

MEET MIGUEL DELCOUR, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF KVGGO

Intergraf had the opportunity to have a conversation with Miguel Delcour, who is in charge of managing the Dutch Printing Association (KVGGO) since February 2019.



What is your position at KVGGO?

Chief Executive, although I rather use Head of Side Issues.

What is your professional background?

I am the fourth generation in a family of bookbinders. I have studied printing techniques and allied trades, and later Industrial Engineering/Graphic Management. After my internship in China and graduation in the newspaper business, I decided to crown my study career with a Master of Science in Business Administration focussing on Strategic Management.

As my father sold the family business at the right time, my options were not solely limited to the printing industry. I worked at a consulting firm learning the intricacies of management and consulting. From 2005 up to the beginning of 2019 I worked as independent firm simplifier and interim-manager for all types of businesses, also print-related.

The moment I saw the vacancy for a new Chief Executive for KVGGO I knew this was a good time to switch from self-employed to a permanent job. Although the market for interim managers was growing at that time, the silent call of my ancestors was clear. Here I am, back to my roots to help renew the Dutch association in the printing industry.

What are your biggest three challenges as head of KVGGO?

KVGGO, just like the industry, had to dwindle a lot the previous ten years, leaving little space for progressive strategies, renewal of products and services and/or the implementation of a flexible organisation structure. Due to this, KVGGO's image in the industry suffered, as it shifted from a necessity for all business owners to an expensive old and dusty organisation.

First, we need to rebuild the image and the position in the market for current and potential members, and for organisations within the same field. After that we can take the organisation to a new level -3.0- in which we have a progressive strategy, state of the art products and services which match the industry needs and are organised optimally for our members.

You are also joining Intergraf's Steering Committee. What would you like to achieve in your role as a Member?

My goal is to join forces with others wherever it is possible, so that we can strengthen our common goals, learn from each other and advance on subjects of common interest in order to prevent us all re-inventing the wheel at national level.

How do you see the printing industry evolving in the Netherlands (In Europe?)

What are the challenges?

The market will keep shrinking for a while. Therefore maintaining a

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profitable niche-market remains a real challenge. Bulk orders will almost exclusively be about efficiency through further price pressure. At the same time, we have a major problem with the ageing workforce in the industry and the influx of new graphical specialists which has dropped nearly to zero.

The use of paper is (unfairly) under attack, which means that the delivery of printed matter is limited at many levels within our society.

A good paper-lobby is missing, both in the Netherlands and in Europe. We are still fighting with facts against this perception and it does not work; a good alternative approach is hard to come up with and by now it is almost too little too late.

What are the opportunities?

I really think that the first thing we need to do is to join forces and prevent the unfair treatment of paper, be(come) proud of our products and show the world what we can do. Also, it is important that we continue to create products that have an added value for our clients, society, the environment, education, news and information disclosure, for security purposes, commercial usage, marketing and sales possibilities, etc.

If we succeed in that, the industry will find the way up again, the creativity will provide new opportunities, and we will be proud again to be working in our industry.

What do you see as the most crucial future trends and technologies?

Obviously, due to new technology, more and more orders will go to digital printing. This means that the possibilities for printed products will rapidly grow. If we increase our collective creativity, in my opinion, the possibilities for the industry will be enormous.

The trends will depend strongly on the adaptation of new technology and the creativity of the industry. We are in the business of creating trends; unfortunately, we unlearned our creativity, and we forgot to be imaginative as we got stuck in our sad declining situation.

What advice do you have for printers?

Wake up, look up, go out, hook up with the real world, embrace the changed society, be proud and show your added value for the customer instead of focusing on the printing machinery and the number of printed copies it can produce per hour. Our industry is one of the most creative industries, so be creative and come up with something special for every customer (and try to standardise what sells from a market perspective, not on the bases of 10% profit on production costs). (disclaimer, not all printers are bad, if the cap fits you, you should wear it!)

Outside of the office, what are some of your interests and pastimes?

Work and private life are gently mixed, in my case. My hobby is working and making a contribution to the society with my work. That is why work feels like home for me. But I'm blessed with my lovely wife, an

eight-year-old princess and a six-year-old son. I really don't need a specific hobby to make it to the end of the day. I love to be there as much as possible, I write about my children in my blog (www.delcour.nl/kids) and I enjoy going out with my wife and kids to as many places as possible together, let them see the world and share all kinds of experiences with them.

Do you have any message(s) that you would like to communicate to your European colleagues?

I think I just did already in this interview, but to be concrete: let's work together and prevent the industry from falling asleep, grumbling about the good old times of the past and fear the future.

We have a million reasons to make it, we just need the world to get Back to Paper!

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I'm here: m.delcour@kvgo.nl | +31620946100 please feel free to share any thoughts on rebranding and rebuilding the printing industry. You are most welcome to visit our offices in the Netherlands for a cup of coffee and a good discussion about the opportunities of the industry and our associations. ■