AC SHOW® 2026
DAILYTWO
The Show and Conference Daily I www.american-coatings-show.com I May 6, 2026

Source: Liz Lynch

Top industry leaders gather for the ribbon-cutting ceremony – officially opening the American Coatings Show and Conference 2026 in Indianapolis.

Ribbon Cut, Doors Open: ACS 2026 Is On

Three days, one industry, countless innovations

Indianapolis is once again the place to be for the global coatings community: with a ribbon-cutting ceremony the American Coatings Show (ACS) 2026 officially opened its doors this morning. The high-caliber lineup at the ribbon cutting underscored the event's significance, bringing together leading innovators and decision-makers of the paint and coatings industry.

As the largest platform for the sector in North America, ACS sets the tone for where the industry is heading. More than 540 exhibitors fill 136,600 square feet of exhibition space, where coatings experts connect, evaluate new technologies, and shape the conversations defining the months ahead.

A SHOW FLOOR MIRRORING THE INDUSTRY'S PULSE

The show offers a complete view of the marketplace: raw materials, additives, production and testing equipment, automation tools, digital technologies, and sustainability advancements. From global market leaders to ambitious newcomers, ACS 2026 mirrors the full breadth of the coatings value chain. A highlight of this year's edition is the brand-new ACS Community Hub – a dedicated stage for panel discussions on market trends, sustainability, regulation, and the future of coatings technology.

A STRONG START, WHICH WAS ECHOED BY THE INDUSTRY

"The opening of the American Coatings Show and Conference was electric – full of energy, excitement, and momentum. Seeing attendees actively connect with exhibitors, spark new ideas, and build meaningful relationships on the show floor was truly terrific and set the tone for an outstanding event," said Jennifer Dugas, Senior Vice President, Events & Expositions at the American Coatings Association (ACA).
Matthias Janz, Director Trade Shows, Vincentz Network added: "The opening day of the American Coatings Show and Conference has clearly demonstrated the importance of this platform for the international coatings industry. Together with the ACA, we bring together a strong exhibition and a high-caliber conference program that addresses both today's challenges and future developments across the industry. The strong engagement on the show floor as well as in the conference sessions confirms the value of direct exchange between industry, research, and application."
ACS is hosted by AC Media in collaboration with ACA and Vincentz Network (VN) – a transatlantic partnership that is both unmistakably North American and truly international in spirit.

SCIENCE, INNOVATION, AND THE FUTURE ON STAGE

Running concurrently, the American Coatings Conference features expert-led sessions on next-generation formulations, biobased materials, advanced application methods, and the role of digitalization and AI.
Setting the tone was the keynote by Dr. Bedri Erdem, CTO at Rust-Oleum Corporation and RPM Consumer Group: "Reimagining Chemistry as the Catalyst: Driving Innovation, Sustainability, Performance to Fuel Growth in the Coatings Industry."
A particular highlight of the opening was the presentation of the American Coatings Award to Dr. Ioanna Tzortzi of Perstorp – a fitting prelude to a week dedicated to innovation and progress.

CONTENTS

THINGS TO DO

Panel Discussion:
"Choosing the Right Low-VOC Technology Path"
Booth #2088,11:00 am

Panel Discussion:
"Balancing Sustainability, Performance and Process Efficiency"
Booth #2088, 2:00 pm

Coatings Bar Trivia
Booth #2088, 3:30 pm

INTERVIEW

Source: TGraphic - stock.adobe.com, created with AI

"AI has Reached the Front Door of Industry"

How artificial intelligence is transforming resin development, formulation optimization, and the coatings value chain

Source: Perstorp

Perstorp

Artificial intelligence is generating growing curiosity across the coatings industry, yet adoption remains uneven and often exploratory, according to Ioanna Tzortzi, associate specialist for application development in the coating solutions business unit at Perstorp. Here she discusses where AI and digital tools are already delivering measurable results and what the industry still needs to see before broader adoption can take hold.

How is AI being used to accelerate the development and optimization of resin and additive formulations? *AI can accelerate resin and additive development by learning relationships between formulation choices, process conditions, and performance, and then using that knowledge to predict outcomes and guide decisions. It can screen candidates faster, identify the most influential variables, and recommend operating windows that are more robust than single-point recipes. In practice, we have seen strong results with active/sequential learning, where the model updates after each experiment and proposes the next best trials to improve performance or reduce uncertainty. This methodology is transferable across the coatings value chain — from upstream resin/additive design and synthesis optimization to downstream formulation tuning, application performance, and scale-up — by continuously learning from structured lab and process data.*

Where do you see the greatest impact of digital tools today in the coatings value chain, and where is AI still underutilized? *I will answer this more broadly: the coatings industry is not yet at a stage where digital tools are fully embedded across manufacturing and application development workflows, so it is still early to rank "greatest impact" areas. We are at a point where AI has reached the front door of industry — companies are intrigued to use it in different contexts, but adoption is uneven and often exploratory. What the market is actively seeking now are credible success stories and clear examples of where AI/digital tools add value, how it can be operationalized in day-to-day work, and what tangible benefits it delivers (speed, quality, robustness) compared to traditional approaches.*

How do you ensure data quality and model robustness when deploying machine-learning models for R&D or process optimization? *Data quality, integrity, and structure are the key prerequisites for applying ML either process or R&D related. We take a project-specific approach: in our AI-driven alkyd emulsification work we defined the full set of qualitative and quantitative target-related variables and ensured historical and ongoing experiments were captured in the same format (consistent units, always reported, no "silent" missing values). Where needed, we engineer smart descriptors to represent product metrics reliably for training. For model robustness, we update the data ingested to the model regularly (e.g., monthly), keep a human-in-the-loop approval gate, and benchmark predictions against lab outcomes using success indices, and finally, tracking model performance metrics over time to detect improvement or deterioration.*

Do you see increased demand from coatings manufacturers for digital or AI-enabled services? *Rather than clear demand for AI-enabled services from coatings manufacturers, we currently see growing curiosity. Customers ask for success stories and a practical explanation of what AI can do, how it can be operationalized, and how it fits into daily formulation and troubleshooting workflows. The market is looking for case studies that quantify gains in process and experimental efficiency versus the traditional, human-driven trial-and-error approach. This is exactly what we are demonstrating with our AI-driven alkyd emulsification work using Neptem: we benchmarked the model against a human-led approach and showed significant gains in resource efficiency and in material discovery.*

INTERVIEW

"There's No Compromise for Aesthetics"

Balancing sustainability, durability and appearance is redefining innovation in modern wood coatings

Source: BASF

Kyle Flack

BASF, Booth #1529

Sustainability targets, stricter regulations and rising performance expectations are reshaping the wood coatings market. Kyle Flack, technical manager for Resins NA at BASF, discusses how advances in resin chemistry, waterborne technologies and energy-curable systems are helping manufacturers meet evolving demands without sacrificing application properties or visual appeal.

What are the most significant performance and sustainability challenges shaping the development of wood coatings? *For factory applied finishes, especially in waterborne systems, block resistance and early stackability is paramount. This needs to be realized along with many other balanced properties. Early nickel marking resistance and scratch resistance are other key features for furniture and flooring where consumers are requiring higher levels of performance. This is a challenge when moving to more sustainable chemistries because the mechanisms of film formation are different and the chemistries available require more tuning.*

Another key consideration is that wood is not just wood anymore. Composite types of materials and plastics are replacing traditional wood substrates for higher durability, which creates new challenges.

How are regulatory pressures and evolving environmental standards influencing formulation strategies for wood coatings? *Regulatory pressures can be initiated in our region and in other cases are translated and adopted from other region's efforts. There is a continued need for solutions, which enable reduced VOCs, reduced carbon footprint, and reductions on formaldehyde, to name a few. The formulation strategies evolve to integrate these needs, in some cases realizing shifts from solvent-borne systems to waterborne systems, adopting bio-renewable content solutions and carbon footprint reduction strategies like mass-balance. Larger furniture manufacturers drive many of the changes to be adopted globally, but regional acceptance can be slower depending on whether changes are wants or true needs, dictated by customer voice and regulation.*

What advances in resin chemistry are having the greatest impact on durability, appearance, and application efficiency? *There are many resins and chemistry types that are valued in wood coatings. In waterborne latex systems, the process and morphology of the latex is more of a driver than the resin "chemistry." BASF has developed products that perform much more closely to a solvent-based system in terms of applicability, appearance, and resistance properties through the fine tuning of process. In energy cured systems, urethane acrylate oligomers enable the weatherability and balance of performance properties that are desired with coatings with robust requirements, like exterior wood furniture or even flooring that may see high levels of UV light through a window. Our line of energy cure oligomers and light stabilizers work together to drive performance.*

How do you see the balance between protection and aesthetics evolving in wood coatings? *There's no compromise for aesthetics. The drive for protection is always increasing, for example, higher durability exterior coatings; but these can't give up performance on application or appearance attributes. Low matte finishes are maintaining their importance and in some systems this can create aesthetic challenges. In energy cured matte finishes, the ability to build performance is there, but at the cost of formulation rheology in many cases. BASF has worked to address this with a new dispersant that allows for higher filler loads and low gloss with less rheology build.*

"We Have to Disrupt How We Think and Work"

Bedri Erdem gives keynote speech on the future of the coatings industry

One of the highlights of yesterday's opening plenary session of the American Coatings Conference 2026 was Bedri Erdem's enlightening keynote speech. The chief technology officer at Rust-Oleum Corporation and RPM Consumer Group outlined a fundamental shift in the field of coatings chemistry.

Erdem explained why the industry must move beyond incremental formulation changes and reinvest in molecular-level innovation supported by digital and AI-driven discovery tools, as sustainability, performance, and regulatory compliance increasingly converge.

The speech was titled 'Reimagining Chemistry as the Catalyst: Driving Innovation, Sustainability and Performance to Fuel Growth in the Coatings Industry'. Erdem began by providing a brief historical overview of the coatings industry. He emphasized that chemistry has been the backbone of the industry for almost a century. From the early drying-oil systems and Staudinger's macromolecular framework, to transformative polymer chemistries such as polyurethanes, epoxies and silicones in the 1930s, these advances still underpin the performance of modern coatings. He then went on to show how the chemistry of coatings is undergoing a fundamental transformation, driven by pressures to be more sustainable, the need for better performance, and digitalization.

Over the past several decades, innovations such as emulsion polymerisation, controlled radical processes, powder coatings and UV/EB-cure technologies have enabled the development of high-performance, low-VOC and energy-efficient systems. However, Erdem emphasized that the increasing demand for circularity, durability, barrier protection, and functionality in new application areas is exposing fundamental limits. "We're reaching the limits of legacy chemistries."

Looking ahead to the future of the coatings industry, the keynote speaker emphasized the need for a change in mindset and working practices, and encouraged collaboration across the value chain: "This is paramount."

"What do we do now?" Erdem asked. He said that the industry has reached an inflection point. Long-established systems such as isocyanate-based polyurethanes, bisphenol A epoxies, silicone-MEKO curing systems and formaldehyde-crosslinked resins are facing increasing scrutiny due to concerns about toxicity, emissions and the end of their life. At the same time, emerging fields such as energy storage, e-mobility, advanced electronics and biomedical substrates require precise control of polymer architecture, adhesion and durability.

Source: Liz Lynch

Erdem emphasized that advances in analytical chemistry and molecular-scale characterization are transforming the field of coatings innovation. Techniques that shed light on polymer architecture, cross-link density and interfacial energetics are now key to discovering next-generation systems. He emphasized that meaningful breakthroughs depend on a deep understanding of the chemistry – specifically, how monomer design, functional-group placement and network topology influence performance. He emphasized that the real shift occurs when this chemistry is fused with digital and AI-driven design.

"AI does not get rid of the chemist,"- Erdem said reassuringly, "it can be our best friend."

And he concluded,"Let chemistry become our rocket."

And the Winner is...

Ioanna Tzortzi of Perstorp receives the American Coatings Award

In addition to the keynote and survey, another highlight took place during yesterday's Plenary Session: the presentation of the American Coatings Award 2026.

For her outstanding technical contribution, Dr. Ioanna Tzortzi Associate Specialist in the Coating Solutions business unit at Perstorp, Sweden, received the acclaimed prize.

The award was presented by Mike W. Johnson, CEO and President at the American Coatings Association and Yeray López Arauco, Community Manager and Editor at Vincentz Network. Selected jointly by the American Coatings Association and Vincentz Network, the American Coatings Award honors the most exceptional scientific paper presented at the conference. In addition to the recognition, the prize includes a $2,500 cash award and a commemorative sculpture.

COMBINING EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY WORK WITH AI

Tzortzi was recognized for her paper, "Accelerated Alkyd Emulsification through AI-Driven Experimentation," which addresses one of the key challenges currently facing the coatings industry. As the sector continues to move toward more sustainable, low-VOC and waterborne systems, alkyd resins play a central role. However, developing stable oil-in-water emulsions with consistent performance remains a complex and resource-intensive task.

Her work introduces an innovative hybrid approach that combines experimental laboratory work with artificial intelligence in an iterative, closed-loop process. By integrating data-driven models with targeted experiments, the methodology enables a more efficient exploration of the complex relationships between resin structure, emulsifier systems, and processing parameters. This not only reduces the need for extensive trial-and-error testing but also improves the ability to predict emulsion stability and coating performance.

AI AS A GUIDE FOR FORMULATION DECISIONS

A key aspect of the research is the use of AI to guide formulation decisions and prioritize experiments, allowing for faster convergence toward optimal solutions. The approach also provides deeper insight into the most influential variables in alkyd emulsification, supporting a more systematic understanding of structure–process–property relationships.

Source: Liz Lynch

With this work, Dr. Tzortzi demonstrates how digitalization and advanced data analytics can drive innovation in traditional formulation science, opening new pathways for more efficient and sustainable product development in the coatings industry.

DON'T MISS HER PRESENTATION

Ioanna Tzortzi will present her award-winning paper today from 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. in Session 9: Digitalization.

Browse to page 2 for an interview with Ioanna Tzortzi.

Sharing Opinions on Current R&D Challenges

Conference survey results: digitalization, regulation and competitive formulation development in focus

During the plenary session of the AC Conference, more than 350 coatings experts were invited to take part in a short audience survey. Participants cast their votes via smartphone and could follow the results live on the big screen.

The poll gave the audience the opportunity to share their views on some of the most pressing issues currently shaping R&D activities, from digitalization barriers and regulatory pressure to the challenges of developing competitive new formulations.

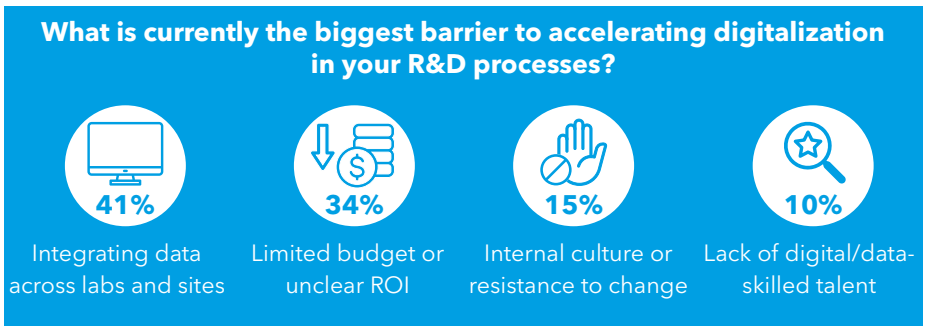
One key question focused on the acceleration of digitalization in R&D processes. Integrating data across labs and sites was named the biggest barrier with 41% of the votes, followed by limited budget or unclear ROI at 34%.

This shows that both data integration and investment-related questions remain central obstacles for many R&D teams. Internal culture or resistance to change accounted for 15%, while a lack of digital or data-skilled talent was selected by 10% of respondents.

Regulatory pressure was another focus of the survey. Restrictions on substances of concern were clearly identified as the strongest factor currently impacting formulation work, receiving 63% of the votes. This placed the issue well ahead of VOC reduction requirements (17%) and sustainability and carbon-footprint demands (14%). Traceability and reporting obligations received 6% of the votes, indicating a lower immediate impact compared with substance-related restrictions.

A further question addressed the development of competitive new formulations. Customer pressure to reduce costs was seen as the biggest challenge, receiving 38% of the votes. The need to shorten time-to-market followed with 28%, underlining the importance of faster development cycles. Raw material prices and availability, long considered a key pressure point for the industry, accounted for 19%, while global competition and differentiation received 16% of the votes.

Overall, the audience poll offered a snapshot of the industry's current priorities and pain points.



Strong Start to the Conference

Pre-Conference Tutorials Set the Tone for the ACC

Before the main conference programm started, nine Pre-Conference Tutorials took place.

Designed for both newcomers and experienced professionals, the tutorials offered valuable introductions and refreshers on key topics shaping the coatings industry.

From foundational knowledge to forward-looking innovations, the tutorials covered a broad spectrum of subjects and attracted a strong and highly engaged audience. The extended "Coatings 101" session once again provided a comprehensive entry point into coatings technology, equipping participants with essential terminology, formulation basics, and an overview of key raw materials and performance parameters. It was sold out as was the tutorial on polyurethanes.

FOCUS ON WATERBORNE SOLUTIONS

Particularly popular were the tutorials "Fundamentals of High-Performance Waterborne Coatings" and "Polyurethanes: The Building Blocks Explained." This underscored the continued importance of waterborne technologies in meeting regulatory and sustainability demands, as well as the central role of polyurethane chemistry across a wide range of applications.

AI AND SUSTAINABILITY KEY THEMES

Emerging trends and technologies were also front and center. AI & Digital Tools: What They Mean for Coatings" attracted considerable attention, offering insights into how digitalization, data-driven development, and artificial intelligence are beginning to reshape formulation workflows, testing, and production processes. Sustainability was another key theme, with the tutorial "Sustainable & Circular Coatings: Materials, Design, & Reality" prompting thoughtful discussion on balancing environmental responsibility with performance and cost considerations. Attendees also explored topics such as weathering and durability, smart coatings, protective systems, and radiation-cured technologies—each session led by industry experts and designed to deliver both theoretical insights and practical relevance.

Tutorial Talkback

Voices of attendees

Kathryn Williamson
Unspent

I visited the Pre-Conference Tutorials on waterborne coatings and on sustainability. I run a startup and so it's really important for me to understand where the innovation is in the market today, so it's been useful to hear the pespectives from experts and what they're formulating, so that we can understand where our material can make the biggest impact.

Faith Austria
Taiyo America

I just attended the tutorial on "Polyurethanes: The Building Blocks explained" and "Fundamentals of High Performance Water-Borne Coatings". We're from the solder mask industry, so we're opening our minds to some new technologies. There's lots of learning and lots of building blocks, since it's kind of new to us.

INTERVIEW

Limits and Challenges of Today's Technology in the Coatings Industry

Process constraints, additive limitations, and sustainability pressures reshape formulation strategies

As manufacturers push for lower VOCs, safer chemistries, and improved sustainability, coatings technology is approaching the practical limits of both formulation and processing. Jigarkumar Patel, senior R&D technical manager at The Sherwin Williams Company, explores how regulatory demands and operational realities intersect on the plant floor. Reducing VOC, for example, can fundamentally change a coating's drying profile.

Modern coatings are under mounting pressure to deliver lower VOC, safer chemistries, and improved sustainability yet still meet demanding performance and productivity expectations. In many cases, the constraints are no longer just material choices but the physical and operational limits of existing customer processes. Reducing VOC, for example, can fundamentally change a coating's drying profile. Many industrial facilities operate with fixed oven lengths, limited airflow, or tightly controlled line speeds.

When a reformulated low-VOC coating requires a different evaporation rate or higher temperature to achieve the same hardness and handling properties, the customer may simply lack the process flexibility to accommodate those changes. This creates a gap between what is theoretically sustainable and what is practically adoptable.

ADDITIVE LIMITATIONS AND PERFORMANCE TRADE-OFFS

Additives pose a second major constraint. The industry has made progress in identifying alternatives to legacy materials, but true one-to-one replacements remain rare. New dispersants may not provide the same pigment-wetting robustness, especially under high-shear grind conditions or with complex inorganic pigment blends. Defoamers often behave differently in lower-VOC or lower-surface-tension systems, leading to persistent micro-foam or crater-forming over-deflection. Likewise, substitutes for traditional slip and surface-control additives can struggle to match historical benchmarks for block resistance, slip, or mar and scratch performance properties that are critical in industrial environments where parts are handled, stacked, or packaged quickly.

When these gaps appear, formulation chemists must be exceptionally creative. Achieving performance parity often requires not one adjustment, but a cascade of them, altering resin balance, rethinking the solvent package, modifying particle size distribution, or introducing synergistic additive combinations. In many cases, the solution is not purely formulation-based; it also requires changes in mixing practice, film build, airflow, flash time, or cure conditions. This interplay between formulation innovation and process adaptation is powerful but time-consuming, and it highlights the complexity behind seemingly straightforward sustainability targets.

BEYOND INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

These challenges reveal the limits of incremental improvement. Modern coatings operate within narrow windows defined by application equipment, substrate diversity, and productivity pressures. Pushing further will require not only better building blocks, smarter polymers, more efficient crosslinkers, and next-generation additives, but also better system design across the entire value chain. Progress is being made, but achieving meaningful leaps will require collaboration, realistic expectations, and a shared understanding of where technology can stretch… and where it reaches its inherent limits.

Source: Sherwin-Williams

Jigarkumar Patel
Sherwin-Williams

"Regulatory Momentum in North America is Fundamentally Reshaping Preservation Strategy"

From regulatory constraint to innovation catalyst in coating preservation

Source: Axarda

Nigel Atkinson
Arxada
Booth #1538

As regulatory constraints tighten and sustainability expectations rise across North America, the coatings industry is rethinking how it approaches microbial protection. Nigel Atkinson, Arxada's vice president of paints & coatings explains how innovation in delivery systems and formulation design is reshaping preservation strategies.

How are current and upcoming regulatory restrictions in North America influencing the selection and design of biocides for waterborne coatings?

Regulatory momentum in North America is fundamentally reshaping preservation strategy. As agencies tighten restrictions and narrow the list of permissible actives, formulators are forced to work with fewer tools, many of which now carry lower inherent efficacy. At the same time, coatings are trending toward lower VOCs, higher biobased content, and more neutral pH ranges – all of which significantly increase microbial susceptibility.

What this means for our industry is that preservation can no longer rely on traditional high-load actives. At Arxada, we're responding by engineering systems that deliver more performance per unit of active – from multifunctional additives that stabilize pH and viscosity to advanced delivery technologies that elevate the efficacy of the remaining regulatory-compliant, zero-VOC preservatives. Regulatory pressure isn't slowing us down; it's accelerating a new era of smarter, more sustainable protection.

Which emerging technologies or modes of action do you see as most promising for next-generation coating biocides?

The most promising technologies are those that extract maximum value from the actives we have– and do so with precision. We're investing heavily in multifunctional additive platforms, originally inspired by the cosmetics industry but rebuilt specifically for the CASE environment, where high pH and stringent VOC limits present real challenges.

Our "TIME" controlled-release microencapsulation platform is another breakthrough. By reducing leach rate and protecting actives from UV and chemical degradation, these systems dramatically extend long-term efficacy. Synergistic combinations such as our "Polyphase" 763CR technology allow us to maintain strong antifungal and antialgal performance while meeting tough regulatory constraints.

Biocidal innovation today is less about discovering brand-new modes of action and more about using advanced science, delivery engineering, and synergy to push remaining actives far beyond their traditional limits.

How is the industry's push toward more sustainable and 'label-friendly' coatings shaping biocide innovation at Arxada? *The sustainability shift is one of the most transformative forces in our market, and we've embraced it as a central design driver. Customers want robust microbial protection but with reduced hazard labeling, lower VOC footprints, and better alignment with ecolabel and consumer expectations.*

At Arxada, that means innovating preservation systems that do more with fewer actives. Multifunctional additives help reduce preservative use levels while improving formulation stability. Controlled-release systems lower environmental bioavailability and minimize leaching to sensitive microenvironments. Together, these innovations let us maintain efficacy while supporting cleaner SDS profiles and more sustainable coatings architectures.

Sustainability isn't a constraint – it's an opportunity to design inherently smarter, more efficient preservation tools.

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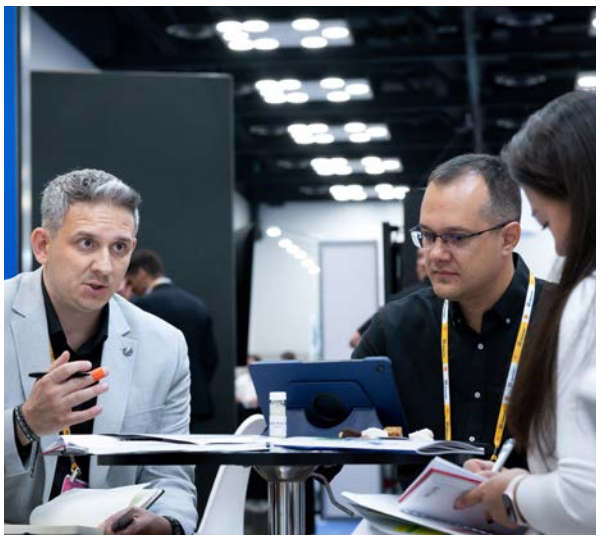
AC SHOW

Colorful Impressions from the Show Floor

The first day of the American Coatings Show is all about networking and interaction



Sources: Liz Lynch

INTERVIEW

"Developing New Pigment Chemistries Faces the High Hurdle for Regulatory Approval"

How heat stability, infrared reflectivity, and regulatory pressures shape modern pigment innovation

As regulatory demands tighten and performance expectations rise, pigment selection has become increasingly strategic for coatings formulators. From heat stability to infrared reflectivity and sustainability considerations, development priorities are evolving across the value chain. Mark Ryan, market and product manager for the Shepherd Color Company, shares his perspective.

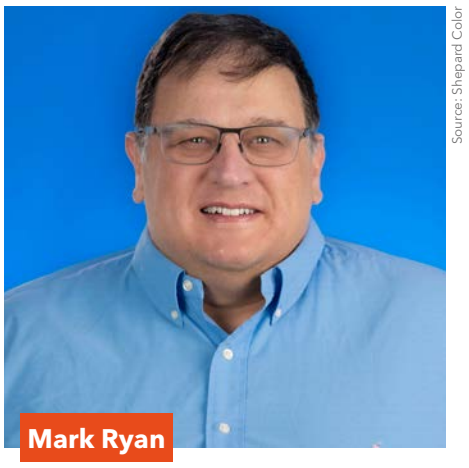
How should formulators evaluate pigment performance across different binder chemistries and curing conditions? *In a time of limited lab resources to run evaluations, experienced chemists consistently identify heat stability as the most important indicator of a pigment's overall performance. It speaks to the inherent inertness of the pigment and leads to a number of desirable properties: importantly, stability in high-temperature cure or use, but also general properties like non-migration and weatherability. This stability usually leads to a wide range of regulatory approvals.*

Of course, infrared reflectivity is a parameter that you cannot see but can lead to improved coatings performance due to cooler surfaces in outdoor applications like building products.

How might evolving regulatory, sustainability, or performance requirements influence future pigment development for coatings? *Developing new pigment chemistries faces the high hurdle for regulatory approval, such as REACH and TSCA. Even if approval is granted, there are often significant use restrictions that make adoption by the industry harder. Despite these hurdles, we have registered two new pigment chemistries in the last decade: "Niobium Tin Pyrochlore" (NTP) Yellow (CI Pigment Yellow 227) and "YInMn Blue" (CI Pigment 86).*

We have also followed a two-prong strategy. The first is to optimize our current products beyond the current performance parameters. We continue to expand our "Arctic" IR pigments by increasing Total Solar Reflectance (TSR) and making more jet versions of the black pigments. While CI Pigment Blue 28 cobalt blue is a well-known colorant, by applying Shepherd's decades of expertise and research, we have increased the chromaticity of our Blue 20G599 beyond any cobalt blue that we have offered before. Shepherd Color also continues to expand the durable color envelope with the reddest CI Pigment Yellow 216 for true orange shades. While orange is a beautiful color, RTZ Orange 10C341 enables formulators to add "a" value and redness to color matches without degrading weatherability.*

Beyond improving known chemistries, the second approach is to find new uses for current pigment chemistries. A notable example of this comes from the plastics industry, where the IR pigments that have been used in cool roof coatings are finding use in black plastics to improve sustainability. Standard black paint and plastics absorb in the IR. IR pigments allow IR scanners in plastics recycling facilities to 'see' and identify plastics. They can then be sorted by polymer type, which greatly improves their usability and sustainability of plastics.



Source: Shepard Color

Mark Ryan

Shepherd Color Company
Booth #2760

Color pigments have a lot to offer paints and coatings manufacturers, and Shepherd Color is always working to improve our 'problem-solving' pigments to address the ever-evolving challenges the industry faces.

"Improving Simulation Conditions Remains Challenging"

Potential and limitations in testing for biological growth in exterior coatings

Microban's James Rapley, liquid formulations manager and Jesse Turmenne, senior microbiologist, highlight critical limitations in current testing methods for biological growth on exterior coatings. From outdated standards to the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, this interview explores how modern formulations can better address real-world microbial challenges and long-term performance.

What limitations do current industry standards have when it comes to evaluating biological growth on exterior coatings? *Current industry standards have several notable limitations. One key challenge is organism selection, as prescribed test organisms may not accurately represent the real-world microbes responsible for defacement in specific outdoor applications, such as roofing or siding. Test duration is another limitation, since common exposure periods that are between 28 and 90 days are insufficient to replicate biological growth and staining that typically develop over years of outdoor exposure.*

Additionally, many existing methods prioritize evaluating physical coating properties (mechanical strength, yellowing, etc.), rather than long-term biological growth. Many standards were developed decades ago using technologies and chemistries that have since been heavily regulated or phased out, reducing their relevance to modern formulations. This creates a challenge for newer, potentially safer technologies as their mechanisms of effect may differ leading to skewed results.

Lastly, while formulators can interpret results within test guidelines, limited microbiological expertise often restricts their ability to design improved solutions, highlighting the need for cross-functional collaboration between coatings scientists and microbiology experts.

What role do accelerated laboratory test methods play in testing strategies for biological resistance? *Accelerated lab test methods mainly serve as screening tools to help decide if a formulation potentially has biological resistance. However, without a correlation to real-time outcomes, the difference between a formula that can deliver 3-5 years of protection vs. a technology that can deliver 8-10 years can be determined without real-time exposure. While accelerated tests speed up the process of determining what could possibly work in the field, they do not speed up the process of getting results that can predict real-time performance.*

What key trends do you see shaping testing and measuring methods? *Looking ahead, testing and measurement methods for exterior coatings are expected to evolve toward creating stronger correlations between accelerated testing, simulated exposure, and real-time performance. While accelerated methods offer significant time savings, they often don't reflect real-world behavior, making hybrid approaches that combine acceleration with longer-term simulation increasingly important. Improving simulation conditions remains challenging, as meaningful testing requires extended exposure and appropriate environmental conditions to create the biological growth necessary to see degradation and defacement mechanisms. Another key trend is the modernization of test methods to reflect current regulatory realities, as many legacy standards were built around technologies and active chemistries that are no longer widely used or permitted.*

Future test development is also expected to align more closely with modern actives and their allowable use limits. Finally, testing needs to become more application-specific and interdisciplinary, integrating coating degradation, microbiology, and environmental exposure to better understand how physical breakdown and biological growth influence one another.

Source: Microban

James Rapley

Microban
Booth #446

Source: Microban

Jesse Turmenne

Microban
Booth #446

Plenty of Novelties

Today's Product Presentations

Discover the latest innovations at today's Product Presentations at Booth #260. In concise 15-minute sessions, exhibitors will showcase their newest developments, giving you quick and valuable insights into cutting-edge products and technologies. Below you will find today's schedule. You can find the complete program at https://tinyurl.com/5n99xee9

9:20 – 9:35 am
Intumescent Coatings
Nina Dantas
Synthomer

9:40 – 9:55 am
High Performance Silicone Defoamers for Industrial Applications
Dr. Wei Zhao
Ashland

10:00 – 10:15 am
Novel Dynamic Wetting Agents for High Performing Systems
Jeanine Snyder
Sasol Chemicals

10:20 – 10:35 am
Keep the Moisture out, Stop Floor Failures – Ultrafast Moisture Vapor Barrier: "Ancamine 2875"
Dr. Shiying Zheng
Evonik Corporation

10:40 – 10:55 am
"Rhoplex RN-128" All-Acrylic USDA Certified Biobased Product Supporting High-Quality Paint Performance
Paul Doll
Dow Chemical

11:00 – 11:15 am
The Power of Partnership: PFAS-free Technologies for High-performance Coatings
Michael Goedeker, Oleg Afanasyev, Ph.D Omya

11:20 – 11:35 am
Transforming Coatings Innovation Through Ecodesign & New Market Applications
Chris Miller
Arkema

11:40 – 11:55 am
Data Centers – A Promising Area for Growth for the North American Coatings, Adhesives, Sealants and Elastomeric (CASE) Markets
Eric Dumain
Arkema

12:00 – 12:15 pm
Novel Dispersant Technology for Enhanced Universal Colorant Performance
Brian Vest
Syensqo

12:20 – 12:35 pm
From Compliance Burden to Competitive Advantage: Rethinking Product Stewardship in Coatings
Will Schaub
Lisam

12:40 – 12.55 pm
Wanhua "Tolonate" Technology for Sustainable Coatings
Lin Luo, Wanhua Chemical (America)

Source: Source: Phierce Photography

1:00 – 1:15 pm
Hostavin & Addworks : Innovative and Versatile Light Stabilizers
Simon Bodendorfer
Clariant

1:20 -1:35 pm
Water-based Amine Curing Agent Designed for Fast Cure, low VOC 2K Epoxy Systems with Improved Corrosion Resistance
Nitin Patil
Polynt Group

1:40 – 1:55 pm
Enhancing coating Performance with "Levasil"
Peter Greenwood
Nouryon

2:00 – 2:15 pm
Additive Solutions for Functional Barrier Properties in Modern Paper Coating Formulations
Dhara Metla
BYK-Gardner USA

2:20 – 2:35 pm
Next Generation Multifunctional Additives for Waterborne Paints and Coatings by Advancion Corporation
Dick Henderson
Univar Solutions

2:40 – 2:55 pm
Novel Spherical Calcium Silicate Anti-Corrosion Pigments for Protective Coatings
Francisco Cortes
Evonik Corporation

3:00 – 3:15 pm
"Vulcan XCmax" 22 Specialty Carbon Black for Application in Automotive Primers"
Dmitry Fomitchev
Cabot Corporation

3:20 – 3:35 pm
"Tamol 9802" Functional Additive for Improving Open Time and Application Performance
Sunny Wang
Dow Chemical

3:40 – 3:55 pm
Optimizing Paint Performance Through Colorant Technology: The "PureOptions" Platform
Tom Vo, BASF Corporation

4:00 – 4:15 pm
Transforming Coatings R&D with an AI-native Operating System
Kevin Meyer, PhD, Albert Invent

4:20 – 4:35 pm
Product Quality Control through Inline Viscosity Measurement
Frank Wiedmann,
Fluid.iO Sensor + Control

4:40 – 4:55 pm
Introduction of Low viscosity, High Performance Type Polyamide hardeners for Industrial Flooring and Protective Coatings
Min Jun Park, Kukdo Chemical

As of April 23, 2026

AC Show Daily 2026

Publishers
American Coatings Association (ACA)
901 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 300 West
Washington, DC 20001
www.paint.org

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Pigments and Raw Materials Shaping the Future of Color and Function

New products at the ACS: the latest materials combine aesthetics with eco-friendly profiles

In the realm of pigments and raw materials, the industry is witnessing a strong push toward energy efficiency, sustainability, and brilliant visual effects. Formulators are seeking out materials that offer high functionality—such as solar reflectance and robust weatherability—without relying on hazardous substances.

The latest offerings highlight a shift toward bio-renewable resins and structurally advanced materials that cater to both aesthetic and protective demands. At ACS 2026 you will find a diverse array of solutions designed to meet strict environmental goals while expanding styling possibilities.

AUTOMOTIVE & INDUSTRIAL COATINGS

The automotive and industrial sectors require materials that deliver both striking aesthetics and uncompromising durability. To address styling needs, a new generation of pearlescent pigments based on titanium dioxide-coated synthetic mica offers the whitest effects and clean sparkles. Another effect pigment designed for achromatic automotive stylings provides high sparkle energy and an elegant, near-neutral appearance. For robust formulation bases, a comprehensive range of materials for high-solids, UV/EB, and powder coatings is targeting e-mobility and electronics. Impact resistance in these demanding environments is being improved with a series of reactive diluents and flexizers that reduce brittleness in epoxy backbones. Furthermore, a universal, TMP- and TME-free rutile titanium dioxide is ensuring high gloss across solventborne and waterborne systems. Additionally, formulators can explore a resin-free line of organic and inorganic waterborne dispersions tailored specifically for flexible industrial formulation.

COOL COATINGS & ARCHITECTURAL

Mitigating the urban heat island effect has become a priority in architectural design, driving demand for specialized reflective pigments. A new line of IR-reflective inorganic pigments boasts high total solar reflectance to reduce cooling energy use without losing color depth. Similarly, optimized black pigments, including easily dispersible variants, have been designed to keep sun-exposed surfaces cooler while delivering rich, attractive dark shades.

WATERBORNE & BIO-BASED SOLUTIONS

As the regulatory landscape tightens, raw material suppliers are innovating to support greener formulations. Sustainable portfolios are expanding with bio-based epoxy and furan resin solutions that offer high mechanical strength and anti-corrosion properties for heavy-duty marine primers. Emulsion chemistry is advancing with a crosslinking monomer that creates self-crosslinkable, one-pack waterborne systems curing at ambient temperatures.

ADHESIVES, SEALANTS & GENERAL PAINTS

Foundational raw materials continue to evolve to improve the mechanical and visual properties of general paints and adhesives. A high-quality ethyl methacrylate helps formulators fine-tune glass transition temperatures and durability in acrylic systems. Naturally sustainable cellulose fibers are being utilized to reduce shrinkage and cracking in adhesives and sealants. Reliable film formation and corrosion resistance are ensured by new high-performance solvents. For safe and vibrant coloration, a full line of environmentally friendly pigments and anti-corrosive materials is on display. Color options are also expanding with new high-performance orange and red pigments offering intense chroma and excellent fastness for diverse paint systems.

GENERAL-PURPOSE INNOVATIONS

Several raw materials and support tools offer broad utility across the chemical industry. An intelligent software platform automatically generates compliant safety data sheets and GHS/CLP labels directly from formulations without using templates. A di-tert-butyl peroxide initiator essential for the polymerization of styrene and acrylates is also featured. Manufacturers are showcasing a variety of ethoxylated and propoxylated chemical raw materials, alongside a broad range of specialty chemicals encompassing phosphorus derivatives and acetone-based products. Finally, high-definition portfolios are growing with an interference effect pigment delivering exceptional chroma and subtle sparkle for versatile styling.

Source: Siam - stock.adobe.com

A selection of novel products presented at the ACS at-a-glance

Product Name	Company	Booth No.	Application Area(s)
AAEM	Gantrade	2959	Adhesives, Architectural Coatings, Concrete Coatings / Sealers, Cosmetics, Industrial Coatings, Inks, Metal Coatings, Paints and Coatings, Sealants, Waterborne Coatings, Wood Coatings
Alpha-Cel Products	J. Rettenmaier USA	1170	Adhesives, Paints and Coatings, Sealants
Arkema Solutions	Arkema	1130	Automotive Coatings, Construction, Electronics, High-solids Coatings, Powder Coatings, UV/EB Curing, Waterborne Coatings
Brufasol And Brufablend	New Brook International	1781	Paints and Coatings
Chemeter	Siam USA	524	General
Efox 20	Akpa Kimya	2273	Plastic Coatings / Plastics, Resins
Ethoxylated & Propoxylated Products	Green Chemical	1175	General
Fanchon Orange 36 / Sunbrite Super Red 177	Sun Chemical	1866	Paints and Coatings
Farbencoolblack	Alfarben / Torrecid USA	1137	Architectural Coatings, Cool Coatings
Glacier	Sun Chemical	1866	Automotive Coatings, Coil Coatings, Powder Coatings
Arctic Black 10G975	The Shepherd Color Company	2760	Cool Coatings, Paints and Coatings
ISBE / BHMFE	Kukdo Chemical	630	Bio-based, High-performance Coatings, Marine Coatings, Primers
Kukdo Flexizers	Kukdo Chemical	630	Automotive Coatings, Floor Coatings
Lumina HD	Sun Chemical	1866	General
Monteck EMA	Teckrez	807	Adhesives, Paints and Coatings, Sealants
Ti-Pure TS-6706	The Chemours Company	712	Architectural Coatings, Automotive Coatings, Industrial Coatings, Solventborne Coatings, Waterborne Coatings
Xirallic NXT Leopard White	Susonity	2673	Automotive Coatings

GUEST EDITORIAL

Shaping the Next Era of Coatings: Innovation, Sustainability and the Power of Digital

Key trends and challenges for coatings manufacturers. By David Bem, Senior Vice President, Science & Technology and Chief Technology Officer, PPG Industries

PPG Industries

The coatings industry stands at a pivotal moment. Around the world, manufacturers are being challenged to solve a complex equation: meet rising expectations for performance and sustainability, adapt to volatile supply chains, accelerate innovation, and support customers who are facing increasing productivity pressures.

At PPG, we see these dynamics not as obstacles, but as catalysts. This period of rapid change presents an opportunity to reimagine how coatings and coating stacks are designed, delivered and used, both inside and outside the can.

One of the most significant challenges for coatings manufacturers today is that customers expect more than ever before. They expect their "job to be done," to be productive, simple and high quality. Whether it is an automaker seeking to reduce energy consumption in the paint shop, a beverage company adapting its packaging to regulatory requirements, or a contractor navigating increasingly strict environmental standards and labor shortages, our industry must deliver solutions that enhance productivity, reduce waste, and improve sustainability without compromising performance. This has fundamentally shifted how manufacturers should innovate. It is no longer enough to provide only the coatings technology; we must make the job to be done easier and provide the processes, tools and digital workflows that help customers apply that coating more efficiently and consistently.

"Increasingly, value is created through application technologies, automated systems, robotic and AI-enabled workflows."

CHALLENGES IN THE RAW MATERIAL MARKET

At the same time, the industry continues to navigate unpredictable raw material markets. The availability and pricing of resins, pigments, solvents and additives frequently fluctuate due to global demand cycles, the geopolitical environment, logistics constraints and the accelerating push toward lower carbon materials. Concurrently, the regulatory environment is shifting around the world at a faster speed than we have ever experienced. This volatility directly affects R&D strategy. It requires us to formulate coatings that can be manufactured using a broader range of inputs, or that incorporate novel chemistries which reduce dependence on vulnerable raw materials. When market conditions change, R&D teams require the agility to pivot formulas quickly, ensuring continuity for customers without compromising quality. At PPG, we are investing in material sciences, polymer synthesis and engineering capabilities to anticipate these shifts and use them as opportunities.

Source: Smile Studio AP - stock.adobe.com

RAW MATERIAL TRENDS

Looking ahead, several raw material trends will meaningfully reshape the coatings landscape. The push for lower carbon, biobased and circular materials will continue to accelerate, particularly as global regulators tighten requirements around VOC emissions, hazardous substances and lifecycle impact. Waterborne technologies, biobased resins, recycled polymers and new catalyst systems will increasingly define the backbone of future formulations. As these materials gain traction, they will open new opportunities to redesign coatings for performance characteristics such as faster cure times, improved corrosion protection, lower density for lightweighting and enhanced durability.

Yet new materials alone will not move the industry fast enough. Technical complexity is increasing, customer expectations are climbing and product lifecycles are compressing. To accelerate innovation at the speed the market demands, our industry must think differently about how we discover, develop and scale technology. This is where digital transformation plays an essential role.

DIGITAL TOOLS ARE INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT

For decades, formulation development relied heavily on physical experimentation, which is both time and resource intensive. Today, digital tools, such as machine learning models and digital twins, are allowing us to learn faster. At PPG, digital twins for formulations are helping scientists narrow down the most promising chemistries before they ever enter the lab, reducing the number of iterations required to reach a commercially viable product. These tools do not replace physical testing, but they dramatically improve its efficiency. Our teams are now able to combine their expertise with data driven insights, accelerating discovery and delivering better outcomes for customers.

BEYOND THE COATING

Innovation also extends well beyond the coating itself. Increasingly, value is created through application technologies, automated systems, robotic and AI-enabled workflows, and digital ecosystems that simplify the use and application of the coating. Areas like simplified digital design tools reduce labor requirements and energy use, minimize waste and create overall productivity, which are value drivers that customers require. Whether it is overspray-free coating systems that improve transfer efficiency, low temperature cure processes that lower energy consumption in automotive plants, or digital refinish platforms that save technicians hours of time per job, these advancements illustrate how much opportunity exists to rethink the entire customer journey.

"The greatest opportunity for our industry lies in the convergence of advanced materials, digital insights and sustainability-driven design."

SUSTAINABILITY IS A KEY DRIVER

Lastly, sustainability remains a critical driver and integral part of this work. Customers are facing intense pressure to reduce energy use, decrease emissions and meet environmental standards. Coatings have a unique ability to help them do so. Whether through low temperature, expanded bake electrocoat technologies that reduce oven energy consumption, precision application systems that minimize waste, fire protection coatings tailored for electric vehicles, or biobased architectural paints that improve indoor air quality, coatings can dramatically improve performance and environmental impact.

As we look toward the future, the greatest opportunity for our industry lies in the convergence of advanced materials, digital insights and sustainability-driven design. The companies that will lead the next era of coatings will be those that innovate across the entire value chain, partner closely with customers and embrace the power of data to accelerate decision making. At PPG, we are committed to building that future—one breakthrough, one collaboration, and one customer success at a time.

Navigating Moderate Growth

Strategies for the coatings market in South America in a moderate growth scenario.
By Francisco Racz & Washington Yamaga; Rácz, Yamaga & Associates

South America entered 2026 with early signs of economic stabilization, although growth remains modest and uneven across the region. Current projections point to an average GDP expansion of around 2.5%, supported by the gradual recovery of Argentina, relative stability in Brazil, and selective growth in countries such as Uruguay, Paraguay, Peru, and Colombia.

Under this scenario, the coatings market is expected to grow slightly above GDP in most countries, driven primarily by new construction, residential maintenance, home refurbishments, and industrial maintenance, rather than by large-scale capacity expansion. By 2030, the South American coatings market is projected to approach 4 billion liters, generating revenues exceeding USD 12 billion, increasingly shaped by a transition from volume-driven growth to value-driven strategies focused on margins, differentiation, and performance

The regional market has demonstrated resilience despite persistent inflationary pressures, currency volatility, and the high cost of imported raw materials. In response, companies have moved beyond standardized regional approaches, adopting country-specific strategies centered on portfolio rationalization, sustainability, and technical differentiation. Competitive advantage is increasingly built on total cost of ownership (TCO), regulatory compliance, and closer engagement with professional applicators and industrial customers.

SEGMENT DYNAMICS

Growth rates vary significantly across segments. The most relevant structural trends include the gradual recovery of the automotive OEM sector in Brazil and Argentina, and the consistent expansion of industrial maintenance coatings across most markets, which continues to outperform overall market growth. Performance-driven demand, environmental regulations, and the adoption of low-VOC and high-durability systems are reshaping product portfolios and investment priorities.

COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES

Brazil remains the primary growth anchor for the region. While construction and residential maintenance are expected to expand at moderate rates through 2027, automotive coatings and industrial maintenance are likely to lead industrial paint consumption. Infrastructure, energy, and logistics investments continue to support demand for high-performance protective systems, reinforcing Brazil's role as both a volume and technology hub, despite an overall growth rate below average.

Despite recent reforms and improving GDP growth in 2025, Argentina continues to experience subdued consumption and industrial activity. As is well known, production declined across several segments in 2024, due to inflationary pressure and an industrial slowdown. Elevated inventories in distribution channels and the gradual return of consumer confidence are expected to delay a full market rebound for 2026, and beyond.

Colombia is consolidating its position as the second-largest coatings market in South America, with volumes projected to surpass 400 million liters in 2030. Growth is supported by urbanization, housing demand, and strengthening middle class, benefiting both the architectural and industrial segments.

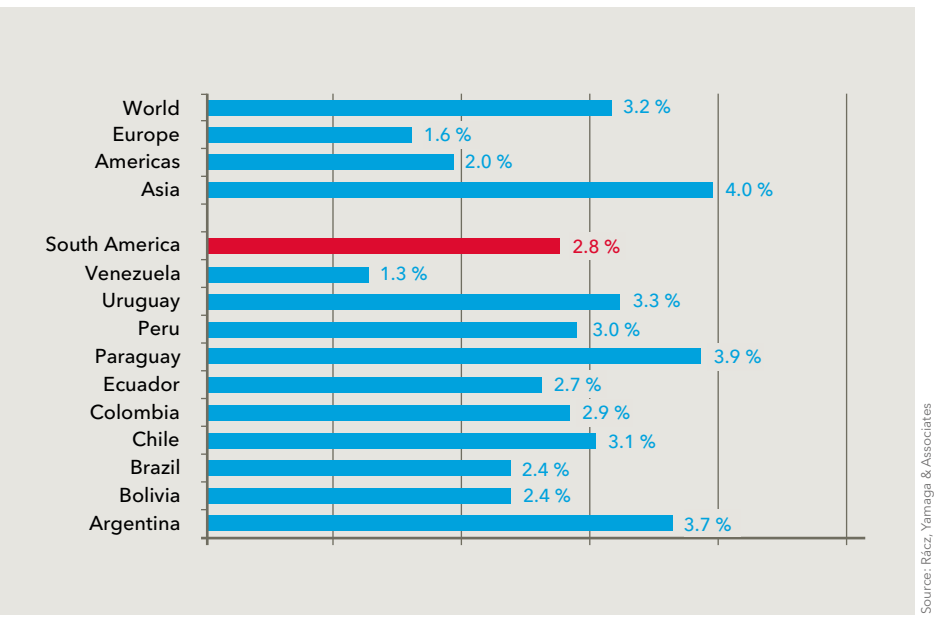


Figure 1: Compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of coatings market volume in %, 2025-2030

Chile remains a mature and specialized market, with strong positions in protective, marine, and industrial coatings. Growth continues at a moderate pace, increasingly driven by performance, durability, and environmental compliance rather than price competition.

EXPANDING STRATEGIC MARKETS

Paraguay shows strong expansion supported by public investment and civil construction, while Uruguay maintains a stable, quality-driven market focused on technical service and sustainability. Peru is expected to return to moderate growth supported by infrastructure and industrial recovery. Guyana and Suriname, although small in absolute volume, stand out for high two digits growth rates driven by oil, gas, and offshore infrastructure demand.

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

In a moderate growth environment, the coatings market in South America does not grow despite uncertainty – it evolves through it. Competitive positioning increasingly depends on value-based pricing, localized decision-making, sustainable portfolios, and technical service as a differentiator. At the regional level, geopolitical tensions, evolving trade regulations, and raw material volatility remain key external variables shaping medium-term projections. Under these conditions, strategic flexibility and disciplined capital allocation are becoming as critical as scale and global brand presence for long-term success.

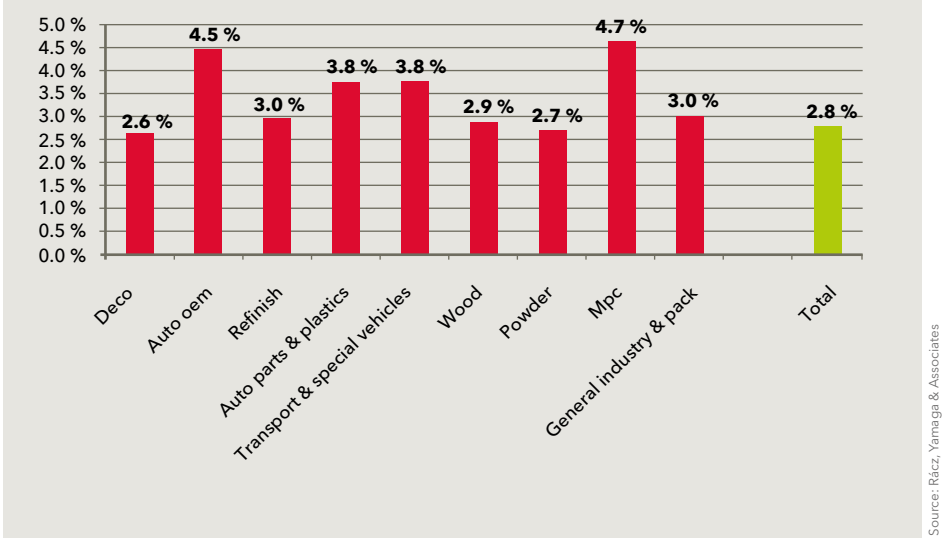


Figure 2: Volume CAGR by segment in South America, 2025–2030

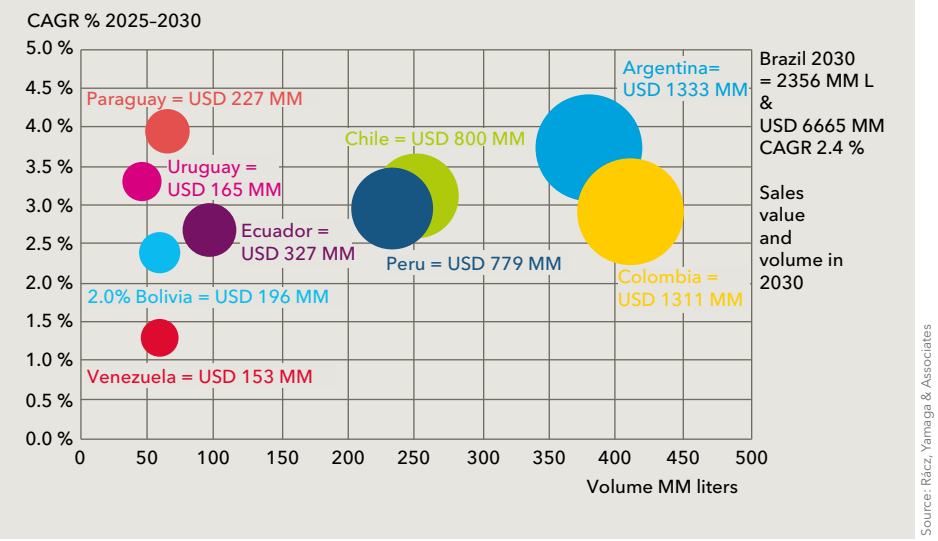


Figure 3: The coatings market in South America by country

INTERVIEW

"The Greatest Potential is in Polymers for Interior Wall Paints"

Bio-based raw materials: sustainability and performance in transition


Source: Ecoat

Eugénie Charrière
Ecoat, Booth #549

In this interview, Eugénie Charrière, strategic marketing & business excellence director at Ecoat, explains why bio-based binders are gaining traction in architectural and industrial coatings.

Which classes of bio-based raw materials have the greatest potential for high performance coating applications, and why? *The greatest potential is in polymers for interior wall paints. Indeed, most of high performance architectural coatings are formulated with water-based acrylic binders. Traditionally petro-sourced, these resins may require coalescing agents to form a proper film which adds VOCs, but consumers seek healthier and better indoor air quality through bio-based, low or zero VOC paints. We offer high performance alternatives, such as a bio-based alkyd binder, which contains 98% bio-based raw materials and does not require any coalescent. Used in easy-clean premium wall paints with great stain and scrub resistance, it can also be blended with acrylics to improve applicability and open time. Its negative carbon footprint enables up to 35% reduction of CO_2 emissions compared to styrene acrylic-based paints.*

What are the key technical tradeoffs encountered when increasing bio-based content in coating binders, particularly with respect to durability and long-term performance? *After many years of research, we have developed specific compositions and process know-how, which enable the company to offer low VOC waterborne resins with bio-based content ranging from 47% to 98%, and strong decarbonization up to 113% on the binder. These high levels of bio-based content, far higher than most of the existing products which can be found on the market, do not come with technical tradeoffs. As highlighted in the Environmental Product Declaration, our water-based, bio-based alkyd emulsions and water-based polyurethane-modified alkyd dispersions offer similar durability and long-term performance as their petro-sourced water-based equivalents.*

What, if any, performance gaps between bio-based and conventional coatings still require the most research attention? *A large portion of anti-corrosion coatings for DIY and general industrial applications is still solvent-based and formulated with high VOC conventional petro-sourced binders. But there is a growing need for direct-to-metal (DTM) low-VOC solutions with no loss of performance. We have developed new polyurethane modified dispersions, among which is a low-VOC and 47% bio-based resin specifically designed for waterborne DTM applications. It is so hydrophobic that it can be used in coatings achieving C3/C4 corrosion resistance, even without any anticorrosive pigment, which is remarkable. Formulations that do not contain anticorrosive pigments are obviously cheaper and do not require safety labels triggered by these pigments. The decarbonization of up to 40% of the coating is also a great advantage.*

How do evolving regulatory requirements in North America and Europe influence technical priorities in the development of bio-based coatings? *In the past decade, demand for eco-friendly coatings has grown, driven by consumers and new regulations such as the EU Green Deal and mandatory non-financial reporting (CSRD). CSRD compliance highlighted that raw materials are by far the main source of CO_2-emissions of paint producers, making the shift from petro- to bio-based a key lever for decarbonization. Life Cycle Assessment must confirm the carbon footprint reduction while labels (Ecolabel, BioPreferred…) and certifications (LEED) promote eco-design.*

If priorities have recently changed in the EU and North America, consumer demand is still there and not fulfilled. On top of that, China is introducing CSRD-type of reporting in the country, reinforcing the global momentum toward low-carbon footprint coatings. So, the transition may be temporarily slowed down in western countries, but it is there and will increase.

Young Professionals and the Future Workforce

The current situation for newcomers in the industry. By Victoria Scarborough, Ph.D., VP Collaborative Innovation, The ChemQuest Group

The global paints and coatings industry is entering a structural inflection point, driven less by raw material pricing volatility or supply chain constraints and more by demographics.

A significant portion of the current technical workforce, including formulators, application specialists, plant engineers, and regulatory experts, entered the industry during the 1970s through the 1990s. Many of these professionals are now approaching retirement, creating a knowledge-transfer gap that is more consequential to long-term competitiveness than any disruption in raw material supply or regulatory drivers. Against this backdrop, the emergence of young professionals into the coatings workforce is not merely a talent pipeline issue but a strategic imperative tied to innovation development, sustainability mandates, and digital transformation.

Unlike previous generations who often fell into coatings via adjacent chemistry or manufacturing roles, today's new employees are more likely to enter the industry with explicit expectations around purpose, technological engagement, and environmental stewardship. These issues matter in a sector that is increasingly defined by ESG alignment, PFAS phase-outs, VOC abatement, circular economy targets, and the push toward biobased inputs such as lignin, cellulose nanocrystals, and chitosan.

The future workforce will be tasked with replacing legacy technologies – like lead chromates, heavy-metal corrosion inhibitors, and long-chain fluoropolymers – with safer alternatives and with materials that can meet performance specifications under more stringent lifecycle analysis (LCA) scrutiny. This transition will require competencies that sit at the intersection of materials science and systems thinking.

THE ROLE OF DIGITALIZATION

Young professionals are entering the field with greater fluency in computational modeling, AI-assisted formulation, high-throughput screening, and data-centric quality control. For example, in industrial wood coatings where cure-on-demand LED-UV systems, low-temperature cross-linking, and bio-based film formers are gaining traction, the next generation of R&D chemists will need to understand not just polymer chemistry but photoinitiator kinetics, energy-dose mapping, and digital process control. Similarly, in protective and architectural coatings, the integration of smart corrosion inhibitors (e.g., encapsulated actives in mesoporous silica matrices) demands familiarity with nanostructured delivery platforms and triggered-release mechanisms.

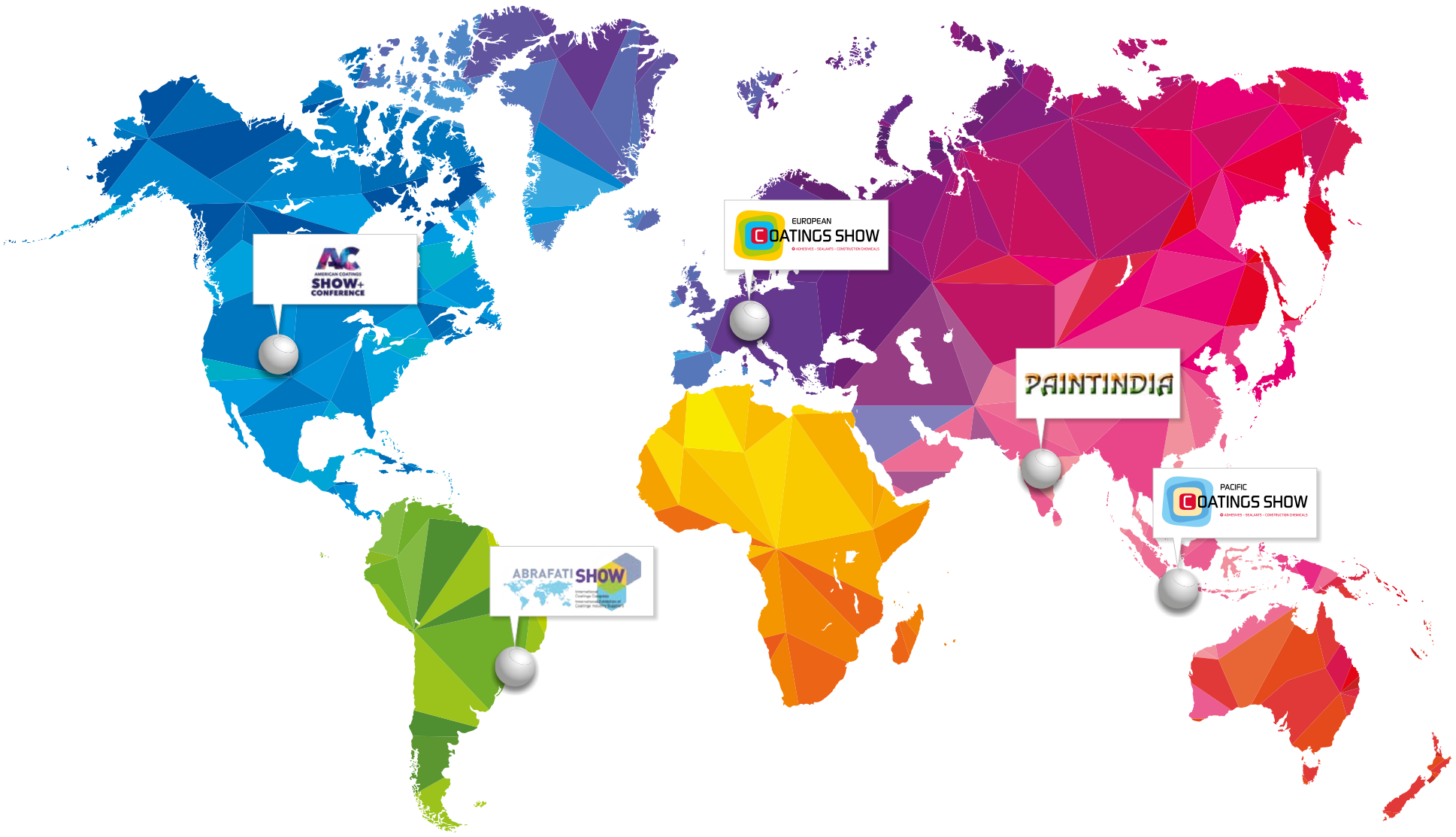
Despite its central role in enabling infrastructure longevity, lightweight transportation, clean energy deployment, and hygienic built environments, the coatings industry often struggles to position itself as a high-impact career destination. Young professionals motivated by climate resilience or circular-economy principles may not immediately recognize that formulating a low-VOC, bio-based wood coating or developing a PFAS-free stain-repellent finish can yield meaningful environmental benefits at scale. Onboarding a young professional workforce will require intentional changes in how coating companies structure early career development. Traditional apprenticeship models, where tacit knowledge is transferred informally over years on the lab bench or plant floor, must evolve into more formalized mentorship frameworks. Digital knowledge capture, modular training in regulatory science (e.g., TSCA, REACH), and exposure to commercialization pathways will be essential if organizations hope to retain technically ambitious employees who might otherwise migrate to sectors perceived as more innovative, such as energy storage or advanced composites.

The future workforce in paints and coatings will ultimately be defined not only by who enters the industry but by how effectively their skillsets are integrated into innovation pipelines. Organizations that invest in interdisciplinary training, sustainability-driven R&D agendas, and collaborative innovation platforms will be better positioned to harness the energy and technical fluency of young professionals. In an era where material performance must coexist with environmental accountability, the next generation of coatings scientists and engineers will do more than replace retiring experts. They will redefine what performance means in a decarbonizing world as we transition from hydrocarbons to carbohydrates.


Source: The ChemQuest Group

Victoria Scarborough
The ChemQuest Group

The Leading Coatings Shows & Conferences



EUROPEAN COATINGS SHOW reloaded

Online
June 16 – 17, 2026
www.european-coatings-show.com

PAINTINDIA

Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi, India
March 12 – 13, 2027
www.paintindia.in

EUROPEAN COATINGS SHOW
ADHESIVES – SEALANTS – CONSTRUCTION CHEMICALS

Nuremberg, Germany
April 27 – 29, 2027
www.european-coatings-show.com

ABRAFATI SHOW
International Coatings Congress
International Exhibition of Coatings Industry Suppliers

São Paulo, Brazil
September 28 – 30, 2027
www.abrafatishow.com.br

PACIFIC COATINGS SHOW
ADHESIVES – SEALANTS – CONSTRUCTION CHEMICALS

Jakarta, Indonesia
October 27 – 29, 2027
www.pacific-coatings-show.com

AMERICAN COATINGS SHOW+ CONFERENCE

Denver, USA
March 28 – 30, 2028
www.american-coatings-show.com

The ACE Coatings Market

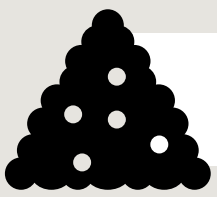
Five facts about the market for coatings for agriculture, construction and earthmoving equipment

Source: Flaticon

Fact 1: Global Market Size (2024)

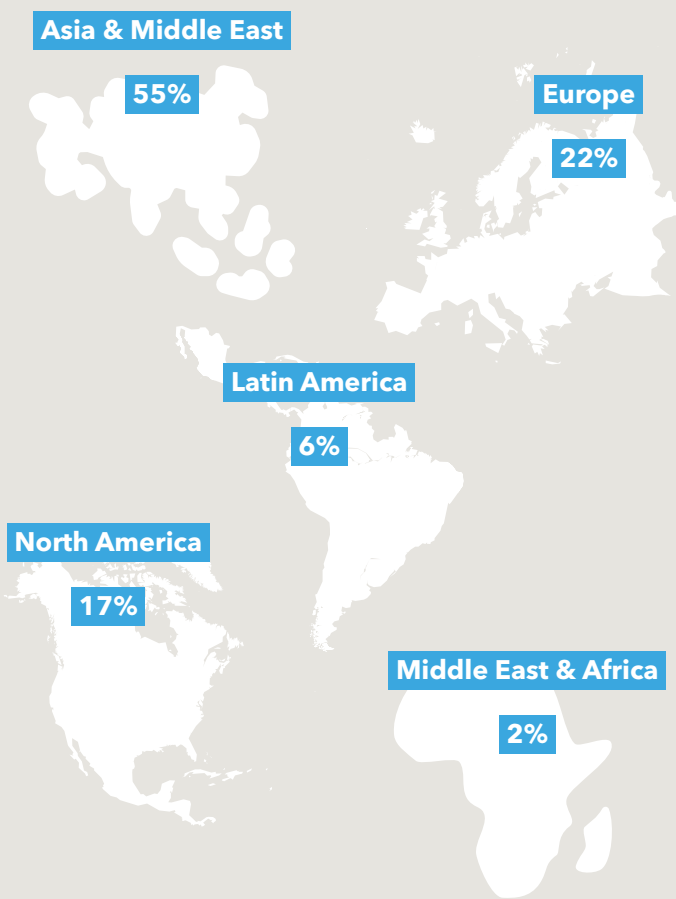
Fact 2: Market Composition

Liquid Coatings: $2.32 Billion



Powder Coatings: $809 Million

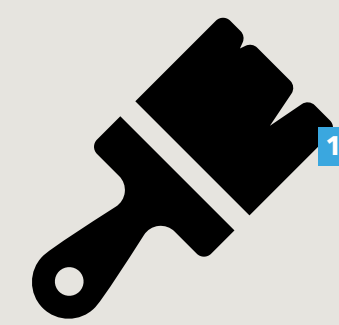
Fact 3: Regional Market Share



Fact 4: Key Market Concentration

= 75% of the ACE Coatings Volume

Fact 5: Share of ACE on the Market Overall

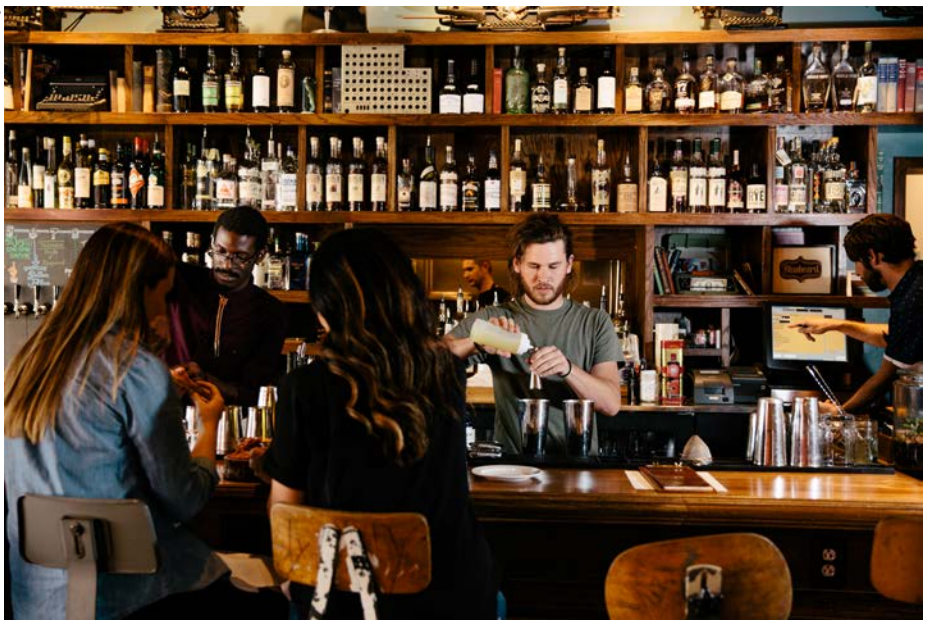


1.6% of the Total Paint and Coatings Market

3% of the Total Non-deco Industrial Coatings Market

The figures are based on data from Orr&Boss.

Source: Visit Indy



Bluebeard **is one of Indy's best restaurants, named after a Kurt Vonnegut novel. The aesthetic also resembles a library with old books and typewriters.**

Source: Visit Indy

Black Acre, **located in Irvington on Indy's Far Eastside, is one of many local brewers making their mark on the city's thriving beer scene.**

Where Food, Craft, and Culture Collide

Indy's nightlife blends Midwestern warmth with big-city creativity

When the sun sets over Indianapolis, the city's vibrant nightlife scene animates, shaped by culinary ambition, craft beverages, and a deep sense of place. Known for major sporting events and a thriving downtown area, Indy also shines after dark with an eclectic mix of restaurants, cocktail lounges, wine bars, and breweries.

Whether you're seeking a fun night out or a relaxed neighborhood hangout, the city's after-hours offerings reflect both its historic roots and its forward-looking energy.

Indianapolis nightlife is closely tied to its food scene, which has earned national attention in recent years. Many evenings begin at destination restaurants that double as social hubs.

Bluebeard, located in the historic Holy Rosary neighborhood, is a prime example. With its emphasis on seasonal ingredients and an adventurous bar program, it attracts diners who linger late into the night over thoughtfully crafted cocktails. Similarly, *Mama Carolla's*, housed in a charming former Italian villa, offers a warm, convivial atmosphere where classic Italian dishes set the tone for a relaxed but lively evening.

Source: The Fountain Room

The Fountain Room **is a stylish supper club in the Mass Ave neighborhood.**

For those drawn to skyline views and atmosphere, downtown delivers in style. *Astrea*, perched high above the city, exemplifies Indianapolis' growing taste for upscale cocktail culture. Its carefully curated drinks and refined setting make it a popular stop for date nights and celebratory gatherings. Just a short walk away, venues like the *Fountain Room* evoke old-school glamour, pairing vintage design cues with modern mixology. These spaces show how Indy blends nostalgia with contemporary flair, creating nightlife experiences that feel both timeless and fresh.

CRAFT BEER HUB

Beyond cocktails and cuisine, Indianapolis has firmly established itself as a craft beer destination. Neighborhood breweries anchor local nightlife, offering welcoming spaces that bring together locals and visitors alike. *Black Acre Brewing Company*, for instance, is known not only for its inventive beers but also for its laid-back taproom vibe. Places like this highlight how Indy's after-dark culture isn't limited to downtown; it thrives across the city's diverse districts, each with its own vibe.

What truly sets Indianapolis' nightlife apart is its accessibility. The city feels approachable, even at its trendiest spots. Conversations flow easily, dress codes are relaxed, and hospitality is genuine. Live music, seasonal events, and pop-up experiences frequently add extra energy to nights out, ensuring there's always something new to discover. Whether you're bar-hopping with friends, savoring a long dinner, or sampling local brews, Indianapolis invites you to slow down and enjoy the moment.

Source: Visit Indy (official Indianapolis tourism information)

Source: Scott Crone

Livery's **two-story restaurant naturally directs guests to its spacious rooftop patio.**

Source: InterContinental Indianapolis

Astrea **provides sweeping views of Monument Circle from the rooftop cocktail lounge.**

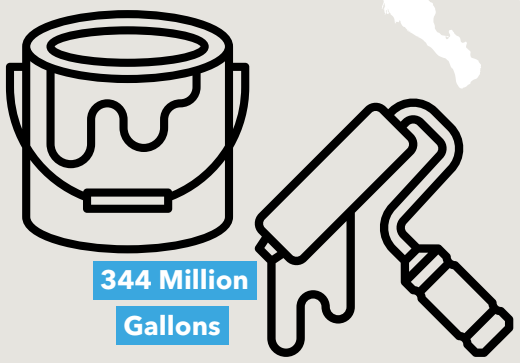
MARKET

The Mexican Paints and Coatings Market

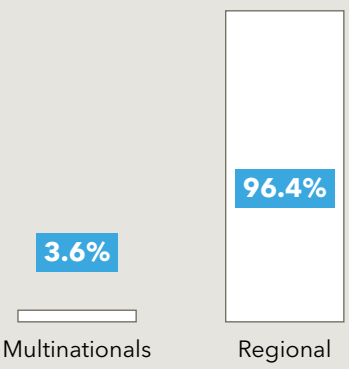
Six quick facts at a glance

Source: Flaticon

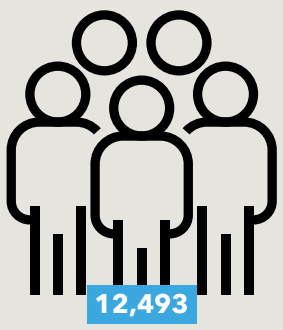
Fact 1: Market Size



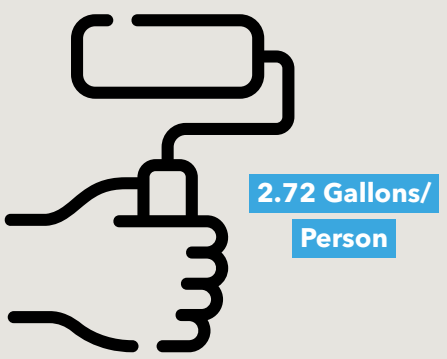
Fact 2: Market Structure



Fact 3: Employment Figures

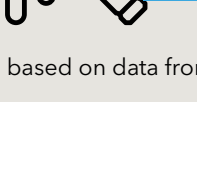


Fact 4: Per-Capita Consumption

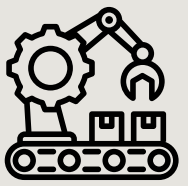


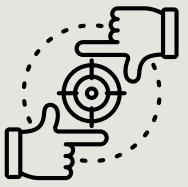
Fact 5: Market Segmentation

Decorative

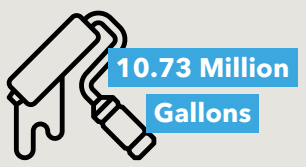


		Value Share	Volume Share
	Emulsified	27.71%	47.87%
	Enamels	5.23%	4.63%
	Waterproofing	7.6%	14.12%
	Textured	1.93%	3.1%
	Total	**42.47%**	**63.71%**
Special Purpose			
	Aerosols	0.95%	1.2%
	Marine Maintenance	1.15%	0.41%
	Industrial Maintenance	2.55%	2.75%
	Traffic Painting	1.29%	1.19%
	Automotive Refinish	17.21%	6.64%
	Total	**23.15%**	**12.17%**
OEM			
	Metal Fabrications	1.82%	1.66%
	Other Products	3.39%	2.01%
	Automotive Paint	19.91%	7.9%
	Wood Products	3.54%	3.8%
	Total	**28.66%**	**15.38%**
Solvents and Reducing Agents			
	Total	**5.72%**	**8.73%**





Fact 6: Trade Flows Mexico – US



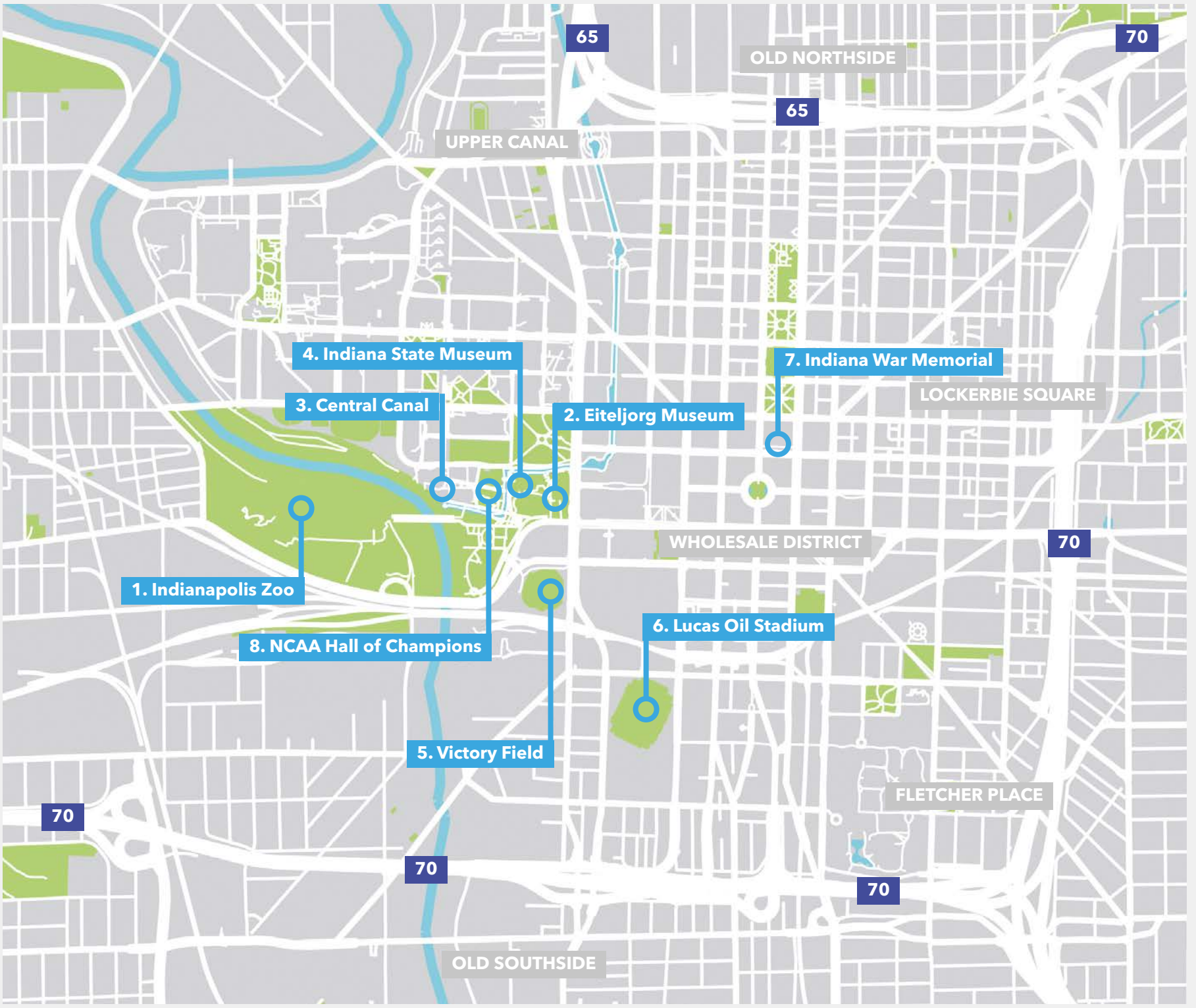
The figures are based on data from Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes de Pinturas y Tintas.

Discover Indianapolis

There is a lot to see and do in the American Coatings Show city

From world-class museums and green spaces to exciting sports venues, Indianapolis has something for everyone. Make the most of your time at the American Coatings Show by enjoying the city's diverse leisure offerings. The map features several must-see spots in downtown Indy.

Source: ink drop - StockAdobe.com



1. Indianapolis Zoo

The zoo, aquarium and botanical gardens are TripAdvisor favorites.
1200 W Washington St.
IN 46222

3. Central Canal

Explore the main canal in the White River State Park on foot or by pedal boat, passing museums and cafés.
801 W Washington St.
IN 46204

5. Victory Field

Enjoy a game or just the excellent views of downtown.
501 W Maryland St.
IN 46225

7. Indiana War Memorial

There are many monuments worth visiting in Indy including the Indiana War Memorial.
55 E Michigan St.
IN 46204

2. Eiteljorg Museum

The Eiteljorg inspires an appreciation of the art, history and diverse cultures of Native Americans and the West.
500 W Washington St.
IN 46204

4. Indiana State Museum

Discover Indiana's past, present and future.
650 W Washington St.
IN 46204

6. Lucas Oil Stadium

See behind the scenes during a tour.
500 S Capitol Ave.
IN 46225

8. NCAA Hall of Champions

Two levels of interactive exhibits show all about NCAA sport history.
700 W. Washington St.
IN 46204

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