

You Don't Know Jack

By Lou Caron, PIASC President/CEO

I've concluded that those who think that print is dead know nothing about print. People see newspapers and reference materials like encyclopedias as print. Thus, when these institutions reduce circulation or move online, people conclude print is dead. What these individuals fail to understand is newspaper publishing and printing of encyclopedias is the "small print" of the printing industry.

It only takes a trip to the local shopping mall to see print is alive and well.

First, to begin the visit to the mall, coupons arrive in the mail. These targeted direct mail pieces provide discounts on many items of interest to the consumer. Most consumers fail to understand the extent to which these offers are targeted. These ads are not the "spray and pray" junk mail of the past. Today's offers are the result of a detailed analysis of multiple data points used to design a direct mail offer that fits the expressed needs of the individual consumer.

In addition to coupons, today's con-



sumers are also influenced by ads and offers found in their favorite magazines and product catalogs. The lifestyle photography in today's print publications is a far cry from the old Sears' catalog images. Many of the photos in today's publications have a distinct theme. In some cases, many of the products in the ad are available from the same retailer. These ads have a strong influence on consumers who want to have the same "look" as the models in the magazines.

So far, print has influenced our trip

to the mall, and we haven't even left the house.

On the way to the mall, print, once again, will influence our purchase decisions before we arrive. The power of outdoor print media cannot be over-emphasized. In many ways, outdoor advertising reinforces the ideas we received from the direct mail piece or magazine ad.

Have you ever noticed how you see a print ad in a magazine or hear a radio commercial, and then you "happen" to see a print ad on a billboard while driv-

ing? That's no coincidence. An effective marketing campaign involves multiple channels. Outdoor advertising is one of those channels.

Once we arrive at the mall, print will continue to direct and encourage our decision making. From locating the correct retail establishment to helping us decide where to eat, print will guide our purchase decisions.

Parked outside the mall is a vinyl-wrapped van promoting a restaurant. The images are crisp and sharp. The message suggests a place to eat before you enter the mall and see what other food choices are available.

The power of print is impressive! Even with coupons in hand, we are distracted by the many print ads we see as we walk through the mall. One sign in a store window reads, "Save 20% this weekend only!" Another says, "Buy one get one free." And the materials on which these ads are printed tell us a lot about the retail shop and its products.

The variety of substrates available for
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GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATIVE

Post Your Required "Time Off to Vote" Posters Now!



Under California Law, at least 10 days before a statewide election employer must post a notice regarding employees' right to have time off to vote. With the election coming up on March 3, NOW is the time to get your notice posted. If you have purchased the "all in one" California State and Federal 2020 poster from PIASC then you're already covered, because the notice is included. If not, you can download the required notice (in a choice of 10 languages) at <http://bit.ly/vote-notice>.

Here's what you need to know about the required time off to vote:

- Eligibility:** Employees are only eligible for paid time off for the purpose of voting if they do not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote. The intent of the law is to provide an opportunity to vote to workers who would not be able to do so because of their jobs. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Length and timing of the absence:** Employees can be given as much time as they need in order to vote, but only a maximum of two hours is paid. You may require time off to be taken only at the beginning or end of the employee's shift.
- Requiring advance notice:** You may require employees to give advance notice that they will need additional time off for voting.

BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Quality, Service & Price: The New Commodity Conversation

Much can be said about market trends, but the truth is that these trends are always connected to print buyers' purchasing criteria. When it comes to buying criteria, those in the printing industry are no different from any other industry—they come down to **quality, service and price**. Many printing professionals say that we need to move away from a "commodity conversation" that focuses on quality, service and price, but how can we change the conversation when customers' buying criteria are inherently tied to these attributes?

1. Quality. Although quality is often perceived as a commodity, it is actually something more. Quality is a key area where we can truly differentiate ourselves from our competitors—but first, we must understand the broader meaning of quality. When talking about quality, we're often referring to technical print quality—yet the overall quality of a printed product involves much more than technical print quality. In our industry, true quality is driven by the total benefits and return on investment (ROI) that a product delivers to the buyer. As a print service provider, you must be able to identify the benefits and ROI that your offerings bring to your customers. Rather than selling print, maybe we should really shift our focus to what our customers are selling (e.g., retail, finance, automotive, charity).

The next time you're in front of a customer, think of their company as your company and determine what you need to know to serve them best. You'll find that you start asking different questions, and the customer will be more engaged in the conversation because it will be more closely linked to their job responsibilities and overall success. If you find it difficult to engage a particular prospect with this approach, consider the possibility that you might be talking to the wrong person within that company—or maybe you are not yet skilled enough to have those conversations. Ultimately, you'll need to translate your customers' objectives into strategic marketing and production specifications. If you take the time to identify the right customers and to better understand their businesses and job responsibilities, your meetings and conversations will be richer because of the quality of information that you'll gather. This information will enable a better alignment with your customer and also provide more value. This will in turn enable you to improve the quality of the products that you sell while also differentiating yourself and your company from the competition.

2. Service. When having a conversation about service as well as quality, it's important to shift the focus to ROI. You should start by assessing your

own unique capabilities. Good service relies upon providing what customers need, when and where they need it. What can you do for your customers that other providers can't, and which of your capabilities—technical and human—are superior to those of your competitors? You must understand what your customers need in terms of quality (previously discussed) and quantity (run lengths), while also having the right technologies and people to fulfill these requirements. When relates to timing. Timing really is everything, and the right technologies and partnerships can help you fulfill customers' needs with the right timing. The where is obvious, and partnerships and technologies are important here as well.

3. Price. The price battle drives print service providers out of business each and every year, and the only way to shift the conversation from price is to add differentiation. At the same time, however, this differentiation can't be random—it must relate to the customers' other core buying criteria (i.e., quality and service). Differentiating with service can be difficult because competitors can easily duplicate it. Meanwhile, differentiating with quality—and not just print quality—creates more potential for differentiation and has a better chance of

aligning with the customer's ultimate goals. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the quality of a product is not enough on its own. Without excellent service, even the best quality product will not live up to its full potential. It is also important to understand that a low-quality, low-cost product might ultimately be more expensive than a high-quality product with a higher price. Regardless of price, the product that delivers the highest ROI is ultimately the best and cheapest option for the print buyer. A good friend of mine is fond of saying, "We'll lose on price if we sell on price!" If you hope to avoid price-driven battles, these are words to live by.

The Bottom Line

Although you can't ignore customers' core buying criteria of quality, service and price, you can shift the focus away from these commodities by focusing on benefits and ROI. By creating market differentiation with outstanding quality and service, you can eliminate price-driven battles and create a sustainable business that stands apart from the competition and delivers greater profits.

Source: Provided by Canon Solutions America

FEATURE ARTICLE

Continued from front

wide format printing is impressive. Everything from vinyl to soft fabrics to textured stocks, each giving the consumer a different “feeling” about the store and its products. The substrate itself can show the difference between a discount store and a high-end establishment.

In addition to the ads hanging in the store windows, window clings on the store’s doors, floor decals, and point of purchase displays inside the store will guide purchase decisions.

How many times have you entered a store to buy one thing but left with an entire basket full of products?

Research shows that 70% of what the average consumer buys during their shopping trip are unplanned purchases.

This is due in large part to effective packaging. Today’s products are embellished with tinted foils, embossed text and textured substrates. Some packages have interactive labels with augmented reality triggers. A smartphone app brings labels to life to display stories and activities. Other products have instant redeemable coupons to encourage consumers to take a look and buy.

While walking around the mall, you see people wearing t-shirts, hoodies and jackets emblazoned with their favorite sports team, band, television show or historical figure. This apparel is embellished with specialty inks and creative designs. Others are designed to have a “vintage” look. Either way, this clothing allows people to promote their teams and express their taste.

While you are shopping, many establishments will provide a trinket or tchotchke for you. These printed promotional products help advertise their business. Many are useful, like pens or mugs. Each time these are used, the consumer is reminded of the company.

During a trip to the mall it’s not unusual to stop for a coffee. The coffee shop, too, is full of printed products. Everything from napkins to window clings to coffee cups; the whole place runs on print.

Printing touches every part of our lives.

During a simple shopping trip, we engaged with offset and digital print with the coupons, magazines and catalogs. Grand format printing produced the outdoor signage. Large format printing created the vehicle wraps, signs and window clings. The advances in flexography made the beautiful labels and packaging possible. Screen printing gave us the graphic t-shirts, hoodies and jackets. And a mixture of many these printing processes made the advertising specialties possible. This only touches the surface of the critical role print plays in our lives!

To think that print is dead just because a newspaper’s circulation drops shows a complete ignorance of the industry. The reality is that print is as natural to our being as breathing. Just close your eyes and consider the number of times you encounter something printed from the moment you wake. And don’t forget the clock face or the measurements on the coffee pot! Print is living with us.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Once Again, You Can Require Confidentiality During Internal Investigations

Workplace investigations are very delicate matters. After all, an allegation of illegal or unethical conduct has been made, and it is your job to thoroughly and impartially investigate what happened. In these situations, the first thing that the accused, the accuser and any witnesses should be told is that they will not be retaliated against for speaking truthfully during their interviews. But what about confidentiality? Can the second thing you tell these people be a warning that they cannot discuss the investigation with their coworkers while the investigation is taking place? In other words, can you require strict confidentiality while an internal investigation is underway?

The rules recently changed

In the past the answer was yes, you could require strict confidentiality. Then under

an Obama-era rule, the answer was no—prohibiting employees from talking about an ongoing investigation could result in an unfair labor practice charge.

On December 17, 2019 the National Labor Relationships Board (NLRB) reversed course and held that yes, you may require strict confidentiality for the duration of workplace investigations into illegal or unethical behavior. Provided, that is, that this confidentiality restriction does not apply to communications with governmental agencies. You can prohibit employees from talking to each other, but you cannot interfere with an employee’s right to file a charge or complaint with a State or Federal agency.

CONTACT US

Address:
5800 S. Eastern Avenue, Suite 400
Los Angeles, CA 90040
P.O. Box 910936
Los Angeles, CA 90091
Phone: 323.728.9500
www.piasc.org

Key Contacts
Lou Caron, President
Ext. 274, lou@piasc.org
Dennis Bernstein, Commercial Insurance
Ext. 222, dennis@piascins.com
Evie Bañaga, Employee Benefits
Ext. 224, evie@piasc.org
Kristy Villanueva, Member Services
Ext. 215, kristy@piasc.org
Rodney Bolton, Human Resources
Ext 218, rodney@piasc.org

Upcoming Events



WEBINAR: Can Credit Card Processing Fees be Reduced?
February 18, 2020
In this webinar we dive into the rising cost of payment processing and the tools available to reduce the fees your business pays. Let’s take a closer look at interchange rates, the growing use of reward/cashback cards and the options merchants can utilize to reduce their costs through direct bank transfers, interchange optimization, and how

Zero Cost Credit is saving merchants money.
Register contact Emily Holguin at 323.728.9500 or email emily@Piasc.org, or visit <http://bit.ly/creditfees>



WEBINAR: What’s the Difference Between an Independent Contractor and an Employee?
March 3, 2020
Although your business might have

independent contractors and employees performing the same or similar work, there are vitally important legal differences between the two. To avoid exposing your company to the possibility of significant fines and costly lawsuits, it is critical that you know when to classify a worker as an independent contractor and when to classify a worker as an employee.
Unfortunately, the “independent contractor vs. worker” question can be quite complicated.
Join us at this webinar to learn how to determine if a worker is an independent contractor or an employee, and how this designation impacts everything from tax withholding to the application of employment and labor laws.
Register contact Emily Holguin at 323.728.9500 or email emily@Piasc.org, or visit <http://bit.ly/contract-employee>

CLASSIFIEDS

Glendale digital printer with 8 digital presses, including HP Indigo and Canon Color Stream Inkjet, and complete bindery is **looking to lease space** to small printer, designer or broker. 625 total square feet with space to fit 5 people. Space includes desks, kitchenette, bathroom plus additional bonus storage space. Signage on front of building also available. Contact Keith at 818-335-1928

LA printer is looking to purchase a **used Laminator** for medium-run-length laminating. Call Keith at 818-335-1928
Want to place a classified ad? Contact Wendy Ferruz, 323.728.9500, Ext. 262, wendy@piasc.org

DON’T FORGET TO SUBMIT!

CALL FOR ENTRIES
PIASC LOCAL PRINT COMPETITION

2020 PIASC PRINT Excellence Awards

Deadline:
Friday, February 28th
4:00 pm

www.piasc.org/printexcellence

PIASC Events Calendar

FEB 18

WEBINAR: Can Credit Card Processing Fees be Reduced?
11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Online
Contact: Maribel Campos, Ext. 210, maribel@piasc.org

FEB 25

WEBINAR: E-Commerce and Customer Engagement for B2B and B2C
11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Online
Contact: Maribel Campos, Ext. 210, maribel@piasc.org

FEB 28

2020 Print Excellence Awards: Submission Deadline
www.piasc.org/printexcellence/
Contact: Maribel Campos, Ext. 210, maribel@piasc.org

MAR 3

WEBINAR: What’s the Difference Between an Independent Contractor and an Employee?
11:00 am - 12:00 pm
Online
Contact: Maribel Campos, Ext. 210, maribel@piasc.org

MAR 15

TAGA Annual Technical Conference
March 15-18, 2020
Oklahoma City, OK
www.taga.org/conference/

APR 5

2020 Continuous Improvement Conference
April 5-8, 2020
Columbus, OH
ci.printing.org