

Newspaper printing operations cautiously optimistic for 2022

Newspaper printing operations are optimistic about this year's business, according to the *World Printers Forum Outlook 2021-22* report, just published by the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA).



Source: @zefart [123rf](#)

This follows a year of big challenges in 2020 that saw newspaper printing operations bounce back in 2021.

[The report](#) is based on the annual global survey of printing executives who are members of the World Printers Forum (WPF) and part of the WAN-IFRA Global Media Trends Panel to examine the trends and forecasts for the printing industry.

The survey was conducted with some 73 respondents from 17 countries sharing their insights and plans. Most of the newspaper printers that participated in the Outlook survey had average paid weekly circulations between 100,000 and four million copies.

This year's analysis was provided by Manfred Werfel, the former director of the World Printers Forum.

Key takeaways of the report

- **Planned investments:** The highlight of last year's edition was the surprising enthusiasm expressed by the printing community to make new as well as retrofit investments despite a difficult 2020. Similar to the previous year when more than 70% of the executives revealed their plans for investments, this year, too, close to 70% of respondents said they would be investing in the coming days. More than 39% of participants plan both new as well as retrofit investments; around 24% plan to focus only on retrofit investments. The share of those who have solely new investment plans is relatively low at 6.1%.
- **Increasing revenues:** While more than 57% of respondents recorded increased revenues in 2021 compared to the previous year, around 67% were hopeful of even greater turnover for 2022.
- **Circulations up:** A significant number of respondents, after seeing increased weekly circulation in 2021, feel certain their numbers will improve further in 2022.
- **Commercial expansion:** The majority of respondents expressed hopes of continuing expansion of business with external customers; 47% said they are also printing products such as books, catalogues, magazines, brochures and so on while 53% indicated they are printing only newspapers.
- **Low closures:** During the peak of the pandemic (in 2020), several publishing houses shut down some of their printing plants and outsourced the work to external printers. However, the situation seems to have improved since: More than 90% of respondents said they had no plans to close printing plants.
- **Outsourcing printing:** Around 44% also made it clear they do not intend to outsource printing jobs to external printers in the immediate future. However, almost a third of the participants did seem to be considering the possibility.

Much of these expectations were taken into consideration before the recent crisis in Ukraine arrived. Depending on how this plays out, for newspapers supply chains that are already under pressure could be even more disrupted.

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