

Insource your print

Four reasons to bring production printing in-house

INTERVIEWED BY JAYNE GEST

With the Great Recession, marketing departments shrunk drastically. Many tasks like production printing — sales collateral or marketing materials that go in front of customers and prospects — were outsourced, if they were not already created by outside printers.

But as the economy recovered and businesses, once again, had healthy and growing balance sheets, that production printing hasn't always returned to the company.

Lauren Hanna, director of sales at Blue Technologies, wants organizations to consider how bringing your marketing and sales printing in-house can provide control, reduce waste, allow on-demand printing and enable more targeted or customized marketing campaigns.

Smart Business spoke with Hanna about in-house production printing.

Why do some organizations keep outsourcing their production printing?

First of all, a lot of organizations don't know what their printing spend is for marketing and/or sales. They don't realize how much they are outsourcing. In other cases, they are outsourcing it because that's what they've always done. Or, they don't feel like they have the available staff to make the switch.

What are the biggest benefits of bringing production printing under your roof?

In-house production printing gives your company more control of both the brand and messaging. You're proofing in real-time, instead of having to send it out and trust that your files are going to come out the way that you want them to.

Print is still very much alive and well

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for organizations today, but marketing or sales materials might go out across different platforms. Therefore, you need to make sure that your physical prints match your digital campaign. There needs to be continuity between those two, along with the ability to make changes in both places quickly, and there's no better way to do that than to control that printing yourself.

Having a production printer also helps businesses reduce waste with on-demand printing. Companies that outsource their production printing might have to order 10,000 copies of a catalog, for example, but if a part or product changes, that catalog is no longer up to date. When they outsource, they have use to all of that collateral — until it's gone — and they can change the messaging. Or they throw it away.

That ability to print on-demand is also useful for customizing your collateral for a specific customer, product line or division. With marketing and advertisements everywhere, businesses want to differentiate themselves amongst the noise and acknowledge their customers' interests and preferences. Rather than send out a brochure or postcard to all of your prospects, for instance, customized printing allows you to make conditional changes for targeted marketing. This, in turn, can impact your revenue, brand loyalty, and customer acquisition and retention.

After an organization decides to bring its production printing in-house, what else should executives keep in mind?

Many companies think that it's going to be a very large task or that they will have to find a full-time person to run the printer. But that most likely won't be the case, if they work with a strategic technology partner to help identify what bringing the marketing and sales printing in-house entails. With the proper communication, they can set up training, workflows, etc., so it's not a burden on the marketing department or staff.

In addition, it's normal to be hesitant. A lot of the organizations were hesitant in the beginning, but then increased their in-house printing because it's easy once you have a process in place.

Again, work with a strategic partner to come up with a plan together. You'll want to create an outline that processes what's going to work best for your organization because every company's marketing initiatives are different. You can start smaller and expand once you get more comfortable. It's very common to take a phased approach. You don't need to bring 100 percent of everything in-house, but even with a portion of that total, you'll gain control and reduce waste, while having the ability to print on-demand and create targeted marketing campaigns. ●