SHARPEN YOUR SELLING SKILLS
Learn five key steps you need to master in order to become an “insight seller” and grow your business in 2018.

THE AR OPPORTUNITY
How do you ensure your customers stand out? By providing new and unique services — especially ones that bridge print and interactive media.

EXPAND YOUR TOOL BOX
Need help creating your 2018 marketing programs? The new marketing kit is sure to create a reaction.

INKJET INNOVATION
Start the new year off right. Get insider tips and strategies to innovate with inkjet.
It’s a new year and a new chapter for the thINK user group.

Happy New Year! I am pleased to begin 2018 as your newly elected thINK Board President.

For those of you who don’t know me, I’m Chief Customer Officer at SG360° and I was Conference Chair for thINK 2017. I’ve been involved with thINK since the very beginning, serving on the steering committee. As part of a group of ten Canon Solutions America customers, we began meeting in April 2014 to shape the group’s direction, goals and educational objectives.

Mark DeBoer, our previous thINK President, was also part of the steering committee, and I’m focused on picking up where he left off. I’m excited about working with all of the other thINK board members. They are an amazing group of people with a lot of knowledge and viewpoints to share.

Mark Your Calendar for thINK 2018: September 5-7, 2018 | Boca Raton, FL

The thINK conference has grown every year. Attendance is up. Sponsorship is up. Our educational offerings are right on target.

In 2018, we will focus on ensuring we stay in tune with the marketplace and keep the conference content fresh and valuable for everyone, whether you are just implementing inkjet or a seasoned professional. And, we will continue building a strong sense of community. Be sure to mark your calendar now for thINK 2018 — you won’t want to miss it!

Also, don’t forget: thINK is more than just a yearly conference. Look for thINK monthly eNewsletters, attend the quarterly webinars, like and follow thINK social media, and visit thinkforum.com to read and download valuable tools and resources.

What changes would YOU like to see going forward? Email me with your ideas and suggestions at bob@thinkforum.com.

Let’s keep the momentum going!

Bob Radzis
thINK President
SG360°
Chief Customer Officer
SELLING HIGH SPEED INKJET

Hands down, no matter what size business you own — or are a part of — from a large transactional printer to a huge commercial printing firm or a direct mailer down to franchise printers and independents, you want to grow your business. As a business owner, your top priorities are to acquire new customers, retain the customers you have and sell more to them, and sell value-added services.

During the “Selling High Speed Inkjet” session of the 2017 thINK Conference, Kate Dunn, director of Keypoint Intelligence/Infotrends’ business development service, detailed the five key strategies of “insight sellers” — sales reps today that are super successful.

1. Know How to Create Demand
Instead of competing on price, insight sellers are able to talk to their customers about things that matter to them: increasing the engagement rate on a marketing campaign, how to effectively use the data the customer is capturing, reducing the number of calls to the 800 number, and getting customers to pay faster.

So instead of saying, “Hey, we got an inkjet press. Let’s talk about it,” these insight sellers say, “Hey, let’s talk about what you need to do as a business and the ideas that I have for helping you accomplish those objectives.”

That’s demand creation. The rep is starting the process. The rep is going to shape it and it’s going to lead right back to your company, not the competition.

“In this case, you’re not competing on price,” Dunn said. “Those are often your higher margin deals. You’re basically circumventing the competition.”

2. Target the Right People
These insight sellers are able to get to the people that make things happen. By getting to the people who care about capturing the buyer journey information — not the print buyer or the person who is simply tasked with finding the lowest price — you’re starting at the top. It’s not simply about price anymore. Insight sellers target those people who have strategic objectives to accomplish.

3. Use Insight to Lead to the Solution
Insight sellers are able to lead to the solution, not with the solution. That means they are not going into a customer saying, “We got a new inkjet press. We can go faster. We can turn your work around quicker. We can add color. We can get rid of shells.” What’s the first thing that customer says? “How much does it cost?” And then it’s all about price again.

Instead, the insight seller talks about all those strategic objectives — better ways to reduce calls to the call center, ways to get your money faster, ways to collect more buyers journey information, ways to increase response rate. Now, the person on the other end says, “That’s interesting. How would you do that?” That’s leading to the solution.

4. Quantify the Value for Customers
These insight sellers know enough about their prospect’s business to hypothesize what an increase in response rates would actually do for them. The insight seller goes to their customer and says, “If we increase this response rate by X, you’re going to get Y percent more leads and you’re going to convert 20% of them. That’s $9.5M. Do you want to talk about how you can capture that?” So, what’s the customer thinking? How do I get my hands on the $9.5M, not how much more this going to cost.

“It’s really critical to be able to do your research and create that hypothesis of what the value of change could look like,” said Dunn.

5. Coach Customers on How to Buy
Sales reps should be involved in multiple sales cycles all the time so they should know who was involved in other situations where they hit a stumbling block. So in that first meeting when the person says they want to pursue the project, the insight seller can tell the client up-front that these specific people — the branding person, the IT person, etc. — need to be in the next meeting because they’re going to end up in these meetings at some point. By getting their requirements up front, it helps to streamline the process. The rep is teaching customers how to buy, how to evaluate things, who should be involved in it, and they’re turning that into value for them. The customer is appreciative because it doesn’t waste their time; a valuable commodity.

Sales experience is a key factor in purchasing decisions today. Fifty-four percent of why people choose things or choose vendors is based upon that sales experience. Do you take the risk out of this for me? Do you help me understand the alternatives? Do you help get that widespread support across the organization? Do you help me understand how this really helps me and do those ROI calculations?

Buyers are seeking more than just product information. They’re looking for ideas. They want that insight. Make sure your sales reps are providing that.

For more of Dunn’s insights into selling high-speed inkjet, be sure to view the full recorded session on thINK-forum.com. All of the presentations from the 2017 thINK conference are available for thINK members to view.
IMS, INC.

WHERE DATA DRIVES BUSINESS

The future of the commercial printing industry is perhaps nowhere better reflected than at IMS, Inc., headquartered in Syracuse, N.Y. A nationally recognized brand and integrated service provider of print, mail and digital delivery services, it has five production facilities around the country. What areas make IMS a model for the rest of the industry? Listening, data and workflow — in that order.

Founded by W. Lee Vanderpool Jr. as a pioneer in presort mail, IMS expanded its operations and transformed into one of the most recognized names in transactional document delivery. Today, it serves a diverse clientele that includes many of the top-tier performers in financial services, insurance, credit unions, community banks, health care and accounts receivable management.

When asked to describe the company’s model for success, John Mashia, president and COO of IMS, summed it up in one word: efficiency. “Our goal is to drive the client communication through our organization in a way that is automated and efficient, both operationally and technically,” he says. “For us, that means investment in technology.”

This investment starts on the front end with secure FTP, automated proofing and a web portal for jobs that don’t need a personal touch. Clients can submit jobs securely at any hour.

However, Mashia cautions that, no matter how automated you are, your clients must feel comfortable picking up the phone and calling. “Automation is great, but your clients must be able to reach a live person when needed,” he says. “We continually get accolades from clients who tell us how tremendous our customer service is in all aspects of our business. You must still have that personal touch.”

Indeed, despite its IMS DirectLink workflow, the overwhelming majority of IMS’s work still comes in through secure FTP.

“We did a tremendous amount of market research. We had to make sure that it actually was what people were experiencing on the floor. What we found was that the i300 was exactly as advertised.”

— John Mashia, president, IMS, Inc.

In IMS’s production areas, it operates a fleet of sheetfed and roll devices in both monochrome and color. These include Canon and other toner sheetfed devices.

In July 2017, IMS invested in its first high-speed inkjet press, the Canon Océ VarioPrint i300. “This is part of our ongoing migration to a full white paper workflow,” Mashia says. “We will still have some applications that require toner color, but we are making the transition to inkjet because the quality is so good. For our business it’s a good fit.”

IMS chose the VarioPrint i300 for its reliability and speed (up to 294 letter images per minute). The Canon Océ VarioPrint i-series targets heavy production volumes of 1-10 million pages per month.

Because IMS was already running tens of millions of impressions every month through its toner boxes, any press it purchased needed not only to be fast, but reliable. It also needed to be able to draw from multiple paper sources, as well as maintain automatic duplexing and in-line finishing at speed. The VarioPrint i300 supports a large variety of paper sizes up to 13.9x19.7”
targeted messaging isn’t just for direct sales either. IMS is also helping clients use targeted messaging for brand building. For example, credit unions talking about how they are supporting communities, such as sponsoring local events, or health care organizations supporting green initiatives.

“It’s one thing to sell your products,” Mashia says, “but you also want to communicate what type of organization you are with the communities that you serve.”

This dual marketing/brand building role is another place where the transition to inkjet plays a particularly important role. “When you look at white paper in, product out workflow, inkjet gets our clients into a position where their messaging can change month to month. That is hugely valuable to them,” Mashia says. “Instead of ordering preprinted material that they throw out because they’re not relevant anymore, they can fine tune and touch their client base more relevantly on a more consistent basis.”

While it might be tempting to think that most large organizations are doing targeted messaging already, Mashia says, that’s not always true. “There are highly successful organizations that aren’t,” he explains. “What they are doing [traditional messaging] works. So we always want to have the conversation.”

What’s next for IMS? Currently, it has tens of millions of impressions per month and over 1 million mail pieces a day running through its five locations, including the millions of impressions running flawlessly through its VarioPrint i300 every few days. To support these volumes, it is making ongoing investments in prepress and workflow, as well as continuing to focus on strengthening its data platform.

“We are seeing success in servicing our core competency, so we will continue to fine tune our offerings and invest in new technology,” Mashia concludes. “Transitioning to full white paper workflow, including high-speed inkjet, and our commitment to the data side of messaging have been — and continue to be — key to our growth.”

IMS has also focused on helping its customers monetize their investments. Through smart tracking and measurement, clients have seen “millions of dollars in lift” as a result of their data-driven efforts. “They are generally focusing on demographics as well as product lines,” Mashia says. “They really want to ensure that they are presenting the right opportunities to the right demographic.”

Other areas of growth for IMS include e-document delivery, secure and marketing emails, and e-statements with design. Customers are also looking to invest in multi-touch campaigns, from e- to print to mobile. “They realize that multiple touchpoints will drive better results,” Mashia says.

Along with other efforts, IMS conducts focus groups with a variety of customer groups, both large and small. This type of listening is a foundation — if not the foundation — of its investments and business modeling. “Data is important, but sometimes you have to sit down and really talk to people about what challenges they are experiencing and better understand how you can bring value to their organization,” Mashia says. “We are lucky to have some open and honest customers who engage with us in really deep dialogue.”

IMS has also gotten feedback about the need for mobile-optimization of all documents. “When you look at metrics, people are consuming content on their phones more than any other channel, so all of our clients’ documents must fit on that screen,” he says. “There are still many documents that aren’t built for mobile devices, and if those documents aren’t mobile-optimized, they won’t be read.”
By now you’ve probably experienced augmented reality (AR) and maybe even used it in a client project. Few technologies offer the opportunity to add value to the print pieces you’re already producing for your customers. AR transforms paper touch points into interactive experiences, bridging the gap between print, digital and mobile communications. It not only increases long-term engagement and response, but also helps keep print relevant in an increasingly mobile world.

These media-rich experiences allow viewing, as well as interacting with animation, graphics and links to relevant content. And we know that if we can communicate with someone through an interactive experience, we have a much higher likelihood of continuing the dialogue or fulfilling a customer need. That’s because calls to action within the AR experience can guide viewers to make a purchase, watch a demonstration, schedule an appointment, request information and even click to call.

AR Here and Now
It’s here, it’s relevant, and it’s too big to ignore. Globally, the AR market is poised to grow to $165 billion by 2024 according to research by Global Market Insights, Inc. The company predicts that adoption across the e-commerce and retail space will spur the global augmented reality market demand. The technology offers retailers the opportunity to enhance the overall shopping experience and greatly increase customer interaction with brands and products.

The fact is, AR is already being integrated into a wide range of marketing and business applications. Think book publishing, training materials, advertisements, packaging, billing statements, direct mail and catalogs, marketing collateral, event marketing, point of purchase — the list goes on and on.

It Starts with Print
Using an AR browser app and a smartphone, users scan an AR marker, which could be an image or a 3D object (think promotional product). The app connects to an AR cloud service that returns content to the device and augments the real-world environment with computer generated sensory input like sound, video, graphics or GPS data.

One of the simplest ways to add AR into a print piece is with video. However, clever marketers are pushing the limits of AR by incorporating motion graphics, animation and 3D environments. Here at Trekk, we’ve created a wide range of experiences including information overlays, 3D walkarounds and complete environment immersion.

The Value Add
What’s really exciting about AR is that it not only opens up a digital channel to tell a bigger story, but also

BRINGING AR MAGIC TO thINK
One of the areas where our clients are seeing tremendous success with AR is at trade shows and events. Used for demonstration or gamification, AR has proven to be a real show stopper, encouraging repeat visits to the booth, and offering booth staff more opportunity to connect with potential prospects.

A splendid example is the AR game created for thINK 2016. If you were there, you probably remember “Greetings from thINK.” If you weren’t, you have the opportunity to try it for yourself with the cards inserted into this issue of the thINK Forward newsletter.

The idea behind the project was to ensure a great experience for thINK exhibitors. It started with development of the thINK AR browser app and a series of printed postcards. Each partner booth was assigned a unique postcard design with a Florida theme. thINK members visited booths throughout the Partner Pavilion, collected postcards and used the AR app to view AR experiences that brought the postcards to life. Some of the experiences included instant winner prize messages. Once attendees collected all the cards, their names were entered into a drawing for grand prizes.

The AR experience was a hit with both exhibitors and attendees. The postcards also provided fun souvenirs everyone could take home with them to share the technology with their families and colleagues.

Try it for yourself now by downloading the thINK AR app.
allows for continued communications. With the app downloaded, there is an opportunity to keep delivering new experiences that keep customers and prospects engaged with the brand.

Because the AR content is stored in the cloud, the experience can be changed at any time without changing the marker — increasing the shelf-life and value of print. You can even track each interaction and deliver a new message each time an experience is triggered.

As mobile technology continues to up the ante and consumers expect more interactivity in their brand interactions, we’ll all be challenged to deliver bigger, better, and more relevant experiences. Think about the print pieces you’re currently producing for customers. How can you add more value, engagement and interactivity with augmented reality?

Sarah Mannone is executive vice president of Trekk, a multi-channel marketing communications agency. Her team designed the postcards and created the augmented reality experiences for the thINK conference. She can be reached at smannone@trekk.com.

2018 BELongs To Those Who innovate — And continue To learn

With new business services like expanding digital print technologies, data services, omni-channel communications, and intelligent workflows emerging, innovation must remain a strategic priority in the printing industry. As competition expands along with growing customer demands for print and digital services, new business models are coming to the forefront and being deployed in real applications.

In order for print providers to execute effectively, education is key. As a thINK member, you have access to a plethora of resources to help you grow your business. You’ll find top-notch industry data, thINK conference presentations, books and catalogs, downloadable media profiles and much more in the Resource Center on the thINKForum.com member website.

These new white papers have been added to the Resource Center, so log in to download them now!

Roadmap 2018
Each year, the analysts at Keypoint Intelligence/InfoTrends evaluate pivotal marketing and technology trends and their potential effects on print service providers in the year ahead. Learn and benefit from the results of this research in the Roadmap 2018.

Is Data Enrichment in Your Marketing Services Portfolio?
Data enrichment (also known as data appending) is the process of finding and replacing missing or inaccurate attributes in existing data contact lists. This article explores how print service providers can leverage data enrichment services to bring differentiated value-add to clients.

Effective Sales Management: Critical for a High-Performing Sales Team!
Many of today’s print service providers under-invest in their sales efforts, placing a greater concentration on daily production, mailing, shipping, and distribution. The sales process often becomes an afterthought, but it deserves more attention. This white paper explores how implementing strong sales managers and sales management processes can deliver double-digit business results.

Creating the Right Sales Structure
In today’s market, you must align your sales organization with your overall business strategy while also accommodating the changing demands of your customer base. This article discusses options for structuring your sales team to deliver better business results.

Locating Who to Talk To: It’s an Art and a Science!
In today’s world, having a list of addresses simply isn’t enough. Modern marketers are obligated to create an easy path to purchase, especially in an age where brick-and-mortar stores must compete with easy online purchases. This article explores how Geoservices tools can guide people to products by defining clear targeted areas for marketing campaigns.
Ten years ago, Action Printech was amidst the Great Recession faced with a difficult reality: limit its product and services offerings or fail. Now, thanks to the addition of the Canon Océ VarioPrint i300, the Plymouth, Mich.-based company has managed to not only keep its doors open, but it has experienced 30% growth in sales and volume, from January to September 2017, all with no increase in labor hours, according to Owner Chris Dunlap.

“We came from a point 10 years ago where we were just trying to survive, it was that simple. ‘What do we do to survive?’” he asks. “We succeeded. Now the question is, ‘how do we thrive?’”

Thriving for Action Printech has come in the form of an inkjet investment in two VarioPrint i300 sheetfed presses, technology that Dunlap describes as a “game changer in quality.”

“To me, [inkjet is] the future. This is where the printers of the future are going to have to find themselves if they want to be successful.”

— Chris Dunlap, owner, Action Printech

It hasn’t always been easy though. Action Printech started as a mom-and-pop quick print shop, opened by Dunlap’s parents in 1979. Unfortunately, only a few years in, his father had a massive heart attack and was unable to continue running the business, so at the young age of 19, Dunlap took over. Around 1990, Dunlap decided to pursue the aspects of the business that he enjoyed the most — the relationships and business-to-business interactions — and closed the company’s quick print business to become a full-fledged commercial printer.

When the Recession struck, Dunlap decided it was imperative to focus on the vertical that provided the most potential for the company: book printing. Since then, the company, which has approximately 20 full-time employees and 18,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing space, has carved out a niche as a short- to medium-run book printer, focused on quality and reliability, from book one to book 1,000.
The company installed its first VarioPrint i300 in November 2016 when it realized that finding and retaining employees had become a challenge in the shifting industry. It needed a solution to reduce the labor involved in the process of offset printing while maintaining the quality and reliability it had become known for. It also wanted a solution that would accommodate short-to medium-runs and increase its capabilities for variable printing.

Dunlap explains that he remembers hearing about the VarioPrint i300 in its very early stages, and knew that it would fit his company’s needs perfectly.

Action Printech’s first VarioPrint i300 provided a slight learning curve, Dunlap says, mostly due to the fact that it was an offset-only business at the time. To combat the challenge of learning new technology, Dunlap says he took full advantage of the help that Canon offered, and now, he is able to train new employees on the press within a few days.

Less than one year later, Dunlap explains that Action Printech had seen enough of a response from his customers that he purchased a second VarioPrint i300. In June 2017, the second press was up and running, contributing heavily to the company’s significant 2017 growth.

“When I saw the response from my customers and that they weren’t just happy about what they were seeing and what the VarioPrint i300 was allowing me to do in servicing them, they were talking about giving me additional business,” he explains. “I saw there was a possibility to grow. That’s why you make an investment … to grow.”

The set of VarioPrint i300s are now the “main workhorses” for Action Printech, Dunlap says, and the consistency is unparalleled for the company. Dunlap points to his experience with offset as a main differentiator with his new presses. Prior to adding sheetfed inkjet technology, Dunlap says that his team had to contend with the variability of working with offset, which can be affected by environmental factors, including heat generated by the press and humidity. With this technology, he explains, that inconsistency is gone.

In fact, Dunlap says that in his more than 30 years in the industry, he has only seen two technological advancements that he would consider “revolutionary.” The first, he says, was when direct-to-plate technology eliminated the expensive part of the prepress process, and the second is inkjet.

“But inkjet hands-down trumps what happened with direct-to-plate technology,” he says.

For Action Printech, success has come from the VarioPrint i300s, which will enable the company to continue to grow and thrive.

In the future, Dunlap says that he expects Action Printech to expand geographically, beyond its 50-mile radius of business. The VarioPrint i300s will give the company the opportunity to explore new markets, especially when it comes to variable printing, which just wasn’t feasible with the company’s offset equipment.

“Inkjet is going to lead the way for where we grow,” he says. “To me, it’s the future. This is where the printers of the future are going to have to find themselves if they want to be successful.”
Today's color inkjet devices are creating new market opportunities for service providers thanks to their high productivity, compelling cost of operation and greatly improved quality levels.

To grow your business with high-speed inkjet, it is important to find the right applications combined with a business strategy that matches the capabilities of today’s technologies. You also need a well-prepared sales force that is capable of articulating the value proposition associated with migrating traditional offset to a digital world.

Canon Solutions America recognizes that you need more than leading technology in today’s market. To successfully grow your high-speed inkjet business, you need a strategic business plan. That plan should define the right applications and business strategy that aligns with the capabilities of today’s technologies.

To help with this, Canon Solutions America has designed a new marketing kit to assist you in maximizing your investment in Canon’s Océ VarioPrint i300.

“We saw a need, especially with small- to mid-size companies, when it came to marketing their new services and equipment,” said Tonya Powers, senior manager, marketing, Production Print Solutions, Canon Solutions America, Inc. “To address that need, we developed a series of direct mail pieces that could be produced on the VarioPrint i300 along with corresponding pieces for a full omni-channel campaign.”

“It’s a multi-touch campaign that’s based all around lead gen as well as cross-selling and upselling,” said Andrea Shue, marketing specialist, sales development, Production Print Solutions, Canon Solutions America, Inc. “It’s all about getting a leg up on starting and growing new business. You’ve made the investment. How do you drive this business quickly?”

With the help of Trekk for design, Canon took care of the program’s content and design. In the newly developed marketing kit you’ll find:

• Ready-to-go direct mail campaign that highlights the value you can bring to your potential customers and turns that message into responses with clear calls to action.
• A sales presentation designed for one-on-one or small group sales pitches, complete with talking points, so that you’ll be ready to go when inquiries come in.
• Open house event marketing materials, including an invite template and a follow-up thank you note.
• Social media post templates so that you can support your direct mail campaign through digital channels.
• Tips for adding content marketing to your multi-channel approach through blogging, along with suggested blog post topics to get you started.
• A 12-week marketing calendar with our suggested deployment schedule.
• Application samples for you to print and provide to prospective customers.

Remember: direct mail is effective on its own, but optimal marketing success lies in a multi-channel approach. Canon suggests supporting the campaign with personal email touch points, content marketing and social media.

Additionally, a video series complementing the how-to guide is already in the works. Visit thINKforum.com to access the marketing kit and other great resources.
THE LATEST IN INKJET PRODUCTION PRINTING HAS ARRIVED

Approximately 246 billion impressions will be produced by production inkjet devices in 2021.

Canon Solutions America delivers innovative inkjet technology with three iconic inkjet presses to help you realize new opportunities in commercial print, direct mail, and transactional applications while creating unparalleled opportunities with books, catalogs, and magazines.

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The total cost to print this issue of the thINK newsletter is 23¢ per piece and 3 Hours and 10 minutes. Compare that to 41¢ per piece and 8 Hours and 36 minutes of Press time on a 100 page per unit toner engine. Supply and service cost of inkjet was 12¢ per set and 30¢ for toner per set. No Labor or lease cost was included. That's profitable print!

PRODUCTION NOTES
PAPER: Mondi NEUJET® silk 160gsm /108 lb. Text
PRESS: Canon Océ VarioPrint i300

thINK is an independent community of Canon Solutions America production print customers, solution partners, and print industry experts and Canon Solutions America is a proud executive sponsor. Led by some of the most successful inkjet service providers in the country, it provides a forum for members to network, gain knowledge, discuss common challenges, and share best practices.