



Business 2 Business

a monthly newsletter published by PIP

What's Trending in Print?

It's already the second quarter of 2023—a perfect opportunity to look at some of the popular print trends we're seeing.

Special effects and finishes: Everyone likes a little flair! The market for special production features such as varnish, foil, metallic, laminate, gloss, etc., continues to grow. Most often requested for their ability to highlight specific design elements, these techniques really let a piece shine. Popular applications include wedding invitations, restaurant menus and event planning materials.

Sustainability: The use of sustainable materials continues to be a regular request, particularly from millennial and Gen Z customers. These demographic groups place a lot of emphasis on brands

that share their environmental ideals by using recycled materials, energy-efficient equipment and renewable resources.

Event support: Following a couple of rough years in the industry, events are on the rebound, meaning that wide-format printing and materials production are also on the rise. As in-person meetings, conferences and events return, so does the need for signs, badges, promotional items, banners, etc.

Wide range of inks: The wide range of available inks at lower price points is leading to greater availability and higher demand for customers. From low-cost aqueous inks that are mostly water with some additives mixed in to quick-drying eco-solvent inks and latex, the options appeal to a broad audience for different purposes.

Rise in e-commerce: Customers have gotten a taste for e-commerce since 2020 and that interest is not waning. The creation of e-commerce packages allows companies to provide value-added services with variable options through an electronic portal.

What trends are you liking? Let us know if we've missed one of your favorites. And call us if you have a project that requires any of these printing solutions. WeDo it all!



WeDo

Turn Bad Online Reviews Into a Marketing Opportunity

It's every businessperson's nightmare: you wake up and find that someone has aired a laundry list of grievances in your company's direction. Maybe it's a scathing product review on Amazon or a broadside on Yelp or Google.

It can be tempting to ignore a bad review, especially if you already have a devoted customer base. And don't assume your positive reviews will eclipse critical ones in search rankings. Here's how to take the jabs in stride and come out the better for it.

Monitor your reviews. Even a single bad review can cost you business, so be sure to monitor your reviews regularly and don't ignore any of them. While bad reviews need to be addressed, responding to positive reviews is also a good practice that shows you're appreciative of customers and engaged in your business. Consider monitoring platforms like Yelp and your Amazon product pages as an extension of your customer service efforts.

Never go after the reviewer. No matter how inflammatory, angry or insulting a review is,

never lash out. Not only will you permanently lose the reviewer as a customer, but you'll alienate both active and potential customers. It's hard not to take it personally but keep it "all business."

Reach out quickly. The longer a negative review stays online without a rebuttal, the more potential customers will see it. Respond on the same platform where the review appeared. Stay focused on the issue and be gracious and solution oriented.

Your apology can be as short and simple as: "We value our customers, and we're sorry you were unhappy with your experience. We'll reach out directly to find out how we can make things right." Then, move the conversation to one-on-one contact: this feels more personal, and you'll avoid spilling all the details in a public forum.

Solve the issue. Reviewers often don't expect a refund or freebie; they just want to be heard. Listen carefully, tell them how you've addressed their complaint and invite them back. Try to ensure that they're satisfied with the resolution. If their experience was positive, they might update or remove their review.

Once the issue is resolved, read the review again with an objective eye to see if there is anything to be learned from it. If it's a matter of a product not meeting the customer's expectations, look to see if your descriptions might need revisions or if there's something more you can do to avoid hearing the same complaint again.



Making Direct Mail More Earth-Friendly



Although April marks the commemoration of Earth Day, sustainability is a year-round concern when it comes to products and marketing practices. While direct mail may not be the first thing you think of when you think of sustainability, it's another area where many consumers want to be more eco-friendly.

Here are some ways you can lessen the environmental impact of your direct mail while getting better results.

#1 Reduce mail volume

Customers want personalized communications, so target direct mail pieces only to those likely to be interested. Use variable data to customize the content and use first names for a personal touch. If a 10,000-lead client database only has 8,500 names, only send to those recipients. You'll send fewer pieces and be more likely to see a response.

#2 Carefully choose materials

Use recycled or recyclable paper products and inks with lower

environmental impact whenever possible. Recycled papers use less water, energy and bleach. Strategically sending more targeted mail and using recycled materials will help keep pieces out of landfills.

#3 Simplify mailers

Reduce the amount of paper and ink required by sending smaller items like postcards, instead of letters or catalogs. You will reduce the materials used, make your piece more recyclable (no glossy inserts or plastic address windows) and the mail rate is less expensive too! All wins for eco-conscious consumers.

#4 Make smart design choices

Give some thought to design choices that can make an environmental difference. For instance, full bleeds can be used sparingly to save ink and energy. Your font can even make a difference—sans serif fonts are considered more eco-friendly because they use less ink. You may also want to include a note on your mailers encouraging recipients to recycle after use.

| Did you know? |

Promotional products from PIP amplify the impact, engagement and memorability of external marketing and internal incentives-and-recognition programs. For example, we can customize a creative, budget-friendly solution of tchotchkes that rock—fun, useful and/or memorable giveaways to meet engagement and branding goals for tradeshow and direct mail campaigns. Did you know that promo products (also called ad specialties) generate 15% to 50% greater recall than any other major medium, according to the PPAI, an international industry trade association. Within your company, HR staff can use promo products to recognize achievements in wellness, service longevity and attendance, while the operations department can do the same for successes in safety, compliance and training. PIP offers promo items for every budget, so call and let us help you brainstorm a winning solution.



GET INSPIRED!

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 **marketing tango**
THE RHYTHM OF INTEGRATED MARKETING

INSIDE

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Content Strategy: 5 Essential Building Blocks

We all know the importance of content marketing, but without a solid plan in place the rewards are minimal. Put these building blocks in place to realize the full advantages of content marketing.

- 1. Understand the why.** Know why you are undertaking the effort. Is it for lead conversion, customer retention or upselling current customers?
- 2. Know your audience.** Understanding your target audience is essential to creating the right content. Know your demographics and buyer personas.
- 3. Define success.** What does content success look like for your business? How can content help you tell a story that will influence buyers?
- 4. Build relationships.** Become a friend, advisor and trusted guide to your audience. Understand their pain points and share solutions that your organization can provide.
- 5. Brand right.** Establish and reinforce your brand and unique selling proposition without over-selling.

Streamline Your Business



Manage Ordering, Fulfillment, Distribution and Inventory with an Online Ordering Portal.

PIP can design,
program and build an
online ordering portal
to suit your specific
business objectives.



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