

Securing Print Shop Success In A Digital World



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Introduction

To paraphrase words often attributed to Mark Twain: The reports of the print industry's death have been grossly exaggerated. In the face of changing technologies and consumer needs, print remains a steadfast resource for innumerable industries, including marketing, advertising, manufacturing, shipping and mailing, and more.

But our increasingly technology-driven world does present a challenge for print shop owners looking to grow their customer base.

What can you do to impress your print buyers, old and new, in a world where digital communication is the first priority of buyers and consumers alike?

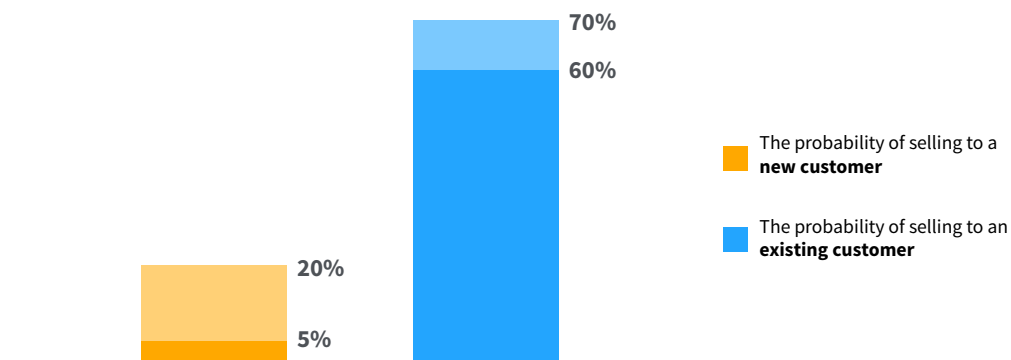
The short answer to that question is: through new services, products, and ideas. However, since that's a little vague, the longer answer is what we'll explore in this eBook, with tips, tricks, product and marketing recommendations for the modern print shop owner.

Let's get started, shall we?

Retaining and Delighting Current Customers

The first step to growing your customer base is, you guessed it, keeping your current customers.

Not only does it cost five times more to obtain a new customer than it does to keep an existing one, but the probability of selling to an existing customer is 60-70 percent. The probability of selling to a new prospect is somewhere between five and 20 percent.¹



But in order to retain your existing customers, you need to do more than just keep them happy. You need to show them that you can be more than just a print product supplier and become a trusted business partner.

So what can you do? As a print shop owner, you should always be looking for ways to show your customers they are valuable to you and offer a new standard of customer service.

¹“Customer Acquisition vs. Retention Costs - Statistics and Trends,” infographic by [Invesp Consulting](#)



Implement post-purchase loyalty and delight programs such as a frequency printing card and exclusive discounts for loyal customers. Give them previews of new products and early access to sales. In short, make them feel like their loyalty is more than appreciated and financially beneficial to them as a customer.



Visit your customers in person and bring samples of new products. Ask for their input and feedback on how the products can be useful, or how they might be improved. Leave samples or small supplies of products for your customers to test and try out.



Host an open house where customers can preview new products and the applications they could be used for. Create a mock-up of how clients might use a new product, complete with a production timeline and cost to be showcased at the event. Customers need to know that you're not only offering new products, but that you're thinking of the ways they will be using them.



Communicate more often. Consider producing a monthly email newsletter showcasing all the new products you have used in the preceding month, and what you have printed on them. Sure, an email newsletter may seem ironic for a print shop, but it is an incredibly effective tool for nurturing current customers and new leads.



Add new product announcement inserts to boxes, bags, and packages.

If you have been having trouble communicating the arrival of a new product or service that your customers would find valuable, or if you want to start cross-selling; print postcards, flyers, catalogs or brochures and stick them in your customers' packages before they pick them up. They may not have time to stick around and chat with you, but they will reach into their bag or unwrap their package to find your announcement.



Offer incentives for trying a new product or printing service.

The inserts we just mentioned above? They're perfect opportunity to offer an incentive for the first time buyer of a new product or service.



Most importantly, listen intently to their goals, their pains, and their needs.

If they provide valuable feedback, let them know! Follow through on your customers' needs and show them that not only were you listening, but you were hearing as well, thereby creating a strong relationship based on putting the customer's concerns first.

Current Customers as Market Research

Your customer base is your most valuable resource, and we're not just talking financially. In the last section we talked about listening to your customers' feedback as a way to build a relationship, but that feedback can be incredibly valuable to your business as well.



Conduct surveys of current customers. How do you determine what your customers need? The easiest way is to ask them. Using your current customer base for market research can give you the step up you need to stand out in the print industry.

Conducting regular customer satisfaction surveys annually or bi-annually is a great way to stay in touch with your base. You can also send out automatic post-purchase surveys to ask customers about their buying experience. Use these free online survey tools in conjunction with any email marketing tool to get feedback.

- [Survey Monkey](#)
- [Typeform](#)
- [Google Forms](#)
- [Zoho Survey](#)
- [Survey Gizmo](#)
- [Survey Planet](#)



Review customer purchasing behavior for cross-selling opportunities.

You know who your customers are and what they normally buy. Are they ordering the same job again and again? By reviewing their purchasing behavior, patterns will emerge, and that will offer you the opportunity to cross-sell other products and services that will complement their current purchases.

The simplest way to do this is through a customer database or CRM—customer relationship management platform—where you can record and check customer data. There are numerous CRMs available, each with different features, but we recommend using a CRM that has segmentation capabilities, so that you can divide your customer base into the most relevant categories for sales analysis and/or marketing research.




Customer success stories also make great marketing materials.


Use your happy customers' experiences with your products and services to present new ideas to others. These may come in the form of:


- **Written and published testimonials**
- **Case studies offered through your website**
- **Online reviews**
- **Shout-outs on social media**
- **Videos of happy customers**

The point is, customer testimonials or reviews are incredibly effective when it comes to marketing your business. Today, 88 percent of consumers² say they trust an online review just as much as a personal recommendation, so your happy customers just may be the catalyst for bringing in new business.

Gus And Ruby Retweeted

 **nola** @beautifulpaper · Jul 18
Love these rose gold foil night sky #wedding invitations from @gusandruby! #designerrolodex bit.ly/29UAoB5



 **Patricia B.**
Somerville, MA
0 friends
6 reviews

★★★★★ 9/14/2016

Love, love, love this store.

First off, their prints and paper goods are amazing. One of my must-go's when I am in Portsmouth.

My daughter bought a print for me a few years ago. They tracked down another one and shipped it to me for my daughter's wedding.

Can't say enough great things about their service and beautiful things.

A must-see place. Don't miss it.

Was this review ...?

Useful Funny Cool

²“How Important Are Customer Reviews For Online Marketing?” by Jayson DeMers, published in Forbes

Prepare Your Print Shop for the Future

Part of impressing your customers and attracting new customers is ensuring your business is prepared, organized, and efficient. Today's print shop owners and managers have to create strong future-focused teams with the freedom to impartially examine unique opportunities and aggressively move business in new directions.



Embrace new print products and technologies. Being open to new products, moving away from old “tried and true” sales techniques, and embracing new marketing tactics will make the difference between growth and profitability and failure.



Hire tech-savvy customer representatives. It's no longer sufficient to depend on outside sales reps, inside customer service personnel, or referrals from satisfied customers to create the type of growth necessary to sustain a strong printing business. As trends are increasingly focused on the internet and social media, it's more important than ever to hire highly skilled and far-sighted customer service advisors who can work with clients over all media to satisfy new needs.



Enhance your online presence. Creating a strong internet marketing presence is also a major factor in encouraging new prospects to contact you. Reaching out to customers over all avenues—phone, email, live chats, video conferencing, etc.—will strengthen your company's image both with customers and within the industry.



Don't get too comfortable. Being prepared to be uncomfortable but still taking the necessary steps to offer more advice, more products, and more flexibility to customers will be essential for upward growth.

New Customers Want New Ideas

The role of the modern print buyer has changed. According to a survey conducted by print industry copywriter [Margie Dana](#) and consultant John Zarwan, 97 percent of modern print buyers have professional roles outside of print purchasing. Many are in communications, marketing, or management roles where they are responsible for not only the print application itself, but how well it performs.

The same survey showed that only 13 percent of modern print buyers want a printer that only handles printing.

The moral of the story? Print buyers are doing more, and so should printers.



Set your print shop apart by offering more than printing services. You want your business top-of-mind when your customers need printed media. One way your print shop can accomplish that is by offering to do direct mail for your customers. Target their customers with a personalized piece to help your clients win more business, and encourage them to refer those clients to you for an extra value-add.



Offer a new, specialized product type. With all the competition out there, you want your printing business to stand out. What better way than to offer a unique specialty paper?

Everyone wants their message to be the one that gets all the attention. Be the print shop that offers personalized messages on a specialty paper that gets people talking. A few of the most versatile and popular paper substrates include:

- **Synthetic or waterproof paper for thousands of applications from weatherproof signage to durable field manuals.**
- **Durable but flexible paper products that satisfy that middle-ground need such as Relyco's TriDura, which is water and tear-resistant.**
- **Carbonless laser paper for printing multi-part business forms, invoices, statements, receipts, and more.**
- **"Fold-and-go" substrates for personalized packaging, direct mail, corporate gifts, special events, and more.**



Marketing Those New Ideas With New Techniques

Not only are today's print buyers looking for new products and ideas, they're looking for you to meet them where they are. What do we mean by that? We mean that in this digitally-focused world, your customers have found a way to combine physical communication with digital communication, and that means you need to do the same.

The trick is not to sacrifice your physical presence for digital, while still investing enough time and money into your digital presence to attract today's consumers.³

A great way to do this is through inbound marketing. More and more print shops are discovering that traditional outbound marketing efforts are not attracting the same number of customers that they used to. They're turning to inbound marketing techniques, such as blogging, videos, social media, and email newsletters, to bring customers in before reaching out with a more traditional sales pitch.

³“Digital-Physical Mashups” by Darrell K. Rigby, published in the [Harvard Business Review](#)

Inbound marketing allows you to build a relationship with your potential buyers in the digital space, so that by the time they actually walk into your physical shop, they're closer to making a purchasing decision. It's also cost efficient—according to Search Engine Journal, inbound leads cost 60% less than outbound leads.⁴



⁴“Six Steps to a Successful Inbound Marketing Plan” by John Foley Jr., published in [Printing Impressions](#)

So how do you update your marketing efforts? **First, perform a marketing audit.**

Ask yourself: What are you currently doing to market your products and services? Catalogue your efforts and their effectiveness as best you can, and determine which efforts to continue and which ones you cut down on or get rid of to make room for new initiatives.

As part of this, you should analyze your current online presence. For local shops, online search (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.) can be an incredibly important part of attracting customers, so make sure your website is optimized for those search engines to find.

Consider social media. If you currently have social media accounts, how are they doing? Could they be better? If you don't, maybe it's time to start. Social media is a big part of inbound marketing efforts and a great way to connect with potential, and current, customers. According to Sprout Social, social media marketing has reduced costs for 45% of businesses. Businesses utilizing social media for lead generation also increased their revenue by about 24%.⁵

⁵“**How to Generate Leads Through Social Media,**” by Dominique Jackson, published on the [Sprout Social blog](#), July 16, 2015

Real World Examples

Here are some great examples of print shops who are using social media, blogging, and other inbound marketing efforts to attract new print buyers and bridge the physical/digital gap with their business.



Conway Office Solutions used social media to promote their open house event. This is a great example of combining their efforts in the physical and digital spaces to reach and impress today's print buyers.

The screenshot shows the AlphaGraphics website with a blog post. The header includes the AlphaGraphics logo with the tagline 'increase your reach', navigation links for 'About', 'Blog', and 'AG Online Login', and a search bar. Below the header are two main service categories: 'Print Services' and 'Marketing Communications', each with social media icons. The main content area features a search bar, an 'About Us' section, and a blog post titled 'The Value of Web-to-Print Online Ordering' dated June 20, 2016. The post is authored by 'admin' and categorized as 'Web-to-Print'. The article text discusses the physical nature of printing and the benefits of digital technologies, specifically web-to-print portals, in streamlining the printing process.

alphaGraphics
increase your reach

About Blog Search AG Online Login

Print Services Marketing Communications

Search

The Value of Web-to-Print Online Ordering

June 20 / 2016

Author: admin

Category: Web-to-Print

Comments: No Comments

About Us

Founded in 1970 in Tucson Arizona, AlphaGraphics has grown to a worldwide company with more than 260 independently owned and operated business centers dedicated to drive results for their clients. AlphaGraphics is a global leader in marketing and print communications and is your one-stop shop for all of your marketing and printing needs. Create and send targeted direct mail campaigns, brochures and every door direct mail pieces or producing mobile sites, email campaigns, posters and window cling. If you're looking to increase your reach, contact your local AlphaGraphics center to learn more.

Printing is an inherently physical business—meaning there will always need to be a press and some sort of tangible material to get the job done. But there are some aspects of printing that have definitely reaped the benefit of digital technologies, including the way many print providers are communicating with customers.

We're talking, of course, about web-to-print portals and the revolutionary way by which they've served to streamline nearly every facet of the printing process!

Ordering, proofing and prepping, made easy

Digital technology in the form of a web-to-print portal has effectively consolidated the print prep process into a real-time, nearly instantaneous workflow. As a result, some of the biggest hurdles in the print process are absolved right from the get-go, including:

- With the ability to create approval workflows, web-to-print offers an

Alpha Graphics, in Tucson, Arizona, uses their blog to highlight interesting aspects of both their print and marketing services. They also offer downloadable case studies and promote their content on social media and to generate leads from qualified users.

The screenshot shows the top of the TPI Solutions Ink website. The navigation bar includes links for HOME, SERVICES, BLOG, ABOUT, RESOURCES, CONTACT, QUOTES, and FILE UPLOAD. Below this is a blue header for the 'PRINTING AND GRAPHIC DESIGN BLOG'. The main article is titled 'How to Create a Print Ready PDF' by Addy Fulmer, dated Fri, Mar 16, 2012. The article text explains the importance of creating a print-ready PDF and provides instructions for setting up bleeds in Adobe InDesign. A screenshot of the InDesign 'More Options' dialog box is shown, with the 'Bleed' section highlighted. Below this, two images illustrate 'Correct use of bleed' and 'Incorrect use of bleed'. The article also includes sections for 'Illustrator - Bleeds' and 'Photoshop - Bleeds'.

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POP ART

TPI Solutions Ink added a new photo to the album: #TypefaceTuesday. Yesterday at 10:34am · @

Happy #TypefaceTuesday! Debussy is the font used in the Dunkin' Donuts branding. I don't know about you but I sure needed a DD #coffee to get me running after the long weekend!

Typeface of the week:

Debussy

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

If you are from New England, this typeface is probably ingrained into your memory and hearts forever thanks to Dunkin Donuts. However, there is not much information on this typeface. Was it created for the coffee franchise, or was it created later to replicate it? Either way, it is a bubbly, retro typeface that works very well for large titles and is great for readability.

Examples of Debussy:

#typefacetuesday tpsolutionsink.com


TPI Solutions Ink uses their blog as an informational resource for their current and potential customers. This post, about how to create a print ready PDF, ranks in the top three spots for several keywords TPI’s buyer personas would likely search, including, “create pdf for print” and “print ready pdf.”

TPI also does a good job of responding to comments and engaging with users both on their blog and on social media. Weekly #TypefaceTuesday updates, coupled with a mix of both internal and external content provides their followers with information that’s not only useful, but also interesting.

Locust Street Press
April 26 · 🌐

So excited about this two color foil, hand-lettered business card. Printed and designed in-house by our talented graphic artist/letter-er, @rezink.sh

Ps. Red Anvil Machining is a new custom machine shop right here in Rockford!!




👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

LOCUST STREET PRESS HOME ABOUT SERVICES PORTFOLIO BLOG CONTACT

CUSTOM SPECIALTY PRINTING SHOP BLOG

Guide to Letterpress Wedding Invitations
Posted by Heather on April 29, 2016 in [2016 Blog](#) | 0 Comments

Guide to Letterpress Wedding Invitations



THIS IS A PRINT SHOP BLOG.

Countdowns of celebration. Refuge of all the arts against the ravages of time. Army of fearless truth against whispering rumors. Inevitable triumph of trade. From the place words may fly ahead not to perish as waves of sound, but fixed in time. Not arranged by hanging hand but welded in proof.

"Friends, you stand on sacred ground. This is a print shop [blog]."

*Original source, unknown, adapted by us.

For a truly special occasion such as your wedding, you want everything to be perfect, from the luxurious dress and choice of flowers down to the table centerpieces and the save the date or

Invitations. There are many different types of wedding invitations, with styles as unique as the couples that design them. One of the most unique and customizable types is a letterpress invitation, made using a traditional technique.

We've seen every type of letterpress invitation come through our shop, and have compiled a list of our favorite tips and tricks, as well as an overview on the history and printing process of letterpress wedding invites, the pros and cons of ordering them for your own special day and the ways you can make them more cost-effective if you have your heart set on them.

Letterpress Printing Through the Ages

The first movable type printing press originated in the 1450s, when Johannes Gutenberg wanted a way to mass produce the Bible. He started with wood block printing, and then he transitioned to metal type to achieve the print clarity he wanted. Through this he had unfortunately, his press printed 100 copies of the Bible over a span of three years.

As the centuries passed, many advances in printing and typesetting were made. Gutenberg's printing press model stayed largely the same over the years, but his letterpress method was eventually offset printing in the 1900s and was mostly phased out in favor of this modern technique.

However, the oldest form of printing had a revival in the 1980s with innovations such as photopolymer plates and digital integration. In the beginning, letterpress printers were instructed not to make much of an impression in the paper, and the way the ink barely touched the surface was referred to as "fine and print." Nowadays, with the availability of this, many more artists are able to produce deep impressions and tactile designs.

Finally, Locust Street Press is a great example of a traditional media company that is getting inbound and digital marketing right. Locust Street Press uses their Facebook and Twitter profiles to showcase the great work they do in-house, as well as to provide valuable resources to their readers.

Blog categories include Die Cut, Foil Stamp, and Letterpress, which effectively drills down based on both keywords and user needs to provide the best experience for their audience.

Explore the Possibilities with Specialty Paper and Your Marketing

As you've probably noticed, the key words here are "new" and "different." You have to show both current and potential print customers that you're thinking ahead to anticipate what they might need. In a lot of cases, it's something that they don't even know they need yet. It's your job, as their trusted print partner, to show them.

Combining a new product (such as a specialty waterproof paper) with a different way of reaching out to your customers (through social media and inbound marketing) can mean the difference between being a successful 21st century print shop and a dinosaur of a bygone time in the industry.

Take a photo of the vibrant colors your new waterproof paper product comes in and post it to your Facebook account to show customers that they can have options and staying power in their print pieces.

Bonnie Chase Designs shared your post.
 May 12 · 🌐

Thanks Julia, am so thrilled I found your product, made some more this morning!

Julia Kuziomko · **Bonnie Chase Designs**
 May 12 · 🌐

Hi Bonnie! I thought waterproof paper!



Creative Uses
 Bonnie Chase Design makes wine-proof paper
 RELYCO.COM

Like Comment

4

Julia Kuziomko
 Like · Reply · More

Write a comment

Bonnie Chase Designs
 May 21 · 🌐

"A toast " from the girls...to a cute gift of wine tags & matching coaster 🥂



Like Comment

You and 7 others



Bonnie Chase Designs
 about a month ago

Waterproof wine tags

1 Like Comment Share

Write a blog post about all the uses for the flexible water- and tear-resistant paper you're now offering to customers who need something between standard paper and full-on synthetic substrates.

Shoot a funny video of someone on your team trying to rip the tear-proof paper you have in the shop and post it to YouTube. We could go on and on, but do you see what we're getting at?

There are many lessons to be learned about running an effective print business in 2016, but the keys will be to embrace digital avenues like social media, blogging, and online advertising as a means to promote what you do. By putting inbound marketing to work, you can attract people who might never have considered print solutions and bring them to your doorstep.

If you take away only two things from this piece, make it these two:

Invest in specialty paper products to offer your customers

Consider a new way of marketing your print shop and its offerings

So what are you waiting for? Now is the perfect time to take these lessons and create a more sustainable, effective print business for decades to come. Embrace digital and print for a better way forward.

Connect With Us!



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