

Well begun is half done

The importance of production efficiency

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Make the most of your time

One way to maximise your available production time is to streamline your pre-press processes. But if that means cutting corners preparing the job for production, then your print quality can suffer. So you need to concentrate on the aspects of preproduction workflow which won't impinge on quality.

Communication

Communication between customer, salesman and production is the key. And paradoxically although printers are actually in the communication business their own communication is often, let's face it, pretty abysmal. Customers' requirements get misinterpreted, job sheets get mistyped, or worse still, missing

information is simply guessed rather than properly verified.

Get it right at the outset

As with any such process the most cost-effective time to rectify any mistakes is right at the outset. That's when you should work hard to remove any ambiguities, and to clarify the customer's requirements. The further into the printing process the job gets the more expensive it is to make changes. So the inescapable conclusion is that your sales people have to learn to communicate effectively. Right at the outset – even before the job is quoted if possible – they must assemble the necessary specification accurately.

Planning

So before you can even quote a job, you should know enough about it to plan exactly how your shop-floor will produce it. You should know what resources are required, what equipment, and the estimated amount of paper and time needed. And this plan is required before the production process starts – even before you accept the job. All of which

allows a company to use its production capacity to the full.

Consistency

Consistency in the job sheet (or job ticket) is essential, because that's the key document for all the departments from origination through to finishing. Computer-generated job tickets ensure greater consistency, and reduce the likelihood of mistakes.

Streamline

To streamline the pre-production stage, it also pays to reduce the number of people involved at the front end to a minimum. If the job has to go from the salesman to the customer service department to the estimator, and then the planner, time is wasted, profit is lost, mistakes creep in and inefficiency grows. Moreover no one person will then be familiar with the whole job – just his or her own domain. So the customer can find himself repeating himself over and over again to different people. So keep the pre-press communications line as short as possible.

You know it makes sense! 