



TEN WAYS

to showcase your talent, expertise and experience

“Showing vs telling” has always been an important element of sales and marketing. And, as customer and consumer trust levels have eroded, it has never been more important for suppliers to substantiate their skills and experience.

The exponential rise of “influencers” in consumer marketing demonstrates this trend. Finding creative and engaging ways to appeal to customers and prove what they are capable of is the perfect way for PSPs to similarly inspire and educate their customers. Here are some ideas how to achieve this;

1 While your corporate brochure is a valuable piece of collateral, this is usually a “telling” piece. It comes from your perspective and is a subjective statement of your company’s strengths and the benefits a customer derives from working with you. Support this by creating a gallery of case studies, authentic stories written from the customer’s perspective that include a testimonial or quote. Make it a discipline to grow this resource with every new project or campaign of note.

2 Customers are reassured knowing that you are already familiar with their industry and its specific requirements. They will take comfort from the fact that you understand them and so the risk of working with you is minimised. So, make sure that your case studies not only showcase what you do, but who you do it for – their market, sector, size of business, etc.

“DON’T TELL ME THE MOON IS SHINING; SHOW ME THE GLINT OF LIGHT ON BROKEN GLASS.”

Anton Chekhov

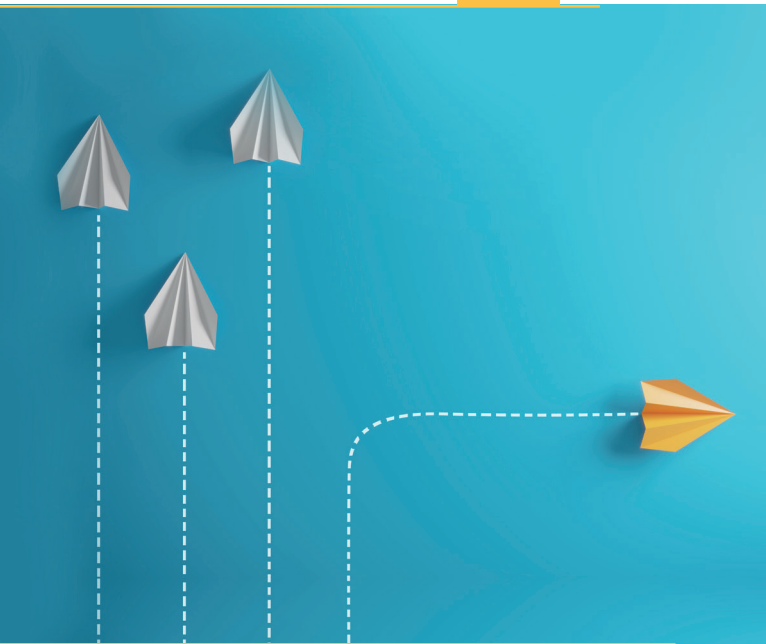
4 Translate the case studies you produce into a range of formats. You will want printed copies that also work well when emailed, but consider getting creative with these too. Make them integral to any presentation your sales team uses when pitching, and consider a short video or animation, even a voice-recording or podcast.

5 Brand and design them to ensure they have a consistent “look, feel and tone of voice” and that they work as a pack or series. In that way they will be capable of standing alone from your other marketing collateral, if necessary. Include full contact details too, in case they become separated.

“NOBODY EVER GOT FIRED FOR CHOOSING IBM”

3 Highlight the challenges that the customer faced, the obstacles you helped to overcome and focus on the results and successes that the project has helped the customer achieve. While you may want to include references to the production process used do not make this the focus. Avoid “talking technical” and use language and terminology that is the customer’s own, rather than anything print-specific.





REMEMBER...



Showcase what you do and who you do it for



Test the boundaries of your equipment



Collaborate to develop new offerings

6 Use case studies as an opportunity to demonstrate your personalisation expertise by making them unique to the recipient, wherever possible. Add their name, company logo and use imagery that reflects them and their business. At the very least consider versioning them for maximum impact. That might be by language, salesperson, market sector or to reflect an event.

7 As well as case studies, share samples to inspire your customers. While this might be reactively when they have a known requirement, be generous and proactive too. Are there new or interesting substrates they may not have come across? Processes or finishes that reinforce the tactile nature of print and that their own customers would react favourably to? Initiate a discussion to demonstrate your interest and creativity.

8 Actively seek out and enter for competitions and awards that, if you were successful, would bolster your credibility. The printing industry is only a starting point; look beyond this to the industry sites and publications favoured by your customers. And, if your target audience includes marketers, consider the equivalent marketing honours too.



This article is one of a series supporting the **Canon Ascent Programme**, a business development initiative for Canon Professional Print customers. If you'd like to know more please contact your Canon Account Manager or search "Canon Ascent Programme".

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It is easy to react to what your customers tell you they want and need but try pushing beyond the ordinary. Test the boundaries of your equipment, experiment and share the results with colleagues and your customers. Research new substrates, explore different and clever finishing techniques and commit to keep innovating.

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Collaborate with your suppliers, keep the lines of communication open and make the most of your trusted relationships. Challenge them to help you create new products and use the expertise that they offer. As an example, paper merchants are always keen to get new materials in front of customers. Make sure you are aware of these before your customers are.

"INNOVATION DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN A LEADER AND A FOLLOWER"

Steve Jobs



SUGGESTED READING:

Marketing: A Love Story: How to Matter to Your Customers
by Bernadette Jiwa

All Marketers are Liars
by Seth Godin