

THE POWER OF PERSONALIZATION

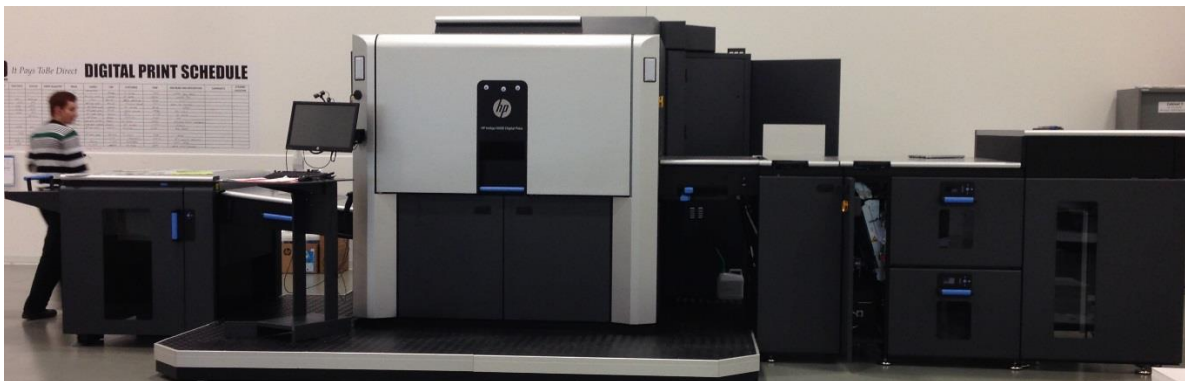
TOBE DIRECT

Most marketers can remember a time when traditional marketing tactics such as mail, print newsletters and catalogs were sent in bulk to large audiences throughout the life of a direct marketing campaign. Now, thanks to a new era of digital and online communication, the landscape of marketing has changed drastically, making the impact of previous approaches less than desirable.

Over the past decade, the widespread adoption of channels such as email, mobile, and social media, are enabling marketers to access critical consumer data that can be leveraged to better target and engage “always on” consumers. Whether these consumers are businesses or individuals, the immediate availability of information provided by the internet has made it harder than ever for marketing campaigns to effectively stick.

For this reason, marketing departments are doing away with bulk campaigns, and focusing their efforts on personalizing their messages. Now, the businesses finding the most success are the ones that are reaching their consumers through personalized and customer-centric, multi-channel campaigns. For many marketers, achieving this level of personalization is viewed as challenging and expensive. Fortunately, due to the recent surge of online advancements, the solution is as easy as finding a printer (or) marketing service provider that is equipped with the right services and technology.

Technology such as a *variable digital press*, which is variable data capable – meaning personalization can be added to any aspect of printed marketing materials – can add an effective touch to any campaign. For example, with the use of this press, and the right data and marketing services, businesses can create highly personalized direct mail campaigns that incorporate multi-channel touch points, ensuring higher response rates to the targeted list of recipients.



Tobe Direct's HP Indigo 10000 – the largest variable digital press on the market.

Why Personalization Matters

It's no secret why variable print communication produces higher response rates than the static print materials used more frequently in the past. Variable data print (VDP) enables brands to not only market to prospects directly by using their names and other personal information, but also by targeting their emotions, interests, location, and so much more. VDP gives printers the capability to change colors, images, and text based on an endless variety of segmenting data.

According to a Responsys [survey](#) nearly half (44%) of consumers are less responsive to mass marketing messages than ever before. Now, with the availability and power of the variable digital press, marketers have countless options to incorporate personalized messages and offers into direct mail pieces with subtle style. For example, the digital press can automatically insert personalized maps that can show the route from each recipient's address to the store or business executing the campaign. It can also change the image or the artwork to reflect the interests or business segments of the recipients, and much more.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a variable digital press is its ability to incorporate powerful cross-channel components to direct mail pieces. For example, by adding a personalized URL (pURL) or generic URL (gURL) to a direct mail piece, the promotion is able to cross from the physical realm to digital. Giving recipients the option to go on their computers or mobile devices to access more information adds immense value to the campaign, as well as the brand behind it.



Campaign incorporates multiple channels: mail, pURL, YouTube video

Once multi-channel and cross media elements are added to a direct mail campaign, consumers are given the opportunity to interact with and learn more about the brand, while receiving another highly personalized experience online. The result is powerful print communications that increase the motivation for recipients to respond, whereby building significant brand loyalty, and enabling sales to collect valuable data to measure and mark their campaigns.

Case Study: Volvo Cars of America, LLC

A real-life case study, found in HP's Direct Marketing Tool Kit, cites Volvo America LLC's substantial return on investment from its recent cross-channel direct mail campaign.

With the objective of selling and increasing awareness of new Volvo vehicles to both current customers, as well as competitive car owners, Volvo created a direct mail campaign designed to increase dealership visits and maintain customer loyalty.

Leveraging the variable digital press, Volvo was able to create personalized direct mail marketing materials that included mobile coupons in its e-newsletters. Mailers led to a pURL, including additional information, offers tailored to the recipient, and a questionnaire, which prompted Volvo's business experts to follow up with respondents.

The results were significant: response rates reached .29% for accessing the pURL, and 46.2% for completing the questionnaire. The results of the campaign were so significant that they helped Volvo achieve the American Business Award's Stevie Award in the "Best Direct Response/Direct Mail" category.

Region	% Accessing pURL	% Completing Survey	# Vehicles Sold
Boston	0.18%	39.1%	152
Hartford	0.27%	30.0%	86
Philadelphia	0.29%	39.9%	79
Providence	0.17%	42.6%	33
Tri-State	0.25%	46.2%	613

Conclusion

With businesses seeing significant response rates that are consistently improving over time, it's clear that well-designed and well-executed personalized cross-channel direct mail campaigns are worth their weight in gold. For the direct mail and print industry, personalization has had a particularly significant impact. Typical response rates for traditional static direct mail are approximately 1.5% - 3.4% - but with personalization, response rates jump to 28%.

Marketers therefore need to leverage the right tools and technologies that can quickly and cost-effectively incorporate relevant content into their messages, and create personalized experiences aimed to increase response rates and drive long-term customer engagement.

Thanks to VDP, printers are able to offer businesses the ability to market directly to other businesses or consumers with impact, style and the coveted personalization trend that all professions will be striving to achieve in their 2014 marketing campaigns.