



Leading suppliers stand with the industry

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Kellie Northwood, CEO, Print & Visual Communication Association, says print industry leadership is achieved through unity and inclusion, with suppliers stepping up to the plate.

As the final steps of the most significant industry association merge fall into place, as the ink dries on the welcome pack folders, and the new name sits before the Commissioner for approval, the strategic pathway and thinking in the background is the real guts of what will drive our future industry success.

This chapter is more than a merge of two entities, it is an opportunity for us all to build what we intend to lead us well into the decade ahead. A member commented recently this is the potential 'metamorphosis of the entire industry' which saw me liken the progress to a butterfly emerging to a new life.

Our industry, whilst carrying strong heritage and legacy, is not what it was in the 1950s, 1980s or even the 1990s. Together we must define our industry for today and the future. Embrace change, challenge status quo, and build a new leadership to shape our future as one.

As the industry association's Board undertakes strategic planning with a futuristic lens, the question arises: how can unity and inclusivity set the stage



for a dynamic, sustainable, and successful industry landscape?

The merger of two print industry powerhouses signifies more than just the joining of forces; it represents a commitment to presenting a united front to the challenges and opportunities ahead. By fostering a culture of collaboration, the new entity acknowledges that the print industry's strength lies in its collective power. The consolidation of resources, expertise, and perspectives paves the way for innovation, shared strategies, and a renewed focus on delivering exceptional value to stakeholders.

In the spirit of forging this united and stronger industry, our industry's evolution should extend beyond mere consolidation. The inclusion of both suppliers and producers within the industry association reflects a holistic approach that recognises the interdependence of various segments. Suppliers bring to the table insights, innovation and advancements that drive efficiency and quality for our

industry, and for this they are part of the industry as we move to unite as one.

Bringing suppliers into the industry association's fold as members is something that has been considered deeply. Historically there was a stage for producers to the left and suppliers to the right, however on review of the Association's articles there is no rule excluding suppliers from a united industry association. With consideration to a unified, and therefore stronger, industry with greater focus to achieving the goals that benefit us all – national and consistent level to skills and training, one voice to promote the benefits and value of the channels we represent – working with all industry protagonists is critical to our success.

Formerly, TRMC, embraced this unity and through the supply partnerships with Ricoh, Ball & Doggett, UPM-Kymmene and Sappi, most notably, have built programmes to benefit our industry. Sappi partnered with then Australasian Catalogue Association to introduce the first environmental programme for the paper and print industry, in 2014, and brought the internationally acclaimed Two Sides campaign into Australia, and in 2016 into New Zealand. The campaign continues to run today.

UPM-Kymmene was one of the original founders of the former 'Catalogues' which today is run as the Real Media Awards, a unique awards program that celebrates the success of customers and print buyers in print campaigns and investment. The Real Media Awards is the most successful awards programme across the



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KELLIE NORTHWOOD

industry, with some 600 entries per year, over \$100,000 in sponsorship investment, and some 650 attendees to the gala event. UPM-Kymmene never falter, stating with great clarity that its support to the Association allows the team to deliver the important things our industry needs, not for singular commercial goals, rather for the betterment of all.

Ball & Doggett was the original supporter of the first effectiveness campaign to be launched across the paper and print industry in Australia in 2016, with the development and introduction of the Value of Paper and Print campaign, then in 2018 the launch of the only print marketing magazine in the country, VoPP. Ball & Doggett continue to support the development of this campaign, and other programmes such as Industry Insights, Power of Print and more.

In 2022, Ricoh Australia and the Association made announcements to their partnership with a keen focus on rebuilding the industry's metrics and information. The Annual Metrics Survey is about to be released, with trial surveys across Skilled Workforce, Member Forecasting and more already building success in government communication, and proving fundamental to the reinstatement of the apprentices across our Awards to the AAPL government priority listing. The partnership from

ABOVE

Supporting the industry: Ball & Doggett staff (l-r) Leigh Hooper, Zaidee Jackson, Michael Byrne and Anthony Rossi

RIGHT

Unity is strength: Ricoh staff (l-r) Michael Crawford, Tina Economou, Allan Webb, Mark Moro



Ricoh is one that exemplifies the united industry approach, and the importance of suppliers to play a role in the important programmes our industry needs.

These programmes are significant for our industry's strength and there are many more. How do we develop a mentoring programme to support and retain our emerging talent across the industry? How do we fund a consumer campaign Love Paper to communicate the environmental credentials of paper and print that educates beyond paper straws and coffee cups, and points to printed brochures, mail and letterbox material? If the member funds from the commercial producers covers the IR/HR advisory, advocacy, skills and training and general business

tools, it is these supply partnerships that will assist in funding the larger programmes to continue our success and strengthen our industry.

As a pure disclaimer, I recognise there are many other supply members in our mix, and we value their investment and their continued sponsorship of awards, events and other activities, I thank all members for their ongoing contributions, however I look further to unifying our industry with mutual benefit for a sustainable future together, and issue a call to arms to the major supply groups to consider how they can assist in the building of a stronger, unified industry.

As our launch video exclaimed – Let's do this. **21**