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Starleaton expands with Zund agency takeover | Print21 Ben Eaton is on the takeover track. <http://t.co/GRTavWVg6C> via @sharethis

Joan Grace quits Printing Industries & Future Print –

### Don't demoralise the industry – James Cryer

Wednesday, 01 August 2012

By Print21

With all the doom and gloom being spouted about the print industry at the moment, it can be easy to miss the plethora of positive and innovative developments spreading through the local industry as well.

James Cryer (pictured), founder of [JDA Print Recruitment](#) and well-known industry gadfly, writes that some of the industry's biggest players are looking in the wrong places for industry news, focusing on the negative, when they should be focusing on the positive:

We all know that economists and statisticians spend their spare time pulling wings off blowflies and terrorising young children by threatening to read them bed-time stories with titles such as "Post-modernist Trends in Econometric Analysis."

But do we have to be batted around the gills every time we open the trade press with reports of our imminent demise?

Take the latest PIAA survey: In a classic example of stating the obvious, we read with breathless anticipation that "89.8 per cent of respondents ranked lack of orders as the primary barrier to increasing production levels."

I know statisticians and economists speak in different tongues to us mortals, but roughly translated, I think this means: "The reason we don't have enough business is because we don't have enough business." Do people actually get paid for writing this stuff?

And elsewhere: one paragraph refers to "labels...forecasting deteriorating conditions" – but another refers to "labels ... reporting improvements in investment in plant". This, I think, highlights the problem of being over-analytical.

But who exactly is this harbinger of gloom and doom aiming at? There is no such thing as 'the' printing industry these days. We've moved on. It is now a diverse nation of disparate tribes – all marching to the beat of a different drum. Anyone who refers to the 'printing industry' as an amorphous blob, should be taken out the back and smeared in Bronze Blue. It's quite meaningless to lump us all under one umbrella – it's a mark of a living, breathing (not gasping) industry which is evolving and which recognises and celebrates its differences, and its niches.

To proclaim a global approach – 'PIAA survey – capacity utilisation lowest in recorded history,' – is to deny the existence of these different tribes, which now make up the broad visual communications 'rainbow.' Is the PIAA really speaking on behalf of all these tribes – or is it merely cloaking its own 'offset-centric' struggles under the mask it calls 'the printing industry'? It is folly to lump everyone into the same bucket.

However, the problem for the beleaguered business owner, upon reading all this depressing 'news' is this: just what evasive action is he supposed to take?

The survey's author is long on description, but short on prescription. Given this depressing news, what are we meant to do? Are printing company proprietors meant to miraculously transform their printing business into a video outlet, or a guesthouse for destitute printers?

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The point is, I'm sure we're all aware of the difficult environment – but there are no short-term fixes.

However, there are lots of encouraging signs of little green shoots breaking through the permafrost. Recent articles in various trade press have highlighted them. There is a list a mile long of exciting initiatives occurring within various print segments.

At this difficult time in our transformation, what the world needs now, are fewer econo-sadists and more promotional press releases and pronouncements from personable, persuasive publicists, preferably promoting print as a positive proposition.

**The industry can't afford to lose talent such as Joan Grace**  
[.http://t.co/DuGDpXtwbC](http://t.co/DuGDpXtwbC)

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Colin Longbottom heads towards the exit Good man Colin, hope your saddlebags are well loaded for the sunset ride.<http://t.co/d5oamorf2X>

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