

Graphic Advisor



A Perfect Finish

Also in this issue:

Ready for take off?

Top of Mind Awareness



Since **theprinters.com**
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Graphic Advisor

Content

Marketing Reality3
 Ready for Take Off? (Preflight)4
 A Perfect Finish.....6
 Understanding Variable Data.....8
 Top-of-Mind Awareness (The Right Side).....10

About Us

theprinters is Pennsylvania's most diversified and unique "full-service" printing and mailing house. Based in State College, PA, our family of companies provides a wide range of digital and offset printing, combined with graphics and mailing services for any project.

Here is a quick review of our companies and services . . .

Seiders Printing, Inc. was founded in 1902 and has been in continuous operation in Pottsville, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. We are one of the country's oldest printing firms and have experienced virtually every technology change in the printing and graphics industry. We provide a complete range of traditional offset and letterpress printed products, in any number of colors, sizes, papers, or quantities.

K-B Offset, Inc., was founded in Centre County in 1973 and has been one of the region's largest full-service offset printers ever since. In 1993, our sister company, Express-Tech Volume Printing Centers, was the first commercial printer to introduce digital printing alternatives to print buyers of all sizes. This combination of offset and digital printing has created a unique and productive combination of the traditional methods and the emerging technologies. We are currently one of the largest digital printers in Pennsylvania. During our growth phase we acquired Dots Enuff! Imaging Service Bureau, a company specializing in pre-press, design, and imaging techniques. We later acquired the Tech-Print Company, a local offset printing company specializing in small format production, and in 2001 we folded the creative talents at Publishers Tech into the mix. The combination of our companies makes theprinters.com a one of a kind organization that not only provides great products and services but reduces the costs to our customers. In 2007 we moved our primary manufacturing facility to a new plant with more than twice the square footage. We also upgraded virtually every piece of equipment in the new shop, increasing our capacity and quality greatly in the process.



theprinters

**We have solutions to your printing problems.
We hope you enjoy this issue of Graphic Advisor.**

Meshing Marketing & Reality

Peter Drucker, business consultant to the stars, has many oft-repeated quotes floating around out there. One of my favorites is “Quality in a product or service is not what the supplier puts in, it is what the customer gets out *and is willing to pay for*. A product is not quality because it is hard to make and costs a lot of money. Customers pay only for what is of use to them and gives them value. Nothing else constitutes quality.” *[ital. mine]*

I believe this is an important clue to good marketing strategy regardless of whether you’re selling a product or a service. It really doesn’t matter how wonderful or innovative your product is if it doesn’t fulfill your clients’ needs.

If I’m going camping, a Swiss Army Knife is a good tool to have and I’ll let you sell me one without complaining. If I’m building a house, I’ll want a power saw, and the best marketing and the most clever copy in the world won’t convince me that the 2" saw blade on the Swiss Army Knife will do. So even though it’s a really well-made SAK, I personally won’t see it as a quality solution to my need.

Another Drucker quote that I like a lot: “Because the purpose of business is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two and only these two basic functions: marketing and innovation . . . Marketing is the distinguishing, unique function of the business.”

So, in his view of things, marketing is really the primary purpose of *every* business (creating customers) and yet, customers will only perceive value in terms of what your product or service is worth to them.

Here at theprinters.com we have been positioning ourselves as being the Swiss Army Knife of printers in the region for many, many years.

We’ve used a number different slogans

to get the point across: Desktop to Maildrop; Design, Print Mail; Your Business Communications Resource. The point was always to inform our potential customers that we had superior skills in many areas. Yet the “knock” on K-B Offset/Seiders Printing/theprinters.com sometimes came down to “yeah, but they’re not the best at _____ [insert your favorite print-related-task here].”

So we steadily whittled away at the items that customers perceive as issues. We added Customer Service Specialists to be the in-plant representatives for our clients. We grew our electronic infrastructure at a break-neck pace so we could handle both the latest graphics applications and mailing operations of greatly increased complexity. We spent many millions of dollars when we relocated to the new plant to replace aging equipment and install the finest German presses and bindery equipment. Our quality control in all areas has improved as has our typical turnaround time.

What has not changed is our marketing message. In its simplest form it’s still “design, print, mail.” But our capabilities in each of those areas have improved and expanded much as has our physical expansion from 25,000 to 55,000 square feet. So, by Peter Drucker’s logic, the question now becomes: Have we created more value in the minds of our customers?

I know that those customers who value service will believe that we have. Those customers who value quality will certainly come to believe it. The variable I cannot really address yet is those clients who value *only* price. While the other factors have improved significantly, pricing remains much the same for us. Will they perceive our improvements as value? I can’t say, but we all know that, in marketing, perception really is reality.



*Customers
pay only for
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Bill Brickley is
Creative Director
at theprinters.
He’s been designing
for print since 1975.

Ready for Take Off?

Before you ever board an airplane, the pilot has already preflighted the aircraft by making sure that everything works. They do this every time that they fly because it is much safer, easier and cheaper to find mistakes before they take off.

For similar reasons, we recommend that you preflight your files before you send them to us. By taking the extra time before you send us your files, you can help ensure that your project moves smoothly and quickly through the prepress and printing process.

There are four main areas you want to check before packing up your files: your document, its fonts, images and colors.

Preparing Your Document

First, make sure that your document is set up at its final print size. This will allow us to properly set up the file for imposition and printing. Then make sure that all the images and graphics that bleed off the page are pulled past the document edge at least one eighth of an inch. This gives us the trim area we need to create the bleed edge.



Checking Fonts

We need all of your fonts, and in the case of PostScript fonts, which we prefer, we need both the printer and screen fonts. We will only use the fonts for your job. By sending them to us you ensure that the character and line spacing you proofed with your customers will be what you get when we print the document.

Checking Images

Images are a major source of problems with print jobs. We need 300 dpi CMYK images, preferably saved in TIF or EPS format (although we can work with your RGB images, as long as you talk to us in advance). GIF, BMP and WordArt formats will not color separate or print well at high resolution so do not use images in these formats for CMYK or spot color printing.

All of the images must contain the same colors that you plan on printing. If you are doing black and white printing, none of the images should be in color. If you are doing spot color printing, all of the images must be either grayscale or duotone images that use exactly the same colors as your document. And as you might imagine, for CMYK color all of your images should be either CMYK or grayscale.



Checking Colors

Just as with images, all the colors in your document should be made in the same color space (CMYK or Pantone, for instance). Make sure that you don't have the same colors with slightly different names, as these can print incorrectly.



Packaging Your Document

And finally, we need you to include all of the fonts and images with your document when you send it to us. We also need 100 percent-sized laser proofs of your whole job. These are the best vehicle for proofing your job against our output.

We want your job to sail through our prepress department with no missing fonts or images, which is why we suggest that you preflight your file before sending it. If you have any questions about preflighting or any other issue, please feel free to contact us.

A PERFECT FI

Sometimes a project needs a little extra something to make it stand out. A few little finishing touches can take a design from good to great. You can choose from a number of creative finishing options, such as varnishes, die cutting and embossing. Although you don't have to be an engraver to create an embossed piece, it's helpful to understand a bit about the processes involved as you plan your design.

is a lot like a spot color ink in that you can use it for emphasis. For example, you might specify that we apply spot varnish only to photos or certain areas of a piece to make an image seem to “pop” off the page.

We offer varnishes in gloss and matte finishes. The main difference is in the amount of reflectivity. Gloss varnishes make the ink and paper below it more reflective to create a polished or liquid appearance. A matte varnish reduces the shine and makes the paper look somewhat dull or buffed. In fact, you can create beautiful effects using just varnish. For example, we



Varnishes are probably the most popular augmentation. A varnish is a coating that we apply to paper to add shininess and dimension. Varnishes work best on coated papers. You can choose from two types of varnishes: spot and flood. As you might guess from the terms, a spot varnish is applied in “spots” and a flood varnish covers the entire page. Although it is often used just to enhance gloss, varnish can have practical purposes as well. You might ask for flood varnish to seal a printed piece and increase its durability and resistance to scuffing. A spot varnish

might print a brochure cover in black ink with a matte coating. Then we can overprint a glossy spot varnish of your logo. Or we can do the reverse. The results often are elegant and understated. When you create a design that will be handled a lot and relies on matte varnish, you might want to look at samples because certain matte varnishes are sensitive to scuffing and the oils in people's fingers. These oils can cause fingerprints on the matte finish.

'FINISH

Die cutting is another finishing option that you might want to look into. With die cutting, we press thin metal strips into the paper much like using a cookie cutter to cut a shape out of dough. We use die cutting to create the pocket flaps for presentation folders, the slots to hold a business card and the holes in door hangers. If you have especially creative needs that don't involve these types of standard shapes, we might need to make a die for your project. Complex shapes sometimes aren't practical to cut with dies so please give us a call if you have questions.



Embossing and **debossing** also involve the use of dies, but these processes add depth. Instead of metal strips, we make the dies from engraved metal. If the image is raised above the rest of the paper, it is embossed. If it is depressed below, it is debossed. Either process involves using two matched dies. We heat one die and press the paper between the two to raise or lower the image. For best results, embossed images should be simple designs, such as logos that avoid the use of any thin lines.

When you are considering finishing options, remember that they might require a little extra time. Be sure to budget that time into your project schedule. These special finishes are worth it!

“When you are considering finishing options, remember that they might require a little extra time. Be sure to budget that time into your project schedule. These special finishes are worth it!”



Understanding **Variable Data**

“Because a standard printed brochure has to appeal to a wide audience, it can never sell in such a one-to-one personal way. But thanks to advances in digital printing, you can customize your mailing so it is the next best thing to that letter to your friend.”

The ultimate personalized marketing piece is a hand-written letter you send to a friend. In it, you might talk about the great new widget you just bought and why your friend might like it. Your letter would take into account your friend's interests and desires. It's likely that if you made a persuasive case, your friend would take your advice and go buy the widget.

Because a standard printed brochure has to appeal to a wide audience, it can never sell in such a one-to-one personal way. But thanks to advances in digital printing, you can customize your mailing so it is the next best thing to that letter to your friend. The key is variable data printing (VDP), which combines short-run color printing with database technology.

VDP can range from simply including individual "mail merge"-type data all the way to the creation of a completely customized piece that is generated based on information stored in a database. At the low end, your letter might say "Dear Mary" instead of "Dear Resident." Or with selectable printing, you could create a newsletter where certain parts of the page are static and other parts are variable. At the high end, the content of the entire piece can be derived from a database. You can base all of the content on customer preferences, such as demographics or past buying habits.

Obviously customizing your mailings for each recipient is a huge marketing advantage. This type of personalized communication increases response rates dramatically

because every piece answers that classic marketing question: "what's in it for me?" Customers get the answers they want because the mailing is catered to them individually.

Of course, this level of personalization does come at a cost. With traditional printing, a fixed setup cost is amortized over the quantity printed. Therefore it's generally much more cost effective to print a large number of pieces. With VDP, there's a setup cost for each piece so the print cost per unit does not necessarily decrease as the quantity increases.

Another issue to consider is the quality of your data. If your database is old or out of date, get it as squeaky clean as possible before you consider delving into the world of VDP. You'll want to remove any invalid data because the cost of mistakes can add up quickly.

In addition to a clean database, VDP also requires quite a bit of technology on the print side of things. Generally, you create your layout and design in QuarkXPress or Adobe InDesign. A processing application then merges your layout with the data and sends it to a digital press. Unlike a standard press, these digital presses have a dynamic image carrier, which means that the image can change from one piece to the next.

The end result is laser-targeted marketing that gets the right message to the right person. With VDP, now you have the technology to send completely personalized mailings that get customers' attention. After all, it's all about them.



Top-of-Mind Awareness



Remember the TV show “Cheers”? It was the bar you could go to where “everybody knows your name.” In marketing circles, the Cheers secret to success is called “top-of-mind awareness.” After all, making sales is easy if everybody already knows you.

To achieve top-of-mind awareness, you have to set yourself apart from the sea of businesses competing for your customer’s attention. Everyday people are bombarded with messages, and cutting through the clutter can be a challenge. The key to rising above the fray is to create a consistent, distinctive marketing message that responds to your customers’ unique needs.

The Right Side



“To achieve top of mind awareness, you have to set yourself apart from the sea of businesses competing for your customer’s attention.”

If you have many competitors in your field, you might be wondering how you can stand out. Even in a small niche market, you might be competing not just with local businesses, but with any business your customers might find online as well. The key is to figure out what you are best at and capitalize on it. When you narrow your focus and position yourself or your company as the expert in your chosen area, you will be the first person people think of when they have that specific need or problem.

Now you just need to get the word out about why you are the obvious choice! You have to hone down your marketing message to a razor sharp point and then share it with the world. For top-of-mind awareness, people need to see information about you multiple times so consistent, compelling communications are important.

You might create a mailing to your best customers, place advertisements in publications your customers read or start up a monthly postcard campaign. Newsletters are another great way to get the word out. Because they are considered a periodical publication, people don’t treat newsletters as advertising but as news. You might even find that your customers start to look forward to your newsletters!

The main point to remember is that if you start up a newsletter or postcard campaign, you must send them out consistently. Missing deadlines will cost you sales.

Remember that those people have a lot going on in their lives so they need that repetitive contact to keep you at the top of their minds.

The good news for you is that if you embark on a top-of-mind awareness campaign, you’ll probably draw customers away from the competition because most businesses don’t bother to create (much less implement) a systematic marketing program. They place an ad here or there and then give up. This type of haphazard marketing just doesn’t work.

Studies have shown that people need to see your message anywhere from 9 to 27 times before they will do anything. You want to make your message completely familiar to your customers. For example, when someone says “rental car” most people think of Hertz first. Even though Hertz is sometimes the most expensive rental car option, they still rent a whole lot of cars because people are so familiar with the company.

If you can focus on what you do best and remain consistent in your marketing message, just like at that famous bar, everyone will know your name.





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The Big Move

As a company we have never been fond of the idea of publishing big lists of equipment specs because, in truth, we are not selling printing presses, we are selling ink on paper — printing. And printing, with all the digital technology that goes into making it better, is still a craft that requires as much art and skill as technology to make it come out right.

Having said all that, we are very happy to have moved into our new space and to have upgraded much of the equipment that our craftsmen use. Perhaps more important than the equipment itself, though, the design and layout of the new facility has made it easier for an excellent workforce to continue doing their excellent work.



**INTERIOR:
before
and after**



**EXTERIOR:
before
and after**



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