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MEMBER PROFILE



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HAPTIC BRAIN, HAPTIC BRAND

SAPPI BOOK EXPLORES THE NEUROSCIENCE OF TOUCH

Daniel Dejan, Print & Creative Manager, Sappi North America

Did you know that more than half the brain is devoted to processing sensory experience, and much of that sensory receptivity focuses on touch? The brain, a 3-lb wet computer, is constantly processing incoming data from the senses. And like all good computers, the brain consumes more than one fourth of the body's energy resources. Although you have touch receptors all over your body, they are not distributed equally. Your hands are some of the most metabolically expensive real estate on your body.

Haptic Brain, Haptic Brand

A new book from Sappi North America, *Haptic Brain, Haptic Brand: A Communicator's Guide to the Neuroscience of Touch*, looks at this intersection of the hands and communications through the lens of neuroscience, exploring how media shapes the brain and consequently the way a brand is perceived. This book examines haptics—the study of how what we touch shapes what we feel—and explores the science behind why our haptic brains respond so well to haptic brands. In the new book, case studies from three of the world's best-known brands (Apple, BMW, and World Wildlife Fund) highlight the communicative power of touch in action.

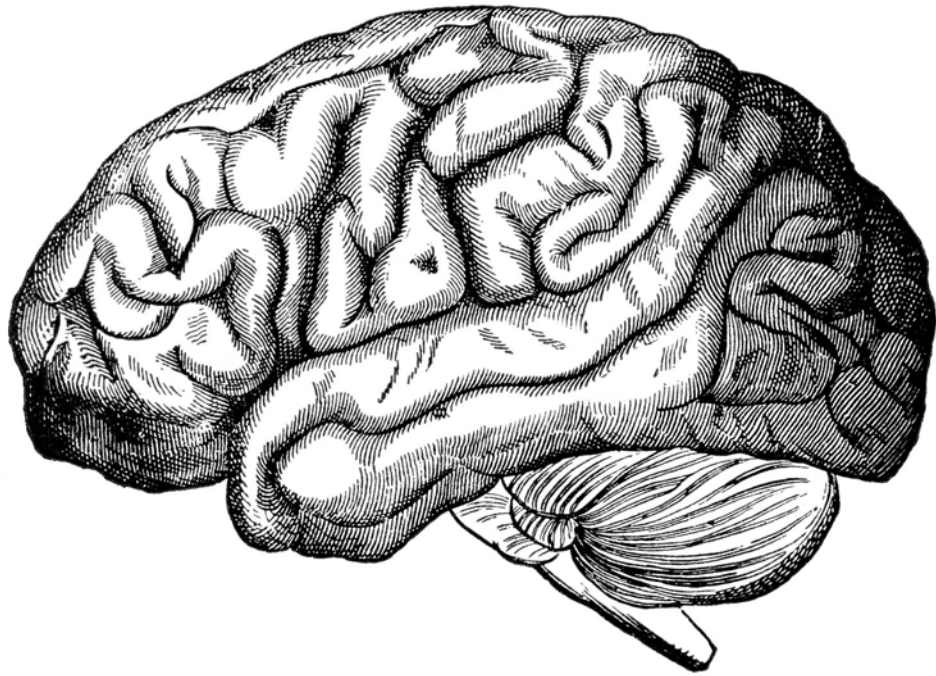
Science Modern

The Houston-based design firm Rigsby Hull conducted a great deal of research to support the content and design of *Haptic Brain, Haptic Brand*. For the project, the design firm was inspired by a font they found referenced in the recent Taschen-published reprint of the mid-1800s tome *Atlas d'Anatomie Humaine et de Chirurgie*. As a result, *Haptic Brain, Haptic*

Brand features a distinctive typeface, Science Modern, originally created by Jules Didot.

The Didot family was to printing, publishing, and typography as the Bach family was to music: successive generations of artistic geniuses who dominated their field for more than 200 years. Jules Didot's father, Pierre Didot, established printing presses in the Louvre and created its most celebrated publications. His uncle, Fermin Didot, along with Giambattista Bodoni, designed and established the "Modern" classification of type, including the time-honored classic Didot (redrawn by Adrian Frutiger in 1991). Jules' innovative typographic contribution to Science Modern replaced the sharp edges featured in Didot with rounded curves. This lesser known, but equally beautiful font, was used in the original eight volumes of *Atlas d'Anatomie Humaine et de Chirurgie* created by Bourgerie & Jacob and printed in France beginning in 1831.

After seeing a reference to the Science Modern font in the Taschen reprint, Rigsby Hull located the original 1842 volume of Jules Didot's



The brain, a 3-lb wet computer, is constantly processing incoming data from the senses. And like all good computers, the brain consumes more than one fourth of the body's energy resources.

fonts published as *Specimen de la Nouvelle Foundrie* in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nacional de France. And then, after determining that the font had never been commercialized, they commissioned Dunwich Type Foundry to recut it as faithfully as possible from the available images. Science Modern, currently featured in *Haptic Brain*, *Haptic Brand*, was redrawn recently by James Puckett exclusively for this purpose and it is expected to be commercially available this year. Sappi North America is thrilled to be the first company in the world to ever use this soon-to-be available font.

Anatomically Correct

Atlas d'Anatomie Humaine et de Chirurgie is a magnum opus of eight books, and was the world's first comprehensive surgical guide. It was written and researched by Jean Baptiste Marc Bourguery (1797–1849), and illustrated by Nicolas Henri Jacob (1782–1871), a student of the French painter Jacques Louis David. The eight books, or tomes as they were called when published, were produced across almost two decades—between 1831 and 1854. Bourguery lived just long enough to finish his labor of love, but the last of the treatise's eight volumes was not published until five years after his death

Haptic Brain, *Haptic Brand* features images adapted from these classics. To create the images for the publication, Rigsby Hull sourced Jacob's original illustrations from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library located at the University of Toronto. In *Haptic Brain*, *Haptic Brand* the brain portion of Jacobs' original illustrations has been replaced with intricately-rendered, interconnected neural networks re-imagined by Thomas Hull in 2015.

Mind, Hand, Paper

Scientists, philosophers, and other students of the human experience say that the hand is an extension of the mind. Or more succinctly, as Immanuel Kant posited, "the hand is the visible part of the brain." For communicators, hands are also devices through which others receive our transmissions and they color messages in ways we'd do well to understand. Our hands are skilled communication tools.

Of course, the importance of the hands necessarily implies the importance of paper. Jennifer Miller, Chief Business Sustainability Officer, Sappi North America, states, "paper matters for brands that matter. The collective power of this research, along with Dr. Eagleman's expert insights, show why marketing professionals and the publishers of high-end magazines and books continue to rely on paper as a key ingredient of the brand experience. They recognize, as we do, that consumers are wired to interact with paper like no other medium."

To request a copy of *Haptic Brain*, *Haptic Brand: A Communicator's Guide to the Neuroscience of Touch*, and to watch a series of videos about the neuroscience of touch, you can visit the website at <http://www.na.sappi.com/education/probookshelf/neuroscience>.

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PLATINUM CONVERTING

FINISH STRONG

Kayleigh Smith, Manager, Marketing, Printing Industries of America

Whether you're playing your favorite sport or you're giving a presentation to clients, one thought always comes to mind—finish strong. Give it all you got and leave everyone wanting more. Give your audience a great impression and be able to say you made yourself, your team, and your mission proud.

That's the idea when it comes to finishing your printed piece. And one thing is for certain, Platinum Converting (based out of Itasca, IL) knows this all too well.

When Jeff Huber, Rich DeWulf, and Mitch Enderle started the company in 1998, the 15,000 square foot facility had only one laminator and one UV coater. Now, Platinum Converting's full menu of finishing resides under a 120,000 square foot roof.

How did they do it? By listening to customer demand.

While their clients loved the service they got on laminating and UV coating, they wanted more; and, they didn't want to transfer their pieces from one shop to another to get it. So the Platinum Converting team used their connections in the graphic arts industry to bring in talented people from all areas of converting. Now, company services include anything in the areas of die cutting, folding, mounting, embossing, hand assembly, and more. If you want your printed piece to pop, Platinum Converting can make it happen in a variety of ways.

Making a Strong Impression

According to the market research firm Yankelovich, people are exposed to almost 5,000 ads per day. With this kind of saturation, finding a way

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Dave Biddenstadt, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Platinum Converting

to make your piece stand out is paramount to success. The quality of the piece is what determines how long it stays in the recipient's hands. That's why using finishing techniques on your printed piece is so important.

"Sensory value," stated Dave Biddenstadt, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Platinum Converting. "It adds an inquisitive nature so that people want to pick it up and learn more about it."

Biddenstadt explains that oftentimes, clients come asking about what they can get for their limited budget and end up leaving pleasantly surprised and confident with their options. "They say 'here's our budget for a project, here's our goal. Where can we get the most pop on what we are trying to produce?' We then look into it, discuss it, and inform them on what's available."

Although almost anytime is a great opportunity to add finishing to a piece, there is one specific occasion where you can really get the most bang for your buck; that is when there is an economic downturn. "When the economy is down," explained Biddenstadt, "people spend less money on finishing. But that's counterintuitive. When the economy is down, you want to do something that is different from your competitors, and finishing is a great way to make that impression."

Staying True to Their Roots

At Platinum Converting, the culture of the company comes from the ownership down. By always remembering that listening to their customers got them where they are today, the whole organization makes it a priority to always put their clients first. "Without those people calling us and asking for help, we don't really have much to do," said Biddenstadt. "When we're hiring, we always make it clear to prospective employees that we want to maintain this philosophy."

But just because you always put your customers first doesn't mean you can't have any fun! In order to keep up morale in the company, Platinum Converting often hosts outings and events such as ballgames, corporate 5K run challenges, and more. On one occasion, teams from the company participated in a weight loss challenge and then headed to Chicago for a weekend of fun. "When growing from a small company of 15 people to a large one with over 100 people, one of the biggest challenges for leadership is keeping that team attitude. We can do so much more as a team than we can do individually," said Biddenstadt.

Converting Quality into Industry Wins

If you haven't heard of Platinum Converting through the market place, you probably know them as a Printing Industries of America Product of Excellence Award winner. Year after year, the company produces high quality pieces and receives industry recognition for their accomplishments through industry award programs. Last year,

the Protection Place iPad Display Box won them a Product of Excellence Award in the Boxes and Totes category.

"Protection Place was fun because we combined a lot of our services to create one final piece. From design and planning through to manufacturing, whenever we are able to touch a lot of the areas in our plant at once, it's exciting and creates a lot of pride in our team... and it's nice to be recognized," said Biddenstadt.

Finishing Strong and Moving Forward

As the industry changes, Platinum Converting plans to change with it by continuing to do what they've always done—keeping their eyes open for change and listening to their customers' needs. "Through listening to our customers, we've added a lot of capabilities and processes to our mix," said Biddenstadt. "We'll keep our eyes and ears open, stay in touch with trends, and find out what our customers are looking for."

"The biggest thing about the industry—its quick," said Biddenstadt. "If you can't keep up, you have to get out of our way."

And that's how to finish strong in the print business.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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TRISH WITKOWSKI

CHIEF FOLDING FANATIC

Staff, Printing Industries of America

No matter what kind of business you're in, there's always a way to spice it up and make it new again. Take Trish Witkowski for example. As the owner of the online folding template customization company, Fold-factory, she needed to find a way to make the industry and other printing companies excited about the work her company does. How did she do that? Witkowski used her folding knowledge and her extensive library of paper folds to brand herself as the Chief Folding Fanatic.

When asked about how she got her start, she usually tells a quick story about a thesis project at RIT in Rochester, New York. However, what most people don't know is that her professional career started under the instruction of the legendary Werner Rebsamen—master bookbinder and world-renowned technical expert in binding and print finishing. He was a professor at RIT when she was a graduate student and he ultimately became her thesis advisor.

To find out more about how she came to affectionately refer to herself as the “folding fanatic,” we sat down with her in this month's Q and A.

Q: So, what was it like working with the great Werner Rebsamen?

TW: I remember classes with Werner were always a surprise. You never really knew what he had in store for you. Sometimes we would be smacking book covers on table tops to test the strength of the adhesive, or putting books into a tumbling, library testing machine to mimic the effect of usage over time. Sometimes he'd bring out his Victorian pop-up books or his mountain of blank folded samples. We'd compare adhesives and binding styles, sew signatures together, and run folding machines. His slide presentations were entertaining and filled with visuals, and his books contained decades of his industry research.

How many classes have you taken where the textbook you used for the class was actually written by your professor—because he happened to be the world's authority on the subject? With his own clever spin on the

nature of the course, he would provide us with the loose book block. He'd say in his thick Swiss accent with a playful wink, “If you want to learn bookbinding, you're going to have to bind the book yourself!” His classes were tangible and fun and rich with content. And beneath the fun activities was always a lesson in the science, materials, and quality required to make the perfect product.

Of all the classes I took, his were some of the most memorable of my time spent at RIT. I think Werner understood that engagement and learning comes from tangible experiences—and this is one of the principles that guides me in my career today.

Q: As the Chief Folding Fanatic, you have an incredibly unique title on your business card. For those who don't know you, what does a Chief Folding Fanatic do?

TW: Great question! I read, research, ask questions, collect, and monitor trends. I pick up on patterns, tricks, and techniques. I study successes and failures. Over the years, I have collected and analyzed thousands of print and mail samples from around the globe, and I share those findings with my customers. I have also done extensive research on the technical side of production folding and print finishing, even documenting folding compensation mathematics for the printing industry.

I am a professionally trained designer with a master's degree in print, and I feel that gives me a unique perspective combining aesthetics and production. I have authored many resources, most recently *Direct Mail (Simplified)* and *Paper Folding Templates for Print Design*. I write for magazines and blogs, and have given webinars and presentations to international audiences. I also love to share my passion for mail, which has led to online courses for Lynda.com and a popular weekly e-video series “60-second Super-cool Fold of the Week.”

Q: Along with all of your speaking and consulting work, you've also founded two companies. Can you talk a little bit about them?



Entrepreneur Trish Witkowski develops products, services, and resources for the print and direct marketing industries.

TW: Absolutely! Both companies, Rock the Mailbox and Foldfactory, service the print and direct marketing industries and develop products, services, and resources that help marketers reach their goals.

Rock the Mailbox is a destination dedicated solely to the creation and distribution of mail. We help people find the right companies and make the right connections to produce quality mail products and successful mailing campaigns.

The other company, Foldfactory, is a place where professionals can go for quick-turn custom folding templates, folded paper samples, specialty dielines, folding ideas, videos, resources, and more. It's really a one-stop folding shop for direct marketers.

Q: Your YouTube series "60-second Super-cool Fold of the Week" has become quite popular. Can you tell us about that?

TW: I feel like some of the creative folded samples in my collection deserve recognition, and video is a very effective format for displaying them. A new "60-second Super-cool Fold of the Week" video is uploaded every Thursday, and we currently have around 340 videos in the series! You can catch up on past episodes at youtube.com/foldfactory, or sign up for Fold Club at Foldfactory.com to get it in your inbox every Thursday.

Many thanks to Trish Witkowski for allowing us to interview her this month! To learn more about her work visit www.trishwitkowski.com.



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COLD FOIL VS. MET POLY

WHAT MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Michael King, President/CEO, Eagle Systems Inc.

In the sheetfed production world, there are many ways to add a touch of foil to your packaging and commercial print jobs. One of the most notable ways to apply foil is with hot foil stamping, which is most ideal when you have small, targeted areas of foil coverage. But when larger areas of foil coverage are desired, two additional options become a part of the conversation—laminated foil board and cold foil.

The Ins and Outs of Laminated Foil Board

Purchasing laminated foil board, also known as metallic poly or met poly, for packaging production is a common practice among many of the companies we've worked with throughout the years, particularly those working in high volume packaging production.

The sheets of met poly make quite a complex substrate. The base board has an adhesive that is applied so that a polyester film with aluminum backing can be adhered. A high gloss coating is applied to the polyester film before the aluminum to boost the shine, and the sheet is laminated to ensure all the components stick together throughout the production process.

To produce projects with laminated foil board, an opaque ink—most often white—is printed over any area in which the metallic effect is unwanted. Depending on the project, this could require multiple hits of white per sheet to ensure the metallic is completely masked where

desired. Even with these multiple hits, the white is never truly white, as it results in more of a grey color.

For projects like toothpaste boxes, you are selling white teeth with grey boxes. A lot of these same boxes require very small type to list the ingredients of the product. When looking at these areas most of them are illegible. With cold foil, you're able to reverse out type as small as 3pt, and you can be sure the copy is readable. Under a loop, you can truly see the difference, as the opaque colors tend to smear or spread out to a blur.

Additionally, for projects requiring folding and gluing, the met poly sheets require the application of an additional treatment so that the glue has something on which to grip in the converting process. This is yet another expensive hindrance in the use of met poly.

Cost Savings with Cold Foil

A cost-effective alternative to met poly when high foil coverage is desired is to use a cold foil application. By keeping the foil in-line, you're able to apply foil and print in a single pass. This opens the door to creating multiple colors of foil by simply overprinting the foil as it passes through the press, and the coverage allows you to maximize the use of your foil by using narrow webs, or ribbons, of foil.



Just a few years ago met poly had a higher shine, while cold foil still had a grainy look to it. Today, however, the shine is there, and cold foil competes directly against met poly. The box on the left was produced using cold foil and the box on the right was produced using met poly.

Where cold foil can really benefit packaging manufacturers is in the cost-savings opportunities it presents. One way to illustrate this is by simply comparing the costs of the met poly to the costs of cold foil.

A couple of years ago, it was not uncommon to find laminated foil board at prices anywhere from \$2 per sheet for low volumes under 1 million sheets per year, down to \$0.60 a sheet for high volumes ranging from 1 to 10 million 28-in. × 40-in. sheets per year. That same project using cold foil would cost \$0.27 for full-coverage foil and adhesive, plus an additional \$0.20 for the high-end board used in production. That cuts the cost per sheet down to \$0.47 and results in a large amount of savings in the long run. Just think if you were to buy even 10 million sheets, this would equal a savings of \$1.3 million!

Cold foil also offers great flexibility on press. With met poly, you're forced to utilize the entire sheet for your project; however, in cold foil you have the opportunity to run variable narrow webs or ribbons of foil—cutting your hard foil cost per sheet down strategically.

For example, the cost to cover a 28-in. × 40-in. area would be \$0.27 to apply adhesive and cold foil per sheet. But if you're covering only half that area, you cut your costs down to \$0.135 a sheet. Equally, if you cut it down to 25%, you could be at \$.0675 per sheet. Those savings really add up!

Lastly, when you're worried about the environmental impact of your production processes, cold foil wins against met poly hands-down. While projects produced with cold foil are 100% recyclable, laminated foil board poses many challenges in the recycling process and cannot be recycled or reclaimed.

Why Would You Choose One or the Other Today?

Just a few years ago met poly had a higher shine, while cold foil still had a grainy look to it. Today, however, the shine is there, and cold foil competes directly against met poly. As we stated earlier, the whites and opaque areas are clearer and crisper with cold foil because it is printed directly on the board. If one makes their own met poly in-house, the process is most times a big bottleneck because production speeds are at most 3000 sheets per hour (sph).

In-line cold foil applications are compatible with press speeds ranging all the way up to the fastest press of 20,000 sph; however, the real world printing speeds average 10,000 sph to 14,000 sph at most.

Met poly manufacturers acknowledge cold foil as competition these days as well. Many suppliers have come way down in price, by as much as 75% of their original pricing, to compete with cold foil. Even still, cold foil is often the most economical option by far when you include logistics and flexibility into the equation.

Consider the percentage of the sheet needed to achieve the desired foil coverage. The reality of what is used and needed is a non-competitive issue against met poly. Most met poly packages are fully covered and used on all sides with the shine because it is less expensive to use than covering large areas with opaque inks. But when presented on the shelf, most customers only see the front and maybe the tops of the boxes. We educate brand buyers how to cost-effectively get the same shelf impact, but avoid the increased cost of adding foil to places that won't be seen when consumers walk down the aisle. And let's not forget the brilliance cold foil can bring to their whites.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

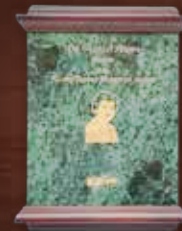
Michael King is the President/CEO and chief design engineer of Ocean, New Jersey based Eagle Systems, Inc. Michael has over 40 years expertise working exclusively with foil machinery. The company brings over 30 years of experience in designing and manufacturing customized foil stamping and cold foil in-line print enhancement equipment with their Eagle Systems brand. He educates all on the process of foiling and is recognized as "The Foil Expert" worldwide.

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OUTSOURCING AND BOTTLENECKS

IN FINISHING

Howie Fenton, Vice President, Consulting Services, IMG

Have you heard the joke that the prepress department is the black hole of your company because work goes in and never comes out? This insinuates that the prepress department is the greatest bottleneck. While often true, it's important to recognize that what appears as a bottleneck may not be the root cause of the problem. In other words, just because work gets stuck in prepress, it does not mean it's their fault. The root cause is often incorrect or inaccurate information from sales or customer service staff.

Of course, bottlenecks can be anywhere in your workflow. More often than not, however, bottlenecks in the front end of the process appear as the most important bottlenecks. As a result we often hear about bottlenecks in estimating, customer service, and prepress and rarely hear about the bottlenecks in the pressroom or finishing area.

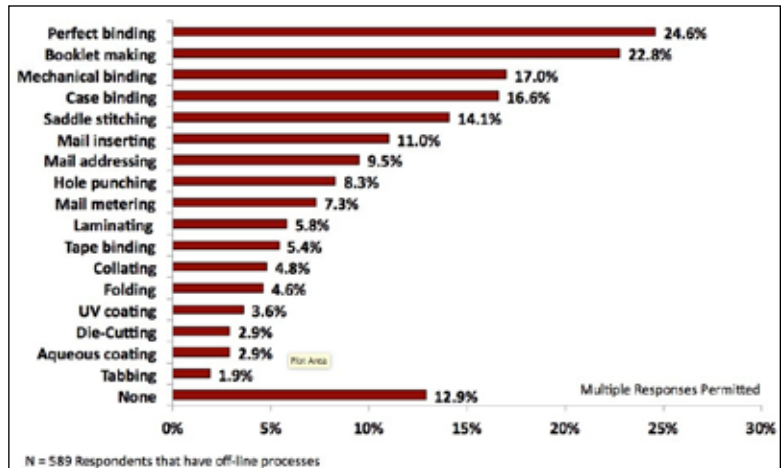


Figure 1. Off-line Finishing Bottlenecks

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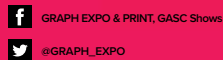
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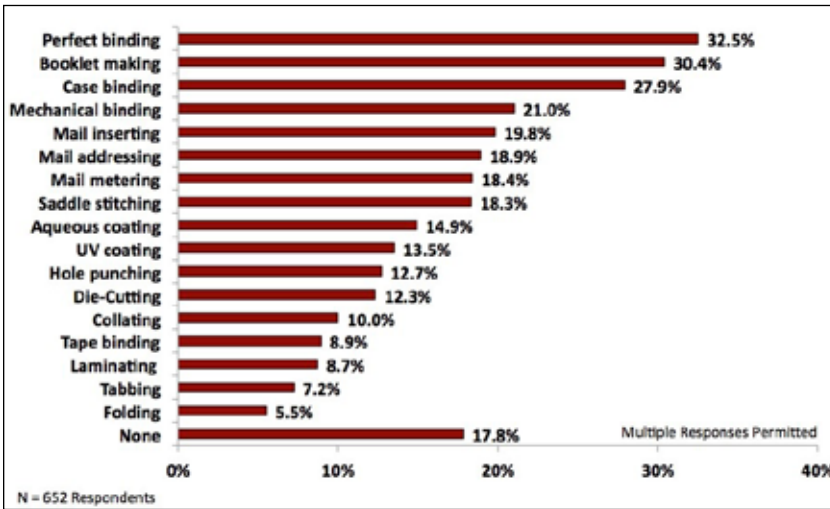


Figure 2. Outsourced Finishing Work

In the 2014 InfoTrends report “Production Print Services in North America: Understanding Industry Transformation,” when companies were asked about their off-line finishing bottlenecks, the top four mentioned included perfect binding (24.6%), booklet making (22.8%), mechanical binding (17.0%), and case binding (16.6%).

Finishing Bottlenecks and Outsourcing

Even more interesting were responses to the question “Which finishing processes are outsourced?” Upon quick glance, it’s easy to mistake this figure for the same as above. The first figure answers the question, “Where are your largest finishing bottlenecks?” and the second answers the question “What finishing work do you outsource most?”

The most obvious explanation is that the bottlenecks in finishing are so significant that they often motivate companies to outsource. But the obvious downside of outsourcing finishing is the increased rinse cycle time and impacts on overall profitability. That is why

other questions in the same survey identified that 25–40% of companies report that they are planning to purchase new finishing devices.

An interesting question to think about is, “What are your investment priorities and will they help in overcoming your bottlenecks, help you sell more, and increase your profitability?”

This article originally appeared on the Xerox Digital Printing Hot Spot blog. . You can visit the blog at <https://digitalprinting.blogs.xerox.com>.

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DIRECT MAIL

WHAT DO PRINT BUYERS WANT?

Buck Crowley, Owner, Buck Automation

There is a conflict between what your customers say they want, what they really want, and what you really can give them!

Experienced print buyers have learned that certain requirements are more luck than intention. They have come to know you and understand what is reasonable to expect from you. However, the market is maturing and technology is improving. The tools and techniques are now in place to lead your competitors, retain your customers, and grab a larger share of the market. It takes understanding what's valuable to your customers and providing it to them in a profitable way.

The emphasis should not be on "what a buyer asks for" but on "what a knowledgeable buyer would ask for if they thought it was reasonable." What do they hope for, and what do they worry about not getting in their direct-mail campaign? This assumes good quality and highly personalized messages are a given. You know how to get a great looking product out on time, but what else is there that's important with direct-mail production?

The production process, from the point that the mail-content files are ready until it is on the USPS truck, involves many people and has several processes. Equipment manufacturers are changing direct-mail production with new processes and supporting machines. This article sets the profile for the next generation of direct-mail production methods.

We interviewed the consultants who coach print/mail buyers and studied the list that mail-inserter manufacturer's offer with their equipment. We have discovered that mail/print-buyers want three things:

- 1) Reduced cycle-time (turn-time or turnaround): The time from when their content changes are frozen and the direct-mail piece is in the hands of the addressee.
- 2) Mail piece integrity: No misuse of the piece or the information such as advanced leaking of content, using the coupons or information not as intended, or altering the piece in a way not approved.
- 3) 100% accuracy: Every name on the list goes in the mail stream. Or 100% saturation is mailed for that class of mail.

While these three requirements may seem obvious, they are not easily or often achieved because the typical production process requires manual intervention. Lots of steps and lots of people touch your customer's product.

There are typically at least five production processes: data prep, print, preparation (fold/tab/glue/insert), address, and tray, and maybe more such as co-mingling. Manual intervention means moving from machine to machine often in other departments and sometimes with a decreasing level of technical understanding as the mail approaches the shipping door. At each step there may be a different set of employees who have the opportunity to add three issues: delays, integrity-loss, and mistakes.

In today's competitive marketplace, equipment manufacturers have looked for more ways to help you provide your print customer something new and different that contributes to their bottom line. This means more automation, less manual intervention, and tighter process controls.

Forty years ago the industry began finishing and addressing mail inline with web presses. About four years ago, addressing on press was added by inkjet. At first look this seems like a major breakthrough in the production process. More than 20 major companies adopted inkjet addressing on web presses for direct mail. But it turns out when addressed mail has to be sorted, trayed, and palletized to USPS standards it can require 10 to 30 man-hours offline for every hour the press runs. It is far more complex to tray mail once it has been addressed on press. Traying unaddressed mail on typical letter shop addressing mail tables or envelope inserters is much easier.

The traditional direct-mail process takes unaddressed pieces off press and into a direct-mail processing area, or to a direct-mail outsourcing provider. For addressed mail, they would feed the printed product into inkjet addressing tables or mail inserters and manually tray the mail from conveyors off the end. In addition to preparing the mail, there was the opportunity for delays and mistakes due to the human factor.

The new inline direct-mail process with a web press takes addressed pieces off the press in trays and processes them immediately to waiting trucks. It's impressive to watch this automated procedure as the finished mail comes off the press and out the door shortly after printing. Trays, straps, sleeves, and pallets are brought into the press area and completed trays are filled every few seconds and taken out of the press area.

The usual web pressman's needs are taken care of; waste and samples are handled automatically both by a combination of procedure and equipment. The usual mailroom needs for processing direct mail are also accommodated—everything is processed to the USPS Direct-Mail-

Manual (DMM). The postal zip code breaks are always correct because a patented process does not require any marks on the printed/addressed mail piece, and therefore there are no mark sensors to fail. Integrity is achieved because sensors monitor and control the process flow of material, untouched by human hands. Rapid turnaround is achieved because the prepared mail process is reduced from days to minutes. As the trays come off the press they are put on the pallets and taken directly to the shipping area.

Direct mail has many variations and rate classes and these have to be taken into account also. With the sophistication in the industry now, this is just a matter of getting it all right. The “system” part consists of tying together all the loose ends on the press—making sure that waste is tracked and dealt with automatically. Some of these interface and automation loose ends have already been dealt with, but only the newest presses and equipment was as complete as it should be. Providing “trying-on-press” as a system gives you a chance, even on older equipment, to connect all these “islands-of-automation” together, so that the flow of material is monitored and maintained automatically.

Today, if the mail doesn’t come off the press automatically into trays and out the door, we are unable to assure and guarantee direct-mail print buyers the three things they really want: 1) reduced-cycle time from days to minutes, 2) 100% integrity, and 3) 100% accuracy.

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HR FOCUS

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR EXPANDS PERSUADER REGULATIONS

Jim Kyger, Assistant Vice President, Human Relations, Printing Industries of America

On March 24, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) released a revised final regulation of the so-called "Persuader Rule." The revised regulation was initially issued in 2011 and sparked quite a bit of controversy regarding the use of third-party consultants by employers during union organizing (and union decertification) campaigns. Under the current regulation, a persuader is a person who is hired by a company to communicate directly to employees (in person usually) about issues surrounding union representation. Persuaders are usually very charismatic people and often are former union members who urge employees to vote against union representation. Persuaders who have direct contact with employees must file reports with the DOL, as well as employers who hire them. Persuaders are often very effective but their usage has declined over the years as employers (typically owners) have taken it on themselves to speak to employees.

Why the Change in the Regulation?

According to the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) FY 2015 election report, unions won 69% of 1,490 representation elections held. By comparison, unions won 58.9% of 2,007 representation elections in FY 2005, a nice increase in win rates. However, the decline of representation elections held has resulted in fewer new members. Only in 2015 did an increase in new members result because the average voting unit size increased significantly for elections the unions won. Organizing larger units (or employers) is more expensive for unions and they want to increase "sales" (new members) while keeping their "selling costs" low (spending less time dealing with employer opposition). This is where the revised persuader regulation comes into play (along with last year's revised NLRB regulation that speeds up elections). Since direct-persuader use has declined, the use of consultants and attorneys giving behind-the-scenes "advice" to employers on how to conduct a union avoidance campaign has increased dramatically over the decades. DOL estimates that between "71 to 87 percent of employers hire consultants to manage counter-organizing campaigns."

Unions wanted DOL to require that the agreements and fees paid by employers to union avoidance consultants and attorneys be publicly disclosed via forms filed with DOL and posted on their website. The idea is that unions will obtain this information and tell employees who will be voting in an upcoming election that the employer is using "outsiders" and

paying them "big bucks." Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez recently said, "The final rule . . . is designed to ensure workers have the information they need to make informed decisions about exercising critical workplace rights such as whether to form a union or join a union." Further, DOL has written that "full disclosure of both direct and indirect persuader activities protects employee rights to organize and bargain collectively and promotes peaceful and stable labor-management relations." Plus, DOL says "it is possible that an employee may weigh differently any messages characterizing the union as a third party."

While the rule's preamble says "the rule imposes no restrictions on what employers may say or do when faced with a union organizing campaign," the unstated goal is certainly to curb the use of consultants and lawyers during union organizing campaigns.

What's in the Persuader Rule?

According to DOL, the revised Persuader Rule requires employers and their hired consultants to report when the consultants directly persuade workers or when the consultants are in one of the following categories:

- Plan, direct, or coordinate managers to persuade workers
- Provide persuader materials to employers to disseminate to workers
- Conduct union avoidance seminars
- Develop or implement personnel policies or actions to persuade workers

Under the Persuader Rule, as examples, employers and consultants will have to report any of the following activities as they relate to union representation:

- Planning or conducting employee meetings
- Training supervisors or employer representatives to conduct meetings
- Coordinating or directing the activities of supervisors or employer representatives
- Establishing or facilitating employee committees
- Drafting, revising, or providing speeches
- Developing employer personnel policies designed to persuade employees
- Identifying employees for disciplinary action, reward, or other targeting

What Is and Is Not Covered for Reporting Purposes?

The revised rule narrows exemption of advice that needs not be reported to DOL. Exempted advice now is “an oral or written recommendation regarding a decision or course of conduct.” However, “activities that manage or direct the business’s campaign to sway workers against choosing a union—that must be reported. An employer’s ability to ‘accept or reject’ materials provided . . . by a consultant . . . no longer shields indirect persuader activities from disclosure.” The rule says it “does not infringe upon the attorney-client relationship” but attorneys and employers will still have to file reports with DOL if persuader activity occurs.

Are There Exemptions?

Yes.

- “Off-the-shelf” materials by consultants (or trade associations)
- Consultants who develop personnel policies that may improve pay, benefits, or working conditions do not trigger reporting merely because the policies could subtly affect or influence employees on union issues. If done with union avoidance in mind, then reporting is required!
- Legal representation on labor matters (court, bargaining, arbitration, other legal services)
- Attorney-client privilege is not affected, unless it gets into “persuading” topics.
- Agreements by which the consultant agrees to merely provide “advice” to the employer, defined as “recommendations regarding a decision or course of conduct”
- Vulnerability assessments, including employee surveys (unless they “push”—persuade)
- Seminars on labor topics (avoidance) that do NOT get into developing or assisting employer-attendees in developing a plan to persuade their employees
- Newsletters addressed to member employers
- Franchisor-franchisee arrangements and persuader activity
- Information PIA provides to unionized employers for negotiations is not reportable (wages, benefits, sample contract language), but any information or advice that is used with employees would be.

What to Do?

The final regulation takes effect July 1, 2016, so if an employer wants to train their supervisors without the required reporting, then it should be done by June 30. PIA’s Human Relations Department provides this service. Contact Jim Kyger at jkyger@printing.org. Your firm’s legal counsel should be able to help and your local PIA Affiliate can make a referral.

Revised Forms

The revised forms are not yet available electronically. However, Form LM-10 Facsimile, the employer’s report, and Form LM-10 Instructions, as well as Form LM-20 Facsimile, the consultant’s report, and Form LM-20 Instructions, are now available electronically. Form LM-20 will be available electronically on July 1, 2016. Form LM-10 will be available on January 1, 2017. Consultants must file their reports within 30 days after entering into such agreements or within 30 days after the conclusion of a seminar. Employers must file their report within 90 day of the end of their fiscal year.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

Noncompliance with reporting obligations under the law carries potential civil and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment. Many experts say to err on the side of reporting, at least on the employer side. Legal challenges and case law will eventually provide more guidance.

Editor’s Note: Printing Industries of America has never had a stated position on labor unions. Over the years Printing Industries of America has helped its members remain union-free, become union-free, and even stay unionized. All assistance, of course, is at the request of ownership.

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As the average age of the pressroom employee reaches 48, it is clear the industry needs some help in attracting and training the next generation of print professionals. PIA recently launched a new Enterprise Training Solution for skills training through our iLearning Center. Normally \$295 per individual, the new enterprise rates allow for significant cost savings to the employer such as a reduced rate of \$195 per seat when purchasing five or more subscriptions. For more information on the new enterprise rates, contact Julie Shaffer at jshaffer@printing.org.



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MARKETING MINUTE

When we choose to bring a new employee into our company, we want to make sure we hire the right person—one that will perform the job well but also meshes with current employees in the organization. This is especially important when you hire someone to market your business.

In this month's exercise, you'll find what kind of questions you should ask when hiring a potential marketing professional for your company. Visit this page to begin: <http://prnt.in/MM1605>.



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