censhare

How to Reach Ultimate Efficiency in Retail Print Collateral Production

freedom to create

Contents

Retail Print is a Consistently Powerful Tool

Despite the irresistible march of digital media, print marketing retains a valuable role in promoting marketing messages. Whether a high end glossy brochure using spot varnish to highlight luxury brands, or a 'cheap and cheerful' weekly update on special promotions, print is still an effective way to put offers in customers' hands.

Compared to a digital presence, printed brochures, flyers and catalogs are more tangible to consumers and are often left lying around at home – a persistent reminder of a retailer's offers and brand. Printed material is easy to access, allowing readers to make their own notes or highlight content easily.

Print is also a great way to reach the entire customer base, as well as potentially converting offline customers to online. It can also present large product portfolios with complex information in an attractive, easy to digest way.

With localized or even personalized offers and information on locations, access and opening hours, retail print is an incentive for shoppers to check out 'bricks and mortar' stores, allowing them to combat the dominance of the online giants.

The Numbers Stack Up for Print

- Some 70% of Americans have said they find direct mail more personal than digital advertising .[1]

- A survey by the UK Direct Marketing Association (DMA) and by consumer research firm fast.MAP found that 56% of respondents regarded printed marketing as the "most trustworthy" of media channels. The same survey found that 48% of people have retained direct mailings for future reference.[2]

- 82% of people still trust print advertisements.[3] The same research indicated just 43% trust adverts embedded in social media.

- German ZAW estimates that "Advertising Newspapers" and "Newspaper Inserts" have generated a combined share of revenue of between 12.4% and 13.0% of all net advertising spend from 2014 to 2017.[4]

- According to the Association of National Advertisers, 2017 saw a leap in print marketing response rate in the US of 190%, with 43% more customers responding to direct mail than in 2016.[5] The same organization reports that more than 100 million US customers made a catalog purchase in 2016, proof that digital media is not the only game in town.

1 www.dmnews.com/channel-marketing/direct-mail/article/13036509/direct-mail-remains-impactful

2 printinthemix.com/Fastfacts/Show/749

3 digiday.com/marketing/global-state-consumer-trust-advertising-5-charts/

4 www.zaw.de/zaw/branchendaten/nettoumsatzentwicklung-der-werbetraeger/2018_1_Netto-Werbeeinnahmen_2013-2017.pdf

5 thedma.org/marketing-insights/marketing-statistics/direct-mail-statistics/

Reaching Every Customer – the Challenges of Customization

As well as great benefits, print also brings significant challenges for many retailers. These are mainly related to the high degree of localization and personalization that retail stores want to achieve with their customized print communications.
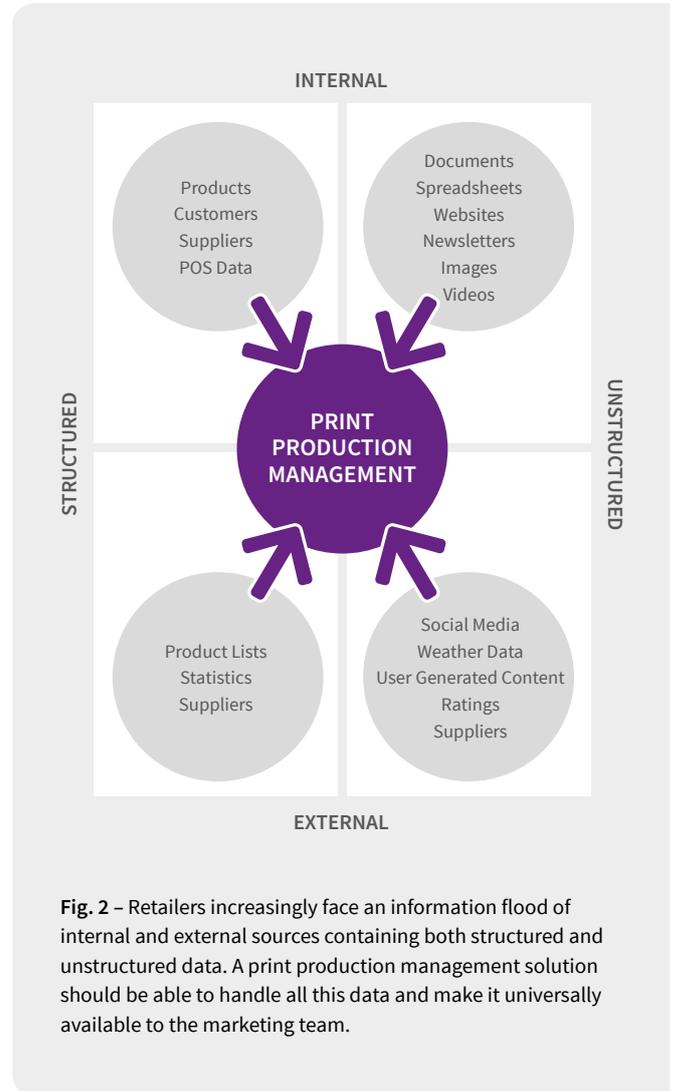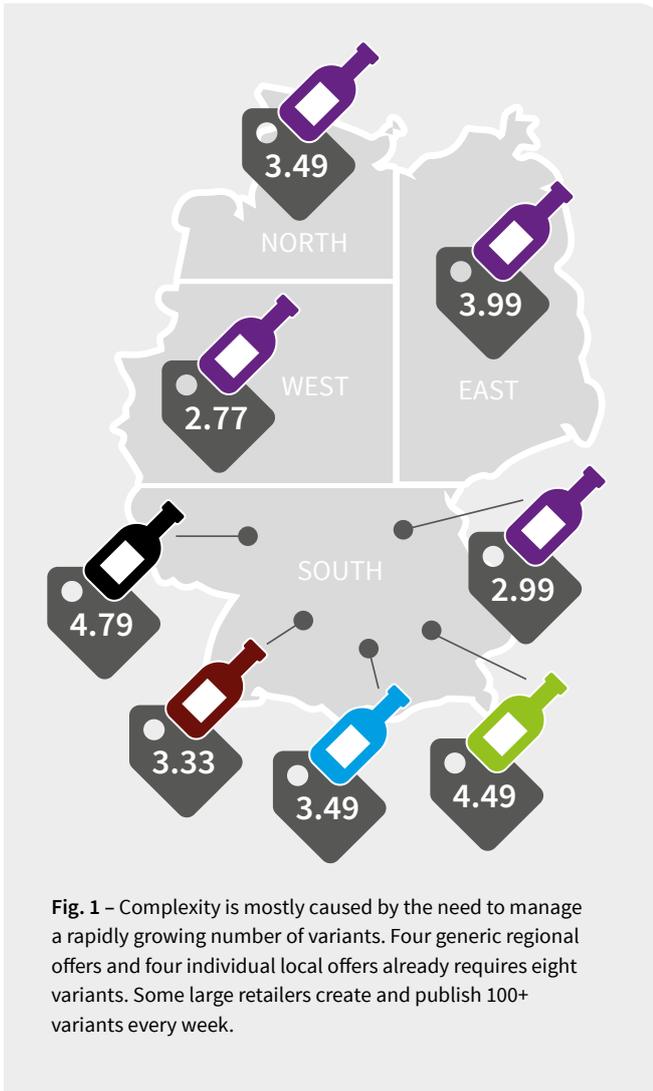
Some face this challenge with a national master plan which can be adapted to regions and even down to individual stores, for example to promote a new location opening. Others dedicate a full page for store specific discounts and offers within a broader, group wide printed piece of collateral.

Factors such as local spending power, regional preferences, sports teams, special events, holidays and even the weather can all affect what offers are promoted to which area and when. In an ideal, very localized scenario, each store can pick different offers, such as time limited vouchers or special promotions on products or brands, to differentiate from local competition and meet their customers' expectations and demands. However, this all creates huge complexity.

For example, consider a retailer that sells across four country regions. It wants to sell the same product at different prices in each region, depending on customer spending power and anticipated demand. However, some stores may want to create a different promotion for a specific product, but retain the other standard offers, leading to a requirement for more variants.

It's easy to see how similar behavior in other regions quickly increases the number of variants (see Figure 1). One leading European retailer produces around 120 variants for its 3,000+ stores every week. Add in the need for promotion in different languages in the same country, for example, Switzerland, Belgium or Canada, and the complexity rises still further.

In fact, the huge complexity involved in retail print promotion is created mainly by the need for customization and the variant management process involved, and it is next to impossible to manage without automation. Conventionally, marketing and creative teams have relied heavily on manually updated 'to do' lists and separate, widely varying project management systems, which makes it difficult to see project details and track progress. With potentially far more than 100 people involved, including designers, photographers, copywriters, editors, project and production managers, the time to produce promotional material can extend to weeks or even months.

Fig. 1 – Complexity is mostly caused by the need to manage a rapidly growing number of variants. Four generic regional offers and four individual local offers already requires eight variants. Some large retailers create and publish 100+ variants every week.

Fig. 2 – Retailers increasingly face an information flood of internal and external sources containing both structured and unstructured data. A print production management solution should be able to handle all this data and make it universally available to the marketing team.

Retailers want to shorten these cycles, allowing them to deliver more offers more frequently, and with more value, to their customers, without compromising the publication quality. Another benefit of short, automated production cycles is the ability to monitor and react to competitors' promotions. Often, final pricing can be subject to amendments up to 48 hours before going to print.

The challenges are compounded by the wide variety of data sources (see Figure 2). These include the retailer's master Product Information Management (PIM) system. This holds data from the suppliers such as images and product descriptions, but these are not always in marketing language – these must be specifically crafted by skilled marketers and linked to the respective product in the system. Pricing information will often come from the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, which may also supply information on store locations and store opening hours.

US Retailer Streamlines Workflows for Hundreds of Staff

This real life brand success story is from a major US retailer with more than 1,100 department stores in 49 states, employing more than 140,000 people and selling everything from shoes to shower curtains. Today, more than 56% of American households shop there, bringing in more than $19 billion in revenue a year.

It wanted to make its marketing more efficient, so its staff could achieve more and its customers could benefit from more personalized, relevant communications.

The goal was to move away from its own Digital Asset Management (DAM) system to a central solution that solidifies, standardizes and streamlines workflows for hundreds of employees.

The company's Senior Program Manager stated that: "Teams used to find it hard to know where a project was at any given moment – and they would be working on 10 or 12 projects in any week. Introducing censhare and our new business processes gave us a project structure that is automatically generated and managed. It was that simple."

Benefits have included production time reduced by 50% and, as a side effect, an annual saving of $275,000 by efficiently reusing assets.

Print Forms the Basis for Omnichannel Marketing

For many retailers, the printed leaflet creates the foundation for their omnichannel marketing campaigns. The discount offers in the leaflet are synchronized to and promoted widely in other channels, including the online store, newspaper adverts, TV and radio spots, and outdoor and instore posters.

The production process will typically involve the retailer using third party agencies for the layout. Playing email ping pong with communications sent back and forth between the agency and the client with corrections, new layout requests and photographs is a cumbersome and inefficient approach in today's digital age. It can also create damaging delays for short turnaround, high frequency publications such as weekly offer newsletters.

Print Takes its Place in an Omnichannel Marketing Campaign

A Swiss company specializing in interior concepts, furniture and accessories for homes, offices and public spaces is using censhare to dramatically improve the efficiency of its marketing communications.

Using censhare for its marketing campaigns allows the company to communicate consistently across all channels – from print publications, price lists and websites to social media – in one orchestrated campaign. Via censhare, the company provides numerous touch points, all of which supply information in a consistent way. The implementation process involved the successive replacement of systems like an image database, product information management, a translation memory system, a web content management system and various file servers.

All content and product information is now managed exclusively with censhare. Real time updating of stock data and prices is performed entirely through a single interface to the company's ERP system. The solution provides outstanding performance, secure administration and the effective storage of data.

Automated Print Production Management

Although agencies still have a major role in template production and creative branding, the practical implementation of flyers and other similar material is more efficient when automated. This way, the retailer can take large portions of the production process back inhouse and leave the more creative input to agencies.

The following describes the main features of an ideal automated print production management solution:

- The planning, creation, production and management of all types of print products are simplified by using integrated page planning, templates, workflows and automation as well as integration with industry standard software such as Adobe® InDesign® and InCopy®.

- The production process relies on digital assets held in a central repository, which speeds up production and allows updates to any content to be automatically brought into the print design files to ensure published information is always correct and up to date.

- Teams such as the design department, copywriters and editors, as well as external resources, can use common processes to collaborate more easily and rapidly.

- Workflows can be adapted to the retailer's existing print related workflows. For example, the solution should allow the production of anything from a four page leaflet to a multipage catalog to be split into separate tasks.

- Entire teams work in parallel on the same print publication, with no need to merge different parts before the print production stage.

- Integrated editors for standard industry software result in fewer layout software licenses required, so the solution can be used by occasional contributors at no extra cost.

- Variant management supports the creation of master files and related variants with necessary flexibility of structure, design and content to allow for all levels of localization and customization within one central and automated workflow.

- Translation management makes it easier to use existing content in different markets, with local teams only needing to provide translations for existing content assets.

- Final designs can be automatically transformed into PDF files or rendered as image files, e.g. JPEG, PNG, or TIFF.

- With integrated print and digital workflows, all production processes use the same information base, including data sourced from other systems like an ERP or CRM system. This helps to synchronize and harmonize content across all channels for consistency across printed and digital media.

The Automated Retail Print Management Process

Planning cycles can vary heavily by industry. The grocery trade has very short cycles, because it does not always know accurately which products will be available for delivery, for example, fruits and vegetables depend on supply, which is difficult to plan a year ahead.

For DIY stores, the opposite is the case. These stores often finalize their rough planning a year ahead as they need to order the promoted products, which will often be sourced from abroad.

However, there remains a common theme between all retailers producing printed collateral – they follow a structured process that offers huge potential for efficiency gains through marketing technology outlined in the previous chapter.

Table 1 shows a genuine example of a process for creating and approving all weekly variants of a flyer, practiced by a large European retailer.

Centralized asset management, a high degree of automation, increased digital collaboration, and completeness checks, allowed the retailer to optimize the entire process. The approved and checked content for the flyer is sent to the design agency, which produces a draft layout which is then sent back to the organization for proofing. Corrections such as spelling errors are then sent back to the agency to produce the final artwork for print. Importantly, there is only one such amendment cycle, a major improvement on previous processes which involved several correction stages between agency and organization, inevitably incurring additional costs and time.

Stage	Task	Content creation team CCT (marketing)	Product promotion team PPT (marketing)	Regional CCT/PPT
Planning	Page briefing and rough layout	✓		
	Alignment of recipes		✓	✓
	Images and copy completed for all countries in rough layout form ready for the formal internal promotional meeting		✓	
	Layout reviewed at the meeting for preliminary approval	✓		✓
	Final quality check prior to handing over to the design agency for final layout		✓	✓
Design/Layout	One correction cycle to check for errors (typos, pricing)		✓	
	Central decision for execution		✓	

Table 1 – A real example of a production process for a food retailer's promotional leaflet. Creative and production teams have clear tasks and can digitally collaborate, provide input and approve content. Here, the leaflets could feature the retailer's special promotions of food, suggesting recipes that use ingredients on offer.

Major Retailer Cuts Cost of Production by up to 70%

A major Swiss retailer operates throughout the country, represented by 10 regionally organized cooperatives. With some 600 sales outlets comprising supermarkets, specialized markets and product centers, as well as retailing and travel organizations, the company operates in all four language regions of Switzerland.

To ensure state of the art communication with its customers, the company decided to upgrade its content management.

The censhare platform replaced the large number of systems previously used to produce advertising materials. System complexity has been reduced, achieving major improvements in production reliability and the quality of the materials produced. Articles and advertising images, as well as additional product information can now be managed and administered at a central site.

Costs of producing advertising material have been greatly reduced. In the case of hosting, this reduction was in excess of 70%, with savings of 15% for agency spend. The entire process is now highly transparent, as everything is always traceable.

From Ideal to Practice

Putting an automated print management solution into use involves a series of stages:

1) Define inputs – what information do you need, and where can it be sourced? Which parts need to be created (for example, marketing copy)?

2) Enable access to your Master Product Information Management (PIM) system so the system can use relevant product information, such as descriptions and specifications

3) Enable access to your product image library (if available) so the system can use product images. This library typically exists within the company or at a third party supplier

4) Enable access to your ERP system that hosts information such as prices, store locations, opening hours and availability so the solution can use this information for each store

5) Create a set of Adobe InDesign templates that can be populated with all the information

6) Define workflows that work best for both your team and your partners: who needs to provide which input in which format and by when; who decides which products shall be promoted where on the page; who approves content and designs for each created variant, and so on

7) Define an approval path, including a limit on the number of correction cycles

8) Define output channels (e.g., PDFs for print, PDF for online use, Apps, Online Stores), including required formats and transformations

9) Perform a test run to check that product images, information and pricing successfully import into the templates and to ensure the resulting output looks correct.

When starting such a project, it is worthwhile spending time planning the InDesign templates to make them attractive while keeping them as generic as possible for easy population with promotional images and copy. It is also important to simplify complex processes when moving to the new all digital workflow, with as few approval steps as practicable.

censhare Brings the Benefits You Need

censhare's print management module offers all the characteristics of the ideal solution defined above. All product information is centrally available, up to date, complete and fully adaptable at any time. Features include integrations of ERP systems, self defined workflows, easy allocation of advertising by type of publication, publishing schedule and region, automatic creation of advertisements and automatic changes to pricing and other product data.

When in doubt, please feel free to involve censhare or one of our experienced implementation partners at any point in the project. Remember that this is the perfect opportunity to clean up your existing processes and make them as lean as possible without affecting production quality. We have the experience of many similar retail print production projects and we're happy to apply it to successfully advance your project.

Grocery Chain Achieves 75% More Efficient Print Production

A recent project for a German national grocery chain shows how to promote messages to a market with 80 million consumers across 16 different regions. Specifically, the chain wanted a print management solution that would give it:

- Control and oversight of all products, information and prices
- Direct communication and comprehensibility
- Management of all promotions and campaigns
- Revision security
- Central and streamlined production of advertising orders and layouts in one system for all regions and target groups

With the help of MSP, a software developer and information systems consultancy and a strategic partner of censhare, a solution was developed based on the censhare print production management module, which allows advertising material to be produced in a variety of formats. Weekly sales brochures can be created for each market in a largely automated process, with a central database supplying images, product information and prices. Last minute updates, such as modified prices or new products, can be applied across all the company's advertising material produced through censhare.

This has produced several benefits for the retailer, with the main one being that print production is now 75% more efficient. With everything managed within a single system, the retailer has cut the number of emails used to send layouts, while pricing errors have been eliminated due to accessing price information from a centralized database.

Other benefits include:

- Ability to change layout and content instantly
- Automated display of metadata in layouts
- Targeted placement of content
- Images and text stored in a central repository
- Templates for layouts based on a modular system
- System supported, workflow based generation of all kinds of PDFs

Conclusion: Simplifying the Power of Print

Retail print is still a valuable tool to reach audiences. Printed brochures, flyers and catalogs are more palpable to consumers and can put the retailer in the consumer's home in a way that cannot be replicated by a purely digital presence.

Its ability to address local and regional needs and take account of local issues down to the individual store level, is also a great asset when seeking to differentiate, both from the online giants and other bricks and mortar stores. Yet, this very ability poses a great challenge – with many different versions of a leaflet or catalog, retailers are faced with a complex production management process that can lead to long delays and inefficiencies.

System based automation and centralization are the keys to making this complex print production process more efficient. Such a system would streamline the creation and production of print based material through the use of integrated page planning, workflows and automation.

censhare's retail print management module meets these needs. By accelerating the print production process, the censhare solution not only cuts costs, but also frees resources for more creative campaigns, as well as allowing a more rapid response to market trends.

about censhare

Our pioneering, universal content management platform lets you connect with your audiences on any channel, in any language, locally or globally. Clients like Allianz, Dyson, Christie's, Lufthansa and many more have already discovered new freedom to create and deliver consistent quality content with exceptional efficiency.

Contact us at **www.censhare.com**