

# EDS REPORT

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## The designer and print buyer

An interesting trend has been the convergence of design and print buying; that is, designers now buy print and print buyers now design. About three-quarters of all printing jobs include the direct involvement of a “creative” — a graphic designer who creates the visual look and assembles text and imagery; selects colors and paper; prepares the file and submits it to the printer; approves or makes changes to the proof; and approves the final job.

For the other 25 percent of all print jobs, design is indirect — as simple as selecting a slide design in PowerPoint, clicking a pre-designed business card layout and filling in some fields on a screen and seeing a proof, or using a page template in a word processing program. Secretaries and those lesser-skilled than designers can effectively specify and buy (pre-) designed print products.

Almost every print job involves some level of creativity no matter how it is effected. What departments do creatives work in? Design/Creative 39 percent, Purchasing 19 percent, Marketing 29 percent, Communications 12 percent, and Other 1 percent. Outside creatives may also work on company projects. What do creatives design? Print 94 percent, Internet 77 percent, POP/Sign/Display 64 percent, Packaging 53 percent, Other, 67 percent.

In the last few years, the role of designers has expanded to include print buying. In fact, some marketing and communications departments contract with an outside designer to deliver the finished product rather than simply the design, bypassing multiple bids for the various production phases and permitting the designer to select a printer who will meet the quality standard set for the project. Within corporate structures, the title “designer” far more commonly identifies the person responsible for placing print orders than does “print buyer.” As a result, more creative professionals buy printing than ever before.

There is no lack of designers. Every year 40,000 graphic designers graduate from 2-year and 4-year baccalaureate programs in the U.S. They work in publishing, printing, corporate, and commercial services. Commercial services include ad agencies, art and design studios, freelancers, display, and marketing services. There are 515,000 graphic designers. Other creatives include illustrators, photogra-

phers, artists, and editorial professionals.

In corporate America, graphic designers work in many departments: ad/promotion, in-plant printing, inhouse graphic services, technical documentation, inhouse presentation services, inhouse publishing, and others.

Most designers lack skills in areas that affect the over-all cost of the job:

**File prep:** Programs like Adobe InDesign and QuarkXPress provide significant functionality to translate an aesthetic vision into a printable file. Word and Microsoft Publisher do not have the proper functionality. Many designers do not get RGB and CMYK right, use fonts that do not embed in PDFs, or use low res images. Designers should be expected to update skills regularly.

**Paper choices:** There are many paper choices, and selection should be based on both the ultimate recipient and the means of distribution. Paperspecs.com can help.

**Mail standards:** Almost half of everything that is printed is mailed and there are rules for weight, folds, tabs, and size. Break them and the project cost increases.

**Color:** Process color today is a bargain but watch those spot colors. Do you really need a fifth color or would a CMYK tint do?

**Changes:** Never-ending tweaking is a costly practice. Eighty-two percent of all print jobs have changes of some kind after the job is sent for printing.

**Job specs:** This is where print buying skills kick in. Picking the right printer with the right equipment is as important as a low price. Communicating with knowledgeable print reps will help to refine the specs and identify cost-saving options.

There is a movement to save money by cutting print volume. Companies might actually save more money through more effective design and print buying practices.

### DID YOU HEAR?

- There has been a 39 percent drop in direct mail and a corresponding rise in e-mail advertising; expenditure for the latter is now at \$12.1 billion (Borrell Associates).
- Through 2014, interactive marketing will grow, led by social media, at 34 percent to \$3.1 billion. Mobile will follow, increasing 27 percent to \$1.3 billion; display advertising, 17 percent to \$16.9 billion; search, 15 percent to \$31.6 billion; and email, 11 percent to \$21 billion (Forrester).
- Current ad expenditure forecasts predict a steeper decline in North America and Western Europe, with all regions joining in the general decline. The report forecasts global ad expenditure to shrink by 6.9 percent over the course of 2009 (ZenithOptimedia).
- A study found that 93 percent of respondents were familiar with at least one type of custom publication, while more than two-thirds say that companies that provide information about their products in these magazines help them make better purchasing decisions (Roper Public Affairs for the Custom Publishing Council).
- Within a half-hour, magazines deliver more than twice the number of ad impressions as TV and more than six times those delivered online. Among web users, 63 percent of banner ads were not seen (McPheters & Co.).
- Retail, Financial Services, Computing, and Automotive remained the four largest verticals among Internet advertisers in 2008. Consumer packaged goods increased its share of total Internet ad revenues by 60 percent over 2007. The Internet is now the third largest ad-supported medium (IAB 2008 Internet Advertising Report).
- The market for printed electronics, including organics, inorganics, and composites, will rise from \$1.92 billion in 2009 to \$57.16 billion in 2019. The majority of the market in 2009 is for printing conductive inks, a relatively mature product line (IDTechEx).