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Flexo News

FTA Europe President's insights: packaging industry challenges & opportunities

In early March, Intergraf and FTA Europe jointly organized the Shaping the Future With Packaging 2023 conference. Sante Conselvan, President of the FTA Europe gave an interview to Cape Decision and spoke about some of the major issues facing the graphic industry and the packaging sector.



When discussing the sector's challenges, Conselvan emphasized the need to distinguish between commercial printing and publishing on one side, and packaging

on the other. While he was initially involved in the printing market, his focus has now shifted towards packaging due to its rapid adaptation to evolving consumer lifestyles. Today, packaging serves as an integral part of our lives, requiring innovative solutions to accommodate diverse consumption patterns. Conselvan highlighted the importance of education, particularly among young individuals, to promote responsible usage, recycling, and the positive aspects of packaging. Recognizing the crucial role of packaging during the Covid-19 pandemic, Conselvan stressed the necessity for a collective effort within the entire packaging community to anticipate a virtuous loop from packaging design to end-of-life recycling.

Moving on to opportunities in the packaging industry, Conselvan highlighted the growth in various segments such as flexible and rigid packaging, cardboard, plastic, and labels. These segments have witnessed shifts between materials, with a focus on new functionalities and simplified compositions. Packaging continues to adapt swiftly to meet the changing needs of consumers. However, Conselvan also emphasized the importance of

consumer responsibility in properly disposing of and recycling packaging materials to maximize their benefits. Conselvan shared ongoing projects undertaken by FTA Europe. One significant project aims to facilitate information sharing among different associations, providing comprehensive documentation of flexo technology and a "toolbox" of best practices. Another crucial initiative focuses on educating about flexo technology. Given the limited number of flexo training centers in Europe, efforts are being made to encourage these centres to continue offering practical training, including summer courses and seminars. The objective is not only to impart flexo knowledge but also to keep up with the latest technological advancements.

Furthermore, Conselvan highlighted the importance of (inter)national meetings and pan-European conferences to foster the exchange of best practices and experiences. Through these platforms, collaboration and networking can extend beyond borders, with contacts established even with flexo associations in Japan, the United States, and the recent inclusion of the Polish flexo federation. Full interview available in French on demand.

"Whether it's flexible or rigid packaging, cardboard, plastic, or labels, all these segments are growing. We have seen shifts between packaging materials, from plastic to fibre, with new functionalities and simplified materials. Packaging is quickly adapting to consumer needs. However, it is important for the consumer who has benefited from the properties of packaging to also be responsible for putting it in the correct bin for recycling."

Sante Conselvan, President of the FTA Europe

FIAUK introduces online training program to tackle talent shortage

Flexographic printing in the UK faces challenges with an aging workforce and a lack of formal education for new talent. The industry is experiencing a brain drain as skilled operators near retirement, and the absence of print schools and limited higher education worsen the situation. The print industry is not perceived as attractive compared to other sectors. Flexo printers are investing in apprenticeships, supported by The UK Government's Apprenticeship Levy, but specific training for skilled operators is lacking.

To address these challenges, the Flexographic Industry Association UK (FIAUK) has developed an online training program called FIA Academy. This flexible and cost-effective program comprises 15 modules covering various aspects of flexo printing, from the basics of flexography and color to inks, plate technology, and proofing. FIA Academy allows employees to study at their own pace and convenience, ensuring minimal disruption to production. Students can earn accredited certificate qualifications or progress to a diploma, with tailored courses to suit individual needs. Hands-on training sessions with FIAUK partner companies complement the online learning experience.

FIA Academy modules are also integrated into the Print Technician Apprenticeship in partnership with the BPIF, providing comprehensive training for employers. Supervisors can easily monitor students' progress and provide feedback, while high-performing individuals have the opportunity to be recognized as FIAUK Student of the Year at the annual awards dinner.

FIAUK acknowledges that addressing the skills crisis requires more than just training and education. The industry must enhance its attractiveness by showcasing its connection to FMCG brands, demonstrating progress toward Industry 4.0 production, highlighting career potential, and establishing links with existing skills pools in science, engineering, and IT. The FIA Academy serves as a valuable resource and starting point for the industry to navigate these challenges and empower its workforce.



ATEF Releases the Spanish Translation of FTA Europe Flexo Best Practice Toolbox

ATEF (Spanish Technical Association of Flexography) release the Spanish translation of the [Flexo Best Practice Toolbox](#), an essential resource for professionals in the field. This comprehensive tool, already accessible in English, Italian, Dutch, French, and Portuguese for iOS and Android devices, serves as a reference guide for best practices.

ATEF aims to promote the Toolbox among Spanish flexography professionals, offering them an easy-to-use resource to enhance their skills and stay up to date with industry trends. With its user-friendly interface, users can quickly access the information they need to optimize their printing processes and improve overall efficiency.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to take advantage of the Spanish version of the Toolbox. Download it today and unlock a world of valuable insights tailored specifically to the needs of flexography professionals.

Flexo Best Practice toolbox in French, English, Dutch, Italian and Portuguese is available [here](#).



EFTA-Benelux seminar explores 'Digital in Flexo' with industry experts

During the EFTA-Benelux seminar held at Hooze Vuursche Castle, notable speakers from Xeikon, Durst Benelux, and BOBST presented on the topic of 'Digital in Flexo.' The discussions primarily focused on relevant materials, color, break-even models, and practical customer experiences. The seminar commenced with an introduction by EFTA-Benelux Board Member, Dirk Goethals, who provided insights into the digital aspect of flexo. Jeroen Van Bauwel, representing Xeikon, elaborated on the aforementioned themes in relation to labels, while Pedro Overmeer and Robert Stabler, on behalf of Durst, addressed the application of digital technology to corrugated/cardboard and water-based inkjet. Koen Vlieghe, representing Bobst, concluded the seminar by discussing the application of hybrid and extended gamut techniques. The event concluded with a networking session.



Call for Entries: EFTA-Benelux Flexo Awards



The 5th edition of the EFTA-Benelux Flexo Awards is set to take place at the Hilton Hotel Antwerp on Thursday, November 9, 2023. Participants in the printing industry are invited to showcase their exemplary work and participate in a competitive environment across a diverse range of 18 categories.

EFTA recommends ensuring the timely [submission](#) of your entries, as the deadline is scheduled for September 18, 2023. Notably, winners of the Benelux competition will have the opportunity to further compete in the FTA Europe Diamond Awards

ABFLEXO invites FTA Europe to Intercontinental Flexo Conference in São Paulo



The Intercontinental Flexography Conference took place in São Paulo on June 15th and 16th, where ABFLEXO - FTA Brasil - invited FTA Europe to participate. President Sante Conselvan of FTA Europe presented the activities of the Federation, discussed trends in the packaging market for 2022, forecasts for 2023, and expectations for the next five years. He also addressed the state-of-the-art sustainability and recycling practices in the European packaging industry, highlighting the new green approach and regulations aimed at reducing packaging and waste. The conference saw a significant turnout of suppliers from the packaging industry, including many associated with FTA Europe member associations.

During the event, FTA Europe awarded ABFLEXO Director Julio Cezario for his continuous endeavour in cooperating with FTA Europe.

ATF Flexo receives Pap Award 2023 and announces National Congress in Paris

ATEF (Spanish ATF Flexo, the French flexo association, received recognition at the esteemed "Nuit du Papier" gala. The company was honoured with the Pap Award 2023 in the Business Initiative category for their implementation of the "Parcours ATF or travel to the heart of the Flexo graphic chain".

The upcoming ATF Flexo National Congress is set to be held on Thursday, December 14, 2023, in Paris. The congress will feature a plenary session followed by a ceremony to acknowledge the winners of the National Competition "Flexostars".



ATIF to host 2023 Awards Ceremony & Conference in Milan

The Italian Technical Association for the Flexo Industry (ATIF) will host the 2023 Awards Ceremony - Best in Flexo 2023 - and Annual Conference FLEXODAY 2023 on November 21st and 22nd in Milan. This highly anticipated event will gather industry leaders, professionals, and enthusiasts to celebrate excellence and explore the latest advancements in flexography.

ATIF's conference session, organized in collaboration with FTA Europe, will offer informative sessions and networking opportunities. Simultaneous interpretation in English will be available for international participants, ensuring seamless communication and fostering global collaboration.

The Awards Ceremony will recognize outstanding achievements and innovations within the flexo industry, acknowledging the contributions of individuals, companies, and organizations driving progress in the field.

The conference will cover emerging trends, technological advancements, sustainability practices, and the future outlook for flexography. Simultaneous translation into English will be provided.

For inquiries and registration, please contact ATIF at info@atif.it.



Intergraf joins the cross-sectoral Coalition on Circular Choices for the EU's Bioeconomy

Intergraf joins the cross-sectoral Coalition supporting Circular Choices for the EU's Bioeconomy to combine the advocacy efforts with partners that represent forest-based industries.



Together, the Coalition represents a sustainable, circular, and integrated European value chain which will be crucial to enable the EU to reach the net zero goal by 2050. The Coalition has already announced its 2030 policy recommendations, available [here](#).

The Coalition is urging the EU to prioritize sustainability and a circular economy with a strong and growing supply of renewable wood

and fibre, through legislation that facilitates the transition to sustainable wood-based products and bioenergy. We recommend recognizing the value of wood as a precious resource, acknowledging renewable materials' contribution to climate neutrality, and improving the use of raw materials by applying the cascading principle. The Coalition also suggests establishing a wood and fibre-based Industrial Alliance to improve material efficiency and secure fair competition on global markets, and, in the meantime, make the EU more self-sufficient and able to withstand global challenges. The EU should recognize the contributions of Coalition stakeholders to the circular bioeconomy and regulate wood, fibre-based, and paper-based products as biobased, sustainable, and complementary recycled solutions to reusable options.

The Coalition has been formed by Cepi. Click [here](#) to access more detailed information about the Coalition and its many signatories.

European Commission allows the removal of printed medical leaflets

The European Commission has proposed a broad reform of European pharmaceutical legislation, including a revision of the Directive on medicinal products for human use. In its proposal, the Commission grants the possibility for EU countries to allow for the leaflet to be provided only in a digital format. However, Member States that allow electronic leaflets must guarantee the patient's right to a printed copy of the leaflet upon request and free of charge.

The proposal to allow for digital medical leaflets is being made through a Directive, which sets objectives for all EU countries to implement into their national legislation, allowing for flexibility in the decision of how these objectives are to be implemented.

The initiative is supposed to facilitate easier access to medicines from third European countries for smaller markets such as Malta, which has experienced significant medication shortages since Brexit, as medicines imported from the UK are subject to a different authorisation process and cannot be exported to Malta; however, the issue of providing printed copies of the leaflet to patients upon request remains unresolved, with references made to pharmacists providing a printed copy to the patient, but Intergraf contends that print-on-demand at pharmacies cannot guarantee the same level of safety as industrial-level printers.

Intergraf is preparing its detailed position on the proposal and is partnering with MLPS (Medical Leaflet = Patients Safety) to support the use of paper leaflets. MLPS is a coalition of healthcare packaging makers within the European Carton Manufacturers Association (ECMA).

The proposal will undergo further discussion and revision by the European Parliament and Council, but with the upcoming European elections in May 2024, it is unlikely to be finalized during the current legislative period.

Relevant sources:

- [Proposal for a Directive on the Union code relating to medicinal products for human use.](#)
- [Pharmaceutical industry position.](#)
- [Consumers' organisation position.](#)
- [MLPS set of positions.](#)
- [MLPS infographics 'Every comma has a point'.](#)



2023

NOVEMBER

- 9/11/2023, EFTA Benelux Flexo Awards, Hilton, Antwerp, Belgium
- 21 & 22/ 11/ 2023, Atif Awards - Best in Flexo, Milan, Italy
- 23/11/2023 FIA UK Diamond Partners' Event, location TBC

2024

MAY

- 30/05/2024 FTA Europe Diamond Awards, Düsseldorf, Germany

FTA EUROPE DIAMOND AWARDS 2024

30 May 2024, Düsseldorf

SAVE THE DATE

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