

winter 2009

SMART

impressions



CRAFTMASTER
PRINTERS, INC.

from imagination to reality



digital printing

what can it do for you?

Craftmaster's digital printing capabilities offer our clients many new possibilities from personalized mailing to cost-effective solutions on fewer-quantity orders. Here are some ideas of how these can benefit you.

personalized direct mail

Targeted, individualized, personal; Variable Data Printing (VDP) takes marketing to a personal level like never before. One-to-one marketing has continually proven its ability to increase customer loyalty and response. You can now arouse an individual; not just speak to a safe average in the mass. Pieces of mail can be personalized down to each word and image. Put their name in lights, include a product of personal interest to the recipient, use gender- or age-specific color schemes, use cross-marketing to introduce new services to existing customers... the possibilities are endless. Studies have concluded that customized direct mail produced an average response rate 75 percent over control groups of mass mail. The more you personalize, the more you will inspire.

variable data

Whether you need account statement inserts or personalized event materials, variable data is extremely functional and efficient. Distributed pieces can be coded for tracking responses on surveys or solicitations to assess both response rate as well as the demographics of those that decline to respond. Variable data is done in-line with printing to provide a turnkey solution for changeable material.

small-run jobs

For few-quantity, quick-turn orders digital printing is often a smart alternative to traditional offset. Digital printing allows for immediate drying and less setup costs than offset presses. The typical trend is 250 to 2,000 pieces on most digital runs, depending on piece size and how many can be placed on each press sheet. Color usage is also achievable on smaller quantities using digital printing versus having to place these jobs on a 4- to 6-color offset press. The reduced setup fees of digital printing allow for more shorter runs which can reduce obsolescence and allow for more relevant, updated material in long-term marketing campaigns.

A little learning is a dangerous thing but a lot of ignorance is just as bad.

Bob Edwards

prepress notes

top production oversights (and solutions)...

forgetting to use style sheets

Style sheets significantly reduce the number of steps in your workflow. If you know all 12 subheadings in an article should appear in the same font, at the same size, in the same color, why apply these text attributes by revisiting the menu items again and again? Create a **Subhead** entry in your style sheet. Place your cursor in the appropriate line of text. Click **Subhead**. In two clicks you have applied font choice, size, color, leading, kerning, and a dozen other attributes.

failing to use templates

When working on a magazine or newsletter, there is no need to start at zero on each issue. Take the layout file from the previous issue and whittle it down to the essentials: logo, issue number and date, masthead, department headers, repeated graphics, scanned signatures, folios, disclaimers, etc. Trash any redundant or unused elements in your style sheets, master pages, and color palette. For example, imported text sometimes brings unwanted style sheets with it. Begin the names of your style sheets with a bullet. That will set them apart. Then dump the rest. View the document at 50% and delete extraneous items from the pasteboard. Then save the document as a template rather than a regular document. When you double-click on the template, a new unnamed file will open – ready to be tweaked with the specifics of Vol. 12 No. 3.

fudging the columns

It was once a point of pride that the columns in a magazine article exactly matched each other. Overlay two pages on a light table and the columns would precisely overlap. To establish this subtle indicator of quality in your publication, create “master pages” for each article. Also, try using vertical justification so that the bottoms of your text columns line up rather than raggedly vary along the bottom.

failing to update linked graphics

The fact that an image is visible in your layout program and in its proper spot would seem to suggest nothing more is required. However, the image you see in your layout program is a low resolution substitute for the real thing. A **link** connects this FPO with the actual high-resolution file. Your printer will need the high-resolution file for quality print production. If that high-resolution file is moved to another folder on your hard-drive, the link is broken. Quark or InDesign no longer knows where to find the high-resolution image, **even though the low resolution FPO still appears on the page**. It is necessary, then, to verify or update links before sending your project off to be printed. This is best accomplished via the “Collect for Output” command in Quark or “Preflight” command in InDesign. This will verify link status **and** gather copies of the high-resolution files into a folder which you can then burn to disk or upload to your printer’s ftp site.

not including bleeds

If a color or image extends to the edge of your page, we will ask you to extend it one eighth of an inch further. This ensures ink coverage does not fall short when the job is trimmed.

placing elements too close to the trim or gutter

In layout programs like Quark or InDesign, your page sits on an imaginary desktop. The desktop is usually the same color as the page: white. The result, unfortunately, is a false impression. Items placed close to this edge give the impression of having room to spare. If the book is printed, however, the text is far too close to the trim and therefore risks being trimmed off! Similarly, text is sometimes placed too close to the center fold or “gutter” of a magazine. A minimum of one quarter inch should separate the edge of the page from the “live area” which contains body text, ads, and so on. That’s a minimum. It is more pleasing to the eye when half an inch or more is used.

accepting and placing bad pdf files

When exporting a file as a PDF, many settings are available and it’s easy to just assume they will work. But low resolution images, missing fonts and no bleed are just a few issues that could result. The good news is that you or your ad clients do not need to learn each of these options in depth. There are two quick and simple solutions. The first option is to use the “Press Quality” preset which will take care of most settings. If choosing this method, check that fonts are embedded and that crop marks, registration marks and bleeds are turned on. The second and most reliable option is to load a plug-in with the printer’s specific settings. Craftmaster can provide a preset to load into InDesign before exporting or, if using Quark, we can give you a list of these presets as Quark does not support the plug-in option.

Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it

Henry David Thoreau

offset printing

the basics

Craftmaster specializes in offset lithography, which is the workhorse of commercial printing. Offset printing works on a basic principle: ink and water do not mix. Images are burned onto metal plates which are then dampened first by water, then by ink. Ink sticks to image areas and water sticks to non-image areas. Images are transferred to rubber blankets inside the press which then transfer to paper; hence, the term “offset.” Following is a very basic review of the printing process as followed at Craftmaster.

pre-press

Before jobs can be sent to press, they must go through a pre-press production department. Files are sent through a Raster Image Processing (RIP) system which translates digital information from fonts and images in your file to an image composed of individual dots which can be output onto proofs and then plates for production. Aluminum plates are burned from the RIP file with each process color (cyan, magenta, yellow, black) or spot color having a separate plate. Each color's plate contains numerous tiny dots which will combine on the press sheet to form the colors and images of your final piece.

the press run

Plates are taken to the press and wrapped around large cylinders opposite rubber transfer blankets. Ink is filled in the units and large, pre-cut sheets of paper are loaded into the rear of the press. Each side of a sheet of paper is equal to one impression. The largest press owned by Craftmaster, a 6-color Heidelberg CD with in-line coating, can reach up to 10,000 impressions per hour and accommodate up to 28 x 40.5" sheets of paper. The first stage of the press run is called “make-ready” where the pressman runs waste sheets to get the ink in the press to the desired densities so that the intended colors can be matched to the proofs. Once the correct levels are achieved, the true press run begins with the pressman constantly checking sheets within the run to make sure that optimal densities are maintained. During the press runs, paper becomes slightly damp from the ink and water so it must pass through a dryer at the front of the press to set the ink and prevent smudging. The sheets are then set aside on skids to dry before moving to the next process: either printing the other side or finishing. The last stage of the press run is “wash-up” where the ink bins and blankets are cleaned and the plates are removed from the press for recycling or storage.

bindery

Press sheets are taken to the bindery for trimming, folding, binding and all other finishing functions. For bound pieces such as a magazine, the sheets from the press are folded down into signatures. Craftmaster offers both saddle stitching and perfect binding as well as plastic binding and coil binding.



saddle stitching

Signatures are loaded into pockets and laid upon each other, or nested, on a moving “saddle” then stapled along the spine. They continue along the conveyor to be final-trimmed by a 3-knife trimmer on all sides except the spine. Saddle-stitched pieces must always have a page count that is a multiple of 4.



perfect binding

Signatures are loaded into pockets and stacked flat on top of each other along a conveyor. A line of glue is applied along the spine and then the cover is wrapped around the entire set of signatures which make the book. The book continues along a conveyor to a 3-knife trimmer where it is final-trimmed on all sides except the spine. Perfect-bound books can have page counts that are multiples of as little as 2.

An idealist is a person who helps other people to be prosperous.

Henry Ford

smart idea

mini-pocket folders

Need to customize a brochure for specific markets or individuals?

Mini-pocket folders are a great way to create a “mix-and-match” brochure that allows you to quickly and compactly put together a tailored brochure for each client’s needs.

Mini-pocket folders save both money and paper by using a series of inexpensive inserts to convey products or services as they are useful to each audience or individual. They also reduce reprinting cost when those offerings are revised or replaced. Creating a targeted offer saves the client’s time and your inventory since you won’t give them a lot of information that they wouldn’t need. A 4 by 9 inch pocket folder will allow for 3.67 by 8.5 inserts (1/3 of an 8.5 by 11 standard sheet of paper). At these sizes you can create colorful, targeted inserts in a catchy folder with either a teaser or your company information on the outside. You can also include slits in the pocket or back of the folder to place a business card. We offer many different types and colors of paper and also the ability to emboss or foil stamp on the cover of the folder. The best part: these can fit in a standard business-sized, #10, envelope to mail.

Ways to increase impact of mini-pocket folders include:

- Continue to stay in front of clients by sending out a new insert periodically for them to add to their folders which highlights a specific or new capability.
- Print an anchor brochure which includes multiple pages if you have lots of generic information that will apply to all prospects.
- Include a punch-out rotary card on an insert.



- Create a business reply card on which clients can request more information.
- Include personalized cover letters on mini-letterhead which you can print on-the-fly from your desktop printer since the inserts are just a standard 8.5 by 11 sheet cut into thirds. (Have shells of the mini-letterhead printed three to a page if you want to keep the colors of your traditional letterhead.)



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