



Graphics

Printing

Mailing

Under One Roof

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## Planning Your Marketing and Planning What You Print

**T**he end of an old year and the beginning of a new one often brings out the introspective side of businesses and organizations. It is a good time to review the results of the past year and plan for the year to come. And this kind of strategic planning naturally leads to developing the next year's marketing plan.

Marketing refers to all the processes and activities associated with promoting the sale of products or services, with focus on acquiring new customers and satisfying existing ones. While marketing plans for medium and large businesses can be very formal and based on extensive research and analysis, most small businesses and organizations use a simpler approach that often is defined by the amount of resources – money and people – available to carry it out.

### Marketing communications

At the heart of the marketing plan is the system by which the business or organization communicates with its target audience. In his book *Marketing Communications*, John Egan, a professor at Middlesex University Business School in London, defines marketing communications or marcom as the process used by suppliers (of products, services, values or ideas) to communicate with a target audience. The goal of the communication is to stimulate dialogue that will lead to developing a relationship.



Marcom encompasses a wide range of possible activities, including

- personal selling – being face-to-face with the customer or prospect
- *direct marketing* – sending promotional or sales material to a specific target audience
- *advertising* – using various mass media to offer a promotional or sales message to a broad audience
- *sales promotion* – offering incentives to purchase
- *public relations and publicity* – indirect promotion via third-party media

### Marcom collateral

Personal selling and direct marketing activities achieve their greatest effectiveness when accompanied by collateral material such as sales brochures and other product information, product data sheets, product white papers, and visual aids (i.e., handouts) to accompany sales presentations. Typically these materials have a consistent message and uniform graphic image

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*“The goal of the communication is to stimulate dialogue that will lead to developing a relationship.”*

*“... each of your collateral material pieces is a project.”*

that match the corporate identity as seen in business cards, letterheads, and envelopes.

In other issues of Printips we've discussed the importance of well-written copy and professional graphic design to the success of collateral material. In this issue we'd like to remind you of another element crucial to success – adequate planning and enough time to do the job right.

### **Collateral material is a project**

You may never have thought of it this way, but to us, each of your collateral material pieces is a project. It may be large or small depending on the end use, the target audience and the budget, but it is still a project. The project elements are the copy or text, the graphics (photographs, illustrations, charts, graphs), and the design concept. All the elements must be in final form and available before page layout can begin.

Whether you are doing the design and layout yourself or using our graphic arts department, you'll reach the conclusion – an attractive, professional-looking printed product – faster and with less cost if you invest time at the beginning to plan the project.

### **Planning for a printed piece**

Like you, we do our best work when we have sufficient time to proceed deliberately and steadily through all the required production steps. We have adopted production standards – the amount of time it takes to complete each step in the production process – so we can allow sufficient time for the entire job and deliver your project on time. The production standards are based on the capacity of our equipment with an allowance for scheduling.

Should you encounter a special circumstance such as an unexpected sales opportunity or an emergency that requires printing, we can generally meet your request for a shorter turnaround time than our production standards dictate. But we ask you to make this an occasional request rather than a standard operating procedure.

To help you plan, here are our production standards that you can use for the production time on your project.

### **Your input**

When we reference our production standards, we are referring to the amount of time it will take to produce the job once it has been released for printing. If you are providing a print-ready file, the production “clock” will start after the file has passed preflight and the production manager has accepted it into production. (Preflight is the term for analyzing the file to be sure it will print as required.) We preflight soon after submission and report the results to you.

If we are providing design and layout services, we cannot commit to a firm due date until you have signed off on the final proof and approved the artwork for press. What this means is that you need to provide your input (such as text, photographs and graphics) on the date we indicate it is due. You also need to return interim and final proofs promptly to keep on schedule.

### **Keep your options open**

One of the consequences of not keeping to the schedule we give you is that you limit your options. For example: if you are ordering 2000 copies of a full color brochure, it can be printed on either a high speed digital printer or an offset press. Generally speaking, the cost per brochure is lower for offset than digital printing. But offset printing has one extra production step (making press plates) and requires drying time before folding, so it takes longer in production. By keeping to the schedule, you'll be able to pick the printing process that best serves your needs. By missing the schedule, you may eliminate the option of offset printing.

It is especially important to keep to the schedule when the printing project requires an operation such as die cutting, foil stamping, or blind embossing done by one of our vendors, or when we are acting as a broker (such as when you are ordering advertising specialty items from us). In these cases, we must abide by the schedule

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determined by others. We factor this into the schedule we give you, so there's normally not a problem – unless you don't keep the schedule.


### Plan your work and work your plan

Make the most of your marketing budget by making a plan for printing that includes enough time to get the job done right. For any project, we're happy to prepare a written timeline that includes the dates when you must submit materials to us. Especially if the due date is critical, the timeline will make it clear to everyone what needs to be done to ensure on-time delivery without incurring rush charges or other unbudgeted expenses.



*“... the timeline will make it clear to everyone what needs to be done...”*

## Managing Your Marketing Material Inventory

 One sure marketing budget killer is to unexpectedly run out of collateral material and lack the time to have it reprinted without rush charges. Here are some ideas to help you manage your inventory of marketing materials:

- *Keep an adequate supply on hand.* Order enough material to last between three and six months. This time period strikes a good balance between having to reorder too often and tying up money in inventory that may become obsolete. An easy way to determine a 3 to 6 months supply is to ask yourself how many of this item you use in a specific interval (per day, per week, per month).
- *When reordering an item, ask us for the typical order interval. It is easy for us to check the order history for any item. Then you'll know whether you are within the 3 to 6 month recommended interval*
- *When ordering, ask us to price several different quantities. Our computerized estimating and pricing system makes it easy to provide multiple quantities for your consideration. You'll notice that as the quantity goes up, the unit price goes down.*
- *When you order an item, ask to have it included in our reorder reminder system. We'll check your order history, predict when you might be running low, and notify you when it is time to reorder.*



*“Here are some ideas to help you manage your inventory...”*

# Business to Business Marketing



*“... deal effectively  
with a variety of  
different people...”*

**M**arketing to businesses requires patience and the ability to deal effectively with a variety of different people in the selling process.

*The gatekeeper.* The gatekeeper’s job is to control access. Be prepared with ways to convince the gatekeeper that controlling access to the person you want to reach is actually counterproductive.

*The product or service user.* The user is important for determining whether your product or service meets requirements. To be effective, be prepared with technical details and facts.

*The buyer.* Also known as a purchasing agent, the buyer may be overly focused on price. Be prepared to demonstrate value.

*The decision maker.* A decision maker controls resources and expenditures even when not directly involved in the purchasing decision. For effectiveness, build a relationship.

*The influencer.* An influencer affects the selection process and can be a powerful ally.

*The initiator.* An initiator sets a course of action.

Please Route to the Printing Buyer



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