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PRINTtips



**Graphics
Printing
Mailing
Under One Roof**

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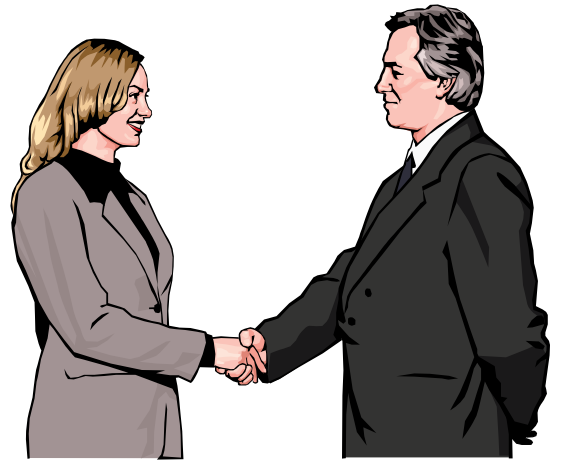
Imagine the Possibilities... ...Partnering with your Printer

You may not realize that our printing business was founded in 1986. In that 20 year period, we've had the chance to work with hundreds of customers ranging from those whose primary job is to buy or manage printing to those who rarely need to place an order. We've had our share of miraculous saves – those awe-inspiring times when despite an impossible deadline and less than optimal manufacturing circumstances, the job gets done and done right. We've also had a few misses, where no matter how hard we tried, things just kept going wrong.

We expect you've had the same range of experiences – those times when you felt immense gratitude to your printer for a job well done, as well as those times when despite everyone's best intentions, the job was a disappointment. In this issue of Printtips, we're going to share our observations gleaned from 20 years of business transactions on the best way to be totally satisfied with your printer.

A few fast facts about printers

Whether you think of us as a commercial printer, a digital printer, a quick printer, a copy shop, a specialty printer, or printing vendor, this is what we do for you: we determine from talking to you what it is you need; we select the best way to meet your requirements; and we provide you with a price to do so. And because we want you as a repeat customer, we organize our customer service activities so you'll have a pleasant buying experience and so we can fill your orders efficiently and cost-effectively.



How to choose the right printer

So if all printers are doing the same thing, how do you know which one to buy from? Some how-to articles suggest you look at our equipment; others, our price; yet others, how long we've been in business or how many people we employ. While all those things are important, they are a necessary, but not sufficient, set of criteria. Taken together, they help you predict whether we have the *capability* and *capacity* to do your work, and whether you have necessary *budget*. But relying on those factors alone doesn't address what we think is the most important basis for selecting a printer – the likelihood that you can build a relationship based on trust.

We mentioned earlier that over the years we've done business with many different kinds of customers. Based on that experience, we've become pretty good at predicting who will select us as their printer and who will move on. We are most successful when our customer has:

Imagine the Possibilities (continued)

“When we speak of a trusting relationship, we are describing an interaction...”

- a regular, recurring need for the kind of printing we do;
- a budget adequate for the printing specifications;
- the authority to place an order;
- the ability to cooperate with our manufacturing standards;
- adequate time to schedule production;
- a willingness to learn from us;
- good communication skills; and
- respect for us as printing professionals.

The more of these characteristics that are present, the higher the probability we can build the trusting relationship we seek.

What is a trusting relationship?

When we speak of a trusting relationship, we are describing an interaction between you and us that leads to mutual satisfaction – you’re satisfied because the job was delivered on time, as ordered, and at the agreed-upon price. We’re satisfied because we have demonstrated our dependability. We believe it is an accumulation of dozens of these transactions that produces a trusting relationship.

Recall that there are three requirements for a trusting relationship: you must need what we provide, and need it on a regular, recurring basis; we must know alternatives for producing the job and select the right one; and you must agree to the price we offer to complete the work.

The price we offer you is based on a combination of factors – the exact specifications of the job, the time available to complete it according to specifications, the capability of our equipment and staff for the specifications, and how much of our capacity the job requires. You may have had the experience of asking several printers to quote using an identical set of specifications, and finding wide variation in price. Likely you found two quotations that were outliers – one very high and one very low – and the rest clustered

together. You may have wondered how there could be such a difference between the highest and the lowest, or between the lowest and all the other quotations.

Although there can be many reasons, one possibility is related to the equipment needed to produce the job. Price is related to manufacturing capability – the lower the cost of production, the lower the price. Despite what some may claim, it is very rare to find one printing company that has one of every piece of equipment that could be used to produce a job. Rather, the printing company is equipped for a well-defined scope of work. If your printing job fits within that scope of work, that fact will be reflected in the price.

From time-to-time, you may have a printing project that doesn’t fit well with our production capability. For example, an order of 2000 or 20,000 envelopes printed with your two-color logo fits well within our manufacturing capability. But if you are planning a direct mail marketing campaign and need 200,000 envelopes, it may be advantageous for both pricing and turnaround time, if we subcontract printing of the envelopes to a printer who specializes in envelope printing.

If we are in a trusting relationship with you, we may take this action without consulting you as part of our commitment to know alternate methods of production and select the right one for a particular job. The fact that you don’t know where the envelopes were printed is not material, for no matter where the printing takes place, we remain responsible for the job. That means we’re responsible for quality, timeliness, and price – exactly as we would be if we had printed the job.

Remember, too, that all printers extend their manufacturing capability by forming relationships with trade vendors. Typically these are printing professionals who do one thing only. Some examples are printers who specialize in thermography (raised lettering); printers

“The price we offer you is based on a combination of factors...”

Imagine the Possibilities (continued)

who add foil stamping or embossing to printed pieces; printers who manufacture envelopes; printers who manufacture presentation folders; binderies that make booklets or put covers on books. We have established these relationships precisely so we can be responsible for your entire job - not hand you printed sheets and send you somewhere else to have them folded or made into booklets.

We make it easy for you

Our goal always is to handle your printing orders so you are confident they will be delivered on time, as ordered, and at the agreed-upon price. We know you appreciate being able to trust us with your work, knowing we will choose the best production method for each particular job and that we will always be responsible for the final job, no matter where it is produced. Trust us on that.

“We have established these relationships precisely so we can be responsible for your entire job...”

Printing Budget

When you are on a very tight budget for a printing project, the single most important thing you can do to keep costs to an absolute minimum is *plan*. Simply stated, printing is a custom manufacturing process with many possible approaches to getting the job done. After you place your order with us, we must translate your order into a set of job specifications - a plan for how the job will be produced. Even for the most basic job, there are often dozens of instructions to write and choices to make.

Involving us in the earliest stages of planning your printing project allows us to make suggestions, provide options, and apprise you

of the cost implications of choices you are considering. We may also have some fresh ideas for accomplishing your objectives. As printing professionals, we are glad to provide this extra service to you. We enjoy sharing the knowledge we have gained in our craft to help our customers get the most out of every printing expenditure.



“... printing is a custom manufacturing process with many possible approaches...”

Q. *When is the best time to ask for a quotation on a job?*

A. As soon as the specifications are firm. Printers distinguish between an *estimate* and a *quotation*. An estimate is a “best guess” based on specifications but is not considered binding on the printer. A quotation is a firm offer to produce the job exactly as specified and is considered binding unless specifications change.



“A quotation is a firm offer...”

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Please Route to the Printing Buyer

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We also love to be able to refer our customers and associates to other qualified business professionals in the community.

Following is a list of professions for which we know very credibly and ethical individuals. If you're looking for a professional in one of these categories, please feel free to contact us. We would be glad to put you in touch with these outstanding individuals who we know and trust.



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