

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF WEB PRINTING

Andy McCourt looks at who's buying what and why

HEIDELBERG XL 105 - THE POWER IN SHEETFED

Heidelberg's new press lifts the bar for the entire industry

WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE CUSTOMER FILES FROM HELL

Harry Brelsford knows the problem from the front line

GOOD HELP - HARD TO FIND IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY

Patrick Howard explores the human resources industry



TARGET MARKET - ONE

Fuji Xerox defines the direct mail market.

Personalised Print scores a bullseye in the new world of one-on-one marketing.



MALCOLM AULD

When you've lived through a couple of technology cycles and all the regular sales pitches from the media spruikers about their latest new, new thing to make you (read 'them') money, you get a bit blasé about major technology leaps.

It happened with the internet—nobody predicted the pace of the boom around the great *dotcom*—because in many ways nobody believed what they were being sold, although the inevitable bust was obvious to most.

Software miracles

Software such as XMPie, DreamType and Direct Smile are radically altering the creative possibilities for direct mail and particularly how it integrates with websites and other print and electronic media. And high quality, variable-data digital colour printers have made short-run personalised printing cost-effective.

Privacy Laws have meant the data held by marketers is now much better quality,



cover, which is a rather standard procedure. But the second level of personalisation uses images.

If you are a female librarian you receive an image of female legs on the cover and inside spread, while male librarians receive an image of male legs. This subtle change of image makes the content appear more relevant and the results have been outstanding, with the highest response rates ever received for this product when offered through direct mail.

SEXING UP direct mail with new digital print technologies

Hey you, read this! Not quite the same as a personal, polite address is it? This month *Malcolm Auld* looks at the revolution in DM happening because of digital print and variable, personalised data. And he has the runs on the board to prove that it works.

And now, as e-mail is choking on its own success and is no longer a viable acquisition media, marketers are again looking for the new, new thing. Interestingly, you need look at one of the oldest forms of communication for the next technology leap—that is, the printed word.

Thanks to an alignment of a number of mostly unrelated factors, we are about to undergo a renaissance in direct mail. In fact when you see the creative options available, you'll realise how sexy direct mail has become and why marketers are achieving results way above historical campaigns.

The factors responsible for the rebirth of direct mail are:

- New DM design software
- Digital colour printing technology
- Privacy Laws
- Australia Post services

allowing for better targeting and personalisation, while Australia Post has introduced a number of new services such as Impact Mail, to encourage more creative mail solutions.

The main difference caused by all this activity is the creative way in which print media can now be personalised—using data, graphics, colour and other variables. As every marketer knows, personal media are the most powerful for building brands, so the more creatively you can personalise your communications, the better your results.

The most important thing in the world to most people is themselves—and the more you can flatter people with relevant communications reflecting creative use of specific data about them, the better your results and the stronger you build your brand.

Variable data is now the preferred option

The renaissance is occurring more rapidly than I first predicted, particularly amongst some advertising agencies. At my agency the creative teams now look at variable data printing using digital colour as their first option for any mail campaign. If for some reason the solution can't be achieved, eg data problems, paper mechanics, or low volume print cost, then the teams fall back to a traditional laser print or offset solution.

Here's a sample we created for legal publisher Lexis Nexis, using variable images and data printed on a Fuji Xerox digital colour press. The brochure is mailed to librarians in law firms and has been personalised in two ways. The first is personalisation of the recipient's name on the

Integrate personalised mail and web

XMPie—a complete desktop workflow tool distributed in Australia by Fuji Xerox, allows you to prepare and manage a personal communications campaign from your desktop—prepare the data sets, upload and manipulate data, import text, graphics and images and send them directly to a printer and website for production.

Identical personalised messages—image and text—can then appear on a postcard, mailpack, poster, banners, stickers or other print media, as well as on a website, HTML newsletter and even SMS. In fact, the recipient of a mailing can link via a personalised URL directly to a unique website that features the same content from the mailing.

We created a series of postcards recently to promote a seminar about these new digital print technologies. The front of the postcard used personalisation in different fonts and the response device is an XMPie personalised website, where the recipient can download a PDF of the seminar brochure.

Making customers smile

You're probably familiar with Direct Smile distributed with Indigo presses by Curries in Australia. (Featured on the cover of April Print 21.)

This postcard is another we created in the series mentioned earlier. It's the first campaign in Australia to use Direct Smile fonts combined with XMPie website personalisation. The font is made of people. The message included a personalised website link for each postcard recipient, where they could download a PDF of the seminar brochure.

Apart from the creative opportunities, the real power of Direct Smile is the results. Hundreds of people linked to their personal website within the first few hours of receiving the 'Up Yours' postcard—and the first booking came in under four hours of the first mail being delivered.

The marketing and print industries have been very slow to embrace variable data publishing—partly through ignorance of its potential, or because of data quality, cost or print quality. The issue of print quality and cost has largely disappeared as personalisation using variable data is now competitive with short run offset print costs.

More output options

The high end printers supplied by companies like Fuji Xerox, HP, Kodak and Xeikon mean the options are far broader. You can print on paper sizes up to A2, manufacture envelopes personalised content as the

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background image, posters, banners, brochures, magazine covers, fly-sheets and more.

AP Mail Management has the only Xeikon press in Australia and can print personalised banners for trade shows up to 82 metres in length. And the stock on which you can print is as varied as the creative options—paper, card, vinyl, metallics, plastics, even canvas.

If your printed words are the words your customer loves to hear, like their name and they are produced in a creative way with related imagery and data, your responses will increase and your brand value will grow.

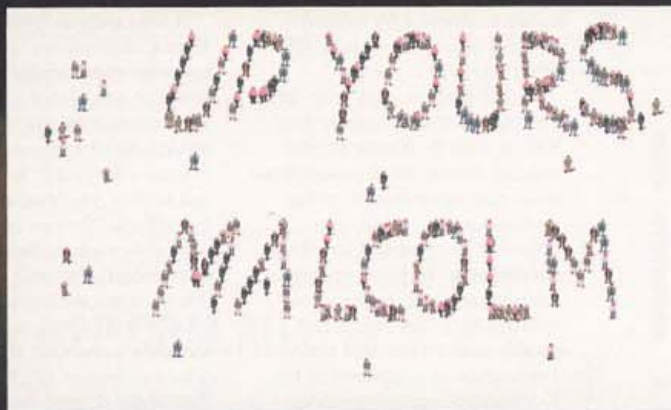
The objective of good direct mail is to deliver what you would say to a customer or prospect if you were talking to them personally. So the more personalised your printed communications, using data that is relevant to the individuals you write to, the more successful you'll be.

If you are a printer looking to stand out from the crowd, maybe you should consider creating a direct mail campaign—possibly a series of postcards—to demonstrate the power of personalised print to grow your clients' business?

If you're not involved with digital printing, then you'll have to find creative ways to differentiate yourself from your competitors so you stand out from the crowd. And one of the best ways is to mail relevant samples of what you produce to your customers. ●



Malcolm,
will your marketing become famous
in the direct mail renaissance?



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