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### Innovation – A new weapon in the struggle to keep our industry relevant – James Cryer's Blog

Thursday, 11 August 2011

By Print21

Quality is no longer the key driver of our industry that it used to be. Other more contemporary measures of success are emerging in this dog eat dog world. One of them is the need to be different.

"Keeping the industry relevant and alive goes hand in hand with creativity and innovation." Theo Pettaras, Chairman, *Printovations Awards*.

The Printovation Awards see the salvation of our industry, lying not in our ability to achieve even better registration, or in minimising dot gain, but in creative attempts to explore new frontiers, in new technology, new applications ideas of existing technology or in some radical new process improvement.

This is one of the tantalising aspects of innovation – its refusal to be easily defined, measured or boxed into categories. It is elusive and ephemeral. Perhaps this is why it's been avoided in past awards programs. It's easier to reward a poster featuring a scantily clad model draped over a Ferrari. But mouth-watering as that may be, it doesn't really advance the best interests of our industry.

Examples of innovation may include a new varnish or special finish or embellishment; a new application of inkjet technology; a new method of printing onto difficult substrates; a complex multi-part mailer. There are a hundred and one possible variations on a theme be it offset, digital, inkjet or whatever.

Our industry's success is built, not on its ability to produce good quality, but on its capacity to evolve by adapting to change, by responding to opportunities, in other words, by innovating.

The whole concept of quality has come under the microscope lately as printing companies struggle to search for an elusive point of difference that sets them apart from their competitors. These days, good old-fashioned notions like quality, price and service are just tickets to the game. Nothing special. But if you don't have them you can't play.

Enter the Printovation Awards, which are designed to recognise and reward often un-sung contributors to the graphic arts industry. They are an attempt to wean ourselves off the traditional, self-serving obsession with print quality.

The Printovation Awards sub-title could be: Recognising our unsung heroes. These are the people beavering away in the lab or the factory, those who are not naturally good at promoting their message, those who typically don't get much credit because their work is behind the scenes.

These are the people and their companies, the Printovation Awards program is trying to reach out and acknowledge.

Get those entries in now by contacting Chloe at [GASAA](mailto:GASAA) on 02 8354 0602, or email: [chloe@gasaa.asn.au](mailto:chloe@gasaa.asn.au).

[Ed: Well known industry commentator, James Cryer, is a judge for the Printovation Awards.]



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