

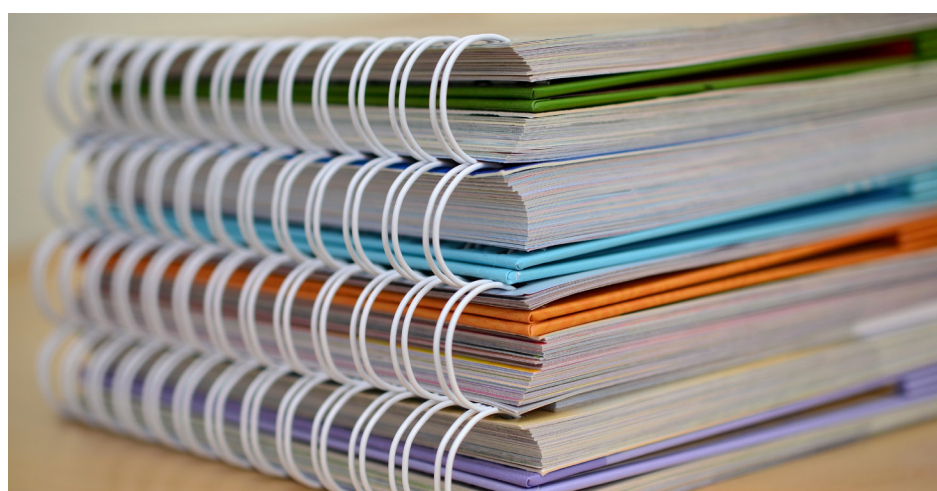
## Differentiating Your Business with Finishing Services

Recent research from Keypoint Intelligence underscores the importance of finishing in differentiating your service offerings.

### Finishing is more than just a backroom necessity

Unfortunately, finishing is often treated like the “second class citizen” of the printing shop. It is common knowledge that finishing services like cutting, folding and binding seldom get the attention that they deserve. These services are often viewed as a backroom necessity rather than an attention-grabber (like a new printing press or digital printer). However, despite its undervalued position, research shows that finishing plays a key business role for print service providers of all types.

Finishing is also in the midst of a period of evolution. Finishing systems that were designed to meet the needs of long-run offset may not be suitable for digital print and today’s customer requirements. To better understand the role of finishing, Keypoint Intelligence recently



conducted a survey of 120 print service providers in North America, including print-for-pay (commercial) and print-for-cost (in-plant) environments. The published survey is called *Market Trends in Print Finishing, 2020: North America*, and similar research was conducted simultaneously in Western Europe.

### Finishing often plays a key role in business results

In reviewing the results of this survey, it

is clear that print service providers have a solid understanding of the importance of finishing to their business results. This is reflected in how they report that finishing has helped them to win deals. These respondents, all of whom are senior managers or owners, resoundingly believe that finishing makes an important difference.

Only 11% of total respondents reported that they had never lost a deal because of finishing requirements. When

business leaders who had lost deals were asked to specify the reason, the highest share reported losing deals when they didn’t have the type of finishing services required. Two other factors, price and turnaround time, also ranked quite high. In truth, these factors are all inter-related. If you don’t have the required type of finishing and there’s a need to outsource that portion of the job, this will have an impact on price and turnaround time.

### When does finishing help to win deals?

Print service providers who want to differentiate their businesses with a full-service approach need to consider whether the addition of a particular finishing technique is worth the expense. Balancing the factors of finishing type, quoted price and turnaround time is key to profitably winning future deals.

So which factors make finishing an important aspect of winning deals?

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## HUMAN RESOURCES

### Is an Employee Eligible for FFCRA Leave?



The Department of Labor (DOL) has developed an online tool designed to help employees determine whether or not they are eligible for leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). You can access this tool at <https://bit.ly/FFCRA-webtool>.

This easy-to-use tool has employees answer a few questions and then either states that the employee “may” be eligible for leave or explains why the employee is not. We recommend that you familiarize yourself with this tool, and possibly use it side-by-side with employees who have requested leave. Taking this approach will enable you to help your employees navigate the pitfalls of this simplified tool, any of which can lead to misunderstandings. For example:

- The tool does not ask if the employee has already taken some or all of their leave.
- The tool asks about situations that apply to the employee but does not define exactly what these terms mean in the FFCRA context.
- Some of the situational descriptions are confusing. For instance, one screen explains that an employer with fewer than 50 employees is exempt from providing certain types of leave. Then it states, “If your employer has not met the requirements and is not exempt, they must provide expanded family and medical leave to all eligible employees.” Many employees, especially those for whom English is a second language, may struggle to understand if this situation applies to their employment or not.

A separate tool for employers is “coming soon.”

## NATIONAL NEWS

### Emergency Pandemic Funding Key to Mailing Industry’s Future

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted all of us, even the United States Postal Service (USPS) — the fate of which is very much intertwined with the commercial print and packaging industry. Our industry is a crucial part of a private sector postal-reliant industry that generates \$1.6 trillion in sales. This mailing industry ecosystem employs 7.3 million workers across the entire supply chain: postal and print equipment manufacturing, paper, printing, publishing, packaging and business segments that mail heavily (think retail and financial services) in order to promote, sell and invoice customers.

But while the USPS enterprise rivals some of the largest corporations in America in size and scope, it is unique in that it is a quasi-government agency that must operate within the confines of the Postal Regulatory Commission, a Board of Governors, and — ultimately — Congress. There are also four major labor unions that represent postal workers, each with its own explicit labor contract. Unlike a private entity that has flexibility to respond to economic conditions by, say, raising or lowering prices, adjusting operating hours or reassigning staff, the USPS operates under many restrictions.

At the same time, the USPS receives no financial support from taxpayers (aside from a small amount appropriated for mail for the blind and overseas voting); it is expected to turn a profit based on its business sales alone. From the largest online retailers to Aunt Minnie mailing a birthday card in Topeka, Kansas, revenue supporting the nation’s postal service is generated by its customers.

When the USPS faces uncertainty, there is clearly a ripple effect in the commercial print and packaging industry that relies on its delivery network as a critical logistics partner. Our industry has seen this movie before in recent times: after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, following the Great Recession, and now — in technicolor — in the midst of a pandemic. Ironically, we’re seeing it at a time when the indispensable role of USPS is at its height, with vital deliveries of medicines, groceries, educational materials, personal protective equipment and the like soaring since March; not to mention the delivery of government checks to individuals, public health literature and sources of printed, mailed news to keep us informed and safe.

Just as the USPS is essential during this time of crisis, the commercial print mail, advertising and promotion sector will be essential to the nation’s post-pandemic economic recovery. But with USPS forecasting COVID-19-related revenue losses that could range from \$7 billion on the rosy end to a maximum hit of \$17 billion through the end of fiscal year 2021, our industry has cause for concern.

PRINTING United Alliance is urging Congress to add USPS to the mix of industries

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## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Using Social Media to Promote Your Print Business

Social media can be a powerful addition to a print company’s marketing strategy, but using it effectively requires research, education, planning and plenty of time. If you haven’t used this channel for business promotion, the prospect of diving into the social media pool can seem overwhelming. In this article, we’ll share some advice about how print companies can take advantage of social media—without getting lost or buried.

#### Research

Just as with any marketing idea, you only want to spend your time in areas where the people you are trying to reach will see your messages. Establish free accounts in the major social platforms you suspect are frequented by your audience and go looking for evidence they are part of the network. Most printers will start with LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

Search for your customers, but also pay attention to groups or hashtags to gauge the activity among other people and organizations similar to your targets. On LinkedIn, for example, search for terms related to the markets you serve and then select “groups”. The groups’ membership lists and activity will be a clue about the kind of companies that use the social network regularly. Search for a hashtag to see how many people are following a keyword within a network. These actions will tell you if your messaging will reach

your target audience.

Pick one or two social platforms that seem to be the best fit. Don’t try to be instantly active on too many social networks at once. You won’t have the time.

#### Education

Look for posts or conversation threads relevant to your audience. Notice which ones are getting shares and reactions. Those are the topics most interesting to the members in a network. If the topics are relevant to your business, consider covering them in your own posts.

You can also use a tool like Google’s Keyword Planner to identify hot topics related to your business. This tool reports how many people are searching for a particular word or phrase. Entering a search phrase displays the average number of searches for the term you entered. Keyword Planner also tells you if many advertisers are competing for the same keyword. You need not run a Google Ads campaign to use the Keyword Planner, but a free Google Adwords account is required.

#### Planning

The first planning step is identifying your objectives. What do you expect to achieve by using social media? Lead generation, brand awareness and thought leadership are some common goals. Don’t lose sight of your objectives as you execute your social media strategy.

Next, decide on the content you intend to publish. Re-posting other’s content is fine to an extent, but original content yields the best results. Unless you have an inventory of material on hand, this means someone must create the content. Identify your resources, which may be in-house or outsourced. If your existing staff will create the content, we recommend allocating time in the workday for handling the task. When this responsibility is a “when you have time” project for someone who already has full-time responsibilities, it rarely works.

Finally, plan the action you will take based on how your social networks respond to your posts. Will you use the interest in a post to segment your leads and follow-up? Use high click rates to spur further posts on the same topic? Respond to followers who comment or share your content with others? Someone must carry out your social media strategy.

#### Execution

Marketing through social networks differs from other approaches. It’s not just another broadcast channel. Your organization must connect with your followers. Besides posting on a consistent schedule, your activities may include commenting or sharing other people’s posts, following other users, and starting or participating in group



discussions. All these tasks take time—probably more than you thought.

Set aside the same time each day to monitor and engage in social media. Take 30-60 minutes at the start of each day to log into the platforms. Notice how followers are reacting to your posts and look for opportunities to grow your follower list or add value by commenting or taking part in group discussions.

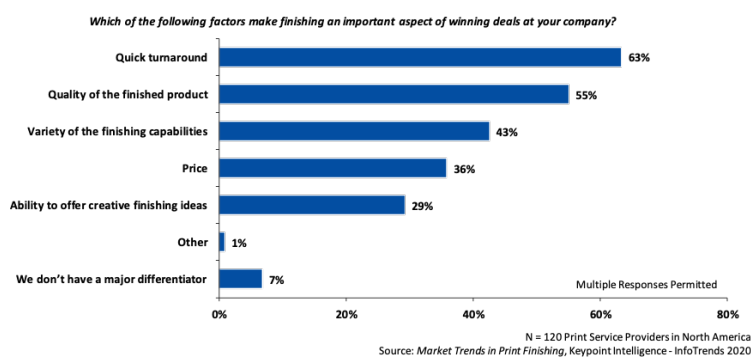
Social networks are for connecting and sharing information. If all your content is marketing oriented, your audience will not respond. Users are quick to unfollow brands that are overly promotional. Focus on creating informational content your audience finds interesting and useful.

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## FEATURE ARTICLE

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Figure 1: Finishing Differentiators



- **Quick turn-around** – As you might expect, survey respondents ranked quick turnaround the highest. Of course, quick turnaround becomes even more important as run lengths decrease and customer expectations of delivery time diminish.
- **Quality** – According to survey respondents, the second most important factor was quality. Failures in the bindery can be extremely costly and time-consuming because they generally require reprints. Few jobs remain profitable when reprints are needed.
- **Expanded capabilities** – Offering a variety of capabilities was the third most important factor. This is unsurprising because it helps to keep jobs in house, which also has a positive impact on turnaround time.
- **Price** – Price was cited as a factor by a little more than a third of respondents. When finishing capabilities are offered in-house, this presumably means that pricing can be adapted without having to factor in the cost of outsourced finishing services.
- **Creative options** – Creativity was cited by 29% of survey respondents. Creative thinking around the finishing process helps to produce documents that stand out and grab attention. A look at any of Trish Witkowski's 60-Second Super Cool Fold of the Week videos will give you a greater understanding about the role of creativity. A design process that takes finishing into account brings services like folding, scoring, embossing, die-cutting and other post-print special effects into play.

Finally, in a statistic that underscores finishing's importance, only 7% of respondents said that they did not see finishing as a major differentiator. Issues around price plus balancing the cost of adding finishing capabilities with the ability to see finishing as a profit center is likely the reason for a lack of interest among this small share of respondents.

## Digital printing can create finishing challenges for print service providers

Shorter run lengths and expectations for quick turnaround can cause problems in the bindery. A print service provider's existing finishing assets, while suitable for longer runs and larger quantities, may not be suitable for shorter runs, smaller formats or the application mix of digital print. Addressing finishing needs, with either in-line or offline processes, can be expensive and time-consuming. Determining whether to add finishing capabilities must balance client needs, job frequency and the ability to profit from finishing services. Automating your finishing processes requires workflow software and adherence to industry standards. Finally, modernizing an aging finishing operation requires adequate budgetary resources.

## What can you do to leverage the benefits of finishing?

First, acknowledge that finishing makes a difference. The respondents to Keypoint Intelligence's survey are crystal clear on this point. Then...

- **Review your marketing materials** – Evaluate how your shop leverages finishing in your marketing and sales materials. This does not have to just be a dry list of finishing equipment—it is better to focus on the applications that require finishing, whether that means folded brochures, bound books or dye-cut promotional items.
- **Track your costs** – Tracking the cost of finishing is another key factor for leveraging finishing's benefits. It's difficult to understand the value of finishing if you aren't tracking the related costs! Are you using budgeted hourly rates, and if so, how is finishing accounted for in those? Are you charging separately for finishing? If so, how are you making those calculations? Whatever you do, don't put your shop in with the minority of users who say they don't track finishing costs at all! In the long run, such a strategy is unsustainable.
- **Budget for future purchases** – Having a long-term capital equipment acquisition plan is another valuable tool because it quantifies the investments needed to sustain, build and grow a business. Even if finishing purchases only show up occasionally on a multi-year purchase cycle, they still need to be a key area of focus.

Although there is significant work to be done, the good news is that print service providers innately understand the value of finishing. They simply need to take greater care in how that knowledge is applied to business decisions around marketing, sales and new equipment purchases.

Source: Provided by Canon Solutions America.

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## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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Though consistency is important, and social media is somewhat of a numbers game, always post with intent and compare your content with your objectives. When faced with a choice between frequently publishing lackluster content and posting well-written, thoughtful and interesting articles less often, choose the latter.

You'll want to set time aside for analyzing important metrics like profile views, shares and clicks. These statistics will tell you if you're in the right platforms and if you are influencing your intended audiences.

Social media is an important business tool. It's a place where nearly all your potential customers go before they do business with your company, so it is foolish to ignore this powerful way to promote your brand. But using social media is a commitment. Resources and time must be allocated to the effort or it will fail. Jumping into social media with a halfhearted effort can damage the brand image more than it helps.

Source: Roger P. Gimbel, EDP, President, Gimbel & Associates

## NATIONAL NEWS

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receiving COVID-19 stimulus funding. Yes, the ultimate impact of direct pandemic injury versus preexisting financial conditions of the USPS is debatable. Yes, there are unanswered underlying assumptions as to how package delivery volume will fare when more Americans return to pre-March 2019 in-store purchasing. What isn't debatable is the need for consumer and business confidence in a reliable, affordable postal service that will continue to deliver during and after these uncertain times.

Source: PRINTING United Alliance Printing Press Blog.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

## CNG's Kelly/Spicers Continues Packaging Expansion, Acquires Northern California's American Packaging

Central National Gottesman Inc. (CNG), which owns sales and distribution businesses in the global pulp, paper, tissue, packaging, wood products and metals industries, announced that its Kelly/Spicers division has acquired Northern California-based American Packaging, further expanding its packaging business throughout the Western U.S.

American Packaging, founded in 1976, is one of the region's leading independent packaging distributors, with a broad portfolio focused on high-growth markets such as medical devices, food processing, pharmaceutical and technology products. American Packaging also brings strong expertise in packaging equipment, including sales, servicing, maintenance and line integration design.

The acquisition of American Packaging strengthens Kelly/Spicers' growing industrial and retail packaging business, which is anchored by Premiere Packaging Industries (PPI) in Southern California.

American Packaging President Kaye Leedham Herning will continue in her leadership role, capitalizing on the strong foundation that she and her team have built since acquiring the business in 1997. The business will continue to operate out of its 72,000-square-foot San Leandro warehouse, strategically located between global tech hub Silicon Valley and the renowned wine region of Napa Valley. It will continue to operate under the American Packaging name until transitioning to Kelly/Spicers later this year.

## PIASC Events Calendar

SEPT  
16

**WEBINAR: Get Informed on Informed Delivery - provided by PIM**  
9:30 am - 10:30 am  
piasc.org/events

NOV  
14-15

**Los Angeles Printers Fair**  
The International Printing Museum  
Carson, CA  
<https://www.printmuseum.org>

For full list of workshops and virtual classes, please visit [www.piasc.org/events](http://www.piasc.org/events)

SEPT  
21-25

**PRINTING United Alliance Color Ready! (Online)**  
Virtual Conference Week  
September 21-25, 2020  
<https://bit.ly/colorready2020>