



*How can print companies effectively  
attract and engage younger generations to  
pursue careers in the print industry?*

Viktoria DIMITROVA

## Introduction

Printing is one of the most important industries in the world, providing access to information and knowledge for centuries. From the invention of movable type through the development of the printing press to the introduction of digital printing, the industry has undergone major changes driven by innovation and technological progress. The previous years have proven to be years of great challenges for the printing industry. The blockade of economic activities and restrictions have led to a decrease in market demand for traditional printing applications. On the other hand, some areas are developing at an impressive pace. A typical example is the label and packaging sector. Printers that are fast enough, flexible enough and manage to focus on new areas are reporting great growth.

It is a popular idea that the printing industry is dying due to the advent of the digital age and all the technological achievements and innovations that come with it. However, this is very far from reality - we still live in a world in which printing is necessary and even mandatory. In fact, the demand for printing services is growing rapidly worldwide. Just think of the thickness of the “books” with mandatory installation and usage instructions that you found when unpacking the last stove, washing machine or TV you bought – they are as thick as a classic novel.

However, printing companies face serious challenges in attracting young talent who prefer digital professions. In this paper, we will examine the main challenges facing printing companies and present my perspective on effectively attracting and engaging the younger generations.

Nowadays, young people want to do something different. They want to discover new things, to go beyond the written paths set by the traditional education system. But still, I do not know, and I am sure you do not either, a child or teenager who dreams of being a printer. They are usually afraid of it because of the reactions of the family or our teachers. To attract young people, we need to show them that it's safe here in the printing industry and that they can do many things that are outside the norm.

## Challenges and possible solutions for printing companies

- **Lack of awareness:** Many young people are unaware of the career opportunities in the printing industry. They perceive this sector as outdated and without future prospects.

The first step is to raise awareness of our sector among young people. What I propose first of all is to invest more time (and therefore money) in organizing small regional and national seminars, where children and adolescents can be introduced to the different stages of the preparation and printing of printed products (books, brochures, magazines, newspapers, advertising materials, labels, packaging, etc.) - prepress preparation, printing, finishing and booklet-binding processes, etc. It can be very interesting for children in primary school: for example, a seminar on color science. Workshops are the best option if we want to raise awareness of what we do. And what about if the seminars are free and the lecturers, coming from a printing company, work with huge partners who are our clients? This is a way for them to promote their company and support the printing house. This type of partnership is also a good way to attract people to participate in these seminars to popularize the printing industry.

Printing companies can also collaborate with universities and vocational schools to develop programs and courses that prepare students for careers in the printing industry. Offering internships and practical training can provide young people with real-world experience and expose them to opportunities in the sector.

- **Online presence:** I will not describe here the fact that we must use social media to advertise our industry. This is something that has become almost mandatory for every company to have at least one social network to stay in touch with its community.

An active presence on social networks and online platforms (YouTube, Twitch, ...) can increase the visibility of the printing industry among young people. To change the minds of young people and therefore, in the long term, of society as a whole, we can rely on what has been common on the internet for the last decade: namely online influencers. It is a good idea to regularly publish photos or short reports about what is being done in our company to increase our image culture.

- **Insufficient adaptation to new technologies:** Some printing companies are lagging behind in integrating new technologies and automation, making them less competitive and attractive to young talent. Integrating modern technologies such as 3D printing, digital printing and automated systems can make processes more efficient and interesting for young professionals. Digital printing offers much greater flexibility than conventional methods. This means that organizations can digitally create personalized experiences or use smart packaging with QR codes for scanning. In addition, some digital label presses can now produce labels that can be used in the food industry as standard. An example of this is labels that change color depending on the level of oxygen or carbon dioxide in the package, indicating whether the product is still fresh. They not only improve product safety and quality, but also provide new ways to interact and engage with customers. They not only improve product safety and quality, but also provide new ways to interact and engage with customers.

One of the main benefits that come from automation is the ability to produce more with fewer resources. Automated workflows provide the ability to receive and manage orders 24/7, thus optimizing equipment utilization. I believe in innovation through automation. By centering products on the success of customers, I am confident that automating every step of the print production workflow is the best way for the printing industry to thrive today, as well as meet the many challenges of the future. Companies that monitor trends and implement timely innovations in their businesses will be competitive and have something to offer in a rapidly evolving and increasingly demanding market. Customers are becoming more and more technology-savvy and setting higher standards for what they want to get, in order to value their attention and money. Enrichment and automation will also help printers differentiate themselves from the competition by providing more interesting and visually appealing options with more streamlined processes. Companies in the industry that embrace and move towards automated workflows and inline finishing alongside digital presses will be well-positioned to capture new markets and attract new customers.

- **Competition from other industries:** Technology and digital industries offer more attractive salaries and working conditions, making the printing industry less attractive to young

professionals. Offering competitive salaries, flexible working hours and career development opportunities can attract young talent.

• **Environmental practices:** The implementation of sustainable production practices and the use of recyclable materials can attract young people who are sensitive to environmental issues. To give a clearer idea, I will take an example, without connecting it to real solutions or products. If we manage to save 2 liters of ink and 1 kilogram of paper per day, this is practically a little over 700 liters of ink and a little over 350 kilograms of paper per year. If every printing house in Bulgaria introduces technologies and rules for saving some amount of consumables, the amount of waste and discarded waste will significantly decrease. Therefore, we must set as our main goal to work with partners whose working methods can be simply described as the best possible result, achieved in the easiest, safest and most favorable way, which, among other things, includes protecting the environment and ourselves.

However, if people in your production and office environment have knowledge of the initiatives in the organization, as well as a field for expressing their own intention and desire in relation to nature conservation, this in itself is a factor in achieving better results.

## **Conclusion**

Printing will never die because people want to hold something in their hands and the experience of reading a book cannot be replicated digitally. Even though digital technologies are becoming more prevalent, people are still attracted to the printing industry and the opportunities it offers.

Attracting and engaging the younger generations in the printing industry requires a comprehensive approach, including educational initiatives, technological innovations, attractive career opportunities, sustainability and digital integration. By implementing these strategies, printing companies can overcome the challenges and create an attractive environment for young

talent, securing the future of the sector. Overall, digital technologies are likely to take center stage over the next few years as packaging requirements continue to change dynamically. Digital technology allows for great flexibility, needed to deliver high-quality output that can be customized or delivered in a short period of time, without adding prohibitive costs.

As millennials enter the workforce and have a greater impact on economic trends, it is important to understand their preferences and attitudes, what they value, and what matters to them. Young people can find their way into the printing industry in a huge number of different directions – with each type of young person, depending on their aptitudes, having an area for development. For the more creatively oriented, it is design and layout, for the more digitally oriented – digital workflows and all the software related to this, for the innovative – printed electronics and the huge potential of this new field of printing technologies, for those who like natural sciences – the creation of new barrier layers and varnishes in packaging, helping the hundreds of millions of hungry people around the world have access to food and water with a longer shelf life, for technologically oriented young people – digital and conventional printing processes and all the software and technologies related to them. For every young person, there is room for development in printing technologies - as long as they are aware and informed about what is a problem in most cases.

***Viktoria Dimitrova - 1st year student***

***University of Chemical Technology and Metallurgy  
Department of Printing Arts, Pulp and Paper  
Conventional and Digital Printing Technologies and Design.***

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## Sources of information:

- <https://printguide.info/novini/software>
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- <https://www.piworld.com/>
- <https://whattheythink.com/>
- <https://www.forbes.com/consent/ketch/>
- <https://m.pomagalo.com>