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FOR PUBLICATION

THE POWER TO MOVE

Canon at Drupa 2024

Canon **EMEA**
DBA Design Effectiveness Awards Entry - July 2025

Executive Summary

This is a story that goes beyond conventional design craft. It's about how a deep creative partnership reshaped the strategic foundations of a high-stakes commercial opportunity - and delivered record-breaking results.

Drupa is the world's leading international print exhibition. In 2024, after an 8 year hiatus, the show returned to reunite a disrupted and declining industry. Over a 14-month creative engagement, every facet of Canon's approach was reimagined to transform a one-off event into a long-term accelerator that would:

Drive high-value sales -
through real deals and signed contracts.

Build pipeline -
acquiring net new leads and nurturing existing.

Elevate brand perception -
impressing customers, rallying staff and driving reach.

Exhibit more sustainably -
with a demonstrably reduced footprint.

Our breakthrough came from the single, unifying idea: in a digital-first world, print has *'The Power to Move'.*

More than a campaign, this became a strategic platform that shaped every element of the experience - from layout and narrative flow to spatial design and content strategy.

We reimagined the stand as a behavioural journey, guiding visitors from emotional resonance to commercial action. The result - a 5,000 sqm immersive experience designed to move people in every sense, and drive performance at scale.

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA

Sales target exceeded	a new record.
196%	increase in total sales value vs 2016.
268%	increase in total pipeline value vs 2016.
131%	more new leads captured than any Canon event in history.
96%	of visitors and **94%** of staff were *'extremely impressed'* with the overall experience.
46%	reduction in CO2e emissions compared to 2016.
#1	media share of voice with **122** positive press articles.

These weren't just record-breaking outcomes; they came despite 30% fewer show visitors vs 2016, no pre-show marketing campaign, a flat footprint and reduced media budget vs 2016.

Same stand. Same space. Same sales team. Smarter design.

Context and Overview

The Business and Market

Canon is one of the most respected names in imaging technology - spanning print, cameras, software and services. Yet despite its global scale and technical pedigree, the commercial print market it operates in is consolidating and fiercely competitive. Canon must constantly reaffirm its relevance in a digital-first world, where the role of print is often misunderstood, overlooked and undervalued.

Print is everywhere - shaping consumer choices, personalising environments, enabling education and sparking joy - through books, photography and packaging. While overall print volumes have declined, the market remains vast, worth over €430 billion - twice the size of the global entertainment sector.

The Opportunity

Drupa is the world's largest and most influential print trade show. Held in Düsseldorf every 4 years, its return in 2024 after an 8 year COVID-induced hiatus marked a critical moment in the industry. With 1,643 exhibitors from 174 countries competing for the attention of 170,000 visitors - many of them high-value decision-makers with buying intent.

This audience is experienced, informed and highly selective. For brands like Canon, standing out demands more than a strong product lineup, it requires a compelling story, strategic clarity and seamless experience design.

Drupa isn't just about footfall, but influence: a rare opportunity to shape perceptions, fast-track pipelines and prove long-term value to an entire ecosystem.

Context and Overview

The Ambition

Canon's goals were bold, aiming to leverage Drupa as a business-critical platform to advance its position as a category leader and partner of choice, successfully unveil a suite of new future solutions and align messaging across multiple business units and regions. All this whilst launching a refreshed brand identity in the live channel. Success would be measured by:

Achieving an unimaginable sales target, 60% higher than 2016.

Capturing more new leads than in 2016.

Hosting over 10,000 visitors during the show.

Driving press coverage to achieve a top five share of voice.

Demonstrably reducing the CO2e emissions associated with exhibiting.

The Challenges

Unlike its focused and well-established rivals, Canon's offering is broader, their story more complex and their platform harder to unify. Delivering cut through and commercial impact meant overcoming serious headwinds:

Diverse narratives -
multiple product lines with unique goals and tailored messaging.

A broader brand -
spanning cameras and medical tech that dilutes Canon's print leadership.

Complex product story -
future tech is harder to demo than market-ready products.

No marketing -
unlike rivals, Canon entered without a campaign to prime awareness.

Smaller space and budget -
a compact stand with a net lower design spend (REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA) than key rivals.

To succeed, Canon had to transform complexity into clarity and use strategic design to outperform scale and spend.

The Brief and Scope

The brief was to create a flagship experience that would cut through noise, build trust and drive conversion. But as the work unfolded, the scope quickly expanded far beyond traditional stand design.

What Canon really needed was a unifying idea. One that could flex across strategy, messaging, content, space and storytelling to:

1. **Align and integrate product messaging to tell a cohesive, unified story.**
2. **Shift perception from vendor to visionary.**
3. **Turn emotional engagement into commercial action.**
4. **Prove that sustainability and scale can co-exist.**

Our first move was a deep strategic audit, mapping Canon's full product and service portfolio and analysing customer journeys to identify critical 'moments of truth' - points where emotion, credibility and commercial impact converge. Rethinking how Canon shows up live, our commission included:

Developing a creative platform to anchor all messaging and storytelling.

Designing a modular content and journey system aligned to decision-maker mindsets.

Crafting a holistic and behavioural experience to guide people through the sales funnel.

Creating a space optimised for navigation, engagement and conversion.

Defining new experiential principles for how Canon shows up live.

Setting sustainability standards to influence future global events.

The Design Solution

'The Power to Move' was more than a theme: it became the strategic thread that tied Canon's commercial, emotional and environmental ambitions together. It brought coherence to a broad and diverse portfolio, united internal teams and shaped every creative and design decision.

The result - a 5,000 sqm experience engineered to drive behaviour, not just deliver information.

We structured the space around three concentric zones that mirrored the buyer journey - moving from emotion (wow), to understanding (now), to commitment (how).

This wasn't just about spatial design. This was behavioural design in action - drawing people in fast, then guiding them deeper into discovery, dialogue and decisions.

The Design Solution

WOW - *Emotional impact:*

At the centre stood a kinetic 360° 'Core' - a sculptural cylinder alive with synchronised light and animated content that worked to embody the energy behind 'The Power to Move'. Inside, a multisensory film experience brought Canon's purpose to life through 'World Unseen' - a powerful story using dimensional print and immersive sound to show how Canon technology helps blind audiences explore imagery through touch.

It didn't sell a product, it signalled what Canon stands for: opening hearts before minds.

NOW - *Establishing credibility:*

Radiating from the 'Core' was a portfolio zone that presented Canon's entire print ecosystem. Segmented by industry, it made navigation effortless and discovery intuitive. Flagship print machines were front and centre, but never isolated - they were contextualised with signage, stories, interactive software demos and live printing experiences.

This zone positioned Canon as a serious cross-vertical transformation partner, not just a product vendor.

HOW - *Driving action:*

The outer layer - 'Printworks' - flipped the focus from products to enablement. We led with real customer stories told in immersive narrative 'suites' and high-impact application displays that sparked curiosity and grounded innovation in real-world results. Hands-on masterclasses and mini-hacks turned interest into ability, showing visitors not just what's possible, but exactly how to achieve it.

The outcome? More relevance, richer conversations and a clearer path to conversion.

Designing for Credibility and Reach

Canon's credibility wasn't claimed. It was demonstrated - through clarity, care and quality - at every touchpoint. The 'Core' primed with purpose-led storytelling. 'Printworks' ensured claims were always grounded in Canon customer provenance telling their own stories, turning interest into insight. To extend reach beyond the halls, we designed with media in mind. Broadcast-quality lighting and dedicated camera zones enabled seamless press capture and curated tours. This turned the space into a high-performing content engine, enabling Canon to outperform every competitor in earned media reach.

Less, but Better

Sustainability wasn't an afterthought - it was fundamental to the brief and built into every decision. We removed raised platforms and double-deck structures entirely, reducing materials and streamlining logistics. Printers were positioned directly on the hall floor, just as they would be in real production environments, stripping away unnecessary scenery and reinforcing authenticity. Where build was necessary, we built to last: modular scenic elements were constructed from raw, reusable materials designed for redeployment across Canon's permanent Experience Centres and event programmes. This less-is-more approach delivered high impact with a significantly lower footprint, proving that scale and sustainability can co-exist.

Results

Canon's Drupa 2024 experience set new benchmarks for what design can achieve in a complex, high-stakes B2B environment.

Despite 35% fewer show visitors than 2016, no pre-show marketing campaign and a significantly reduced media budget, Canon didn't just meet its ambitious goals - it dramatically exceeded them. The results weren't driven by scale or spend, but by strategic, insight-led experience design that turned emotional connection into commercial action, enabling the most successful sales motion in their history.

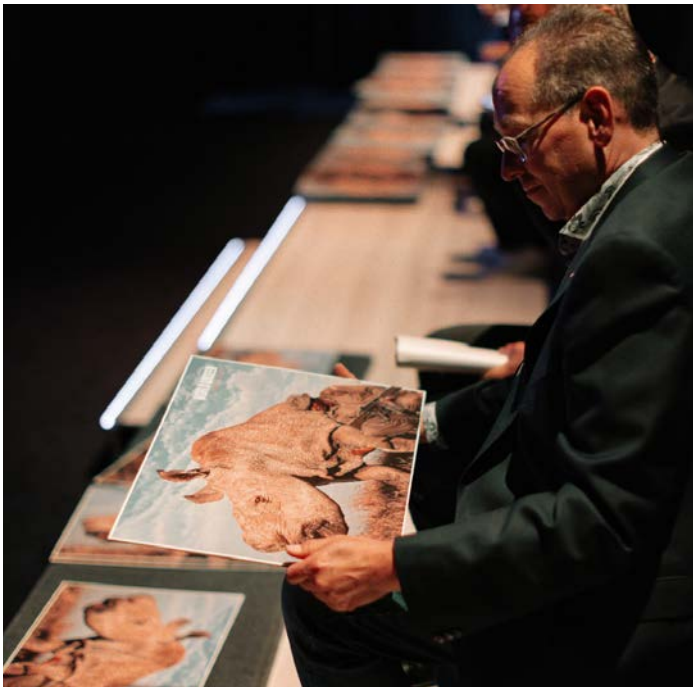
Commercial performance:

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA sales target exceeded - a new record.

196% increase in overall sales value vs Drupa 2016.

131% more new leads captured vs 2016 - the highest ever at any Canon event.

268% increase in new and nurtured pipeline value vs 2016.



Engagement performance:

15,000+ visitors, capturing **9%** of total Drupa attendance, vs 5% average conversion rate for B2B stands of this scale. *

9 minute average dwell time, beating the 5.5 minute benchmark for similar scale B2B stands. **

96% of visitors rated the experience 'exceptional'.

94% of Canon staff reported exceptional satisfaction with the experience.

9,010 recruitment applications, directly driven by on-stand QR code placements.

122 pieces of positive press coverage, with **100%** positive sentiment.

#1 media share of voice across all exhibiting brands.

Sustainability performance:

46% reduction in CO2e emissions vs Canon's 2016 Drupa presence - with no compromise to creative ambition or visitor numbers.

70% of materials and physical assets reused across other Canon programmes post-show.

Narrative platform, content system and spatial principles now adopted as the blueprint for Canon's global experience strategy.

These results were not just commercially successful - they redefined what design effectiveness looks like in the print and imaging sector. At a show where most exhibitors measured success in footfall and impressions, Canon delivered tangible, trackable business outcomes that outperformed category norms and internal expectations alike.

** Center for Exhibition Industry Research, 2023 Benchmarks.*
*** Freeman Global Event Benchmarking Report, 2023–24.*

Other Influencing Factors

To fairly assess the impact of this work, it's important to address the key variables that could otherwise explain Canon's success at Drupa 2024. None of the most common explanations apply and here's why design, not external forces, made the difference:

Same show, same location, same footprint.
Canon's stand remained in the same hall and had the same 5,000 sqm footprint as all prior Drupas. Performance gains weren't due to a better plot or increased presence. They came from how the space was used.

No additional sales resource.
The on-site sales team was the same size and structure as in 2016. There were no new incentives or resourcing increases. The commercial uplift came from better-qualified conversations, clearer storytelling and deeper buyer engagement.

PR success without a PR budget boost.
Canon's media budget was lower than in 2016 and smaller than several key competitors. The standout media coverage was enabled by a design strategy that built in media capture, story staging and press touring - proving design's role as a multiplier.

No headline product advantage.
While Canon introduced several innovations at Drupa 2024, most were future-focused launches, not market-ready products that could be purchased. The volume of closed business in June 2024 was from existing or evolved product lines. This wasn't a product halo effect, it was a storytelling, trust-building and clarity effect.

Tougher market, smaller audience.
Drupa 2024 saw 35% fewer visitors than 2016. With more competition and lower footfall, it was harder to win, not easier. Canon's performance, in this context, reflects meaningful category outperformance, not favourable timing.

More expensive products, longer sales cycles.
It's important to acknowledge that in the 8 years since the last Drupa, Canon has introduced some significantly higher value products to their portfolio. But, as unit cost goes up, so too does the length of the sales cycle, making it far less likely to acquire and convert a customer at a single event.

In short, this wasn't the result of **more** - it was the product of **better.**

Better strategy. Better design. Better outcomes.

Credits

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Business Lead ..... Andy Sexton
Client Lead ..... Adrian Brown
Executive Producer ..... Jane Mehta
Technical Production ..... Adam Daly
Project Coordinator ..... Harriet Clark
Creative Director ..... Adam Doherty
Lead Spatial Designer ..... Roger Munroe
Digital Designer ..... Jamie Manfield
Digital Designer ..... Rory Tatton
Graphic Designer ..... Ollie Down
Technical Designer ..... Ryan Overton

Partners

AV Production ..... iMag Displays
Fabrication ..... Image Construction
Lighting ..... Static Lighting
Networking ..... Connect Live

Canon

Vice President, Marketing and Innovation ..... Marc Bory
Senior Director, Marketing and Innovation ..... Jennifer Kolloczek
Director, Marketing and Innovation ..... Mathew Faulkner
Director, Marketing ..... Hans Schmidbauer
Director, Sales ..... Geoff Hobbin
Senior Manager, Strategy ..... Cathy Bittner
Senior Manager, Brand and Sponsorship ..... Pete Morris
Manager, Events and Incentives ..... Sally Lawrence
Project Manager, Events and Incentives ..... Kay Martiny

Canon Partners

World Unseen Campaign ..... VML
PR and Comms ..... Nelson Bostock