



Marco Erismann

Wow, I Produced This Book!

26-year-old Marco Erismann came to the graphic arts industry in a roundabout way. After completing his vocational training with an award, he worked in postpress at [Vogt-Schild Druck AG](#) in Derendingen – preferably on the Bolero perfect binder, because over the years he has become a real softcover fan.

Did you always want to become a print media processor for printing equipment and book-binding, and do you even have a family background in graphics? is a question I get asked from time to time. The answer is a double no. It's true that I had a flair for handicrafts when I was young – after all, my father is a tinsmith, my brother is a self-employed landscape gardener, and my grandparents were farmers. But frankly speaking, my dream job number 1 was professional soccer player, because soccer is my biggest hobby next to motor sports. But unfortunately, as with so many people, that didn't work out for me either. So I turned to my second dream job – since I always liked to do something with wood in my youth: carpenter.

Slipped into the graphic arts industry

I started my apprenticeship with full vigor and top motivation after my school years and an intermediate year as a landscape gardener. But after only a few months, health problems put a nasty crimp in my plans. After one and a half years, I had to abandon my apprenticeship as a carpenter with a heavy heart because of severe back pain.

That was not an easy time for me. But fortunately, the disability insurance showed me retraining options tailored to me – and so I slipped into the graphic arts industry. I was allowed to get a taste of two departments: the print shop and the bookbindery. I wasn't that fascinated

by the training as a printing technologist because – without wanting to offend my colleagues at the presses – it didn't offer enough variety in my eyes. Postpress, on the other hand, I found much more entertaining and exciting right away, because it involves various processes: cutting, folding, collating, stitching and binding.

It was the right decision

I was then lucky enough to be able to take the two-year Federal Vocational Certificate (EBA) as a bookbinder at the Bürgerspital (hospital) Basel, or more precisely at its subsidiary [BSB Medien](#), a partner for printing and digital media production. We had several interesting pieces of equipment there, such as a gathering, cutting and folding/punching machine, as well as a small manual perfect binder.

The interaction between man and machine always fascinates me in my job. This fascination also had an effect on my motivation during my apprenticeship – and inspired me to achieve a good result in the final exam. I promptly completed my apprenticeship in the employment workshop of the Bürgerspital Basel as the best in my year. On the one hand, this filled me with pride and, on the other, it was confirmation that I had chosen the right career path.

And it motivated me to continue on this path – with an additional apprenticeship as a print media processor for printing equipment and bookbinding with a federal certificate of proficiency. Admittedly, this meant another three years of training. But I learned a lot in the process and today I can say without any ifs or buts that it was the right decision.

I like high-quality books and brochures

However, I was unlucky with my first training company near my home, which went bankrupt just one month after I started. But I didn't let this setback throw me off track and started looking for alternatives at the end of 2019. Of the two companies I took a closer look at, Vogt-Schild Druck AG in Derendingen immediately caught my eye because of its modern machinery. Although I have a 50-minute commute to work, it was clear to me: this is where I wanted to work – and from January 1, 2020, I had an apprenticeship contract with Vogt-Schild.

Right from the start, I liked working on the Muller Martini Bolero perfect binder the most. First, I had basic knowledge from my EBA time. Secondly, in softcover production, the processes – collating, glue application, milling control, quality monitoring – are complex and demanding. They require a lot of specialist knowledge and the utmost concentration. And thirdly, I like high-quality books and brochures. I often quietly take a final product in my hands and say to myself: Wow, I produced that!

Winner of the final apprenticeship exam

Damir Milicevic played a big part in my becoming a perfect binding fan. He was my specialist teacher at the [School of Design in Berne](#), which I attended part-time, and got me excited about softcover in many conversations. It was a perfect example of an optimal interaction between practice and vocational school.

Because I like my work so much and always set myself high goals, I really wanted to complete my apprenticeship with a good grade. And I succeeded in doing just that. Last summer in Berne, I came second among the winners in the category of print media processors for printing equipment and bookbinding. Of course you always want to be first. But I was also delighted with second place and the 250 Swiss francs in travel vouchers. I also see this as recognition of my interest in my profession, because without it, you don't get such a good degree.

I like the variety of working hours

Of course, I was pleased to be offered an employment contract as a print finishing specialist after completing my apprenticeship at Vogt-Schild Druck AG. There are several reasons why I really wanted to stay. I like my work and the high level of automation in our company, which also has a family atmosphere. I also like working shifts – from 5:50 a.m. to 2 p.m., from 1:50 p.m. to 10 p.m., or from 9:50 p.m. to 6 a.m. I like the variety at the company. I like the variety in working hours because I don't always like to have the same daily routine.

Of course I have plans for the future. But I don't have a fixed career plan – you have to remain flexible and open. First of all, I'd like to continue gaining professional experience. But I would like to get ahead in my profession one day. My goals are to go to college and become a vocational trainer so that I can pass on my skills to others. Where I will be in ten years is hard to say. In any case, I'm not worried about my career. After all, good skilled workers are always in demand in the graphic arts industry. Funnily enough, however, this is not so well known among my colleagues. Because when I talk to friends about my job, I always have to explain it to them in detail – and a lot of question marks jump out at me.

The learning effect is much greater from paper

I'm just as sure that print has a future. After all, people who work on a computer all day don't want to read on a tablet in the evening; they want something tactile in their hands and therefore prefer to read from a book. Print products will also retain a high status in advertising, because electronic advertising is usually clicked away immediately.

For me personally, too, it's inconceivable to stop reading from paper. Since my mother works in the early delivery of newspapers, we often have newspapers at home, and I enjoy reading them. I also experienced the advantage of print when I was preparing for my final apprenticeship exam. The learning effect is much greater on paper than on a digital device. You can add notes, mark important parts of the text with a highlighter pen, and there are no distractions like on a tablet. I am therefore convinced that printed books will remain important as a school resource.

In this [video](#) on the largest Swiss apprenticeship portal [yousty](#), Marco Erismann talks (in Swiss German) about what he likes so much about his job as a print media processor printing equipment and bookbinding.

Marco Erismann also made an appearance in the [video](#) about his employer Vogt-Schild Druck AG, which was filmed in 2021 as part of an Industry Night (time: 5:43 to 6:06).

Learn more about Marco Erismann on [LinkedIn](#).