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Resource for Excellence
in Business Management



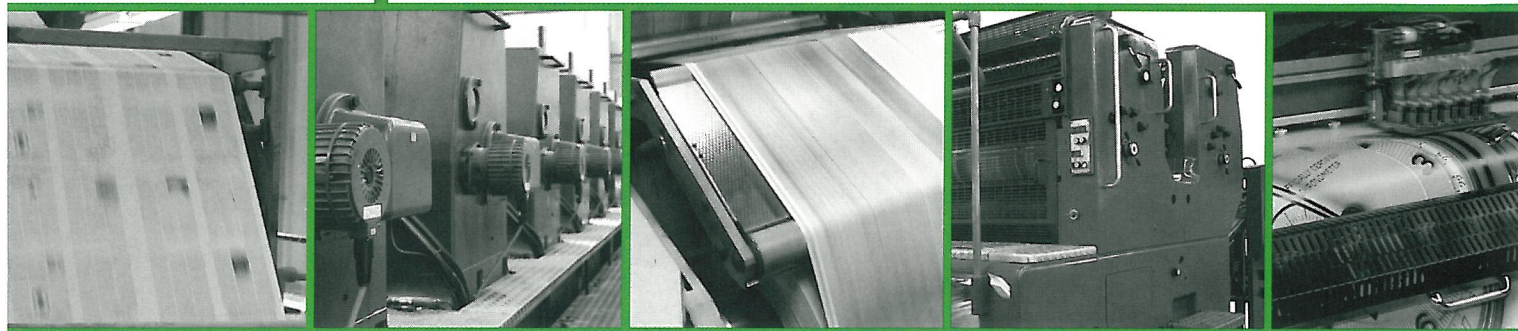
by Jim Dunn

Keeping

print in the mix



Robust industry resource gives printers marketing data they can use to demonstrate the power of print and how it complements other media.



An effective sales pitch for print has many familiar elements: meetings to assess the customer's needs; the presentation of a quote; a review of high-quality samples; often, a plant tour; always, a pledge to deliver on time and in the quantity requested at the agreed-upon price. For a long time, sticking with this tried-and-true formula was the best way to assure sales success in print-centric customer environments.

Today, though, that built-in priority for print is no longer a given. Digital media occupy almost every marketing space that print does. Increasingly, these media are threatening to chip away at print's position in the budgetary decision-making process that many call "the marketing mix."

Print can't take its place in this mix for granted, not when those who now buy print can also choose from a growing array of digital alternatives to ink on paper. And while print can still stand on its own merits as a persuasive and cost-effective medium, it can't stand alone.

A Powerful Channel

Those who sell it must be able to demonstrate not only that print is a powerful channel in its own right, but that it complements the new channels penetrating the marketplace via laptops, cell phones, PDAs, and other electronic devices.

Clearly, the sales pitch for print has to evolve quickly with these changes in the market for print. And, with the help of a

remarkable clearinghouse called "Print in the Mix," it can. Print in the Mix (www.printinthemix.rit.edu) is an online project funded by The Print Council (www.theprintcouncil.org), an industry coalition dedicated to preserving and promoting the role of print as an effective communication medium.

The Print in the Mix clearinghouse is housed at Rochester Institute of Technology and is published by the Printing Industry Center at RIT, which is joined in this endeavor by faculty and staff from Bowling Green State University, California Polytechnic State University, North Carolina A&T State University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Ryerson University, and the University of Houston College of Technology.

Print in the Mix is available free of charge to anyone wishing to document how and why print remains so valuable to marketers, media planners, and others who influence the marketing spend. It exists to do one thing: keep printers well supplied with facts, statistics, and research reports that they can use to energize and nuance their sales messages.

Print in the Mix does the intelligence-gathering work that most printers don't have time to do by monitoring the most authoritative sources of information about the effectiveness of print in many forms. From this continuously updated body of

"Print is a necessary piece of today's marketing mix."

knowledge, Print in the Mix extracts the most pertinent information, presenting it both as “Fast Facts” and as more in-depth articles on topics of interest.

Because everything is organized within categories corresponding to the major print markets, resources are easy to find. Once located, they can be quoted in sales presentations, inserted into PowerPoint slides, linked from printers’ websites, shared with clients via email, and distributed in any other way that will bring them to the attention of those deciding how much investment print will get as they calculate their next marketing spend.

The information in Print in the Mix is as varied as print itself, but the theme of everything it contains is the same: *print is an audience-pleasing, response-generating, ROI-producing solution that can and should be an integral part of almost any multi-channel marketing campaign.*

“*Make well-informed presentations about the things that print does best.*”

Unbiased Studies

As a clearinghouse for the information most worth having about print, Print in the Mix hits the high notes—reminding us, for example, that print remains the most trusted medium for B2B (business-to-business) communications. It also refutes the myths: among them, the baseless idea that direct mail is “junk” that nobody wants, opens, or reads.

The information is at everyone’s fingertips 24/7. That’s a major advantage for sellers of print confronting new attitudes and, occasionally, the print buyer’s misconceptions, as they strive to elevate print’s place in the marketing mix.

Mike Beddor, Chief Executive Officer of The Japs-Olson Company, St. Louis Park, Minn., and a Print in the Mix user, notes that when advertising agencies and other clients plan multi-channel promotional campaigns, their project teams often will include people who aren’t well versed in print.

A particular value of Print in the Mix, he says, is that it can supply print-related facts and statistics that are hard to come by in the general business media and that these customers, as a result, probably won’t have seen.

Japs-Olson sales representatives can use this print-specific information to give everyone who needs it an equal awareness of print’s role in the multi-channel mix. The effect, according to Beddor, speaks for itself: “Almost universally,” people will say, “I wasn’t aware of that.”

Another user, John Holladay, Director of Business Development at Daniels Graphics, Asheville, N.C., says that the aspect of Print in the Mix he finds most helpful is the fact that it “brings unbiased studies to the table.”

Source of Knowledge

He explains that because the sources of the information—for example, Forrester Research, or the Direct Marketing Association—often do not have direct ties to the printing industry, their reports carry third-party credibility that Daniels Graphics customers find convincing. What’s more, says Holladay, the information is always positive and relevant, unlike much of what turns up in impromptu Google searches about print and print markets.

“Print is an extremely important marketing communications channel,” says Beddor, “but oftentimes without the recognition.” Such recognition is something that may have to be nurtured, and that’s often where a well-chosen fact or figure from Print in the Mix can do the most good.

Beddor notes that Japs-Olson works most closely with “the

Visitors Access Diverse Studies

Since the site was launched in September 2007, Print in the Mix has had some 6,000 first-time visitors, and, since April 2008, has seen a sustained 50% monthly spike in new users. Following is a sample of the most popular Research Summaries and Fast Facts the users are accessing:

Top Research Summaries

- ◆ *DMA 2007 Response Rate Trends Report*
- ◆ *Measuring Media Effectiveness: Comparing Media Contribution throughout the Purchase Funnel*
- ◆ *DMNews Direct Mail Survey 2007*
- ◆ *The Contribution of Direct Mail Advertising to Average Weekly Unit Sales*
- ◆ *Forrester Research: The B2B Digital Marketing Shift*
- ◆ *The Household Diary Study: Mail Use & Attitudes in FY 2006—Advertising Mail*
- ◆ *Forrester Research: The Digital Transformation*
- ◆ *Harris Interactive Study: The Corporate Decision Maker’s View of Business Media*

Top “Fast Facts”

- ◆ Direct Mail Not Being Replaced by Email but Latter’s Use is Growing
- ◆ Print Advertising Rates Most Positively with Consumers
- ◆ Direct Marketing - Effect On Sales (U.S.)
- ◆ Direct Marketing - Effectiveness (U.S.)
- ◆ Personalizing Direct Mailings
- ◆ 2008 U.S. Estimated Ad Spending by Media Type
- ◆ More than 80% of Website Users Also Read Their Print Newspaper
- ◆ Advertising Inserts #1 Research Tool
- ◆ Consumers Interested in Green Products and Companies
- ◆ Top 10 Marketing Trends for 2008

For questions about Print in the Mix, please contact Liz Dopp, Managing Editor, at eadppr@rit.edu. For information about The Print Council, please contact Joanne Vinyard at jvinyard@msn.com.

people who are in charge of getting the printing done,” that is, customer personnel working at the execution stage after the print purchasing decision has been made by others. Because of the outcome-affecting roles they play, it’s important to update the print awareness of these hands-on personnel, too—and not necessarily just the newcomers among them.

The “seasoned people,” Beddor says, now have concerns about the environment and sustainability, topics covered by Print in the Mix. Using information from the clearinghouse addresses these issues and helps Japs-Olson communicate its own policies about sustainable printing.

Holladay, likewise, says that having access to Print in the Mix information helps Daniels Graphics position itself as a source of knowledge. By counting click-throughs to Print in the Mix information shared in the Daniels Graphics e-newsletter, Holladay can alert the sales team to topics in which readers are showing particular interest.

This pulse-taking has proven especially beneficial in the company’s recent drive to increase its business with advertising agencies. Noting that some ad agencies have asked him for copies of the research reports they have seen in the e-newsletter, Holladay says that Print in the Mix gets some of the credit for the success Daniels Graphics has been enjoying lately in this segment of the market.

Of special help to Japs-Olson have been facts and reports specific to its specialty, direct mail: for example, an article detailing the perceived vs. real impact of mail on the waste stream; or a Fast Facts excerpt on how personalization drives response. Beddor finds these nuggets of information handy to insert into presentations as “support mechanisms.” He also says that the articles about print-based direct marketing can be very useful as handouts—particularly in presentations to those who are new to the channel.

Solid Evidence

According to Patricia Sorce, Ph.D., Administrative Chair of RIT’s School of Print Media and Co-Director of the Printing Industry Center, stories like these underscore the benefits of augmenting presentations for print with the kinds of solid evidence that Print in the Mix offers in abundance.

The quality of a customer’s perception of print, she says, depends on which generation the customer belongs to and how generally media-savvy the person happens to be. Sorce acknowledges that because the Internet and other non-print media are so pervasive, “you can’t overplay the power of print.” Thus, it’s more realistic to advise the customer, “Print isn’t going to solve all of your problems, but it is a necessary piece of the marketing mix.” Instead of exuding “missionary zeal” on print’s behalf, she

recommends making well-informed and convincing presentations about the things that print does best.

Sorce says that because Print in the Mix is updated every two weeks with new material culled from reliable sources, it can be an evergreen destination for information-seekers. “Don’t visit once,” she urges printers. “Keep coming back.” She also hopes that visitors will “dig down one more level” beneath the Fast Facts into the Research Summaries section, which contains detailed briefs on trends in each of the subject areas that Print in the Mix encompasses.

“It keeps printers well supplied with facts they can use to energize sales messages.”

“It doesn’t cost anything to go beyond the Fast Facts,” says Sorce, adding that being able to state not only the facts but their origin polishes both the presentation and the image of the presenter. This is an important sales edge, she notes, because “Fortune 500 companies want Fortune 500 sales representatives”—sales professionals with the same sophisticated command of information that they expect of their own managers and executives.

“From the onset, our goal was to have *Print in the Mix* become a living, growing communications tool that serves to demonstrate, in very positive ways, the role of print as a viable information medium within the marketing mix, which as we all know grows and changes in many ways each and every year,” says Sorce. “We feel that we’re achieving this goal and look forward to continuing to build it into an even greater resource.”

Like a well-planned printing job, Print in the Mix is all about leveraging efficiency. Holladay appreciates what the clearinghouse does to improve his personal effectiveness as a business development manager. “Everybody needs to be mindful of their time,” he says, “and Print in the Mix really helps me to do my job a lot more quickly.”

Beddor urges all printers to get better acquainted with the resources that Print and the Mix and The Print Council offer in support of what they do. “If you don’t know about it,” he says, “you can’t use it.”



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Jim Dunn is President of Heidelberg USA, Inc., and Co-Chair of The Print Council (www.theprintcouncil.org), which funds the Print in the Mix clearinghouse of research on print media effectiveness.