

ANALYSIS

**INKJET IS ALL GROWN UP... AND
IT'S AN UNTAPPED GOLDMINE!**

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Introduction

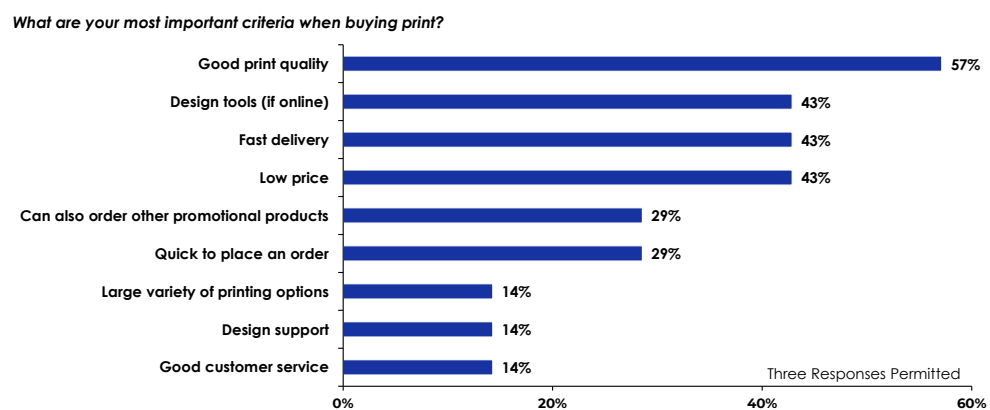
Inkjet print technology continues to revolutionize the industry because its benefits are well-aligned with today's business needs. Most people in our industry recognize inkjet's versatility and ability to deliver affordable short runs with personalized content in record time. This is a welcome transformation for document owners who need to generate statements, invoices, and direct mail. Still, few would consider printing a coffee table book on an inkjet device that is designed to print simple graphics and images. As a result, print service providers (PSPs) have been trained to rely on the traditional offset printing process when producing premium quality applications.

Today's technological advancements are changing the landscape, offering PSPs and their customers an opportunity to benefit from inkjet's value even when top quality print is the goal. This article explores the benefits of modern inkjet technology, which can be an exciting alternative to offset and toner even when quality can't be compromised.

The Importance of Print Quality

Premium print quality is essential for marketing communications. Businesses must deliver high quality printed materials to their customers so they can convey the right message about their brands. The overall look and feel of a finished brochure, catalog, or book can affect how easily a product can be read or scanned to create a lasting first impression. According to a recent survey of US print buyers by Keypoint Intelligence, the three most important criteria when buying print were quality, delivery time, and price.

Figure 1: Most Important Criteria When Buying Print



N = 201 Print Buyer Respondents in the US
Source: US Print Buyer Marketing Survey; Keypoint Intelligence 2022

We've all heard the statement that the devil is in the details. When it comes to a brand's reputation, though, the details are everything. Imagine a company that sells luxury vacation packages. If their marketing collateral appears to be low quality, includes dull colors, or is printed on an inferior substrate, this will reflect poorly on the brand. People's opinions about a business can easily be shaped by what they see on paper. Many



customers will assume that a company is unprofessional if it won't invest in high-quality marketing materials. On the other hand, customers are more likely to trust a company that delivers high-quality print collateral with vibrant colors, a luxurious feel, and messaging that aligns with their specific interests. Brand owners understand that the details matter when working to create a positive impression of their brand. For that reason, marketers have traditionally been forced to print high-end marketing collaterals on an offset press... but this is changing!

The Acceleration of Change

Compounded advancements in technology are all around us. Just think about how much the world has changed in the past decade. We now have self-driving cars, voice-activated smart speakers, and surgeries that can be performed by robots—all thanks to compounding technological advancements. The same can be said for production inkjet presses. By building on previous technologies, inkjet presses have seen incredible improvements in productivity, flexibility, and quality... and this is just the beginning! As compounding advancements in technology continue, the possibilities are endless.

Inkjet technology has improved by leaps and bounds within a surprisingly short period of time. Just a few years ago, inkjet presses were considered effective for only a few applications. Now, ongoing improvements in ink chemistry and printhead architecture as well as improved ink drying performance have transformed inkjet into a well-positioned solution for a wider variety of applications—including those favored by luxury brands. With the expanding library of substrates available, press manufacturers are constantly exploring new ways to apply and adhere ink to paper. Thanks to a near constant stream of modifications and changes, inkjet's transformation has been exponential.

In today's world, print quality and flexibility remain paramount. PSPs simply can't afford to ignore the significant inkjet breakthroughs that now address the exacting demands of modern customers.

A Buyer's Bias

Although offset will remain a preferred method for producing high-quality printed pieces in long runs, it has some obvious drawbacks. Specifically, the output is static, so you'll be paying a premium price even if you don't need long print runs. Inkjet technology, on the other hand, makes it possible to accommodate the preferences of today's consumers. Once again, think about a luxury travel company that uses catalogs to attract new business and encourage client loyalty. Sending marketing collateral out in bulk is certainly an option, but delivering catalogs with messaging relevant to a specific audience or even an individual is a game changer. Even better, consider the possibilities of embedding a user experience in the catalog. Let's say a potential customer spends time on a luxury



travel company's website. After seeing a few interesting options, he or she requests more information specifically for warm climate destinations. Instead of a static brochure, that prospect could receive one that fully immerses them in an experience. With the help of Augmented Reality (AR), prospects could see themselves standing a sandy beach, watching the waves hit the shore. With variable data and today's printing technologies, the options to enhance the customer experience are endless. By increasing the value of their marketing pieces, you can help your clients drive better business results.

Even so, many print buyers may hesitate to consider an alternative to how their critical customer-facing documents are currently printed. If they are unaware of recent advancements in inkjet print technology, they might think that they'd have to sacrifice quality for relevant and personalized marketing. With today's refined inkjet technologies, though, both can be achieved.

Before convincing your customers of inkjet's possibilities, you must first be able to recognize them yourself. If you're still unsure about inkjet's benefits, consider starting by viewing inkjet product videos online or requesting samples from various inkjet presses. Even better, set up a meeting with a manufacturer of a modern inkjet solution and request an industry update. It has never been more important for PSPs to seek new ways to help their clients get more from their marketing spend.

The Bottom Line

Regardless of the industry you're in, change can be difficult. In the printing industry, however, change is essential to remaining viable. If your customers aren't running through the door with requests for engaging, high-quality inkjet print, this doesn't necessarily mean that they wouldn't want it if they knew what was available. Take the time to workshop a few ideas with your customers, emphasize and prioritize the needs of their customers, then determine what must happen to create a case for change. If you don't think you're quite ready to invest in an inkjet press, consider partnering with someone who will enable you to better serve your important clients. According to a famous quote by writer Stewart Brand, "Once a new technology rolls over you, if you're not part of the steamroller, you're part of the road." So don't risk being left behind—commit to a change and research how best to implement it in your business. You'll be glad you did!



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As part of the Business Development Strategies Consulting Service at Keypoint Intelligence, Karen Kimerer has experienced the many challenges of expanding current market opportunities and securing new business. She has developed a systematic approach to these opportunities, addressing the unique requirements of becoming a leader in our changing industry.

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