

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02] DC: This is the true story of two printers who agreed to podcast with me and have their opinions recorded. Listen to what happens when printers stop being polite and start getting real.

[0:00:13] JM: Hi, this is Jamie McLennan.

[0:00:14] WC: And this is William Crabtree.

[0:00:16] DC: And I'm your host, Deborah Corn. Welcome to the PrinterChat Podcast.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:25] DC: Hey, everybody. It's Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador to the printerverse. We are here today with the PrinterChat Podcast. I'm trying not to scream too loud, because my mic is hot. But Jamie the printer, from the GM of Invoke Print and Marketing and Will, the CEO from Tampa.Media and printinginabox.com. Did I say it right that time, sir?

[0:00:54] WC: Yes, yes. Close enough.

[0:00:56] DC: It only took me two days to put the dots and the coms in the right places. What I am referring to is last week, the gentleman and I took a trip to PRINTING United together with a new friend that we call Mobi, which is our mobile radio station that broadcast on PrintFM.com. And we are going to take this episode to recap our journey on the show floor all about Mobi and PrintFM. But let's start there, Will, since you are the proud papa of Mobi.

[0:01:40] WC: Well, so Mobi was one of his nicknames, or Mobros, the mobile broadcast studio is a foldable cart that has been constructed with the notion that it needs to be able to travel on an airplane, so it runs off of batteries that are FAA approved to go on a carry-on. So, two battery packs run a laptop, a mixer, a wireless mic system and a wireless in-ear monitor system. We were able to roll around the show floor completely wireless and conduct interviews and talk to

people and commentate and speculate and have a good old time. It was a learning experience. It was our maiden voyage.

We did encounter some challenges, but nothing that is worth doing comes easy. It was definitely a learning experience and I know how to make it better. Now, we're working on how we make it better and how we structure ourselves better next time as well, so we can do this again many, many times over at many other shows. 2026 we're going to be all over the place, right?

[0:02:49] DC: I hope so. None of it would be possible if you hadn't spent the time and the money to make Mobi and bring him to life. Thank you so much for that, Will.

[0:03:03] JM: The whole process, the Mobi that you guys put together, and Will definitely put together I think was amazing. I was seeing pictures of it and then seeing it in person is just amazing. The CMYK, microphones, everybody just was –

[0:03:16] DC: That was my only contribution, by the way.

[0:03:20] JM: Having the old antenna definitely kept us in people's –

[0:03:24] DC: I'm sorry, Jamie. Who was wearing those antennas again?

[0:03:27] JM: Deborah and Jamie were.

[0:03:29] DC: Oh, because Will refused to wear one.

[0:03:29] WC: And I would not. Not yet. I did not wear the antenna.

[0:03:34] DC: Will refuses to have fun with us, Jamie.

[0:03:37] WC: I don't look good with headbands. It's just a thing.

[0:03:39] DC: Okay, fine. We're going to work on you on that.

[0:03:43] JM: I saw that people sent some pictures of us, which was cool.

[0:03:45] DC: Yes. I saw a bunch today. I wish they were tagging us, because every once a while, I just find one, or somebody tags me and I'm like, "Oh, that was cool." The students were so happy. The Cal Poly people, they posted a bunch. Emily Simon posted. Patrick Wayland.

[0:04:00] JM: Patrick Wayland. Yeah.

[0:04:02] DC: I loved his post. Everybody was so cool. I really appreciate it. Doesn't Ashley Crabtree was with us, too, and I believe, she's got a ton of photos and video to share.

[0:04:11] WC: We got a ton of photos, a ton of video. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Which, what we'll do is I can just have her do a dump to you, Deborah, and you can go through it if you want to start posting stuff –

[0:04:19] DC: Hey, now.

[0:04:20] WC: - right away. Then, we'll do some editing and tying some stuff together and make some cool videos on our side.

[0:04:25] DC: Coolio. Yeah, you could just dump them in our drop box. We have a drop box.

[0:04:29] WC: Yay.

[0:04:30] DC: Okay, so let's talk about the show itself. Jamie, thoughts.

[0:04:37] JM: The show itself is basically what I expected. I mean, it's pretty united. It's very large. There's so many different things to go to. The one thing I thought was interesting that they put some of the major manufacturers in the middle, so you had to go through everything to get there, and that way, you could see more of the show and not have people on the outside, which I thought was good. Canon was in the middle. HP was in the middle. Their PRINTING United booth was in the middle, and a lot of the other major brands. They were went out from there. Around the outskirts, you did have smaller companies, but also some material stuff like that.

You did have to pretty much go up and down every aisle and all around to see everybody. It's not like you could concentrate in one area. The only time I thought was that was the mail hub was in one area, which is interesting. It was like, "You got to see us, mailing hub."

[0:05:24] DC: Okay. I must have missed the mail hub. I don't remember seeing a mail hub. Was it by where Pitney Bowes were?

[0:05:32] JM: The guys with the cloud shirts.

[0:05:33] DC: Oh, yeah. It was by Pitney Bowes and Bluecrest area.

[0:05:38] JM: Just postal stuff in one area at the time.

[0:05:41] DC: That's when we first walked in and Pitney Bowes had – I mean, Bluecrest basically turned off our –

[0:05:45] JM: Yeah, turned off our Wi-Fi.

[0:05:46] DC: - podcast, because all the stuff added there. Yeah.

[0:05:49] JM: Yes. Yeah. But yeah, I was excited. I mean I got to see most of the things I wanted to see, which was cool. I thought it was very interesting just doing it as our podcast roving around. I think I got to see things that I would not go to and got to meet a lot of different people. I felt that was really big. I'm like, I didn't even know about them. Gelato people, amazing. Didn't know anything about them. A couple other companies, Technow, I'm like, they weren't on my radar. Now they're on my radar, stuff like that. It was really cool. I thought that opened my eyes to more of the show than I think, because I had a list of things I wanted to go see and this took me to other areas where I probably would have not visited.

[0:06:29] DC: Will?

[0:06:29] WC: I thought the show was fantastic. The experience of doing it with PrintFM and with the Mobi. It was a lot of fun, right? It was a new experience, because I'm usually trying to avoid talking to people and this is the opposite of that.

[0:06:46] DC: Gazelling through the show.

[0:06:49] WC: It was great to see the reception and how excited people were to see us and to interact with us, and to participate in getting on the radio and wanting to talk about their products and their business and their services and everything else. I had a blast. I got to see a lot of the stuff that I wanted to see, but it was a different perspective of the show, too, where I'm usually, as you call it, gazelling, but I'm running around the show looking at things very bird's-eye quickly, and then going back to review on the things that I want to see. I didn't really have a lot of time for that.

I did go in on Friday. So, Ashley and I did go in on Friday. We went to the whole garment area, which I think the three of us missed most of. We didn't make it back to that corner of the show. I saw some pretty interesting stuff there that was cool. I did make another pass by Sawgrass and refreshed my information and what they had to offer. I'm strongly considering purchasing that system and the Sawgrass system is it's a desktop printer. It does a sublimation, but it also does, it's their own unique material, but it's heat press. Basically, it's DTF, but it doesn't feel as thick as DTF and it's simple step process. You print it, you stick it, you peel it, or you stick it, you heat it, you peel it, and it's a real low entry point of \$2,200. Well, actually, \$2,200 is the high end. That's the expensive printer. You have to have a heat press and all that other stuff, but I've already got all that other stuff, so it's just adding the printer and we're off to the races with another product set. I did make –

[0:08:26] DC: You've got the laser.

[0:08:27] WC: The laser, we went to Trotec. I did like the Trotec booth. I went on Friday on my own and went by Epilog. I'm leaning more towards Epilog over Trotec. I think the Epilog laser moves a lot faster. It seemed just like a more higher quality machine. Price point is about the same as the Trotec, and it does pretty much all the same thing. The only thing it doesn't do is it doesn't do a pass through, but that's because the laser is more powerful. But from what I'm

going to be doing, I'm not really going to be doing anything over the cup bed that the machine allows already anyway.

We'll see. I've already reached out to the person that I met at Epilog. They're already communicating, answering all of my questions. Jamie you forwarded me something that was really cool. I made it through the whole show without my badge getting scanned once. I didn't get scanned one time.

[0:09:23] JM: Yeah, I got scanned twice, which is weird. It was –

[0:09:26] WC: But one of them had to have been. Unless, they just hit everybody. But you forwarded me an email. What was the company that you forwarded me the email from?

[0:09:33] JM: Oh, you're going to make me remember now?

[0:09:35] WC: We liked it at the show. It was something that we got really excited about. I want to shout the company out.

[0:09:40] JM: It was the Photo Tex material.

[0:09:42] WC: Photo Tex. Yes.

[0:09:43] JM: We use that all the time, so it was like nothing new to me. We use it all the time. I know you would thought it was cool.

[0:09:48] WC: Yeah, I don't use that material. I've never actually put hands on it. You sent me that email that they sent out, where they're offering sample rolls. I already hit them and requested sample rolls from them, so we can get that material in and start testing it and experimenting with it. Then the Xante that I've been on the fence about whether or not I was going to purchase. Had a great conversation with their CEO. Really excited about that, and I think we're going to proceed with purchasing that. We're definitely buying a laser, and I think we're going to move forward with that Xante as well.

[0:10:19] DC: How cool.

[0:10:19] JM: Very cool. That was a cool piece of equipment. Yeah.

[0:10:23] DC: I know. I just walked to the gentleman standing next to him like, "Excuse me. Can you help me with this machine?" He's like, "Well, sure. I can." Then turns out, he's the CEO. Bonus. That was awesome. Well, couple of observations from me. First of all, it made me so happy that you guys got to see firsthand that people know who you are from the podcast, and that they like, the printers like this podcast. I know the three that they listen to the most, but this is one of them. They like me and Matthew and they like the Making it With Print the most, because it's most in the wheelhouse.

I usually just report back to you that people have been, say nice things about our podcast, but you got to hear it in person and I like that a lot. Also, that they were calling you Will the printer, and Jamie the printer. That always gives me a little thrill. The second thing is that this is the first time I have ever walked a show with two printers. It was enlightening to me. It's the same reason I used to import Jamie to Graph Expo and be the, for lack of a better term, the bullshit media, but that's not what this was about at all. This was more about the fact that I got to hear real printers asking real questions about equipment.

Also, I wanted to say that we stopped and we spoke to Mark Subers, one of the days at the show. First, I want to give a shout-out to PRINTING United for allowing us to roll Mobi on the floor, as long as we didn't have any wires. So, thank you for giving us a space to do that. Also, what I mentioned to him is that this year before the show, I had, I don't even know, more than 20 emails from the exhibitors inviting me to go to the show, giving me a discount code. I will tell you, the honest truth is that when they started coming in, I was like, "Oh, my God. Nobody must be going to the show. Everybody's so desperate. Why are they sending all of this stuff?"

But then, I came to realize that that's not what was happening. What was happening is that for the first time that I've ever seen, collectively, everybody was helping to promote the show and not just relying on the show to promote the show and usually, what happens is you get information about what's only in my booth, in the booth, and come to see me, and they either

get the list from the show, or they're just mailing generic emails out. I think that that really helped bring people to the show. I'm very happy about that.

The show is reporting over 30,000 registered attendees, so I pinged over and I was like, just a quick question, because everybody has to register, so why are you qualifying it with registered attendees? I was like, does that include the exhibitors? Yes, it does. Because the exhibitors have to register, too. But still, that is a lot of people that was at their show and –

[0:13:44] WC: That's 30,000 sets of eyeballs, so 60,000 eyeballs that had to have seen our signage, or logo, or somewhere at some point in time in that show. Just saying.

[0:13:56] DC: Really? I wonder how that happened.

[0:13:58] WC: I have no idea.

[0:14:00] DC: Oh, by the way, I have a trunk full of lawn signs, FYI, for PrintFM. They're still in my trunk. But yes, we printed lawn signs and we put them all around the Orange County Convention Center. It was entertaining for me at least, when people would say, "Hey, I saw your sign outside." Oh, really? Isn't that lovely. I drove the getaway cart. I'm only going to admit to that. I'm not going to admit to wherever else might have been putting signs outside.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

[0:14:29] DC: Girls Who Print provides women in print and graphic communications with information resources, events, and mentorship to help them navigate their careers and the industry. As the largest independent network of women in print and a nonprofit organization, our global mission to provide resources, skill-building, education, and support for women to lead, inspire, and empower has never been stronger or more accessible. Through our member platform and program, as well as regional groups forming around the world, your access to Girls Who Print is just a click away. Gentlemen, you are most welcome to join us as allies. Get involved and get empowered today. Link in the show notes.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:15:16] DC: Okay, so other than that, I want to go back to this size thing, because I'm not thrilled about the size of the show. I don't see why it has to be that big. I really do not. Put the business aspect of it to the side, although most people are going to say, "But Deborah, it is a business, so you can't put that to the side." But, let's just talk about maybe it's because I focus on user experience more than money, which my accountant's not so thrilled about, by the way. But I just think that there were so many of those little booths and so many of those people were not engaging with anybody. Just to have to walk down every aisle to find the five or six things that – You had a list even though we were going everywhere. If we weren't together, you would have hit those things. They weren't necessarily close to each other. With limited time that printers have out of the office, I just think it could be easier to navigate. Go Jamie.

[0:16:25] JM: I have a prospect, almost customer, we're working on some stuff. He flew down on Thursday only. Spent five hours there. We were texting each other, "I'm at this booth. We're doing a podcast." "We'll be here, we'll be at this booth next." We didn't catch up, because he had things to see. He only had five hours. But he also said the same thing. He's like, "It was giant." It's the first time he's ever been. He's like, "I didn't realize how big it was and that I didn't have enough time." I was like, "I told you that. Tried to warn you the week before." I said, look, it's going to be giant. You're going to get to one area and not be able to find the next where you want to go, so make sure you map it out.

Then he was just like, he was a little upset, because he wanted to see more – he does a little bit more small run offset and stuff like that. He's like, "I didn't see any." It was interesting. He's like, "I wanted to see more presses." I'm like, well, there was a ton of presses there. There was roll presses, there was flatbed. He's like, "There was a ton of flatbed and roll presses." He's like, "But I was looking for –" I'm like, "What other kind of presses?" Because he was like, "I went to Canon with somebody. I didn't see any of their cut sheet digital presses. Saw a lot of their bigger stuff. For smaller printers, he's like, I didn't see some of the things that I need and I was looking for." I was like, I wasn't looking at that, so I didn't pay attention to that. But I guess so. Like I said, HEIDELBERG had a really cool piece with Canon. They're joined together. It was a digital press. It did a little bit of different sizes.

[0:17:43] DC: Digital and in inkjet, they had too.

[0:17:45] JM: Yeah. But he's like, "That was, I don't know." I think he was looking more for 12, 18, 13, 19, cut sheet digital, and I don't think he was finding that. I'm like, well there's a niche for that then. Some of these people should bring it back. He was upset that HP didn't have the Indigo, because he really wanted to see an Indigo. I'm like, you have to go to the place in Georgia, but I thought they should have had an indigo there, too.

[0:18:08] WC: From a size standpoint, right? From, you have the convention center. The cost of the convention center is the cost of the convention center. They have to pay that, regardless of how many booths they sell or not. When they have to decide if they're only going to do the north hall, the south hall, or both halls, right? Because you can divide the room.

I actually disagree. I think that the size is fine. I think that a lot of the little booths that we see, they don't do a good job at creating an experience. We saw a lot of people just hanging out on their phones, not trying to engage with people as they walk by. Really, just there to be there. Didn't document anybody. Not calling anybody out. But if you had a booth and you had a 10 by 10 at that show and you didn't have a bunch of scans, or a bunch of leads, or a bunch of anything from that show as being a person that didn't attend, but you had employees attending, just know that they were sitting on their phone the whole time and not really doing anything.

[0:19:13] DC: Totally. Even as we were walking by, literally looking everybody in the eye.

[0:19:18] WC: They're trying to engage them, and then look back down at their phone. Booth space there is not inexpensive. We looked into getting a booth. I wouldn't say it's expensive, but it's definitely not inexpensive. It's a good amount of money, especially when you consider you have to pay someone to bring in all your stuff. I saw a sign that you couldn't even use a dolly. You're not allowed to bring anything in on a dolly. You can only carry things in your hand. If you need wheels, you have to pay their staff to haul it in for you.

[0:19:44] DC: You also have to be a member of PRINTING United to –

[0:19:47] WC: You have to be a member of PRINTING United, correct.

[0:19:48] DC: - to exhibit.

[0:19:50] WC: Kudos to the PRINTING United crew for – I mean, I only saw a couple of empty booths. It was pretty much a sold-out show from an exhibitor standpoint. There was a lot of good use of space, and I think there was a lot of waste of space. The waste of space, I think, again, goes back to maybe not the right demographic for the booth that was there, not the right people in the booth working the booth. But that stuff was scattered around. I think it was Subers who said something about like, the boulders and the rocks. Having a good spread of you've got the big guys and not too far away from little guys, where instead, in years past, you'll have all the big booths in one area and then all the little 10 by 10s in one other area. You always call it Deborah –

[0:20:36] DC: The flea market.

[0:20:36] WC: The flea market. Yeah, yeah, yeah. There wasn't really the flea market section –

[0:20:39] DC: Somebody else called it the America's spice market today.

[0:20:43] WC: Right? You didn't really have that at the show. It was far more scattered and spread out. To your point, to your friend that only had five hours, it's a big amount of space and you definitely need to map out what you want to see. But we went on a Friday and granted, Friday, there was not nearly the number of attendees there, so it was easier to move around. But Ashley and I, we didn't walk down every aisle, but we walked from the south side, the south end to the north end, and then we made our way over to Scodix and said hi to Pat, because she was doing an interview over there.

We bounced around a good amount of the real estate of the show. If you have a plan and you have a limited amount of time, even though it is big, you can definitely hit everything that you need to hit. But if you're there pulling a Walmart browse and you want to just meander up and down the aisles, yeah, you're going to need a little bit more time.

[0:21:34] JM: You need all three days. Yeah.

[0:21:37] DC: From my perspective, I think it should be easier for the attendees to find things. I used to like, in Graph Expo, they had all the wide format people were over there, and all the,

you know. It's almost like [inaudible 0:21:52] innovation days. Everybody's just right next to each other, and you could literally lean over and ask the other manufacturer what the speed of their press is, while you're talking to another manufacturer about the speed of their press. I mean, it is literally just an open area. I mean, there's not even walls. There's just little fabric dividers between the booths.

Even in a grocery store, just think about it like a grocery store. The items that work together are in one area, so I don't have to go to one side of the show, then go all the way to the other side of the show to get my information, and then go all the way back to – I'm just suggesting that it definitely has to be a balance, where if somebody is a customer of the trade show, meaning that they're getting a booth, that they can't just put everybody in the little booths in a little corner. I totally understand that. But I think it could be organized better, because my understanding is here's a map, where do you want your booth, regardless of what's around you.

[0:23:04] WC: I think it is to a degree.

[0:23:04] DC: I just think that makes it not as user-friendly for an attendee as it could be. We had the app and we had the map. How freaking long did it take us to find Nina's booth and Graphco's booth. Graphco was literally in front of the door on the south side, and we could not find it. With maps –

[0:23:27] WC: It was a good size booth. Yeah.

[0:23:29] DC: I'm just saying.

[0:23:29] JM: That's good bringing up food and water.

[0:23:32] DC: Yes. Yeah.

[0:23:33] WC: It's tough though, because if I'm thinking from the perspective of – for myself, right? If I'm offering software, and do I really want to be right next door to somebody else that offers the same thing that I do? If you're a finishing –

[0:23:47] DC: With the area.

[0:23:49] WC: Yeah. But if you're Graphic Wizard and Duplo, they're direct competitors, they offer the same equipment, they're all finishing equipment, I agree from an attendee standpoint, I would like to go and see all of the finishing equipment in one section, go see all of the wide format stuff in one section, all the digital cut sheet presses in one section. But from an exhibitor standpoint and looking at it from that point of view like, "Do I really want to be next door to my competitor? Do I really want the attendees to be able to ask me questions and then walk across the hall and ask the same questions?"

You have to find the balance of what's in the best interest of the attendee against what's in the best interest of the exhibitor. In the grand scheme of things, from a show standpoint, they're probably going to lean more towards what's in the best interest of the exhibitor, because the exhibitors are the ones that pay the bills. The attendees don't even usually pay to get in.

[0:24:38] DC: Yeah. Well, without the exhibitors, there's no attendees. Without the attendees, there's no exhibitors.

[0:24:41] WC: And vice-versa. And vice-versa.

[0:24:43] DC: Yes. I get it. It's a conundrum.

[0:24:44] WC: I don't disagree with you. I think that there's –

[0:24:46] DC: I don't disagree with you either. I wish that we could just figure out a happy balance somewhere.

[0:24:49] WC: Yeah. I think the way they numbered things was weird. You skipped over.

[0:24:53] DC: Oh, my God. What could we find –

[0:24:54] WC: There was some places where they had the pennants in the ceiling with the numbers of what rows they were in some areas. In some areas, they didn't.

[0:24:59] DC: Except in the middle.

[0:25:00] WC: And then they skipped numbers. They could definitely make it more user-friendly for sure.

[0:25:07] JM: One of the problem with that was I think as some of the booths were massive and they took up two rows, so you're going down a row and you're like, "All right, I got to go around this booth." And you're like, oh, there's a row there and there's a row there. Which one we had. Zigzag around a little bit.

[0:25:19] DC: I mean, it took us at least 20 minutes to realize that the booths were divided, like we had the wrong orientation, and the whole time we were going east and west and not north and south. That aided us not being able to find some things, because I kept having to turn my phone upside down and going – Because you could always find one thing that you will buy on the map, like you are here and try to make it from there. But a couple of times, I'm like, we're walking in the wrong direction.

[0:25:48] WC: I will say though, if you think about it from going to a trade show 10 years ago, you didn't have an app with a map that would show you where to go. You didn't have – 10 years ago, really?

[0:26:01] DC: Yeah. Graphics –

[0:26:02] JM: Just hold that map out going –

[0:26:05] WC: Yeah, you had a physical map that you had to fold out. You didn't have an app on your phone. It was like, oh yeah.

[0:26:09] DC: It wasn't as advance as it was now. Everybody used the same exact app, and I forgot what it was called, but it's part of that c vent system, whatever.

[0:26:18] WC: Yeah. But, I mean, either way, it's getting better.

[0:26:19] DC: 100%.

[0:26:19] WC: It's an improvement over years past. I think the show went well. I think the attendance was great. I'm very happy for everybody that did have booths there. There was a lot of attendees to talk to. I'm sure that there's a lot of opportunities. Maybe people have heard us, because I feel like some of the follow-up is getting better, too. Overall, I give the show, if I'm going to score it on a scale of 10 –

[0:26:44] DC: Oh. We're going to score. Okay.

[0:26:45] WC: I would say, nine. I'd give it a nine.

[0:26:48] DC: Wow, that's a high score. Okay, Jamie?

[0:26:51] JM: I was getting people emailing me the second day that I met the first day. Talking about not waiting until the show was over. Like, "Hey, remember you stop by. Here's our information. Stop by again." I was like, that doesn't happen. That's interesting. So, maybe that was part of that whole get the information out, make sure you're inviting people, but it was definitely, I got a couple emails right away and then definitely Friday, I got a few more like, follow-up. "Hey, we know you stopped by." Like I said, I only had a couple people scan me. Not many. But a couple people did take business cards, because they were busy and stuff like.

Yeah, I was happy with that. As a scale from one to 10, I would give it a solid eight, eight and a half. I don't know if it was nine territory, but it was – I liked it. I mean, I like going to these things. There's a lot of good things and I like to go see materials and stuff like that, and there was a quite a bit of different vendors showcasing different materials, which I was excited about, because that gets my customers excited. They're like, they don't care about my press. Sometimes some of them do. But they want to see what's new and shiny, or new and what's this and what can I use for my windows now. It's different than I used before. Yeah, if you can come back with a couple samples of stuff, they're like, "Oh, great. It was worthwhile. What can you show me?"

[0:28:03] DC: I think the paper companies are a good indication of the show. I think next year, you're going to see all the regular paper vendors there. I saw Nina. We saw merchants. We saw tons of substrate people, because this is the old wide format show. But a lot of people were talking about paper and substrates, and I thought that that is really positive sign to get the paper companies to come back. Like I said, I think that that's a measure of the health of a show, or the desire of people to exhibit as a show, because honestly, papers, one of those things you would think, why does a printer need to go to a printing show to talk to Mohawk, when they have paper merchants and they can get any samples they want? But the substrates are a different story, because of all the considerations for the type of ink and heat and whatever you're doing with it and all of that.

[0:29:05] WC: We talked about this several times throughout the show, and one of the big trends is ease of use, right, and how they are making a huge focus on training and making it easy for someone. You just hired a new graphic designer that's never touched a piece of printing equipment. Their startup training time should be limited to none. That's a big focus in the industry right now. I think with that being a big focus in the industry, the additional focus needs to be with expanding offerings. If you're a cut sheet digital print shop, and you don't have any wide format equipment in your shop, you should, and vice versa. And being able to become versatile. That's what I've always seen PRINTING United as, is it's your wide format, it's your paper and it's your garment. It's where all aspects of printing converge into one place.

I think that there should be a big focus from the manufacturers of for a recode to get into, I think it's the 550 is the entry level digital press now. The footprint of it is pretty small. The click rates are low. There's a lot of benefits to that if you're a wide format shop, because then you can start offering short-run business cards and short-run postcards and things like that, which have great margins. There's a lot of opportunity in the industry for people to change that mindset that, "Well, I'm a wide format shop. I don't offer that stuff, or broker it out," or vice versa.

[0:30:30] DC: Yes. I totally agree with what you're saying.

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[0:30:34] DC: News from the Printerverse delivers topical sales and marketing insight, along with plenty of printspiration, one time a month to inboxes everywhere. Our contributors cover the industry and the future of print media and marketing with strategy for strengthening your customer relationships, better targeting of your prospects, and practical advice for helping your business grow. Printspiration is just a click away. Subscribe to News from the Printerverse at printmediacentr.com. Print long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:31:10] DC: The other thing is that you just said something really important. We have to assume that all printers have a press, at least some type of press, right? Unless, they're a broker, but I'm putting those people to the side. We have to assume all the printers have a press and they bought it from somewhere. Whoever they bought it from, they're talking to them about whatever presses they have and they're making their increase. The draw of going to a show to see something that you can get to anyhow is not really a draw, but exactly what you just said. You're going to the show now to see what other verticals can I get in. I already understand how to use this type of equipment, what works with that type of equipment. We saw the software booths were overflowing, because that is – the industry is cyclical. It ebbs and flows with things.

If you're getting a new press, you're more than likely replacing an old one, right? You're not just, something's happening there. That's why I'm just saying, the focus on the presses isn't as much. My experience has been the apparel area is the most popular area at that show, because in a lot of ways, it's the final frontier. No labels and packaging at that show, unless it's fit on a – I mean, we have Label Expo for that, which is now called Loop, The Loop Show. But yeah, it's interesting.

I do hope that they start bringing the presses back, but I also can see why they don't really have to. Jamie, talk about that hologram we saw in a Canon. They could bring all the presses, the fans. Did you see that?

[0:32:52] JM: That was pretty cool. Fuji did something like that last year, because they had a huge booth and they had all their presses there, which was interesting. Even some of their bigger presses that were digital presses bordering on 29 inches and stuff like that. It was pretty

cool. But yeah, that hologram showing the new Canon that was coming out, that was going around and then they were having a show and tell about it. They were talking about, this is what's coming up, people stand around. Look at this thing that was cool.

[0:33:19] WC: They had the hologram next to the thing, though. They had a hologram of the actual printer sitting next to the printer.

[0:33:25] JM: That's true. Yeah. But I think the hologram was –

[0:33:28] WC: It was cool.

[0:33:29] JM: That was giant. I know when I went to Fuji last year, they had this one press, you could basically – it was like an apartment underneath it. You could live in there. It was so big, I was like, they had a little model of it. It was there and it worked and everything. The doors worked and I was like –

[0:33:42] DC: Oh, my God. That's so funny.

[0:33:43] JM: “How big is this thing?” I was like, well you're going to need this much space. I was like, all right. How many people are buying that? Because I could live in there. This thing is – Yeah, it was interesting. But the hologram thing was cool. Scodix was really cool. They had a bunch of monitors, and the headphones. You could sit down and plug in and watch about their equipment and thus, walk around and touch and feel every type of thing that they could do with their equipment. But they didn't have an actual Scodix there, but you could basically feel like you had seen the press, done that and watched everything you want, and then felt everything and talked to everybody you need to about it. That was cool. That was a good new way of doing that.

[0:34:21] DC: Yeah. They also had presentations in their booth.

[0:34:24] JM: Yeah, it was exciting.

[0:34:25] DC: I thought that that was a really interesting way of going to a trade show and we even asked Pat McGrew about it. She was down with the concept of it. It's like, do-it-yourself trade booth, trade show booth. It was cool. I liked it a lot. Of course, we talked to April –

[0:34:41] JM: Going back to the press thing, we've been looking for a while. It's, I'd like to be able to go, okay, I've looked at all the major brands, and I can look at them all together and go, yes, yes, no, no, yes and go. Then maybe you'll find that one interesting like, what? Didn't even think about that before. Where'd that one come from? Now, you got to start your process all over again. Throw this one in the mix and get some prices on it. But like you said, you can go to Konica Minolta has a place in New Jersey. You can see everything they have. You go down to Georgia and see everything HP has, which is amazing. Everybody should do it like that. Then, I'm sure everybody else has something similar. Canon think days and stuff. I don't know. I really think, one of the guys when I came back was like, "Why do you go? You come back and you're swamped. You get all the stuff?" I'm like, no, I still found time to do work.

[0:35:26] DC: You did. I can attest to that.

[0:35:29] JM: The conversations you're having with the suppliers, because you've already met them there. They know you're on their radar. You're still thinking that's in there. It's part of our plan for the next couple of years, what we need to buy and that. They always want to make sure they're keeping their name out in front of you which is always good. Then finding the different materials, that's always fun. A lot of people bring their new stuff there, like the embellishment paper. I was like, somebody was like, you need to give me a sample of that. You need to be able to print on an uncoded paper with embellishments. I was like, all right, I'll find it when I'm there and I'll bring it home. I've already had a conversation with a guy. We're working on something next week. We're getting some samples in and going from there.

For the people I've never been, they're the always ones like, "Well, why do you go? Why are you spending the money to go there?" I'm like, because you have to go. You have to see it. You'll learn so much when you're there and you'll be able to do this and kick the tires and talk to that software guy. Why do I need that software, rather than software you already have?

[0:36:20] DC: Yeah. I learned so much just from hearing the questions you were asking. I do have to say that you both were amazing interviewers of people. We're having great conversations, great insights, helped people who were listening live to understand what we were looking at. Because I was like, "Jamie, somebody described this." Because I'm going to say, well, there's a thing in front of me that's moving a cylinder. I mean, how long did it take me to understand the level of the cup.

[0:36:52] JM: Looks an air hockey table. Like, yeah. But at first, it sucks down and that boils up.

[0:36:56] DC: The pasta maker, right, with the stupid calendaring of paper. I don't get it.

[0:37:02] WC: Calendar material.

[0:37:06] DC: I'm going to have to learn figure out what that is.

[0:37:08] WC: It's calendared is basically just stuff on a roll. That's all so all you really need to know about it.

[0:37:13] DC: Okay. So, the white piece of paper has nothing to do with it being calendared. Okay, see. I'm asking a question, again, right. Let's put that to the side, because I don't want to think about it anymore. I was actually thinking about it driving home. I'm like, why do they call it calendaring? I don't understand. Okay.

[0:37:31] JM: We had a lot of fun with a lot of international people. Deborah has an accent for every nationality. I can think a few words in every –

[0:37:39] DC: Every language. It goes a long way. Matthew from Canon, before he kissed me hello, because we're there. He's like, three kisses to make sure I didn't only do two like they do in other countries. Europe, there's a kissing code. Different countries have different kisses. If you do two kisses in a three-kiss country, or three kisses in a two-kiss country, they get very upset. He said, first, he's like, "Three kisses."

[0:38:04] JM: Is there a booklet on that somewhere? Is there a booklet for that?

[0:38:09] DC: It's one of the things you learn when you do it wrong the first time and especially to a Belgian, because they're not shy about telling you that you do not know what you're doing. The kissing.

[0:38:20] WC: I'll just stick to shaking hands. I don't need kisses.

[0:38:21] DC: This is true. Okay, let's talk about Dimense. The coolest thing that we think we all agreed that we saw at the trade show, but we'll save that for the end. Dimense, Will. You had seen it before, but it has been improved.

[0:38:41] WC: Yeah, Dimense is a cool product. The company was acquired by Roland. Dimense was part of the Roland booth, which we love Roland. Dimense is a, it's a textured, I don't even really know how to describe it. It's something that you have to put hands on and that you have to see for yourself. But it is one of the coolest materials I think that I've had the opportunity to see and experience and it's a little out of my wheelhouse from the types of clients and products that I typically offer. I wish it was a space that I could get into. But if you do wall coverings regularly, or you do a lot of architectural type collateral, any type of décor, look at Dimense. Dimense is really, really cool stuff.

[0:39:23] DC: Think about all of the restaurants in Las Vegas, like all the banquettes, for god's sake.

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[EPISODE CONTINUED]

[0:40:05] DC: All right, Jamie is holding Dimense in his hand, and he was very good at describing the entirety.

[0:40:09] JM: I had a conversation today about it. I was like, I've been following this company since 2019. I'm like, I'm this close to get a couple customers that are right there and my owner's \$50,000 dollars to that press if you get the jobs that you're saying you're getting. We'll get it tomorrow. I was like, "I'll be with that in writing." Because I was like, I've been waiting years to get one of these. This thing is amazing.

[0:40:29] DC: Can you describe what it is?

[0:40:32] JM: It's like, puffy wallpaper. Anybody ever see the Seinfeld episode with a puffy shirt?

[0:40:37] DC: Yes.

[0:40:41] WC: It's a textured printer, though, right? Textured is Dimense.

[0:40:43] DC: It's a flat paper that's treated with something. When it goes through the press, it puts the proper chemicals where it's going to be raised and it essentially foams up, so it's squishy.

[0:40:59] WC: But then, you have to have the right type of printer to go with the material imprint.

[0:41:02] DC: It's a self-contained unit. You cannot go out of their system. You can't put it –

[0:41:08] WC: Right. So, you have to have the correct Roland printer now, it's a Dimense Roland printer and the correct substrate, or media to put through it.

[0:41:16] DC: Only that substrate and whatever is printing in four color, with the silvers and whatever else they can print in their end, making it –

[0:41:24] JM: Or the pearl media. You get different textures and colors and pearls, and fluorescence and maybe some silvers and gold. Yeah. It's definitely high-end. You can definitely

use it in some high-end places. Yeah, I know a couple museums that would love this. I know a couple high-end architects who were working with that, do architectural work for big buildings. They already asked me about a conversation with some Nina people on that. I said, do they make something like that? I'm like, yeah, they do. Dimense. This is it. This is what you want. They're like, "Do you have it?" I was like, "No, but are you ready to buy it? Because, well, let's talk." We're working with that personnel –

[0:41:58] DC: Make that happen.

[0:42:00] JM: It happens. Deborah and I have been on this trip for years, so it's so cool.

[0:42:06] DC: I gave them the unicorn award. You saw Dr. Alexi gives me credit for the Roland's acquisition.

[0:42:11] JM: Yeah. If you look at it and you can feel the puffiness, but it say, you saw something like a picture of tile. The ground lines are flat, and then all the tile is puffy. It's actually got a texture and it can be – Yeah, it's soft. But it's just a cool stuff. Then, if you need to see it, I'm sure they'll send you samples, or –

[0:42:29] DC: Yeah. The samples are hard to come by. I'm just telling you, because it's a process. I know you got a handful –

[0:42:34] JM: I do it every year and I have a drawer full. I use them sparingly.

[0:42:38] DC: Okay, so I'm going to – obviously, everybody knows I love Dimense. But I'm very upset with Roland, because I do not think that they are showing it correctly in the booth at all. Why are you only showing wall covering wallpaper? Even though it is absolutely the perfect press to output it. I'm not suggesting that. But you're, "Oh, I don't print wallpaper," and you walk right by it, instead of looking at other examples of things that might be manageable, which is one of the reasons why I was so disappointed that Noel Tocci from the Making it With Print Podcast and Tocci Made was not able to join us, because he had a press check emergency, and then he had to fly off to London. But I wanted him to see it, so that he could stand there and be the person and says, "Hold on. Hold on. Why can't I make this with it? Why can't I make that

with it?" Because I want to make a hardcover book using Dimense as the cover material and I need Noel for that.

[0:43:49] JM: Just to do that.

[0:43:50] DC: Just think if we showed people, like anyone who's going to spend a zillion dollars on a bespoke coffee table book, or who knows what it could be. It could be, remember during the pandemic, like the big brands were creating these legacy books, because they had nothing to sell? They're like, let's just talk about our company and how much we love the community and things like that. Those were really expensive. David Drucker who's also on the Making it With Print Podcast, he won an award for a book he made of somebody's private safari trip for just 10 people, or something like that.

I don't even want to tell you what the budget was on them, but the reason David got the job is because the first person they went to didn't spend all the money that they were given and they were trying to be frugal and the guy's like, "No, you're not the right person for me. I need somebody who's going to be over budget on this." I'm just saying, he spent a lot of time in bossing and debossing and stuff. I mean, it's right there. I was asking questions like, how much weight can you put on top of them? Will it puff back up? Apparently, yes.

[0:44:55] JM: I want to find it to run some thicker cardboards. Not cardboard, but thicker boards. If it can be on a rigid material that you can use for something, I think that would be cool.

[0:45:03] DC: You can't. You're going to have to put it through the Dimense and then glue it to the board.

[0:45:09] JM: He said, so he questioned something. He was like, maybe soon as like, just don't.

[0:45:14] DC: Oh, that's right.

[0:45:15] JM: Yeah, remember?

[0:45:16] DC: He was, I can't –

[0:45:18] JM: They're working on something. But yeah. That might open one market though.

[0:45:19] DC: He gave us one of those, "I can't tell you." But it sounds like something.

[0:45:23] WC: You were playing with any of those.

[0:45:25] DC: Yeah, we did. I can't tell you, but that sounds like a really good idea. That's what Matthew told us at Canon. "I can't say yes or no, but that's a really great idea that we may or might not have been discussing." Okay, Jamie. We will let you talk about the coolest –

[0:45:43] WC: Coup de grace.

[0:45:43] DC: - thing that we saw at the show, and pretty much told everybody at the show to go see it.

[0:45:51] JM: Yes. Our favorite company and now we're working on getting a sponsorship for PrinterChat Podcast, swissQ. They need to start taking care of us a little bit, but because they're in –

[0:46:02] DC: How many people do we tell? 30?

[0:46:02] JM: Not the podcast, but probably 75% of the podcast that mentioned. Yeah, they had their pretty much normal booth. They had a lot of cool textured prints. They had the neon colors. They did a lot of neon work for one of the other booths that was over there, Ultra Flex. They got a whole neon room which was neat. But the thing that stole the show that we are right around the corner when you walk by the press, there was a, for lack of term for it, lenticular chameleon. You looked at it one side, it was green and yellow, and as you walk by, it turned pink and purple. It was their chameleon effect, they're calling it. It's basically a software that swissQ has. If you own a swissQ, you automatically get the software. We have it. We're playing around with it.

[0:46:45] DC: You have it?

[0:46:46] JM: We have it. Yeah. Ready to go.

[0:46:47] DC: Did you know that, Will? Did you know he had the software?

[0:46:49] WC: I did not know that.

[0:46:51] JM: We're good to go.

[0:46:51] DC: What the freaking hell.

[0:46:54] WC: Can I get a color-changing gorilla?

[0:46:55] JM: There's a little learning curve. What was that?

[0:46:57] WC: I said, can I get a color changing gorilla? Can you go from black to pink?

[0:47:01] JM: Yeah. We could do that.

[0:47:02] DC: It should be able to do anything.

[0:47:04] JM: Yeah. Like I said, there's a little learning curve. The first one we did, we're like, it's not like the one I saw. They sent us the white paper. They sent us all information and the two guys there that I was talking to, he said, "Just reach out to Jason. He'll walk you through it. He'll teach you what to do." He's like, "Don't worry about it." I'm like, "Good, because we have a customer in New York that really wants to do this on four-by-eight panels." Yeah, so it was the coolest thing. We told a bunch of students about it and whatever.

[0:47:30] DC: Told everybody. Who didn't we tell?

[0:47:32] JM: Yeah, and they're like, "Yes, it was cool." People are just standing there going, "Green. Pink to purple."

[0:47:38] DC: I pulled over some journalists. I'm like, "Did you see the chameleon?" They're like, "What are you talking about?" "Come with me." They were filming it. When you were

standing there, we were having a technical difficulty movement in the eye – No, we went back to swissQ, because it was working there, so we had to see –

[0:47:52] JM: We had good reception there. Yes.

[0:47:54] DC: Yeah. That was –

[0:47:55] JM: Yeah. That was definitely cool. That was the highlight.

[0:47:57] DC: I have never seen anything like that in my life.

[0:47:59] JM: Video of that, shared it with people. Hopefully, that's going to –

[0:48:03] DC: The reason why I loved it –

[0:48:04] JM: We're testing it. We're down pat. I'll let you know. We'll do a gorilla.

[0:48:08] DC: Two things. First of all, did you just get the software since the show? Did you have it prior to that?

[0:48:12] JM: We had it be prior to the show that I didn't know Ian was keeping it secret, because he said, "We've been playing around with it." He's like, "I don't want to say anything, until I know what I'm doing." I was like, okay. Because he's like, "I know you. Tomorrow, you'll be selling it. We'll have a job and I'll know what I'm doing."

[0:48:26] DC: I'm more excited that you're telling me now, because if I found out you had it and I hadn't seen samples from it, I would have been mad at you.

[0:48:32] JM: It was right before the show, he's like, "Tell, we have it." I'm like, well, I have the white paper now and I have all this stuff. This is who we got to talk to. He's like, "All right. Once the end of the month rush is over, let's sit down and we'll start looking at it." We'll start doing it. We're excited. I am anyway. I know, Carl our pressman is excited.

[0:48:48] DC: The last thing I want to do is give a shout out to, you know who I'm going to give a shout out to, guys? Christopher Godfrey. Do you know who Christopher Godfrey is? He's the gentleman that saw us with microphones and pulled us over to speak with us and ended up doing an entire presentation for us. We loved him.

[0:49:08] JM: Oh, yes.

[0:49:09] WC: Oh. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[0:49:10] DC: Christopher Godfrey is his name.

[0:49:11] JM: Oh, man. He was amazing.

[0:49:14] WC: What was his booth? What was his company?

[0:49:14] DC: Well, it's weird. It says –

[0:49:16] JM: Had a Mimaki printer –

[0:49:17] WC: It was a German company. I remember that.

[0:49:21] DC: It says, Heddesheim, Germany is where the company, I guess, is headquartered. But it says, Forever Transfer Applications Technology, is the name of the company. Which might be FTAT, something like that.

[0:49:34] WC: Yeah. I think they were a DTF, either supplier. I don't think they were a manufacturer. They were a supplier of either inks, or films, or both.

[0:49:45] DC: Forever Transfer Applications Technology is the name of the company. But this guy, first of all, Christopher Godfrey if you ever are looking for a job, you find me, because I will be your biggest cheerleader. I just thought you were amazing. We ran into him and the Sawgrass people right after we passed the booth where the people would just get away from me, I'm not even looking at you. We were just all like, who in their right mind turns away free

publicity? Even if he didn't know who we were, we're wheeling a thing, we all have microphones and there's people around us. But the next booth we went to, Christopher took the opportunity to step up literally to the mic and said, "Let me tell you what I do." Then we saw that his social media team was filming it, so he made a video out of it. He's got a secondary use to repurpose this in his own thing. We're in his promotion now. I just loved him. He was so fast, and so informative in just, and I didn't feel sold to at all. I was just clapping. Would you hire him, Jamie?

[0:51:03] JM: Yeah. I remember him now, because I couldn't remember his name, but now it comes. I took a picture of the equipment.

[0:51:06] DC: I took a photo of his badge.

[0:51:07] JM: Yeah, you got the badge, I have the equipment. I'm like, this is his booth, but I don't know his name. I couldn't find it anywhere. But there was a few of those, people taking videos, and I was trying to find maybe somebody's posting it. Did anybody tag PrintFM and didn't see that. The one podcast we did for Graphco, how do we find that? I can reach out to Chris. I looked at the name of it, I couldn't find it.

[0:51:27] DC: It's called Commit to Print, and I believe that I think they said that Printing Impressions is going to run them, or something like that. But either way, I'm sure Jim Latrell who's the gentleman that interviewed us, who works with Graphco will send an email and let us know when it's ready. Okay, we went a little long, gentleman. Any, Will, final thoughts on the show? You gave it a nine.

[0:51:52] WC: Yeah, I gave it a nine. I had a blast at the show. I'm looking forward to next year. Even though it's in Vegas, I'm going to behave. But yeah, no –

[0:52:01] DC: We have that on tape, Will.

[0:52:03] WC: I know. It's recorded. Well, my wife will be with me, so she could go by and make sure that I stay out of trouble. But yeah. No, it was a great show. I'm super excited that we were able to have our maiden voyage with PrintFM and Mobi, and I'm excited for all the things that

we've learned and being able to do it better next time. Thank you to PRINTING United for having us.

[0:52:22] DC: Yes, I agree. Jamie?

[0:52:24] JM: Yeah, I'm looking forward to next year as well. I know Will will work fiercely and create anything that we need to make this thing bigger and better and badder. I picture what's his name from one of the TV shows that was always like, build bigger and better, and I forget his name now.

[0:52:40] DC: Inspector Gadget?

[0:52:41] JM: Oh, yeah. Inspector Gadget. That's like, Will is like that. But we were calling him gazoo all week.

[0:52:47] DC: Gazoo, because he would – But he wouldn't wear the –

[0:52:50] JM: He wouldn't wear his antenna.

[0:52:51] DC: Gazoo the gazelle.

[0:52:54] JM: Yes. But yeah.

[0:52:54] DC: We have a new verb and an adjective. Gazelling.

[0:52:58] WC: Gazelling. Which for those of you at home that don't know what gazelling means, that's me running around the show handing out flyers and putting up signs and outside, not inside. But basically, promoting and doing the Gorilla marketing stuff that I do.

[0:53:12] DC: Yes, but at 97 miles an hour. I cannot keep up with Will. He's very fast. And spry. That's why I call him a gazelle, because he's just – he goes, but it's not clunky. It's very graceful. Little hopping along. He's very fast, people.

[0:53:29] WC: I'm deceptively fast.

[0:53:31] DC: Deceptively fast. Jamie, were you finished?

[0:53:33] JM: I'm finished, yeah. You can't top that. I can't top the gazelling. I can elephant around, but I gazelle around.

[0:53:41] DC: I will give the show an eight, and that's a pretty high mark. I will also say, I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of people there. I hope they were engaged attendees. I really do. I hope that all of the pre-show marketing worked out for all the people who spent the time to collectively share about the show. I'm a community person. I believe in we, not me. I think that they did a really great job this year. I really do.

We didn't mention the AI pavilion, only because we literally could not get in there. I think next year, they realized they need a bigger boat for that. But you know what? I will reach out and maybe we can get the speaker that they had there to come join us on the podcast and share some information.

Everybody, thank you so much for hanging with us on this a little extended version of the podcast. We had a great time at PRINTING United. If you listen to PrintFM, I hope you enjoyed the broadcast, and you can listen right now. It's on 24/7. Until next time, print long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:54:54] 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]

Mentioned in This Episode:

PRINTING United Expo: <https://www.printingunited.com/>

PRINTING United Alliance: <https://www.printing.org/>

Print FM Radio: <https://printfmradio.com/>

Sawgrass: <https://www.sawgrassink.com/>

Trotec Laser: <https://www.troteclaser.com/>

Epilog Laser: <https://www.epiloglaser.com/>

Photo Tex Group: <https://www.phototexgroup.com/>

Xante: <https://www.xante.com/>

Dimense: <https://www.dimense.com/>

SwissQprint: <https://www.swissqprint.com/us/en/>

Forever Transfer Applications Technology: <https://www.forever-ots.com/>

Jamie McLennan: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jamieprints>

DMR Graphics: www.dmr-graphics.com/

Innvoke: <https://innvoke.com/>

Will Crabtree: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/willtheprinter/>

Tampa Media: <https://tampa.media/>

Gorilla Consultants: <https://gorillagurus.com>

Printing In A Box: <https://printinginabox.com/>

Deborah Corn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahcorn/>

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