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CREATING THE RIGHT PRINT MIX WITH VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

SMART CHANGE STARTS HERE.

In the graphics industry there is a lot of discussion about value-added services. The term is often associated with services that are non-core to the primary business but enhance the basic business value. Many years ago, value-added services for the printer were those of typesetting, specialty binding, mailing, die-cutting, and hot stamping. Now value-added services are a vast assortment, with many centered around digital offerings. The key to value-added services is not whether it is digital or analog but the ability to create better long-term customer engagements across multiple channels that carve out a path for business growth. One can no longer be solely dependent on the ink-on-paper platform. Value-added services tend to unlock a positive business brand message for the innovative printer.

It is not the intent of this article to minimize the role of print. The focus is on the fact that when a printer adds an assortment of value-added services to the mix, the volume of ink-on-paper work generally increases. When one attempts to sell only print, the product is often commoditized and goes to the lowest bidder. However, when a customer is looking for a partner to organize a comprehensive omnichannel marketing campaign where print is an important ingredient, the value-added services are often one of the primary reasons for a positive decision. The growing list of former printers who have embraced this concept is rapidly expanding. It seems that printers who focus on re-branding themselves with a comprehensive cross-media services portfolio are indirectly growing print revenue. With the right value-added tools, the printer can spark sales relationships with a strong ROI.

In any business environment, executives want to build a strong path to establishing long-lasting customer relationships. The cost of acquiring new customers is formidable. By asking the right questions as to what is changing in a customer's business, and then identifying and offering innovative solutions, keeps existing customers happy. Value-added technologies based on omnichannel marketing concepts are making a strong case for transforming the typical print model. Combining many value-added services quite often cuts costs and makes for a more enhanced and traceable ROI.

Let's first examine what some of these digital omnichannel and analog value-added services are.

Value-added Services

- Augmented Reality
- Content Management
- Digital Asset Management
- Digital Print
- Creative Services
- Data Analytics
- Data Management
- Embellishments
- Email Marketing
- Finishing
- Fulfillment
- Mailing with Enhanced Intelligence
- Marketing Solutions
- Personalization
- Promotional Products
- Search Engine Optimization
- Security
- Social Media
- Video Production
- Virtual Reality
- Web-to-Print
- Website Development
- Wide-format

It is very important to note that a printer doesn't necessarily need to add all the above listed items. That task would be overwhelming. The best method of selecting which services a printer should offer is to ask one's customers. Determine what challenges they are experiencing, so that the printer can best target a suitable solution. Then the printer needs to determine the services they can easily add in-house. In conjunction with these choices, the printer needs to identify outside partners to assist in some of the work that is important but challenging to bring in-house—just like in the old days when printing companies sent out many jobs for binding or finishing. By focusing on the customer needs and prioritizing them, the printer will not over-extend themselves. The printer must be confident the team of internal and external partners will be a coherent, unified group.

A great example of a company who has experienced a phenomenal growth pattern by leveraging value-added services is The Fenway Group located in Boston, MA. Rick Sands, the President, clearly states, "I am a printer who over the past 10 years hasn't really sold printing services. My philosophy has always been the less we sell print, the more

print we sell." Now that may seem strange, but Sands' story is quite amazing. In 2009 while the recession was taking a devastating toll in the print industry, Sands had an idea that this new internet world presented a great opportunity, not destruction. "We wanted to be the ones connecting what we were doing in the print space with new online experiences."

The Fenway team identified three market verticals—Education, Healthcare, and Non-Profits—as opportunities to provide comprehensive cross-media solutions. They were doing some work in each of these spaces, but not a whole lot. One such customer is a medical school who was ineffectively marketing their continuing education programs to doctors. Fenway created a unique strategy of tracking doctor registrations via customized URLs and landing pages to gather good data on which lists were working. He hired some new employees who were data specialists, and he partnered with some outside vendors. The result was amazing; the data analytics created a baseline from which the school marketing people could more efficiently increase program enrollment. Fenway leveraged content management, data, mailing, and data analytics to increase their business with this school to over nine million direct mail pieces—and they never attempted to sell any print. Now they are expanding their partnership by adding social media campaigns, SEO, digital marketing, and video.

Another client of Fenway's, a hospital chain, was a business card customer. While they were doing over 400 orders a year, the problem was too many human touchpoints. They had some basic web-to-print software but once the order was received it had to be re-entered into their MIS, then manually put into production. This was making the jobs marginally profitable. The hospital chain then expanded to a national presence and the orders of all types were growing. Rick transformed the company with a new W2P software package with DAM, new MIS, and restructured the entire production process to experience only four human touchpoints. In 2018 more than 4,000 profitable orders were placed by this hospital chain.

Fenway never tried to sell more print to the hospital group; they simply automated the processes for the customer and locked them into a comprehensive online service offering. Sands relates this process as a "hub and spoke" model. Originally print was the hub of the wheel; now it is content, and print is only one of the many spokes of the varied value-added services Fenway provides.

Rapid Press of Tallahassee, FL created a unique value-added proposition that clearly differentiated them from their regional competition. This compelling program is distinct and engaging and leverages print in a dynamic manner. According to Lourdes Madsen, company president, "We have helped

launch new business ventures and helped companies with a century of tradition find a modern voice with a system we call Integrated Marketing Solutions. We have changed with the times and have been a catalyst for remarkable change that has enhanced our position with our customers."

The program concentrates on utilizing both direct mail and social media in an integrated manner to achieve significant results for customers. An excellent example is a local hospital promoting certain health-oriented services. Before the direct mail piece is sent out, the lists are reviewed to match the purchased list with local social media people who are on Facebook and Instagram. Ads are then placed in local streaming feeds in advance of the direct mail piece. Madsen said "by using USPS Informed Delivery we know precisely when the mail piece will arrive, so the 'look and feel imagery' of the social media ads will be easily identified to the direct mail pieces." The program continues with both mail and call tracking to ascertain via the analytics of who visited the hospital website landing page and/or directly contacted the hospital. Follow-up banner ads are also used to reinforce the message on these same social media sites.

The typical Integrated Marketing Solution program is executed over a 60-day period. There are many secondary steps, including targeted online banner ads. Another positive impact is capturing new leads from people who have responded to the online ads who were not part of the direct mail. The web portal analytics have proven very beneficial to Rapid Press' customer base. Madsen shares "that one client has realized triple sales volume, and a local association has more than doubled attendance at events by utilizing this service." This new value-added feature has attracted many new customers. Madsen adds "that none of this could be accomplished without the dedicated, hardworking, and innovative team of Rapid Press employees who through their passion, innovation, and dedication make the Integrated Marketing Solutions come to life."

When a printer can expand the customer relationship by offering many diversified, interactive services that either deliver content or enhance content delivered by a digital or analog medium, they deepen the customer bond. Real value-oriented engagement tools power the customer journey. By leveraging value-added services, a printer expands their customer footprint. This in turn builds lasting long-term relationships, increases print volume, and most importantly increases revenue and profitability. As Rick Sands clearly outlined, when you craft a comprehensive, meaningful portfolio of cross media value-added services, you indirectly grow your ink-on-paper business without really trying.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Steven Schnoll is the managing director in the consulting firm of SCHNOLL MEDIA CONSULTING. He has had leadership and ownership interests spanning several decades in five content media organizations and one software company. He has built a reputation as a practical innovator for companies attempting to enter new markets or revitalizing existing markets. Steven was inducted into the prestigious Ben Franklin Honor Society of the Printing Industries of America in 2008.

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