crazy stuff but it was just – because it was so crazy, it had to have been fun, especially since you got to be around the products. The other one is the Sotheby's Catalogue and if any of you worked on that, I'm going to be very jealous, only the retouching, Noel.

I want to be involved with the retouching of those freaking items in that catalog. It is just so pristine, I can't even speak about it, that's how I – just one day, like just once, I just want to be involved with it.

[0:41:53.6] NT: Put a lot of work into that, it's how you should –

[0:41:55.4] DC: Oh, my God.

[0:41:56.4] NT: You get teams that shoot the antiquities, right? And then you just retouch, retouch, retouch against a masterpiece or something that's priceless.

[0:42:04.7] DC: Oh, my God. Just – it's giving me chills thinking about it, and my Mount Everest of print projects would be to work on the invitations for the Academy Awards. They are crazy.

[0:42:17.4] NT: Cool.

[0:42:18.1] DC: All right, the way that they send them, what's in them, the gifts that come along, and everything like that. I mean, I'd like to – screw that. I'll just be the product tester for everything going in the gift bags. If anybody out there at the Academy, Motion Pictures, arts and sciences needs any help, please, find me. Gentlemen, thank you so much, I really enjoyed our podcast. I always enjoy our conversations.

Everybody should visit David and Noel's website just to see the amazing work that they do and they consult, call them. Get their – you know, hire them for an hour or so, or just you know, get to know them, they are worth knowing. Everything you need to get in touch with them, to get in touch with me is in the show notes. Until next time, everybody, Make It With Print long and prosper.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:43:11.3] 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, 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]

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drupa: <https://www.drupa.com/>

ISA International Sign Expo: <https://signexpo.org/>

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