



Dscoop Edge Americas 2023 (Conclusion)

Although we were not able to attend, the Photo Imaging Connect track organized by *Gary Pageau* at the Dscoop Edge included a panel discussion on **Strategies for AI Photo Products** featuring *Christina Teng*, Senior Product Manager, Mixbook (www.mixbook.com) and *Jinny Jung*, vice president, API Biz Ops, Picsart (<https://picsart.com>). Gary served as moderator for this session.

Jinny spoke about Picsart, which started as a consumer app, now with more than 150 million monthly active users. As its capability attracted businesses, a business unit was created ten years ago that offers API's and SDKs. Initially these were only pre-existing designs, images and content, and now are offering creative workflow.

The pace of general AI is mind boggling. It's moving so quickly, even for us in the tech space. So we identified three areas on which to focus to serve our consumer audience and eventually the business audience: text image, putting a prompt up for whatever you can imagine. You get the visual output, but you do have to work with prompts quite a bit to get it right. For example, when we try to create humans in general, they usually have a third leg or six fingers, so you have to learn how to use text advantage. AI writer, which basically lets you put an up word, just a nugget of an idea, and it produces a whole paragraphs of copy. And the last one will take a single image and create 20 different profile initiatives or portraits.

"We're sort of looking at the business community, especially in countries who have mostly small business owners that don't have graphic design support, to create custom marketing materials, etc. This really shortens the timeframe to create content. With generative AI you can create an entire marketing suite for print within minutes that used to take weeks or even months." Open AI is an open source program that is available to anyone. However, to produce good results, it needs to be "trained." Mixbook has AI scientists who create specific models for its use case, so the app layer has been trained to produce specific kinds of output.

Christina said Mixbook is a personalized photo product company started in 2006, empowering customers to enhance just anything. The AI app was launched last year to better curate stories; searching, it is taking date timestamps, putting images in order using a template, pulling the metadata from the photos, and then organizing them in a way that makes sense. Mixbook is beginning to see photobooks being created with the AI App. and it has 688 templates available. It has the Number One Editor, a wide range of designs and physical products, and, from a design perspective, is working to integrate everything.

An audience member asked about feedback from users: do they know AI is being used? Christina said that Mixbook provides full transparency. While there is general concern about the potential misuse of AI, their customers are aware of how AI is helping them, especially when customers are overwhelmed by the number

Volume 40, Number 08

August, 2023

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Website: <http://photo-news.com>



of photos that are available for designing a photobook.

Picsart is open source which could be accessed by developers; it's the product layer on how do I make this AI technology useful for my business. Picsart recently launched AdPilot/AdMaker, a platform designed to simplify the process of creating and distributing social media ads for small businesses. It allows anyone to quickly and easily generate on-brand ad copy and creative for their social ads. With Admaker, users can upload their own product imagery or start from a blank canvas. The user then follows a simple series of text prompts to describe the brand, content and goal of the ad. In seconds, the AI builds Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest ads complete with brand aligned images and copy.

Other tools from Picsart include:

AI Image Generator enables users to create anything they can imagine. Simply enter a word, phrase or prompt and apply a variety of artistic styles and filters, creating visually stunning and captivating visuals.

AI Writer understands context, tone, and style, enabling it to generate personalized and compelling narratives, quotes, messages and even social media captions.

AI Replace empowers users to remove or replace any part of an image with an AI-generated element.

AI Avatar allows you to create personalized and lifelike avatars that mirror your unique characteristics.

AI Filters can enhance and transform photos with just a few taps.

AI GIF Generator based on an open source text-to-video model turns any word, phrase or prompt into a moving GIF.

With AI Sticker Generator, users can effortlessly create any digital sticker.

With AI Background users can manipulate and transform the backgrounds of their images.

SketchAI serves one purpose: to turn your simple sketches or drawings into beautiful masterpieces.

Most of the consumer usage is for creating and sharing on social media. At the moment, they may not yet be posting their text images, but they are playing around with it, trying to use it. But I think that, as they become more proficient and learn how to use it more effectively, you are going to see a lot more output on social in print and things like that. I do think that there needs to be some education on how do you best create using Gen. AI.

Christina said that Mixbook has been working in this space for six years, originally with homegrown systems, building their own data sets, doing their own machine learning. Now, it's all native, and available and fast. They're definitely already expanding their product market fit - not just to younger customers but also to folks who didn't want to try it because it seemed too complex and too daunting. Now they're curious. Out of the pandemic, the lack of connection with others and the loneliness that we all felt, people are expressing themselves via books. There's something about the physical, tactile feeling of a book, opening it, sitting next to a loved one and sharing with them, regardless of age. This whole industry is blossoming for the right reasons. 2022 was Mixbook's best year ever. And this year they're on track to do better.

How do we understand what customers want? They're looking to be inspired. They're seeking to tell a meaningful story, trying to find a unique way to commemorate their life or personal experiences. Remember, photobook sales are on the rise for us right now.

How are we doing our learning? Is it based on both the photo images or workflow? Over time, we'll start to learn customer behavior, and how they want to work, and certainly the things that they need. But for now, it is based on how we can help them design being on our designs and our know how. We have solved the photo organization for finding your photos, we're then also using our AI to marry them with our templates. Whereas before, customers were taking the photos trying to force fit them into our template or designs.

How do I prevent my content from being included? Jinny responded that no one knows the answer, because there are millions of sources of content, images. How do you legally identify individual content, because the tagging of the data rights management or the visual rights management hasn't caught up to be able to say this was from this particular photo? Realize that, if you're a small business and you use generative AI, add in a credit. But if you're a huge company and you use generative AI in your marketing materials, someone is talking. Those are the risks.

A question arose about open source code - why build it if it is free to download? Jinny said Picsart has to pay every time content is generated, although it's like pennies on the dollar. Then we figure out how we're going to monetize it. They receive an API (Application Programming Interface), which they process and it appears at the end of every month. While each program may only bring in pennies, from all the users they may collect billions of dollars.

Where do you see the role of photographer, as these kinds of technologies become more available and easy to use? Jinny's advice to photographers, creatives, graphic designers, writers and others who fear AI will take away their jobs is use the technology to your advantage. An AI user can produce copy that might take a non-user two weeks to write. [*ed. Hiring AI experts is an option, but recruiters are already offering AI people \$100,000+*] Photoshop was once easy to use, but has become more complicated to provide far greater capability.

From the Picsart viewpoint, which commercial market will rise up first, where you see the biggest opportunity? With her background in marketing, Jinny said today's AI tools would have made her much more efficient. So small businesses and marketers who are producing content this biggest opportunity. Larger companies have access to designers to copywriters, etc., and are actually slower to adopt than small businesses who don't have the resources and are going to innovate out of necessity, and also personal use. Since its launch, Picsart's Generative AI has greatly improved with the input from more than 500 million images.

Christina said Mixbook is seeing that, if we make it easier, and quicker, for customers to create their photo products, they will do so more often. AI is starting to impact the industry. We're not seeing deep peaks and valleys anymore, we're seeing steady business throughout the year. People can tell their stories all the time. It takes an hour to create a photo book now, probably more due to review than anything else. Other photo products will be super quick, focusing on personalization of your photos. Gary commented that Planet Art is using ChatGPT to generate personalized text for greeting cards - especially useful for men. Type in some details and review the results. Another market opportunity.

Are educators trying to block AI? The panelists said that elementary and high school students already use Chromebooks, and will figure out how to use AI. Rather than trying to block it, it represents the future and educators should be teaching the ethical way to use this technology.

Tapping Creativity and Content to Boost Photo Output was another panel discussion featuring *Marie-Eve Lemieux*, Chief Solutions Officer, Mediaclip (mediaclick.ca), *Hugh Eastwood*, Managing Director, Photo Create Pty. Ltd. (www.photocreate.com.au) and *Rami Zetuny*, Director, Mixam (mixam.com), moderated by *Gary Pageau*.

Australia Photo Create makes the same range of products offered by Shutterfly in the US, all produced in one facility. Coming from the photographic industry, they had retail stores during the days of film, which is starting to make a comeback.

An online print-on-demand company using mainly HP Indigo printers, Mixam started in the US and the UK and now is available in Australia, Canada and Germany. Rami feels they have most of the comic community. Self-publishing is a growing market, at least for Mixam. Recently, they launched a new feature which they encourage to use every time they print something - a digital link that can be shared online to receive feedback before that physical book is published. Self-publishing customers generally plan to sell their books. This is like a hybrid between the digital and the analog world, by sharing online, you can create a demand for your analog printed products.

When Remi started in the US, he hired account managers, because they have a business ties to catalogs. But they are not converting their knowledge to sales, and he realized his average customers are the young generation. Some were self publishers, some wanted cookbooks, or catalogs for their small businesses, and some wanted to publish a specialty magazine. But they all want to monetize their activities, and this starts with photos. B2C is way better than the B2B for us.

Mediaclip is a software company providing white label software for personalization online. Marie-Eve said their customers are any kind of retailer or photo lab; often a difficult customer. Other customers make promotional items, such as stickers or graphic elements. Others who still print books now create magazines, addressing, for example, the cruise lines, which are given to the end customer as part of a loyalty program. Photobooks now include a QR code linking the reader to a location or a video with trivia about the content. There are different ways of dressing up that work, and having a tool that makes it easy for the creative mind to do various things, limited only by their imagination.

In Australia, Hugh looked back at his company's beginning producing print products from 24-exposure films at 150 stores across Australia and New Zealand. Realizing they were in the on demand business, they started wholesaling and, as digital grew, shut down their individual stores, and had to migrate 3000 staff to an online environment. During this transition, we discovered we were a manufacturer - of photo books, mugs, mouse mats, lots of different things. So we had to revisit what our core mission.

Its about memories, and that's an emotion that people are stimulated to take a photo and create something that touches their heart. The day of your son's special event, or your baby's birth, is a critical anniversary. And you can put that on all our products, and they would touch your heart. So we changed our mission statement to "We create or manufacture expressions of love that touch your heart." And ten years ago we began to do personalization because one customer ordered 100,000+ Christmas ornaments to sell. We decided to make them with a child's name and their age each year; text personalization, and there are many "Johnny's." Quicker and easier than using a photo, but AI is the next generation and self generated images that use text and content. Wall décor can be produced from photos, but also from images available at content companies.

Going beyond flat surface output, Mediaclip supports engraving, and working with third-party partners can provide pillows and other products. It is part of the solution to be flexible and allow the connectivity, so we have to partner with printers and other technology providers to bring a solution. The customer doesn't care who's behind it, they just want to have a great user experience. Personalization is the action of designing something and creativity is the use of imagination to have original ideas. A photo could become a cookbook, and a poster is easily turned into a growth chart, a postcard can become an invitation. Consumers will pay extra or to put more time into creation if the product or the technology is right for them.

The content can come from multiple sources. Members of a team can contribute their photos or selfies which can be assembled into a softcover book for each of them. Photos of friends and family members can be put on jewelry, such as a bracelet. As an industry we need to spark customer's imaginations by showing various endearing products that could be made with their images. The technology is making it so much easier for consumers to create more photo products with their images.

Hugh commented that pure creative people want to create, but most people think of themselves as designers. AI will create the opportunity for anyone to feel like they've created some words, and most people can use words, as well as refine a search, .So AI will be very exciting for most of us who aren't that creative. There are ways to test product ideas before investing in the necessary ideas. Groupon was a excellent source of ideas by people promoting products that they could not eventually produce. He makes more storybooks than photobooks. The front end experience may be different, but the manufacturing is the same. You can get many times greater return by pursuing a market that has existing for a long time, adding a new approach.

IMI Europe Inkjet Development Conference 2023

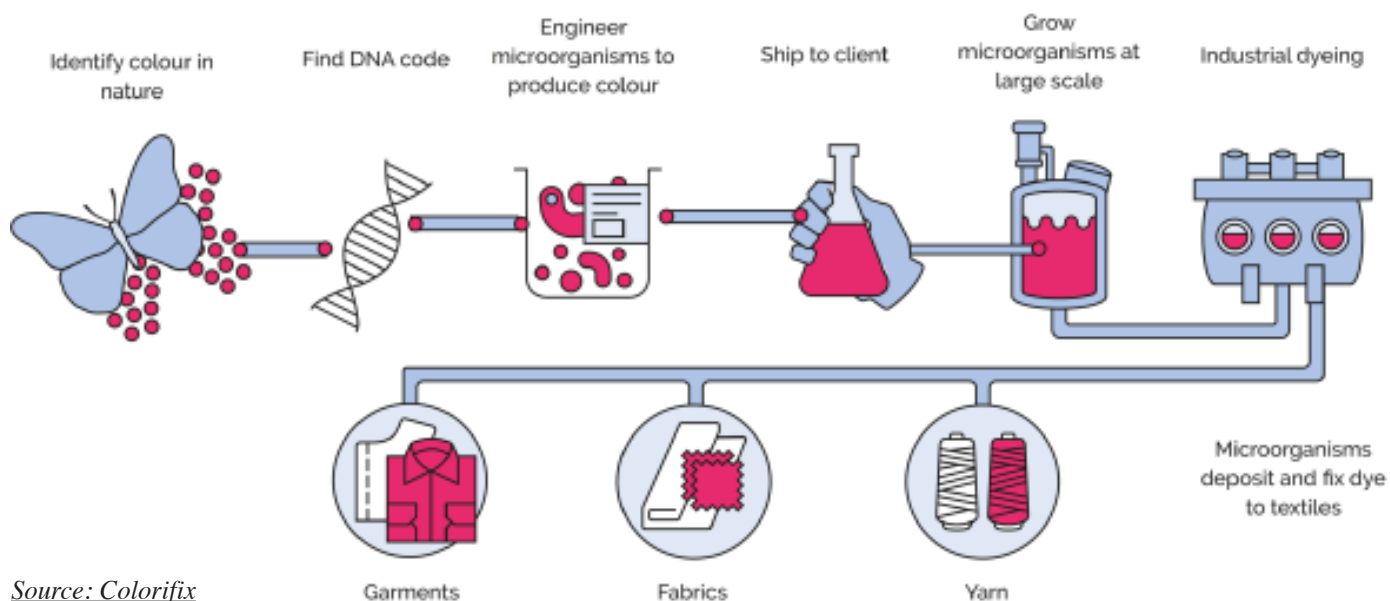
This year's Inkjet Development Conference was held in Hamburg, Germany during May. **Borrowing Colors from nature: Potentials and Challenges of Synthetic Biology in Ink Development** was presented by *Qiaoyi Wang*, Colorifix (<https://colorifix.com>).

"Sustainability is the paradigm of the inkjet printing industry; however, there is still a long way to go," she said. Researchers are looking into bio-based materials for ink formulations. For example, aqueous and vegetable oil-based inks and bio-based binders are increasingly popular. With almost all currently available dyes and pigments being either petrochemicals or heavy metal-based, investigations are being conducted into bio-renewable alternatives. Bio-based compounds as colorants have been used for a long time, but they remain a minority because they cannot meet a massive demand.

Synthetic biology is a field of science that involves redesigning organisms for useful purposes by engineering them to have new abilities. Engineered microorganisms can be used as tiny factories to produce biomolecules including colorants, enzymes, polymers and surfactants. Unique advantages of using synthetic biology to produce functional biomolecules such as colorants: Access to a wide range of colors in nature that are currently inaccessible due to location or quantity; Fast production using large-scale fermentation; Sustainable and renewable production. Less land and resources needed compared to other sources such as plant-based dyes.

Colorifix is the first company to use an entirely biological process to produce, deposit, and fix pigments onto textiles.

Figure 1 - The Colorifix Process in Textile Dyeing



Source: Colorifix

The Colorifix technology eliminates some environmental issues associated with dyeing while significantly reducing others: 0% petrochemicals used; At least 31% savings on CO₂ emissions; At least 49% less water consumed; At least 35% less water consumed; 0 toxic waste.

Applying biologically produced colorants in printing formulations offer a range of advantages: Moving away from petrochemicals; Biodegradability; Biocompatibility; Extra properties (halochromic, anti-UV, antibacterial, antiviral etc.)

What's in the colorful fermentation liquor? Microbial cells (sized between 1 – 4 μ m) and cell debris containing lipids, proteins, and polymers; Culture media components (peptides, amino acids, salt, sugar); Cell products: colorants, enzymes and other proteins, other metabolites such as organic acids, alcohols, surfactants and polysaccharides.

Two ways to apply microbial colorants in ink formulation:

Using the whole culture. Advantages - Save solvent, water and other chemical. Issues - Color intensity

Visual 1st Conference 2023

October 24-25, 2023, at The General's Residence, Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, San Francisco .

Programs include:

Keynote: Profiting from major technology transformations – how about AI?

Fireside Chats: Google Photos – the challenge of “Anything is Possible

Tim McCain: From homelessness to success as a photo entrepreneur – and beyond

Panels: AI image curation 2.0 – when AI-based auto-tagging is so yesterday

Arturo Deza (Artificio), Troy DeBraal (Imaige). Soyoung Lee (Twelve Labs), Israel Shalom (GoodOnes)

The future of stock photography ain't what it used to be

Sarah Casillas (Adobe), Joaquin Cuenca Abela (Freepik), Michael Francello (Shutterstock), Dmitry Shironosov (Everypixel Labs)

What's next for the photo printing market – Today's consumers are digital, online, and do video. Now what?

Jordan Moore (Edge Imaging), Bill Testa (Frintz).

AI image creation – exploring where boundless creativity could take us

Yong Tang (LibAI), Davide Righini (PiktID). Eray Basar (IMG.LY)

Show and Tell Presenters:

Taylor Schmidt (Corbu), Christoph Clermont (Printess). Trista Taylor (LibAI Lab), Ran Rahav (Snapify), Sarah Lefebvre (EyeQ), Jose Florido (Freepik). Servi Pieters (Viesus), Bec Ryttersgaard (Frintz), Nunzio Alexandro Letizia (PiktID), Nick Tirrell (Imaige). Robert Marks (Projector), Marie-Eve Lemieux (Mediaclip), Katie Glymin (Zenfolio), Zenia Malinin (Masterpiece AI). Chris Garcia (GSP), William Liani (VistaCreate)

<https://www.visual1st.biz/program2023>

Brief News of the Photofinishing Industry

- **Stellar growth in the use of direct-to-garment (DTG) digital textile printing machinery** continues to provide a unique and highly successful business model, gaining traction worldwide. (ow.ly/Tmx350PEMF0)
- The 1 billion consumers around the world between **the ages of 50 and 70 are responsible for 27% of spending**, around \$7 trillion each year in the nine product categories. They have a different mindset from younger consumers. Mature consumers' spending doesn't vary as much in response to economic ups and downs. Although mature consumers do spend less overall each year in every product category, they spend significantly more on individual purchases. (ow.ly/6mGF50Pna2x)
- **Giving Cybersecurity the Attention it Deserves.** Research from PwC, 85% of consumers wish there were more companies they could trust with their data. Every business that has employees is at risk. 91% of cyber attacks begin with a phishing e-mail. Research revealed that each cyberattack will cost a small business with fewer than 500 employees an average of \$25,000 per incident. Research from IBM and the Ponemon Institute reveals that a single data breach can cost a small organization nearly \$3 million. (ow.ly/ZRui50Prhk1)
- **How generative AI could empower innovation, redefine productivity, and transform the workforce** - AI is seeing a rush in invention and development, with new tools and technologies appearing on a daily basis. Bringing together data-driven intelligence, expert perspectives, and extensive research to provide insights and future outlooks on current trends, market data, and key player strategies in the AI market. (ow.ly/OiXa50Ps6jy)
- **Practical, Fashionable, and Fabulous Bags to add to your photo merchandise.** Bags are one of the most popular promotional giveaway items. As promotional items, backpacks, commuter bags, and cinch sacks are like mobile billboards. (ow.ly/wo5350PsrP1)

- **“Innovations in Industrial Inkjet”** will showcase the latest releases of printheads, inks, printbars and complete industrial press solutions on Tuesday September, 12 at 1 p.m. ET (ow.ly/NE5h50PC2ks)
- **New MiNT35 35mm film fixed lens compact camera will have a LiDAR autofocus system** that provides accuracy and impressive range capabilities. This is particularly useful in large apertures, where the depth-of-field requires precise focusing. (ow.ly/kOk650PsrYV)
- The international B2B **ImagingExecutives@PHOTOPIA photo industry conference, Sept. 20, 2023** in Hamburg, packs nine exciting speakers and four short demonstrations into an all-day event with simultaneous English/German language translations. **Program details are now finalized**, including a 50-minute lunch break and coffee/networking breaks during the morning and afternoon. (ow.ly/vVpO50Pwgg7)
- **More than just online**, a drupa Essentials of Print Article by Montserrat Petit, states that while digital marketing reaches the sight and hearing of customers, brands must use a combination of printed, physical and offline marketing to reach all five senses: smell, vision, taste, hearing and touch. (ow.ly/1H5Z50PxSLn)
- World Photography Day was August 19. But you can still meet with photographers from around the world at a **special luncheon at the United Nations in New York October 18**. Here is **your personal invitation** to this unique event. (ow.ly/guuy50PBIjU)
- **“Innovations in Industrial Inkjet”** will showcase the latest releases of printheads, inks, printbars and complete industrial press solutions on Tuesday September, 12 at 1 p.m. ET (ow.ly/NE5h50PC2ks)
- **International Print Day is October 25, 2023**. PRINT ACROSS AMERICA will produce a full day of online programming in celebration of International Print Day 2023 to support any open house events from 10 AM – 8 PM ET. All printers are encouraged to participate. (<https://printacrossamerica.com>)
- During its 100th year in business, **JOB**O has introduced **SilverBase, a very compact and inexpensive B&W film development processor**. The modular tank system can be used by beginners, photolabs and professionals. It does not have a water jacket bath and operates at room temperature. Works with 35mm and roll films as well as 4x5” sheet films (with accessory) 120 ml of JOB O alpha developer is required per film - total cost 60 Euro cents. (www.jobo.com/analog/4044t-jobo-silverbase)
- **Yearbook Pro and YB Essentials from Pixami have a new look this year and built-in face matching** that automatically tags all candid photos with student names, allows search of all photos for students by name, and provides coverage reports with detail on student placement in the book. (<https://www.pixami.net>)
- **The Impact of AI on the Creative Industry - White Paper**, from Engine Creative, unveils comprehensive research exploring the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the attitudes, concerns, and expectations surrounding AI in the creative space. (ow.ly/LNqi50PEB1U)
- The **NONS Instant Back for Hasselblad cameras** from the Shenzhen, China based company has already been sold out for the initial production beginning in October, 2023. It uses Fujifilm instax square film, ISO 800. (ow.ly/Wsox50PEMyo)
- **The Lomography DigitalIZA scanning devices handles 35 mm, 120 or 110 films**, and the uploaded film scans, either positive or negative, and can be converted and perform light edits with the online DigitalIZA LAB. (ow.ly/IAIb50PEMKC)
- The **Jasper van Loenen Black Box camera** has a simple optical viewfinder, an AI system analyzes the scene, generates a descriptive caption, prompting a computer generated image, and the built-in photo printer automatically prints the final result. (ow.ly/Hwi750PEN0B)
- **September is Save Your Photos Month**, a worldwide event to help families organize, preserve, share and celebrate their photo and video memories. Free classes to ensure your photos are safe will be available every week. (ow.ly/fqtF50PEN6u)

- **Walsworth Yearbooks has integrated Picsart's photo-editing software into its Yearbook 360 – Online Design.** Walworth's announced states that adding Picsart's capabilities will save yearbook staffs valuable time and streamline design workflows when editing photos for their yearbook spreads. (ow.ly/hXNR50PENeb)

- As reported in the Rochester Business Journal, **Eastman Kodak is suing Brad and Dolores Kruchten**, two former executives who left the company in 2018, to force them to repay money they received from the sale of stock options that the company says they erroneously received. (<https://tinyurl.com/5xba8zvd>)

- Kodak's CEO Jim Continenza said, **"We recently renewed our supply agreement for film with our long-term customer Kodak Alaris in a deal that will run through 2028.** We are committed to manufacturing film as long as there is demand from the filmmakers and photographers worldwide."<https://tinyurl.com/4t5j7w2j>)

Phototalk

by Vimal Parmar

Dscoop India Western Region Meet 2023: Fostering Business Growth and Community Collaboration in Daman

The Dscoop India Western Region Meet took place on 17 August 2023 in Daman, a coastal town in Western India, showcasing a successful community-led initiative with enthusiastic support from Dscoop's volunteer committee members. Dscoop stands as the world's largest collaborative digital print and design community, committed to industry growth, business advancement, and relationship-building.

Part of a trio of local gatherings in India, the Daman Meet was orchestrated by the Western region's volunteer committee, comprising distinguished leaders in the field. After two months of meticulous planning, they curated a robust program focussed on fostering member learning and networking. The event revolved around the theme of Business Growth and Process Innovation, featuring insightful discussions by guest speakers. Notably, Prasad Parulekar outlined strategies for developing apps and e-commerce websites, enabling direct customer engagement alongside traditional channels. Vimal Parmar, yours truly, a recognized Print Evangelist and marketing expert, emphasized the significance of marketing photo print businesses to enhance industry expansion. Omkar Barve, a CFO and investment banker, shared techniques for balance sheet analysis and process enhancement to drive sustainable growth.

Dr. Wilona Annunciation delivered the keynote address on "Improving Negotiation Skills," accentuating how mental approaches influence conversation outcomes, backed by real-world case studies. The event also afforded a relaxed evening for networking against the scenic backdrop of Daman's beachfront venue.

The Daman Meet served as a dynamic forum where busy entrepreneurs devoted the day to introspection, active listening, learning, and business analysis.

Vimal Parmar, India Editor - Photo Imaging News. <https://linktr.ee/VimalParmar>



Upcoming Events

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Sep. 1-5 | Messe Berlin | IFA 2023 (www.ifa-berlin.com) | Messe Berlin |
| +49 30 3038 2180 | Fax: +49 30 3038 2172 | | Berlin, Germany |
| Sep. 5-7 | Photoshop World | The Future of Creativity 2023 (https://photoshopworld.com) | ONLINE |
| Sep. 6-7 | B&H | BildExpo 2023 (https://www.bildexpo.com) | Jacob Javits Convention Center New York, NY |
| Sep. 7-9 | Karnataka Photog. Assn | DigiImage 2023 (https://kpabangalore.in) | Princess Shrine, Gate No. 9 Palace Ground, Bangalore, India |
| +91-80883-79221 | | | |
| Sep. 11-13 | ICX Association | Interactive Customer Experience (ICX) (https://icxsummit.com) | The Westin Charlotte Charlotte, NC |
| +1-877.441.75451 | | | |
| Sep. 11-14 | The Portrait Masters | Portrait Masters Conference (theportraitmasters.com/conference) | Arizona Grand Resort Phoenix, AZ |
| Sep. 12-14 | NBM/Graphix/Pro/Expo | Graphics/Pro/Expo Baltimore (https://graphics-pro-expo.com/) | Baltimore Convention Center Baltimore, MD |
| +1-800-560-9941 | Fax: +1-303-465-3424 | | |
| Sep. 13-15 | FESPA | FESPA Africa (www.fespa.com) | Gallagher Convention Centre Johannesburg, South Africa |
| +44 1737 240788 | Fax: +44 1737 233734 | | |
| Sep. 13-15 | Practical Publishing | Sign Africa Johannesburg 2023 (https://signafricaexpo.com) | Gallagher Convention Centre Johannesburg, South Africa |
| +27 11 568 1894 | | | |
| Sep. 13-15 | Practical Publishing | Modern Marketing Expo 2023 (https://modernmarketingexpo.co.za) | Gallagher Convention Centre Johannesburg, South Africa |
| +27 11 568 1894 | | | |
| Sep. 13-15 | Africa Print | Africa Print 2023 (https://africaprintexpo.com) | Gallagher Convention Centre Johannesburg, South Africa |
| +27 11 568 1894 | | | |
| Sep. 14-16 | Messe Frankfurt India | Media Expo New Delhi 2023 (media-expo-newdelhi.in.messefrankfurt.com) | IEML Greater Noida, India |
| Sep. 18-19 | Photo Booth Marketing | Photo Booth Expo - London (www.photoboothexpo.com) | Novotel London West London, UK |
| +1-905-730-7773 | | | |
| Sep. 18-20 | International Expo-Consults | Sign & Graphics Imaging Middle East (https://www.signmiddleeast.com) | Dubai World Trade Center Dubai, UAE |
| +971 4 3435777 | | | |
| Sep. 19-21 | The Print Show | Print Show (www.theprintshow.co.uk) | NEC Birmingham, UK |
| +44-0117 980 5049 | | | |
| Sep. 20 | Thomas Blömer | ImagingExecutives@PHOTOPIA (www.photopia-hamburg.com) | Messe Hamburg Hamburg, Germany |
| Sep. 20-21 | IS&T (Live and Online) | Advances in Printing Technology (www.imaging.org) | Alps Alpine Co., Ota City Tokyo, Japan |
| +1-703-642-9090 | Fax: +1-703-642-9094 | | |
| Sep. 21-24 | Messe Hamburg | Photopia Hamburg (www.photopia-hamburg.com) | Messe Hamburg Hamburg, Germany |
| +49 40 3569-2826 | | | |
| Sep. 22-24 | Buy/Sell | India Photo and Video Expo 2023 (https://buysellint.com) | Indira Gandhi Pratishthan Lucknow, India |
| +91 90420 32366 | | | |
| Sep. 28-29 | Midwest Sign Association | Midwest Sign Show (https://msasn.org) | Motor City Casino Hotel Detroit, MI |
| +1-513-753-8664 | Fax: +44 1737 233734 | | |
| Sep. 28-29 | ESMA | 6th Int'l Digital Textile Conference (www.digitaltextilecongress2023.be) | Holiday Inn Expo Ghent, Belgium |
| +32 9 355 23 88 | Fax: +32 9 356 78 80 | | |
| Sep. 29-Oct. 1 | Aakar Exhibition | Photo Video Asia 2023 (www.photovideoasia.com) | Hall No. 12-12a Pragati Maidan New Delhi, India |
| +91 - 99789 01084 | | | |
| Oct. 5-6 | Dscoop | Unlocking AI's Marketing Magic (https://dscoop.swoogo.com/aisummit) | The Millennium Gallery Sheffield, UK |
| Oct. 5-8 | | SALON de la PHOTO (www.lesalondelaphoto.com) | Grande Halle de la Villette Paris, France |
| +33-01 76 77 15 21 | | | |
| Oct. 12-14 | Aakar Exhibition | India Int'l Photo Video Trade Fair (www.lesalondelaphoto.com) | Mahatma Mandir Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India |
| +91-99789 01084 | | | |
| Oct. 18-20 | Printing United Alliance | Printing United 2023 (www.printingunited.com) | Georgia World Congress Center Atlanta, GA |
| +1-703-385.1335 | | | |
| Oct. 24-25 | Suite 84a Analytics | Visual 1st 2023 (www.visual1st.biz) | Fort Mason Center San Francisco, CA |
| +1-303-945-3836 | | | |
| Oct. 25 | | Print Across America (https://printacrossamerica.com) | Open House Events across the country Canada and the USA |

Business News

China-Hongkong Photo Products Holdings, Ltd., Hong Kong (<http://www.chinahkphoto.com.hk>) ...

... reported 2022-23 Fiscal Year (31 Mar. 2023) **revenues of HK\$1,079,245,000** (2022 - HK\$1,015,240,000, with a **gross profit of HK\$265,801,000** (2022 - HK\$221,839,000), an operating profit of **HK\$47,010,000** (2022 - HK\$24,271,000), **profit before taxes of HK\$44,502,000** (2022 - HK\$21,336,000), and a **net profit of HK\$42,436,000** (2022 - HK\$17,557,000), or **HK\$3.44 cents/share** (2022- HK\$1.53/cents share). The **total comprehensive income was HK\$39,524,000** (2022 - HK\$19,105,000). The segment information is below, but investment gains rose to HK\$14,769,000 (2022 - HK\$23,688,000) with a segment profit of HK\$11,135,000 (2022 - HK\$20,496,000) .

Servicing - Revenue from services to external customers was **HK\$204,497,000** (2022 - HK\$154,743,000), producing an operating income of **HK\$16,295,000** (2022 -HK\$12,239,000).

Photofinishing and Technical Services - Fotomax recorded a surge of sales of 34.0% when compared with the Previous Year, reaching 107.7% of the pre-COVID-19 year of FY2018/19. In recent years, sales of Fotomax were severely affected by the suspension of social activities and overseas traveling under the Pandemic, which sharply cut the demand for photo-taking and photo D&P services as well as the demand for ID photo taking for travel documents and passports. However, with the relaxation of social distancing measures, the reopening of borders for inbound and outbound travel and the lifting of mask-wearing policy in March 2023, sales of photo D&P and ID photos grew by 7.7% and 91.7% respectively when compared with the Previous Year. Other services, like DocuXpress, also registered a growth of 11.4%, mainly attributable to the price adjustment and the increased demand arising from the documents required for the appeal of GCV application.

The segment operated 54 Fotomax stores as at 31 March 2023 (31 March 2022: 55). Same store sales improved by 38.7%, while online sales grew by 12.4% due to the attractive promotions for online orders and the continuous revamp of the website of Fotomax which made it more user friendly. The marketing and promotional activities in the Year was highlighted by the 40th anniversary of Fotomax. To celebrate the precious occasion, a series of special offers on photo D&P and photographic related products were in place throughout the Year, which were well received by the market. In addition, in order to strengthen Fotomax's image as an established and reliable brand that always keeps abreast of the times, an innovative 40th anniversary logo designed by Mr. Stanley Wong, who is also known as "Another mountain man", a renowned artist and designer in Hong Kong, was used in all promotion and marketing materials of the Year. Another large-scale marketing and promotion event for the 40th anniversary was the sponsorship to the Miss Hong Kong Pageant 2022 organized by the Television Broadcasts Limited which significantly expanded the brand coverage in different media platforms.

On the other hand, sales of the imaging solution service at the Park (Hong Kong Disneyland Resort) and Sky100 (Hong Kong 360° Observation Tower) rebound by 86.8% from the very low base of the Previous Year resulted from the closure of the Park and the sharp decrease in the number of visitors during the peak of the Pandemic. Thanks to the withdrawal of requirements on vaccine passes and the lifting of mask-wearing policy towards the end of the Year, the traffic to the Park significantly increased, thereby driving the sales of imaging solution.

Professional AV Advisory and Custom Design and Installation Services - Although social and commercial activities, such as conventions, exhibitions, hotel development and revamp projects, were resumed in the Year, the segment's sales still dropped by 5.3% as compared with the Previous Year when the segment undertook a considerable amount of household projects for luxury homes and yachts. However, with the resumption of overseas traveling, the demand for household projects in the market dropped by 69.6% when compared with the Previous Year.

Although online sales have attained prominent popularity during the Pandemic, the Group believes that brick and mortar stores will continue to be the key shopping platform for Hong Kong where shopping venues are

easily accessible. It is especially applicable to the Group's AV products because personalized and professional services like trial and testing are always preferred by AV lovers.

Merchandise - Revenue from services to external customers was **HK\$964,112,000** (2022 - HK\$924,447,000), producing an operating income of **HK\$30,102,000** (2022 - HK\$24,490,000).

Photographic Products - Sales of digital cameras and lenses increased by 17.1% when compared with the Previous Year, reaching 71.7% of the sales of the pre-COVID-19 year of FY2018/19. Sales were particularly stimulated in Q3 and Q4 of the Year as overseas traveling gradually resumed after the relaxation of hotel quarantine requirements for arrivals in Hong Kong which made Hong Kong people more willing to travel and equip themselves with the latest and most advanced photographic equipment. In addition, dealers started to stock up for the expected increase in demand after the reopening of the border with China. On the other hand, sales of instant cameras and films recorded a noticeable increase of 26.6% and 46.0% respectively when compared with the Previous Year, which were driven by the resumption of social functions of all kinds. Although the depreciation of Japanese Yen in the Year made parallel products more competitive in terms of pricing, these was not much impact found on the sales of instant cameras for the Year because the global supply of instant cameras was still limited, and FUJIFILM Japan put extra effort to regulate its pricing policy in Japan considering the exchange rate of Japanese Yen.

The shortage of semi-conductors during the Pandemic in the past two years and the lockdown of Shanghai in Q1 of the Year severely affected the supply of stock and hit the sales over these periods hardly. However, with the containment of the Pandemic and the relaxation of anti-Pandemic measures of different countries across the world in the Year, the product supply has gradually picked up since Q2 of the Year and become stable again in Q3 and Q4..

Consumer Electronic Products and Household Appliances - Sales momentum of the segment remained strong over the past few years under the Pandemic, registering a growth rate of 43.8% from pre-COVID-19 year of FY2018/19 to this Year. However, sales was slowing down in this Year because the Pandemic was substantially contained, especially since late of Q3 when outbound travel resumed and demand for consumer electronic products and household appliances (especially products of home entertainment) dropped. Although sales in months when the GCV rolled-out were higher than other months in this Year, but the stimulus effect brought by the GCV was obviously lessened as compared to the Previous Year because more alternatives for consumption were available upon the resumption of general economic activities. Sales for the Year dropped by 4.6% when compared with the Previous Year with retail sales and wholesales decreased by 3.2% and 7.2% respectively. Online sales registered a similar trend with a drop of 6.4% as people tended to get back to brick and mortar shopping once social distancing measures were lifted.

The segment had 13 stores as at the end of the Year (FY2021/22: 12 stores). A new Life Digital store focusing on the sales of the trendiest gadgets and electrical wellness products in the market, was opened in Prince's Building in June 2022. This shop replaced the one located in the International Finance Centre which was closed in March 2022. Same store sales of the Year dropped by 2.2% when compared with the Previous Year. The ratios of sales, including retail and wholesale, of AV products, home appliances and other electronic accessories were 90.0% (FY2021/22: 89.4%), 7.6% (FY2021/22: 8.0%) and 2.4% (FY2021/22: 2.6%) respectively. Market competition became intense again following the recovery of the economy. In order to enhance the segment's competitiveness, aggressive pricing strategies were adopted along with a healthy inventory level. Sales focus was made on high-value items, mainly large-sized TV and high-end audio equipment, to sustain the sales volume and margin in the Year.

B-to-B Commercial and Professional AV Products - Sales of the segment continued to grow and recorded an increase of 24.6% when compared with the Previous Year, reaching 99.3% of the pre-COVID-19 year of FY2018/19. Demand for commercial and professional AV products improved following the resumption of social and commercial activities like conventions and exhibitions, hotel development and revamp projects.

The improvement of sales was also attributable to the expansion of the brand portfolio on hospitality TVs and professional screen displays in Macau since the Previous Year, which offered a variety of products to meet the different needs and budget of individual customers.

Skincare Products - The segment experienced mixed factors in the Year. On one hand, demand for skincare products increased following the gradual resumption of social activities and the lifting of mask-wearing policy. On the other hand, the segment faced intense market competition because the resumption of overseas traveling and the depreciation of Japanese Yen had increased the supply of parallel products with competitive prices. Segment sales increased by 24.3% in the first half of the Year as compared to the same period of the Previous Year, but the growth narrowed down to only 5.6% for the whole year.

To capture those sales diverted to physical stores in the market, the segment extended its presence by developing a new sales channel in Matsumoto Kiyoshi, a popular Japanese drug store selling a variety of Japan-imported skincare, cosmetics and medical products. Matsumoto Kiyoshi hit the segment's target customers well and brought delivering promising sales for the segment in the Year. In addition, to cope with the depreciated Japanese Yen, the segment revised its pricing strategy and adjusted the prices of certain products to restore their competitiveness in the market.

Outlook - Although online sales have attained prominent popularity during the Pandemic, the Group believes that brick and mortar stores will continue to be the key shopping platform for Hong Kong where shopping venues are easily accessible. It is especially applicable to the Group's AV products because personalized and professional services like trial and testing are always preferred by AV lovers. Therefore, with the resumption of economic activities, the Group will pay extra effort in visual merchandising, strengthening its product mix and optimizing its service quality in physical stores. For ASTALIFT skincare products, the Group will expand its coverage in Matsumoto Kiyoshi in Hong Kong so not only to retain local or online customers but also tap in overseas visitors to Hong Kong. Collaborations and promotions between online platforms and physical stores will be another prioritized task to bring traffic to both platforms for all business segments.

Corporate Culture - The Group's corporate culture remained centred around its clearly articulated Vision, Mission and Core Values:

Vision: To make where we operate a better place.

Mission: To enhance the life quality of our customers by providing them with quality products and services

Core Values: Customer-centricity; curiosity to learn; open-mindedness; collaboration; accountability; honest and open communication; and sustainability

Environmental, Social and Governance Report - This year's annual report includes a detailed ESG review. The Group has designed a FY2020/2021 survey to assess stakeholder needs and identify key material topics for engagement. The survey assessed the importance of various ESG topics and included stakeholders from different categories. Results covered: Product integrity; Corporate governance and risk; Information security and personal data protection; Health & safety; Equal opportunities; Talent management; Employee benefits and welfare; Anti-competitive practice; Procurement and supply chain management; Caring for the community; Product environmental stewardship; Solid waste and recyclables; and Energy and climate protection.

To manage chemical waste, the Group works with licensed collectors who follow established instructions for proper handling. Photofinishing solution generated at retail photoshops is collected and handled periodically by collectors approved by the EPD of Hong Kong. The Group has clear guidelines for storing hazardous waste separately from general waste to ensure safety and prevent contamination or spillage. The Group's subsidiary, Fuji Photo Products Company Ltd., is proud to have joined the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Program run by the EPD of Hong Kong. It is committed to supporting and funding this program.

Photo Imaging News Editorial Staff

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