



Survey Helps In-plant

Justify Digital Press

After detailed customer surveying, University of Nebraska Medical Center Printing Services discovered it needed a digital press. It added one, and now business is booming.

By Bob Neubauer

WHEN THE University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) asked staff and students to rate the service they were getting from university departments in 2008, the results were enlightening. Both faculty and students complained about the level of service being offered in all business services and financial departments. That included UNMC's 21-employee Printing Services department.

Standing with the University of Nebraska Medical Center's new Presstek 34DI direct imaging offset press are (from the left) Sandy Goynes, Ken Butler and Kevin Gamble.

Though this information was useful, it was not enough for Manager Lori Fuller. She wanted more specific data about what customers needed from the in-plant and how her staff could provide better service. After all, the in-plant had a lot of competition in Omaha.

Though the in-plant had already been surveying customers via phone and e-mail, customers weren't always candid, and the surveying process was not convenient for them.

"We couldn't get the detail that we wanted," Fuller says.

So when she learned that her MIS vendor, Enterprise Print Management Solutions (EPMS), was rolling out a surveying module called CustomerAlert, in partnership with Survey Advantage, she jumped at the opportunity to use it. She was able to select jobs, e-mail personalized surveys after they were completed and track responses back to specific job orders. The detailed information she received revealed that the in-plant was losing a large amount of four-color work due to its lack of a four-color digital press. So to capture that business, the in-plant used survey data to justify the purchase of a new Presstek 34DI direct imaging offset press.

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—Lori Fuller



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Complicated Installation

The 34DI was installed in late July—a process that presented its own challenges, since the press would not fit through the door.

“So we literally had to go outside and lift it on one of those big cranes up through the second story window,” she says.

The in-plant had also investigated the Xerox iGen3 and an HP Indigo digital press, but found the quality level and price of the Presstek 34DI to be better.

“The registration is dead on, on the DI press,” Fuller says. This is important for the brochures, newsletters, invitations and other products the shop produces on the press.

Three employees were trained to run the press, including Kevin Gamble from the Copy Center Operation, who had no previous offset experience. Despite that, he says the transition was easy. He notes that running the DI is similar in some ways to running the shop’s Xerox 8000. He says that some jobs previously run on the 8000, like postcards and certain newsletters, have been switched to the 34DI.

Fuller says the 8000 is great for runs up to about 1,000, but above that it becomes costly. The 34DI fits nicely here, cost-effectively producing runs between 1,000 and 10,000.

“There’s a definite niche that we needed to fill,” she says.

Along with the DI press, Printing Services has added a new 44” Epson Stylus Pro 9880 proofer. The shop also has two 42” HP Designjet 5500 wide-format thermal ink-jet printers, which it uses to satisfy a big demand for posters from the student population. The shop does its own mounting and laminating.

Surveys Allow Other Improvements

Using the CustomerAlert surveying module has helped the in-plant improve its services in other ways too. Fuller learned that a lot of promotional pieces were being sent to outside printers. The shop has worked to bring those back in-house.

She also learned, through the surveys, that customers wanted an invoice *with* the finished job rather than at the end of the month.

“We didn’t realize that a lot of them wanted that,” she says. The shop now does it this way.

Another revelation: “We found out that they weren’t getting calls back in a timely manner, so we were able to address that,” she says.

Fuller notes that using CustomerAlert to send out surveys takes just five minutes each week. She usually sends them out on Monday mornings. Because EPMS captures the last survey date for each contact, Fuller can avoid over surveying customers. She says she receives a 20-30 percent response rate. Customers, she adds, are always happy when she calls them back about their comments, and many times they reveal other information about their personal preferences. This helps the shop tailor its service to meet individual needs.

Fuller says that because CustomerAlert is a pay-by-the-month module, she can stop using it for a while if she wishes. So far, though, that hasn’t happened.

“It’s turned out to work out so well for us that we have been doing it every month,” she reports.

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