

# How digital print applications add value to your customer

## Gutenberg's first printing press of 1436 has been credited with pulling Europe out of the Dark Ages and accelerating human progress.

But the process then was manual, labour intensive, and without a distribution network for its products, far from lucrative.

Today successful print service providers (PSPs) look more like technology businesses, rather than the manufacturers of old. And the industry is moving increasingly towards digital equipment and automation via integrated systems and workflows, all designed to speed-up and optimise production.

### The all-important return on investment (ROI)

For the uninitiated purchaser, printing may still be viewed through the prism of history. Unless we make our customers aware of the progress and investments being made, along with the corresponding added value this affords them, we'll struggle to change these perceptions. Plus, if we only utilise and market a fraction of the investment we have made, we stand to sacrifice valuable return on that investment.



### The "consultative sell"

Consider the digital print applications in your armoury. Are your customers aware of the solutions they deliver? Can they visualise how they might make use of them? Are you explaining and evidencing what that means to them? And, most importantly, are you focusing on the benefits as they apply to your audience, rather than simply the features?

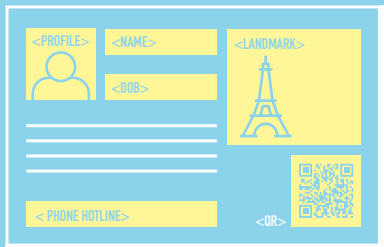
### Variable Data Printing (VDP)

VDP is capable of so much more than simple personalisation. Having evolved to include the modification of text, graphics, and images in order to produce wholly unique and targeted pieces, its sophistication and speed is arguably one of print's best kept secrets!

VDP software has been around for years, and while most clients are aware of the basics of direct mail, the level of print personalisation it offers rivals that of online packages. And that might come as a surprise to your customers.



Throw your net wide with VDP. It is of value to virtually anyone with a dataset that has something to say. So, initiate discussions around the personalisation of all manner of items to create one-off, impactful, high-quality print that resonates and prompts a reaction.\*



#### Think;

- Gifts such as notebooks and office stationery
- Labels such as wine labels, product tags, stickers
- Packaging and gift wrap
- Décor, wallpaper, and textiles
- Accessories, clothing, and bags
- Invitations, door-drops, flyers, catalogues, sales pitches, etc.

\* The Canon Ascent article "How personalisation achieves greater results and ROI" discusses this in greater detail.

#### Programmatic print

While the term is a relatively new one, technically programmatic print (PP) is just a "flavour" of VDP.

Marketers and consumers are becoming ever more familiar with programmatic advertising (PA). Triggered by online action or inaction, it's recognised as an effective means of targeting, influencing, and converting potential customers and clients.

If you have customers already using PA to promote and sell their products, they might well be receptive to PP too as the data that drives PA, for example "cart abandonment" – where a user fails to complete a purchase – can be utilised in exactly the same way.

#### Web-to-Print (W2P)

The growth of ecommerce has been exponential and for many consumers buying online has become their preferred method. So, online ordering of print and printed products can be a seamless transition for them.

B2B print portals and shopfronts are increasingly commonplace. PSPs understand how this aids their own operations by automating receipt of orders, job-ticketing, workflow integration, automatic batching and processing, etc. However, the corresponding benefits to the customer are often overlooked and rarely well-communicated. Don't assume that they are obvious, be sure to spell them out!

For example, brand is everything to the marketer and brand management, control of digital assets and version control of documents should feature large in your discussions with them. Conversely, for a procurement person, they are for more likely to respond favourably to W2P's control of costs, management of cost centres and its approvals and authorisation functionality.

IN B2C, HUGE SUCCESSFUL ONLINE PRINTERS SUCH AS MOONPIG (UK) AND GREETZ (NL) HAVE BRANDED THEMSELVES IN SUCH A WAY THEIR CUSTOMERS WOULDN'T PERCEIVE THEM AS PRINTERS AT ALL!

#### Multi-Channel Marketing (MCM)

Multi-Channel Marketing, sometimes referred to as Cross-Media Marketing, has become the foundation stone for many PSPs looking to move into the Marketing Services Provider (MSP) space.

The investment and resource required to implement it can be significant, and the learning curve steep, but it is often a natural progression for a successful provider of single-channel communications (print) to provide multi-channel communications (emails, personalised landing pages, SMS, etc.)

To maximise uptake and justify such an investment, ensure your marketing contacts understand how effective MCM is at tracking and measuring campaign interactions, behaviours and engagement across all channels. How powerful it is at delivering a 360° view of their customer, and its ability to increase insight, reduce unsubscribes and boost loyalty. While, at the same time, for the budget-holder or procurement person, how production and mailing costs can be controlled and reduced.

"ANY SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM MAGIC."

Arthur C Clarke

Depending on your market your digital applications will differ. However, the premise remains the same. Knowing and sharing their benefits and added value – whether that's brand management, personalisation, reduced costs, enhanced campaign measurability, etc. can open up conversations with existing customers and help win new ones.



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".