



March 2010

# PRINTtips



**Graphics  
Printing  
Mailing  
Under One Roof**

**TechneGraphics, Inc.**  
Park 50 TechneCenter  
2002 Ford Circle  
Milford, OH 45150

**(513) 248-2121**  
Fax (513) 248-5141

**Web site:**  
[www.techgra.com](http://www.techgra.com)

**File Transfer site:**  
[www.tgidirect.net](http://www.tgidirect.net)

**FTP site:**  
<ftp.techgra.com>

**Email:**  
[info@techgra.com](mailto:info@techgra.com)

## The Choice is Yours... Deciding Where to Buy Printing

Once upon a time there were relatively few places that a business, organization, or individual could go to buy printing. General commercial printers, as we were known back then, had large, noisy printing presses best suited to areas zoned for manufacturing and away from retail centers.

Technology changed that in the 1970s when small, clean presses and photo direct plate makers gave birth to the quick print segment of the printing industry. Quick printers could operate in a 2000 square foot retail storefront, readily visible from the street.

Another shift in technology added copiers, then digital output devices that eliminated the need for chemicals to process press plates and run the presses. Now printing could be done in an environment less like a factory and more like an office.

Digital technology also enabled printers to expand their offerings beyond offset printing to include high speed digital printing (color and black and white), large format graphics, posters, banners, signs, and even mailing services – a complete range of services needed by businesses and organizations to communicate, market, and sell.

### Competitors arise

As each technological change was adopted by the printing industry, it also gave rise to a new set of competitors. Quick printers challenged general commercial printers by being more visible and by offering faster turnaround,



lower minimum quantities, and better pricing in low quantities.

Copier technology enabled fast and economical reproduction of multi-page originals in limited quantities. An early commercial application was academic coursepacks – a collection of reading materials for college classes consisting of excerpts from published books and other materials assigned by the professor, to be used by a small number of students enrolled in the class.

Through a process called *supplier convergence*, copier technology also gave rise to printing becoming available in highly-visible retail locations of large, nationwide chain stores. Mega office supply stores and retail shipping franchises are the best known examples.

Before the Internet made it so easy to find sellers of goods and services, customers purchased printing primarily from local vendors. Now the power of Internet search engines, coupled with

## The Choice is Yours (continued)

*“You can buy from a locally owned and operated business like TechneGraphics , or a “big box” mega store, or an online printer. Which should you choose?”*

*“We have a written job description that clearly explains the duties and responsibilities of the position.”*



new digital-based productivity enhancements for preparing jobs for print, has given rise to online printing companies that specialize in a limited menu of printed products such as business cards, post cards, brochures, and flyers.

### Today's choices for buying printing

When your business or organization needs printing today, you have a wide range of choices. You can buy from a locally owned and operated business like TechneGraphics , or a “big box” mega store, or an online printer. Which should you choose?

The answer depends in part on what you need and how soon you need it. Both mega stores and online printers are organized around a standard menu of items as well as the specifications for those items. If you want business cards printed on something other than white paper or a brochure in a non-standard size, this probably is not available at a mega store or online printer.

Getting the printing from the online printer's production facility to you requires time and costs for shipping as well as a small element of risk that the job will be lost or damaged in transit.

### Self-serve vs. customer service

One of the primary differences between us and a mega store or online printer is our customer service as practiced by us. We consider this function to be central to the successful completion of any printing project, since we will be translating your requirements into production specifications. We must listen closely, write up the job accurately, and offer alternatives and options as appropriate. This requires excellent communication skills and a natural tendency to be detail-oriented.

Because these qualities are so important, we use pre-employment tests to determine how closely a candidate's skills and natural way of doing things fits with the CSR job requirements. We have a written job description that clearly explains the duties and responsibilities of the position. We conduct an annual performance review that includes eight areas of evaluation. We provide

tools and continuous training for technical skills.

But the most important thing about our CSRs is their personal accountability and their access to their supervisor. Their personal accountability means they have the ability and have been given the authority to take action if needed. They may offer suggestions or alternatives that you may not be aware of. They will speak up if what you have asked for will increase costs or production time. They will resolve problems on the spot. And if the need arises, they have immediate access to their supervisor who offers another level of knowledge and authority.

### The importance of relationship

One of the reasons we invest so much in our customer service representatives is that we believe in relationships as a fundamental business value. We've worked hard to develop our professionalism and technical expertise and nothing pleases us more than to share both with our customers.

Here's the promise we make: when you do business with TechneGraphics you will experience service that meets or exceeds what you get from our competitors – local, megastore, or online. If you qualify as one of our major accounts, you will have access to much more – monthly reorder reminder service, online ordering of items you use frequently, an assigned customer service representative, and periodic check-in visits by us.

### So who're you gonna call?

We recognize that you may occasionally use a mega store or an online printer. We may be closed when your need arises, or you may think that the job is too small to “bother” us with. What we hope is that despite those times, you think of us as your primary printer, and call us first.

We are staffed and equipped to provide a wide range of printing and printing-related services, some of which you may not be aware of because you've never needed them. That's one of the reasons we ask you to call us first – because we may be the best choice you don't know about.

# 100 Printtips Archived Online ([www.techgra.com](http://www.techgra.com))

- 99) February 2010  
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Editor's Choice: Editing Copy Written By Others
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- 5) April 2002  
Benjamin Franklin, American Printer
- 4) March 2002  
The ABCs of Saving Money on Postage
- 3) February 2002  
How to Build RIP:Roaring Digital Files
- 2) January 2002  
Post Cards Perform Direct Mail Magic
- 1) December 2001  
Copywriting for Marketing Materials

## Describe the Function First

One of the tasks our customer service representatives face is listening closely to the way you place an order for an item that is being printed for the first time. You may be struggling with how to describe what you need, and so may explain it to us by giving printing specifications – how many ink colors, the paper to use, the finished size, etc. While this may seem like a good starting point, in fact it may be cutting you off from other good options.

A better way is to begin by briefly describing the function of the printed piece, and its

intended audience. For example, conventional wisdom says that full color printing is only affordable if you need several thousand pieces. But today's digital color printing technology enables us to provide you with affordable color in quantities as low as 100.

Though we ask many questions, even we can be misled by a confident-sounding customer who provides specifications. Let us share our printing knowledge and observations about current trends to help you get the perfect printed product for your application.



*“A better way is to begin by briefly describing the function the printed piece, and its intended audience.”*

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Deciding  
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**TECHNE  GRAPHICS INC.**  
2002 Ford Circle, Suite D  
Milford, OH 45150

**513-248-2121**  
Fax 513-248-5141  
www.techgra.com  
info@techgra.com

PRSR STD  
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Permit #271  
Milford, OH

## Become a Prudent Buyer



*“Buying more than  
you need from  
an online printer  
increases your  
shipping costs...”*

**A** prudent buyer is one who stays within his budget while assuring that the product or service he is purchasing meets his needs. A prudent buyer uncovers hidden fees and makes apples-to-apples comparisons before committing to a purchase.

We ask you to become a prudent buyer when comparing our prices to those of a mega store or online printer by taking into account the total cost. Online printers almost always add

shipping charges to the cost of the printing. When added to the product price, the total cost may be comparable or even more than what we are quoting.

We also print the quantity you need, not the quantity available in a price list. Buying more than you need from an online printer increases your shipping costs, takes up storage space in your facility and adds to the landfill when you discard out-of-date materials.

## Save The Date! 2010 Clermont Chamber Business Expo

### What is a QR Code?

*QR Codes enable people to quickly jump from printed materials to online content. For businesses, QR Codes can help drive more traffic to websites & videos and increase awareness of products & services.*



Join the Clermont Chamber, on Thursday, April 22, 2010 at Receptions Conference Center East, in building a sense of community among Clermont County businesses, increasing visibility of Clermont Chamber members and attracting new members, at this Business to Business Expo. This is an ideal way to showcase your business, promote your products and services, and network.

game plan for success  
**BUSINESS  
EXPO** 2010  
clermont chamber of commerce

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This QR Code (Quick Response Code) is linked to the Chamber's 2010 Business Expo website. You will be able to see the application, rules and regulations, and a floor plan that includes who has already signed up for the Expo, as well as what booths are still available. Or you can visit: <http://www.clermontchamber.com/Clermont-Chamber-Business-Expo.259.0.html>