

Multi- Media



Making integrated marketing work for you and your customers.

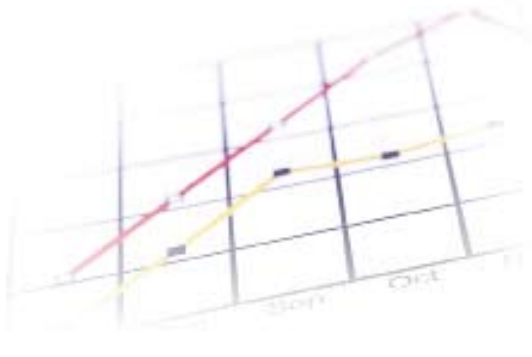


by Steven Amiel

It's an unfortunate truth that many printers today are not having great success profiting from the cross media marketing tools that have evolved out of the digital revolution. Based on our considerable direct experience selling integrated marketing programs and knowledge learned from helping printers in our consulting practice, we hope to explain why this is occurring and what printers can do to take advantage of this extraordinary time in the print industry.

Integrated marketing is hardly new. It's been used for years to reach prospects over time and in a variety of ways to generate awareness and stimulate purchasing and decision-making behavior. When it came to your role in the process, printers were obedient and printed as requested. You did not care why you printed; your role was in doing a great job, on time, at a fair price and with minimal issues. That relatively limited role has evolved considerably today for many printers, and will continue to change in the coming years.

Today, printers actively market themselves as "marketing communication providers", which means they provide services that include Personalized URLs, variable data print, Web-to-print, data bases and e-marketing to complement their core print services. These types of services typically have you involved at the marketing and strategic levels of organizations where these tools get integrated into campaigns at the time they are conceived, not when the printing is bid out.



What it means

The sheer scope of marketing tactics has grown exponentially in recent years, as evidenced by the list below. "Integrated marketing", whether employed in a B2B or B2C space, refers to the combination of two or more of the following to communicate a company's message:

- Print collateral
- Direct mail
- Variable data print
- Point of Sale
- Personalized URL's
- E-marketing
- Trade shows
- Print Advertising
- Telemarketing
- Seminars
- Broadcast (TV, cable or radio)
- Mobile
- Viral
- Video
- Social networking
- Blogs
- Catalogues
- Out of Home (billboards)
- Kiosks
- Web-to-Print

Effective cross media marketing techniques

Most printers do not understand why their customers market or how various techniques fit into the mix. Whether marketing directly to consumers or in the B2B space, everyone is bombarded with ads, direct mail, e-mail – and with little time to absorb it all. In today's busy on-demand world, it is much harder to gain someone's attention, let alone to get them to respond to a call to action (how hard is it to get someone to call you back?). That is the purpose of integrated marketing campaigns. They are meant to reach prospects over a period of time, qualify them based on their interaction (or lack of) and lastly, provide a salesperson with a reason to have a business discussion with a prospect (other than soliciting for some work). Unlike direct mail or a telemarketing effort where someone responds or not, integrated marketing campaigns provide a variety of intelligence that can be gathered that must have corresponding responses to reflect the level and type of opportunity identified.

Learn to qualify leads

What makes integrated marketing so potentially impactful is that it enables you to use time to your advantage, by helping nurture and define prospects and their buying cycles over time. Executed properly, you can use time to develop a qualified pipeline of prospects and where they are in a buying cycle. Your goal is to help your customers improve the way they sell and market through your techniques because more and more marketing budgets are being held to a level of scrutiny they've never had before. The days of just doing the same trade shows or print ads year after year are over. If a program is not tied to a result, i.e. new leads or sales, that money will be allocated elsewhere.

The purpose of providing these services to your customers and prospects is to help them measure the success of what you are providing. An example might include using a "Thank you" Personalized URL to trade show attendees with a survey to differentiate between those who simply stopped by to win an i-Pod vs. those who might actually be in some stage of a buying cycle. This is invaluable information in helping a company track sales that were attributed to the show as well as helping the sales force better utilize their time by following up on and nurturing real leads.

Leads aren't leads if they sit in a drawer

What happens if your efforts result in 25 qualified leads, but your customer takes a month to get them into the hands of the sales force? Marketing and sales must work as one for the most effective results. You need to understand the flow of data and the sales process to ensure success. Ask more questions at every step of the process.

Use integrated marketing techniques as a strategy, not a tactic

Most prospects are not enticed to action merely by seeing their name written in sand or underwater in bubbles unless there is a compelling call to action. Personalized URLs that are crafted with gimmicks, like steveamiyouareterrific.com, may get a prospect to a site, but little more will come out of it if they get there and the

offer is not clear, compelling and relevant. Cross marketing techniques are strategies, not tactics unto themselves.

Avoid creating overly high expectations

The most common mistake is to define the success of a PURL campaign simply by the amount of hits on a personalized landing page. The majority of tests like this will fail. How successful is one cold call? Integrated marketing campaigns are just that. They reach prospects over a variety of touch points and time. Any one of the data points unto itself means little. A classic example is one printer I worked with recently printed a two-part direct mail campaign with PURLs announcing their purchase of a new piece of equipment. There was a call to action with a window of time to take advantage of an offer. Out of 980 pieces mailed to existing and prospects, there were 31 persons who hit the site and 15 who took the time to fill out the short survey. Based on basic lead scoring principals, this campaign identified 31 prospects who felt the mail piece was interesting enough to go to the PURL to read more, and out of those 31, 15 clearly identified themselves (although three asked to be removed from the list) as qualified prospects. Let's look at the results and what they mean:

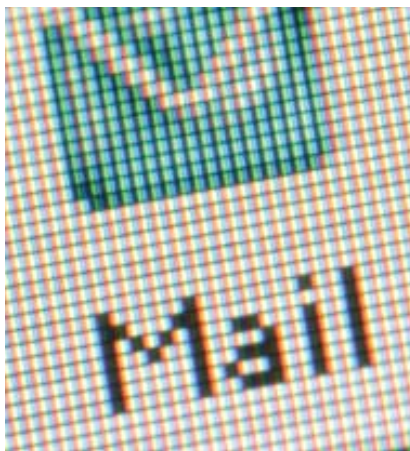
- Under most conditions, after a call or two, most salespeople would have judged this campaign a bust. However, in this case, the company had created telemarketing scripts and a strategy to track the progress of the 31 prospects. Ninety days after the mailing, there have been seven meetings, a number of estimates and one account they have now done over \$200,000 with.



- Most important, it gave reasons for the sales reps to call and follow up with prospects. While only one account was won, no one can argue the success of the program in creating a pipeline to follow up and nurture these leads over time. It was a huge advance beyond a sales rep's previous conversation with a prospect, "Do you have any printing needs I can help with today?"

In my experience in consulting to printing companies, I have often heard printers speak glowingly about the potential increase in response rates without any consideration to the real intelligence which can be gathered. Who it is being mailed to, the call to action, the quality of the list and the other touch points involved are critical to understanding a campaign's success.

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It's important to understand how this part of the marketing program you are producing fits into an entire strategy. And herein lies the takeaway: If you do not know the way your customer currently markets, what their current response rates and cost per leads are, you have absolutely nothing to measure against to judge whether you have made a positive impact.

Be smart in how you use lists and evaluate response rates

Most printers will buy a list, or use a house list and send a clever post card or self mailer with a PLP without good results. However, based on whom you are mailing to, expecting even 3 percent of your prospects to respond to a B2B postcard or a campaign is overly optimistic. The key to success is: What are you doing with the small percentage that do respond? What do you do with the ones that are returned and not deliverable? What type of follow up is there from your sales department in between mailings? How do you treat the ones that hit the site but don't respond? Sending a post card with a personalized URL to presidents of Fortune 1000 manufacturers in hopes of getting a response will be a waste of time, as will trying to get them on the phone. Sure, you may hit one, but as the expression goes, "even a blind squirrel will find a nut in the winter". The real goal in lead generation is about focusing your time on prospects where your value proposition will stand out. Vet out the companies you prospect, and the people you prospect to.

Utilize the same sound integrated marketing lead development strategies internally that you want to provide to your customers

That includes:

- A qualified list
- Sales training in phone skills so you will know how to quickly articulate your company's value proposition (a fancy way of saying, creating an exchange that quickly qualifies your understanding and potential benefit to that prospect)



- A campaign which over time will acknowledge that 98 percent of most prospects are not in a position to spend time with you now.

Position the value of integrated marketing to your customers

Prospects already have full-time jobs that keep them busy. Selling cross media applications will require you to have enough of an understanding of their business to provide the project management services needed to help get a program through an organization to try something new. Be prepared to meet and present to committees. It is not unusual today for cross media marketing to involve marketing, procurement and IT departments. Understand what your customers are trying to accomplish and hook your wagon to what you can do to help them reach their business goals. Contour your capabilities to demonstrate how you can do this better than your competitors.

Value beyond the order

In today's world, the value that salespeople need to provide their customers is more than just moving a job through the shop. The best salespeople take the time to understand their customer's business and are clear in how they can support the integration of cross marketing techniques to improve how their customers sell and market. Moreover, they need to provide the project management skills to help their customers execute campaigns flawlessly. The reward is now having a hand in not just keeping the print work, but increasing the business you do by providing other products and services at non-commodity based pricing. Customers will always appreciate the incremental value the techniques that savvy printers can bring to their business. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Steven Amiel is the Chief Executive Officer and founder of Marketing Mentors Inc. An early adaptor in the business of digital, Amiel previously built and ran three print companies that were transitioned from conventional print operations to highly successful full-service solution selling organizations. Acknowledged as an expert in cross media marketing, state-of-the art lead generation techniques and sales training, Amiel works both with Fortune 500 companies as well as companies in the printing industry, achieving phenomenal results for his clients. He was quick to embrace new technologies such as digital print, Web to press solutions and the internet. Today, he is a highly sought after speaker at industry conferences and events throughout the country. Amiel can be reached at steve@marketingmentors.com

Marketing Mentors was founded in 2006 as a consulting business whose primary focus is on helping companies integrate the new products and services of cross media marketing and providing the training necessary for sales persons to be successful. Its Web site is marketingmentors.com.