

# ANALYSIS

**PRINT BUYERS WANT INKJET...  
THEY JUST DON'T KNOW IT YET!**

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## Introduction

There are approximately 5,300 print buyers in the US listed on LinkedIn and over 8,800 on a global basis. When you look at their profiles, a common thread runs through their qualifications. These print buyers typically:

- Manage complex projects on time and within budget
- Are skilled at improving overall efficiency and productivity
- Are responsible for organizational consistency to meet or exceed company goals
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of marketing trends
- Oversee company infrastructure improvements to drive standardization

It can be expected that these print buyers have a good understanding of today's inkjet technologies and the value proposition they deliver. It's their inherent responsibility to improve efficiencies, increase productivity, maintain consistency, and stay up to date with marketing trends. If that's not enough, they must also deliver projects on time and within budget. These requirements align directly with the value proposition that inkjet technology offers. Nevertheless, even the most astute and well-informed print buyers might not correlate their needs to today's inkjet print solutions. This is particularly true if their current print provider is without an inkjet solution or if they haven't considered inkjet for their printing needs in the past year or two. If either is true, it's very likely they can't fully appreciate all the things that inkjet can deliver today. Inkjet technology is truly changing the way that we print. This document explores how print service providers (PSPs) can help their customers and prospects realize the value of inkjet for their communication needs.

## The Math Problem

Reaching out to LinkedIn's list of 5,300 identified print buyers to share the good news about inkjet print opportunities might be a great way to get the ball rolling. At the same time, however, a much larger group of people can benefit once they understand the value that inkjet print delivers. According to the [NAICS Association](#), there were over 4.3 million companies in the United States with 10+ employees as of February 2022. The contrast between intentional print buyers and businesses that buy print is vast, to say the least. The significance of this observation suggests that some buyers of print are likely holding very different job titles. They probably don't have the training or time to determine the advantages of one print technology over the other.

## Inkjet's Place on the Map

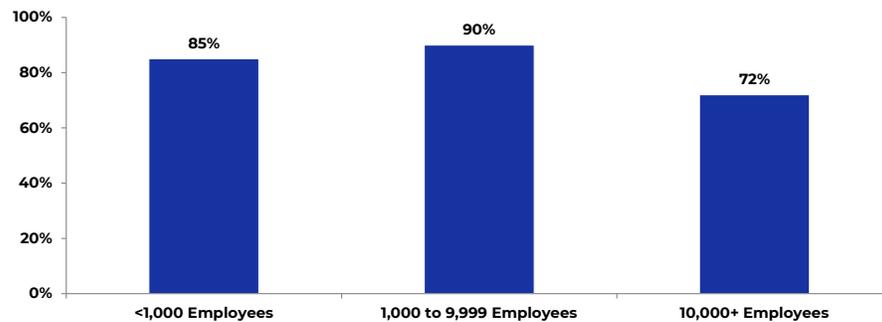
In today's hyper-competitive world, businesses must interact with their customers on an individual basis. In addition, customers want the brands that they do business with to make them feel valued. Consumers expect companies to take the time to get to know them



and then communicate that knowledge by treating them as unique individuals. In support of this, enterprises of all sizes seem to understand the importance of customer journey mapping. According to recent research from Keypoint Intelligence, the majority of enterprises are managing the customer experience with journey mapping technology.

**Figure 1: Managing the Customer Experience**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
— "We use customer journey mapping technology to manage the customer experience."



N = 134  
Base: Enterprises in the US and Canada  
Source: Annual State of Transactional Communications Survey; Keypoint Intelligence 2021

Customer journey mapping isn't new. In fact, it was first introduced by OxfordSM (now Oxford Corporate Consultants) in 1998 to design its service offerings. In addition to serving as a competitive advantage, knowing when and how customers interact with a brand can support the most pressing ideals of today's customers. Some of these include timely communication and response, effective and personalized marketing, and the simplicity or ease of engaging with a brand.

If you don't understand how this information correlates to inkjet print solutions, don't worry... we'll get there! In the meantime, keep in mind that a well-executed customer journey map points to when and where specific content should be used to enhance the customer experience. This content must be current and relevant on an individual level.

Going back to the many buyers of print that don't specifically categorize themselves as print buyers, it's likely that they play a role in one or more junctures of the customer journey. Often, they'll have a well-defined position that demands other disciplines. Simply put, this means that "they don't know what they don't know."

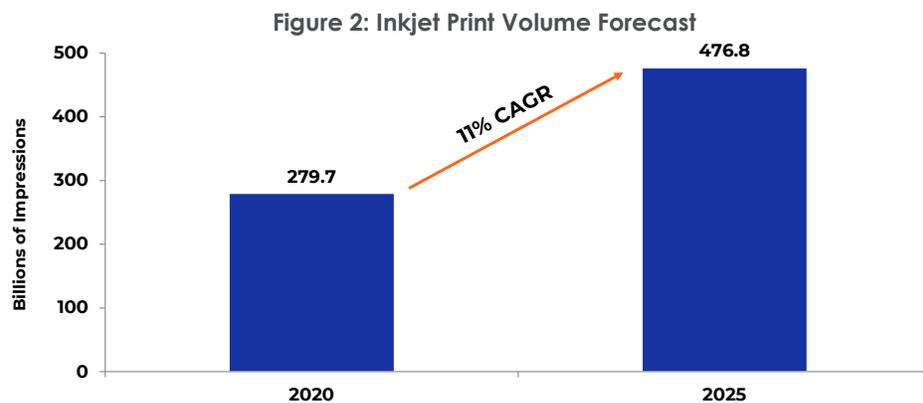
For those that set out to acquire print, many decisions must be made. These might involve paper type, the size of the finished product, the number of units, and the time from order to delivery. Some of these buyers may not be able to see how print can address their need for content to support the customer journey. They might not understand how personalized messages can capture the hearts and minds of their current customers, strengthening the business/customer bond and increasing loyalty. It could be that these potential buyers of



print believe producing print takes too long and inhibits their time to market, so they've shifted their funds to online messaging. To put this another way, they don't recognize the options available in today's market because they don't live and breathe print. Therefore, you can't fault them for not fully understanding something that they might not even think to ask about.

## Identify Areas of Impact

Many potential buyers of print don't know that inkjet page volumes continue to grow. According to Keypoint Intelligence's most recent forecast data, inkjet print volumes are expected to achieve a CAGR of 11% between 2020 and 2025.



Source: *Global Production Printing & Copying Market Forecast: 2020-2025*; Keypoint Intelligence 2021  
 Note: Forecasted volumes do not include eligible offset pages.

Indeed, the drivers behind the upward trend in inkjet volume can be attributed to technological advancements that enable high-quality and high-speed color printing while offering strong cost metrics. For some, this data alone may be enough to take notice of the growth and consider how inkjet can affect the way they use print. Unfortunately, many buyers of print are void of the time.

## Messaging Matters!

Leading PSPs recognize why it's essential to help their customers understand the cause behind the trends and why they need to take note. In doing so, they open the door to better conversations about the purpose of customer communications, and it presents an opportunity to explore solutions that might not be otherwise considered. Likewise, best-in-class print providers know it's important to center their conversations on the value the buyer will gain rather than the benefits of the technology.

When it comes to guiding your customers and prospects on getting the most from their print communication budgets, the conversation must center on the value that is delivered and not the function of the technology. Specific to the customer journey map and delivering effective content along the way, here are a few considerations:



- If you merely suggest that inkjet makes it possible to cost-effectively add full color to a black & white document, you aren't communicating value—you're simply stating a benefit. In this case, the value of inkjet lies in the opportunity to provide messaging that is easier to read and retain while improving brand perception.
- Asking about run lengths and describing how inkjet offers a more affordable solution for a prospect's needs is not value. Instead, you should consider identifying applications with an expiration date and then offering a solution to avoid costly mistakes and reduce waste by printing only what's needed today.
- It may be true that variable data print is the way of the future and inkjet technology is well-equipped to produce it, but again, this is not value. If you want to deliver value, quantify how enhanced customer communications can deliver higher call-to-action rates.

Narrow discussions that only center on technology won't do justice to the impact that inkjet can have on today's communication trends. Buyers of print are tuned into business results, so PSPs must align their conversations with these results in mind.

## The Bottom Line

All print buyers—regardless of whether they categorize themselves as such—understand the components or steps that are required to acquire print. As a PSP, the path that you must take to sell to them can be influenced by many factors, including competing projects, paradigms that might have been established years ago, and the speed of business. Does your prospect simply go with the flow, or are they constantly seeking new and innovative ways to deliver critical communications? The answer to this question might change based on the types of questions that you ask. For today's PSPs, the opportunity lies in understanding how business gets done in today's ever evolving and increasingly complex communication world.



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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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