

[INTRODUCTION]

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

**[0:00:21] MP:** And I'm Matthew Parker, the champion of print at [profitableprintrelationships.com](http://profitableprintrelationships.com).

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

[EPISODE]

**[0:00:41] DC:** Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. Today, we are here with UKvUSA, which means Matthew Parker from the other side of the pond is on the other side of the mic. Hello, Matthew Parker.

**[0:00:59] MP:** Hello, Deborah Corn. How are you today?

**[0:01:02] DC:** I am wonderful. I am ready to have a conversation/argument with you. We shall see.

**[0:01:11] MP:** If we're lucky, we might even get to a fight.

**[0:01:14] DC:** Oh, well, if you're lucky. Well, if the audience is lucky, I guess. Okay, this is your topic, sir, so take it over.

**[0:01:22] MP:** Okay, thank you. I got inspired of this topic after our last episode. Last time, we talked about how printers could develop B2B partnerships and push their business. You really should go back in this episode, because I think there's a lot of interesting stuff in there. I got thinking that over the times, I've actually done an awful lot of work with people who might be considered actually my competitors. I've called this coopetition. I think that it is a really good

example of how we could think a little differently in business. I'd like to bring this more to the printing industry.

Now for this episode, normally Deborah and I come at this completely cold and I said coopetition to Deborah, and like many in the printing industry, she immediately looked a bit confused and said, "What's that?" I sent her an outline of some of the questions I was going to ask. I've got no idea what she's going to say. She's got no idea of what I'm going to say. But there's a little bit more of a structure that we've put in place that we may or may not keep to as this conversation develops.

**[0:02:29] DC:** One author's note here. I understood what it meant, but I wanted to understand what you meant by it. Go ahead.

**[0:02:36] MP:** Okay, I'm sorry. But let's start off with what is coopetition, because I think it is an idea, a strategy that's not always appreciated, or understood within the printing industry. I'm going to start off with an example and Deborah, I'll ask you if you'd like to bring anything to the table. I'm actually going to start off with an example from my photography life, because as some of you know, I run photography workshops and I'm writing a book on photography. Recently –

**[0:03:05] DC:** Hold on. Highly recommend the newsletter. We'll put a link in the show notes.

**[0:03:09] MP:** Oh, thank you so much, Deborah. That's really kind of you.

**[0:03:11] DC:** I love it. You know I commented on that.

**[0:03:14] MP:** I'm blushing now. I recently got contacted by another photographer who offers training and ideas and their audience profile is pretty similar to mine. I mean, she's based in Australia. I'm based in the UK. We've got talking and it was, how can we help each other? There's loads of photographers out there. It's not exactly going to be difficult for us both to fill up our businesses with suitable clients and clients sometimes like to work with more than one person. Let's do some shopping here. Let's work together to build our business.

I was also contacted once on LinkedIn by a sales trainer. They approached me, having slightly misunderstood my profile and thinking that I might need some help with sales training. Also, potentially, would I like to source any sales training. Again, we had a Zoom call. We got to know each other a bit more, realize that we had a lot in common. But equally, we had a slightly different way of approaching things, slightly different solutions for businesses, and there was an opportunity for us to promote each other. We both mentioned each other on our websites now, because if you're looking for a particular type of training that I don't offer, Larry does. So much better that you go to him and vice versa.

There's ways in which we can build our business by working with people, who in theory, we should be going head to head with and going, don't talk to them. They're a threat to my business. Deborah, I don't know what you'd like to add to this.

**[0:04:42] DC:** When I started thinking about this, I was solely thinking about printers and the printing industry. I like the example you gave as far as community building, as far as expanding reach and awareness, as far as technically, you're referring somebody to somebody who's offering something you don't. The way that I'm coming at this conversation is that co-opetition is a strategic collaboration between competing printing businesses. That comes together by the ability to produce work that neither could fully deliver by themselves. It is a model that expands capability, without changing who owns the client. It's a network mindset. It's not a vendor relationship. It's about expanding, like I said, your capabilities, so you can say yes to more things.

Now, you mentioned Australia. I actually saw co-opetition in full force when I went to an event in Australia. In that case, because of the geographical forces and the fact that Australia is a very large continent, but it is in the middle of nowhere and there's only people in certain parts of it, it almost, I don't want to say, forces, but it creates a way bigger opportunity to work together for this exact reason. I don't have to buy a certain piece of finishing equipment. Yes, there are trade printers out there that do it, but that doesn't always work out. It's an opportunity for businesses to join forces locally, or across the state, or if you're in America, across the country, if you're somewhere else. That's how I define it for this conversation.

**[0:06:41] MP:** Okay. I agree with everything you've said. But maybe throughout our conversation, I'll broaden your thinking of what coopetition could involve as well, because I'm going to take it maybe a little further than that. You may, or may not disagree whether they're valid strategies or not, but it will be interesting to see. Building on what you've just said, I think it's probably fair to say that I can think of at least two press manufacturers who actively put their own clients in touch with each other in order to expand their global reach. You may buy a press from a certain manufacturer and then go, "Ah, I'm in the UK. I've got a job that needs delivery in the US. I don't want the hassle of all the delivery." They will put you in touch with someone who mirrors your systems effectively and can produce that job exactly as you want in the US for you, without any of the traditional worries about outsourcing, or trying to find the right partner. There are those networks. I feel it's fair to say that some work better than others, but they do exist on that level already at a press manufacturer level.

Let's talk also about what isn't coopetition. I think you've touched on this already. For me, it's absolutely not just outsourcing your work to trusted partners. That's fine if you're jointly collaborating on a job, even though someone may own the customer. But where you're going, oh, the customer wants a perfect product to either have a perfect binder, so I'm taking it to the trade binder down the road. That's not coopetition. That's outsourcing. That's supply chain management. I feel it's important to make that distinction. I don't know if you've got any other examples that you'd like to throw in there.

**[0:08:23] DC:** Of what is not coopetition?

**[0:08:24] MP:** That's right.

**[0:08:25] DC:** Yeah. I mean, it's passing off jobs without any accountability. It's not shopping you're outsourcing for the cheapest price. It's a partnership agreement. It's sharing the customer, but it's not blurring who owns that customer at any point. That's usually where printers start getting testy about this. Anything where only one side of this coopetition is carrying the risk is not what this is. Everybody's working together on the same job, doing the part that they do. But however it comes into the print shop, that's where that relationship stays. Unless, a printer is like, I've had a couple of times where I needed a web press and my printers are like, yeah, we don't have one. Here are some people that do. Enjoy yourself. Go ahead. We don't want

anything to do with this, because it's not our area. They could have co-opetition with – I mean, it was another printer that was relatively close to where this printer was. They weren't taking it in and sending it out to a trade printer.

They had some sort of relationship, but like I said in this case, they actually handed me over, which could have been a dangerous thing. I could've say, well, they have a web press and they can do the other things. Why am I working with the other printer? As a print customer, I have to tell you, it made the printer who referred me more valuable to me, because I'm like, ah, they're not afraid to help me. I'm still going to be loyal to them, because they're being loyal to me by passing me off.

**[0:10:04] MP:** It is. It's a really tricky one that. I think where you have co-opetition is where the original printer maybe still handles the customer a little bit for the web printer, but the web printer builds it and takes responsibility. There's that openness there. If you just hand your customer over, I have seen cases where competition kicks in. That printer then says, "Hey, I'll handle all your other work as well," which is unfortunate and unethical, but I have seen it happen.

**[0:10:31] DC:** Yeah. Like I said, this is not a vendor relationship. Co-opetition to me is a partnership.

**[0:10:36] MP:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**[0:10:37] DC:** There could be a contract and there could be something that says, okay, everybody who comes in asking if somebody has a web job, we're just going to give you that customer. We can do embroidery and you can't. Everybody who comes in over there, who needs embroidery, you send to us, so we can be the primary communication hub for this job. Then the contract, so what says you can't do other work, you have to send them back to me if they want something that I can do. I know that sounds a little crazy.

**[0:11:09] MP:** That's a perfect example, when it's formalized like that.

**[0:11:12] DC:** It has to be formalized, which is, it can't just be like, oh, let me trust this person not to take other work, because if I'm the customer and I'm like, well, I want to work with them,

unless there was an agreement in place, that could happen. By the way, I have never done that. Like I said, anybody who's ever referred me, I did not say, "Well, what do I need them for?" I was, like I said, I found I was more loyal to them for doing that, knowing that there was a risk.

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**[0:11:47] DC:** Get ready to turn up the volume on print. PrintFM is a global internet radio station dedicated exclusively to print and graphic communications, accessible around the clock in every time zone. No more searching across channels and apps. PrintFM brings relevant topical programming from Print Media Centr, Girls Who Print, and an array of industry contributors who bring their own perspectives, guests, and conversations to the mix. PrintFM also broadcasts from industry events, with live shows being scheduled throughout the year. Visit [printfm.com](http://printfm.com) to explore our daily programming, event schedules, and opportunities to share your content or sponsor our shows. Expert discussions, real-world insight, and industry voices are just a click away. Listen long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

**[0:12:46] MP:** I'm a great believer in business karma, and what goes around comes around. If you start messing people around, you get known and you start losing out on opportunities and business. Word gets around. The interesting thing about your web printer versus embroidery, which has made a little bit of an extreme difference in types, but –

**[0:13:04] DC:** That's the whole point. You want to have coopetition with people who are expanding your capabilities, not just doubling them up. Although, when we get to what it is, I have some interesting thoughts on that.

**[0:13:17] MP:** Okay. But that, I think, you could get to the point where people are selling each other's services, and we'll come to that in a little bit. Overall, the idea of coopetition, I don't see much of it in the printing industry, and I'm wondering why. From your point of view, coopetition a good idea, or is my belief that lots of printers should work together in love and harmony, just absolutely crazy and not going to work?

**[0:13:43] DC:** Honestly, I think it's an economic decision. Because co-opetition allows you to expand, like I said, your capabilities, your ability to say yes, without making the financial investment of that equipment. We always hear that's a great use of trade printer partnerships, because just to use – I'm not going to buy a die cutting machine and all of a sudden, you're doing some die cutting, and now another customer sees it and they want die cutting, and then another. Now you're showing those samples to people. Now more die cutting is coming in. Then there might be a reason to invest in your own die cutting. In that sense, I think it's a very valuable thing why, as long as it's a two-way street.

To me, again, as long as the relationship is owned by the person that the printer contacted, that makes it easier for the customer and that printer also has to be responsible for whatever work that they are sharing with somebody else. I think it gets muddled when, “Well, we told you to contact – or no, we were using our partner for that. So, what do you want me to do about it? Here's their number. Call them and figure out what happened.” No, no, no, no, no, no, no. That would be a very bad thing.

Also, there could be a situation, quite frankly, where we have all these workforce issues in print shops, especially with actually running equipment, or knowing how to run equipment. Who's there? Did you go from having two shifts to only having one shift? What are the hours that you can work? In a sense, if you've set up this partnership, then you can increase your capacity and the amount of time things that are running and you can send extra work that you can't get on the press that day somewhere else, so it still could be delivered on time.

The thing that it is not is doing that in an emergency situation. Like, “Oh, I got to find somebody to do this for me right now. Here it is. We'll just see what happens.” No, no, no, no, no, no. It's good when you sample each other's work. You have to tell people about brand standards and things that are going on, and maybe do a few test jobs. Because the client relationship still has to be maintained and protected, especially if you're going to work with other people. I would say that the risk is not in the collaboration, but if there is unstructured collaboration, without accountability.

**[0:16:37] MP:** I really like that. I think that's really important. I'm going to add a couple of things. I mean, you mentioned it's got to be a two-way street. I think it has to be done in the right spirit

as well. People have to actively want to work with each other for more than just, I want to do your work for you. There has to be a bit more to it than that. I think there also has to be a spirit of openness that people are prepared to share what they might not do with everybody in the industry. I quite often see a lot of printing companies being very scared to share information, feeling that knowledge is power, that they've got secrets and they can't share that with people.

If you're working with someone whom you regard as a partner, rather than someone who's just in your supply chain, then I think you have to be prepared to be open with them. If they're open with you, it's surprising how much that you can learn from each other in that way. Even in your supply chain, I would preach openness. I've always done that as a buyer. When you're into coopetition, I think that's really important.

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**[0:17:42] MP:** Do you need some direction or new ideas for your business? Would sales goals setting and accountability improve your revenues? Or do you have a member of staff who could be performing better? I'm Matthew Parker, the Champion of Print at [profitableprintrelationships.com](http://profitableprintrelationships.com), and I offer a personal mentoring service. Together, we work out exactly what you need. We create a personal mentoring program for you, and then we speak twice a month. You get set goals and action points to make sure you progress.

What makes me different is that I'm the buyer. I've been approached by over 1,400 different printing companies, so I know what works, and I know what doesn't. If you'd like to find out more, go to [profitableprintrelationships.com](http://profitableprintrelationships.com), click the training tab, and then go to mentoring. Or, alternatively, just hit me up on LinkedIn. I look forward to working with you.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

**[0:18:35] MP:** Let's move on. Let's talk about successful coopetition. I came up with five things that I think printers could think about when they're looking at coopetition. They range from the fairly obvious, down to the, Matthew, you cannot be serious level, but I think it's worth floating them out there. I'm going to chuck a couple out and maybe you throw some out and I'll finish off

with the really crazy ones. You may be able to exceed me for craziness. Let's see how far out we can go at this today.

The first one is probably fairly obvious. There's a number of events now that promote this, but it's sharing best practice. I know printers who run similar presses, who've talked to each other openly about the best way to get the install, the dangers, the pitfalls that you might come across it, how to get the most out of your press. They're not holders. This is where it comes back to not having any secrets. They're not holding anything back. Now, typically, they may be in slightly different markets, but not always. I've seen people who in theory are going after the same work, sharing best practice with each other, so they can run their factories efficiently. I think that's a really nice way to work in co-opetition. It doesn't have to be just about sharing, or not sharing clients, but sharing work and having that overlap.

This is a very different way, where you can just sit down and go, maybe over a drink and just go, "Here's the problems I'm facing, or here's the problems I did face and I overcame," and people can just share that best practice with each other.

**[0:20:08] DC:** Yeah, I hadn't even thought about that. That is a really great point. I see that a lot of the Dscoop events. That's pretty much the whole point of Dscoop is digital solutions cooperative. They all work together. This year, particularly, it was all about, here are all the people who own these print businesses and where they're walking around. Ask them anything about their business, and that is literally what they were doing. Very interesting about that. I have to say, this happens in my LinkedIn group almost daily. Somebody posts something about a problem they're having. By the way, if you're working in manufacture, it's usually a first two paragraphs is a tirade about why nobody at your business is responding to them. Then they ask the question, and by the way, whenever I see it, if I know somebody, I say, "Hey, there's a conversation you might want to chime in on here."

Nine out of 10 times, some other printers are like, "Oh, yeah. That happened to me." I'll never forget, the biggest one was over these dots that kept showing up on the printed materials. The printer could not figure out what was causing the dots. Somebody else said, "Oh, it's humidity. It happened to us. You need to adjust your stuff. Something in the press is getting condensation." The gentleman came back. He's like, "Fixed. Thank you so much." That was really interesting.

In that case, they had nothing to do with each other. They weren't in a geographical location. Somebody else might have looked at it as, "Ha, ha. Now I'm going to go to all their customers and say, our material doesn't have dots in it." It could be a scary thing to come out of the, I have an issue closet, so to speak.

I like that. Especially now, if you look at all of the conversation going on about, "AI. You got to use AI in the business. Ra-ra-ra." I don't disagree with it, but I can't stand, you need to use AI in your business. Thank you, have a great day. Then people leave. Okay, great. We get that point. How? How do you do it? What is working for some people? What is not? It's one thing to hear it from the, I don't know if this is going to be a surprise to anybody, but the people who have services that are trying to help you with it, versus another printer in your location, or in your same Dscoop network, or Think, or anything like that, where you can say, "Okay, this is how we use it for inquiries that come over the web." "This is how we do it to keeping track of customer approvals." Whatever it might be. I think that that is a great example of what it could possibly be.

Everything else, I've already mentioned before about who owns the customers and you sell the capability as the thing, not the ownership of the client, and most important that you building repeatable collaboration models that work for you, so this is not just a one-off thing. And you can keep expanding. The last thing I want to say is that those cooperating printers can't blame each other for things. If there's a problem, it's got to be everybody's problem, not just one person's problem. That is different than outsourcing to a trade printer, although essentially, you are accomplishing the same thing.

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**[0:23:53] 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](http://printmediacentr.com). Print long and prosper.

[EPISODE CONTINUED]

**[0:24:28] MP:** First of all, I can't praise Deborah's LinkedIn group high enough, Print Production Professionals. Hopefully, you're putting a link into it in the notes, but it's a great place to have genuine discussions on there. In the spirit of, you've mentioned Dscoop as well, I'm going to mention the Independent Printing Industry Association in the UK, because they are absolutely fantastic at that.

**[0:24:47] DC:** Is that IPIA?

**[0:24:49] MP:** That's right.

**[0:24:49] DC:** I love them.

**[0:24:51] MP:** They're brilliant. We'll put a link to them in the notes as well. They're good for overseas printers as well, by the way. What I find is that some of these events is you have the Dscoop one where I ask this person anything about their business. From those chance meetings, if two people hit it off, that's when the co-opetition really starts, when it becomes a one-to-one relationship, where you're willing to tell them more than you might be at an open conference. The conferences, the events are a great place. If you're looking for someone to have that kind of relationship with, it's a great place to try and network to find the right person, because it does have to be the right person.

**[0:25:28] DC:** I just want to add that there are two printers from the Dscoop network, one is in Italy, one is in Massachusetts, and they're both book printers and they have been working together for years.

**[0:25:38] MP:** Fantastic. Yeah, that's a great example. We then get to the point where we can look at sharing customers, joining up the production like that. We've talked about that a lot already, so I'm not going to go into it more here. But it also gives you the opportunity to actually offer more. If we go back to the web printer and the person who offers embroidery, it actually allows the web printers to go into a client, and when they find out they don't have a need for a

web printer, but they do do some embroidery, rather than going, “Okay, then I'm walking out the door,” they then have the opportunity to go, “Well, we offer that as well.”

Now, clearly, you need a good understanding of exactly who gets what commission from the job and who gets what profit. But you're automatic. Now, wouldn't you like to give away a small percentage of your sales commission to another company who you trust to sell on your behalf and get more work in that way? That's when cooperation works, when it becomes a formal selling agreement.

Now, let's work into the slightly crazier world, but potentially, why don't you just have one sales team between you? Maybe you've got people that you each employ, but actually, you've got a joined-up sales approach, rather than each having a sales representative, who either goes into a certain sector, or who goes into a geographical location. Why not go, “Okay, Deborah, your printing company covers Massachusetts and Matthew, your printing company will cover California. But we can go in and sell for each other and make it more efficient in the way that we cover that.” We cover this on video. I can see Deborah looking completely unconvinced about.

There's potential there to have a joined-up sales force, cut out some of your sales cost, because you know it's been covered elsewhere and increase your opportunities at the same time. What do you think about that one? Am I crazy, or does that one that's worth thinking about?

**[0:27:38] DC:** I think that would make all the printers out there, either if you're driving, they're like, they held on to the steering wheel a little tighter. But stranger things have happened. One of my crazy ideas is rent press time from another printer.

**[0:27:52] MP:** Aha. Okay. You've got my next one.

**[0:27:54] DC:** Oh, okay.

**[0:27:56] MP:** This actually happened to me. I had a client and they contacted me and said, “We've got a successful printing business, but our overheads, we know our overheads are too high.” They were at the city center, so they needed to be there for their client base, but it was getting more and more expensive. They asked me, as an intermediary, to go out to a number of

other printing companies in that area and go, “Do you want to share press time? Do you want to share premises? We're going to still maintain our own company identity, and we'll work out a way in which we can actually share press time, so that it's fair for everyone and everyone shares the right costs for the press. It's not one person using the press 90% of the time and only paying a tenth of it or whatever. Why don't we sit down openly together and have a look at this, because we can all benefit from it?”

Now, my experience was that everyone I approached just went, “Whoa. I'm not prepared to be that open with people.” But I don't see why it can't work with the right framework in place. Now, you've clearly have this idea as well, so I'd love for you to add what you thought about this.

**[0:28:58] DC:** Well, just because, like I said, it's a workforce thing, too. If you have 10 jobs that just came in, you need that work, but you don't have people, you don't have enough shifts, you might not have fast enough equipment to get it done, there could be a way to go to somebody else and say, look, you have that second shift. If we want to buy press time at a certain rate and you produce the job, but it's coming back to us and we own the client relationship.

I want to say this, because I always come back to it. In 2017 at interpack, which is an event in Germany, Messe Düsseldorf, I was there with HP and François Martin was working at HP at the time. He came up to me. He goes, “I have this. I want to do a video,” because I was helping doing social media. “I want to do a video and I want to talk about printers working together to buy a piece of equipment and sharing it.” I was like, “What?” This is 2017. I was like, “What? That is insanity. We can make that video all you want, but my God, who is ever going to do that, right?”

This is why there are people out there who are visionaries, right? Because now that is actually on my list. Why farm it out to a trade printer? Put this, whatever it is, it could be a 3D printer. It could be something weird, like that piece of finishing equipment, a fancy one. One printer itself does not want to take on the financial burden of, but two or three of them who have the right work, as long as it goes where it suits best, whoever has the room for it, and they all chip in for the operating costs of that piece of equipment, from the electricity, to the person who's running it, whoever that might be, or you're able to send your own person in to run it, because you have a schedule. You make a schedule. Shout out to François Martin, because at the time, I thought

he was a lunatic, but this is exactly what he was talking about. It took almost 10 years to come around, but we had a pandemic in the middle of it. Now it actually makes total sense to me.

**[0:31:28] MP:** I think so. I think the other thing is, if you are going to get, say, a 3D printer, that's maybe a new avenue that you're in. Buying another press when you're used to running presses, that's a fairly smooth install. Do you really want to risk 100% of the cost, not just of the capital equipment, but actually investing in the right person to run it, training them up, getting your sales team right? There's a big investment that's way outside the cost of the machine. But if you share a machine, if there's one operator shared between companies, it does save an awful lot more than just the rent of the gear.

**[0:32:05] DC:** That person, by the way, could be a freelancer who works on the hour. It's like, okay, this week I'm going into the print shop with this piece of equipment, Monday from 10 to 6, Thursday from 2 to 4. That's it for this week. Then maybe next week I have something else. You're also not paying a full-time employee, unless, of course, you can repurpose that person in different places. That would be a cool job to have.

**[0:32:31] MP:** Yeah. I'm delighted to realize that you don't think I'm quite as crazy as I thought I was at that point.

**[0:32:36] DC:** Well, I wouldn't share sales. I think that that might be a red line, like have salespeople from different companies going in there. Again, I think I'm a little skewed, because of my experience with printing salespeople. I just can't see how one of them doesn't call you up later and says, "Hey, I just want you to know that we can, you know." I'm not saying everybody's like that. But in my experience, when there's big jobs with big budgets, again, I was coming from advertising agencies. Everybody wants that 60-million-dollar account. I would be interested to know what would happen if I say, I'm sitting at Ogilvy and Mather and I'm like, "This sounds great, but I only want to work with you." That scenario where there's a group that gets signed to a record deal, but they're like, "We only want the lead singer." Then, what are you going to do? Nine out of 10 times, lead singer's like, "Well, okay. Thanks, everybody. But I'm going, I'm signing that contract and I'm out of here." That's a little third rail.

**[0:33:36] MP:** I think a salesperson will act okay on it, as long as they get a commission for both the jobs. The salesperson is generally a fairly mercenary person, because you have to be to be a salesperson. You want the best of your clients, but that's because it's driving revenue for you. They're unlikely to go, "Hey, there's a company that we like and I can recommend them for a job." That's when they might come back and go, "But we can do it too, later on." But if they're getting commission for recommending that company and that's being paid by the other company to them to get it, then why wouldn't they? Potentially, they get more business.

**[0:34:09] DC:** Because it's commission. It's not the full amount of money. But I don't disagree with you. I just think it's going to take a little more convincing than saying to people, "Why don't you all chip in for one of those 3D printers? You all work with architects." All the printers who do prototyping, or send out for things like that. Real estate, by the way, is completely immersed in this 3D printing, because they were always making little displays of the buildings and things like that, like, this is what it'll look like when it's built. Here's where your store will go, and things like that. I think it would be cool to find other people doing it, outsourcing this thing and saying, "Hang on a second, maybe we can all do it together." Because it's still my own client, but now I can do more for them, without the full financial burden in this example.

**[0:35:06] MP:** Yeah. I'm not claiming that we're going to have, after this episode, suddenly loads of big printing companies are going to restructure and join all their sales teams as a result of what we've said today. I could see it happening with the right structure in place. That's a very important caveat to have. I can say, let's get to the end of this. Any final thoughts that you've got on co-opetition?

**[0:35:26] DC:** Most printers, I think, think in terms of what they own, but the more strategic ones think in terms of what they can access. If you're thinking about what you can access, then that opens up your capabilities. It gives you the ability to say yes more, without risk if there's a formal agreement in place. It's how a printer can scale, without doing it themselves. Long-term thinking in this is not about owning everything, sorry, manufacturers. But it's about knowing where to go to get it done. Then, like I said, ownership is one path. If you've built up your business and it's time for you to get that piece of equipment, fantastic. Access is another path. But the long-term goal is knowing when to invest in each of those things.

**[0:36:24] MP:** Great thoughts there. I'd thoroughly endorse all those. I still don't understand why there isn't more co-opetition in the printing industry. At the end of the day, you get access to a wider range of products and services you can offer your clients. You potentially get access to customers that you wouldn't get access to, or you didn't have access before. You can get help when things go wrong, whether that's just advice, or good co-opetition, probably is helping people with disaster recovery as well.

One thing we haven't talked about, but I just want to leave it hanging there for people to think about, but if you've got the right people that you've got co-opetition with, some printers are looking for their exit routes. Some printers are looking to make sure that they can work on a better cost base, which they can't fund on their own with their current client base. There's opportunities for mergers, for takeovers here, and those are so much easier if you've been working with the right people for a little while first. That's one other reason I think people should think about it.

I really hope that this episode will make people think about co-opetition. I'd love it if a few people maybe started up a few tentative discussions, seeing if there was ways in which they could cooperate with, or assist with other people in their sector. It doesn't have to be a full-scale agreement on how we're going to work together yet, but maybe just dip their toes in the water and see what happens. Because I've always found on LinkedIn, I always try and – I don't always succeed, but I try and pick up the phone to anyone I connect with, and it's amazing the conversations that come out of it if you go at it with a cooperative attitude. Please do try a little bit of co-opetition and see what happens.

**[0:38:15] DC:** I would also say that if your equipment makers have user groups, or anything like that to get involved with them and meet the other people who have the same things as you do, who are producing the same type of work for the same type of clients, and that that is a great place to start looking for partnerships.

Matthew, thank you very much for an interesting topic. Thank you everybody for listening. Everything that we've mentioned, and maybe a little more will be in the show notes, so check that out. Also, pay attention to Matthew on LinkedIn, because when he shares the podcast, he

always puts a little provocative question there and gets everybody talking. Yeah. Thank you so much. Until next time, cooperate long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

**[0:39:12] DC:** Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through [printmediacentr.com](http://printmediacentr.com). We'd love to hear your feed-back 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:**

15 Creative Photography Ideas: <https://theworldofmattparker.com/pages/free-creative-photography-ideas>

Ten Common Print Selling Errors And What To Do About Them: <https://www.profitableprintrelationships.com/pages/what-are-the-most-common-errors-for-people-selling-printing>

IPIA: <http://ipia.org.uk/>

Pressure Points Program: <https://getsuperproductive.com/pressure-points>

Matthew Parker: <https://theworldofmattparker.com/>

Profitable Print Relationships: [profitableprintrelationships.com](http://profitableprintrelationships.com)

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

Print Media Centr: <https://printmediacentr.com>

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