



## The Chaos Theory

Why the procurement of printing is generally inefficient, wasteful and chaotic.

In this Newsletter we have tried to cover some of the important issues pertinent to the procurement and management of printing and mailing. Printing is too often associated with pre and post production problems, wastage and high cost. Our aim is to explain why this is and what can be done about it.

Printing straddles most departments within an organisation from marketing, through to membership, finance and administration. And print procurement is normally handled on an ad hoc basis by a number of different individuals from across the organisation. Over ordering leads to wastage and under ordering is economically inefficient.

Printing itself is technical and the options often bewildering. Procurement requires experience and skill to ensure brand quality is not compromised and costs are controlled. Artwork and design is a potential minefield on its own let alone having to negotiate the intricacies of fonts, logo's and colours to ensure their compliance to organisational guidelines.

Please complete the survey enclosed with this Newsletter (or online at [www.computastat-group.co.uk/survey.htm](http://www.computastat-group.co.uk/survey.htm)) and find out if you would benefit from the Computastat Group's Print Management Programme.

### Inside this Issue

- Case Study - The British Psychological Society
- Ramblings of an Old Stager
- The Features and Benefits of Print Management
- Focus on Charities
- Top Tip!

Despite the demise of the traditional printing plate in favour of digital origination, colour still causes a lot of problems. In order to achieve the best possible result without over spending on budgets it's essential to understand the relationship between pantone colours and CMYK and also how colour reacts to different substrates and finishes.

Many printed items may well be part of a mail pack in which case laser compatibility, stock size and weight may play a part. And once an item is printed there are further issues to consider such as storage and distribution.

Without an understanding of printing processes and finishing options the purchase of printed materials is something of a lottery, may well fall short of expectations and often cost more than it should.

Even for those with years of experience, procurement may be daunting when faced with complicated specifications and multiple quotations. Its time consuming, labour intensive and the inclination to take a short cut is sometimes overwhelming.

**The answer to this is print management. A specialist PM organisation is able to organise, advise, monitor, provide management information, online stock systems and more. And through organisational improvements, optimum buying and management information, print management will almost inevitably save you money.**

# Case Study - The British Psychological Society

The British Psychological Society was introduced to the Computastat Group's print management programme in 2011 to overcome a number of operational issues. Principally, they were looking to organise the printing and distribution of their marketing literature. Their office in Leicester was straining under mounds of palletized boxes of brochures, leaflets, letterheads, posters, display materials and promotional goods. Their underground car park contained more pallets of stationery than cars!

Furthermore, organising and following-up quotations, marrying-up numerous and varied invoices to dispatch notes and keeping track of where items were stored was both time consuming and difficult. Budgeting was a long winded process as management information was scarce and almost impossible to accurately collate from numerous and various sources. Print and brand quality control was compromised.

## Stock Control and online Systems

Like many membership organisations BPS have an extensive branch network with specialist groups and divisions. Many of these have operated independently for many years and have their own identity and brand. As a professional body with over 40,000 members and a worldwide reputation the BPS are keen to maintain brand integrity by ensuring all printed materials produced at central and regional level are within specified brand guidelines.

As part of the Computastat Group PM Programme BPS have access to a tailor-made online system which caters for stock call-offs and the printing of personalised items such as event posters, regional leaflets, promotional pens and divisional letterheads, business cards and compliment slips. The system allows BPS to protect their brand by creating templates for groups, divisions and regions which may be personalised with local addresses or divisional logos.

The system is flexible and has all the control and security features that you would expect from a state-of-the-art stock control system.

*"We have a longstanding relationship with Computastat and are delighted that this has developed so that they now provide print management, branded promotional gifts and mailing services for us. They have always been a pleasure to deal with - nothing is too much trouble and the whole team is efficient, personable and courteous. We wouldn't hesitate in encouraging others to use their services!"*

**Kate Waters, Marketing BPS**

## Administration

Perhaps one of the main benefits of PM for the BPS is the reduction in monthly administration. They operate within a Service Level Agreement which specifies exactly what is required on a monthly basis and administration is now very simple. They receive one consolidated monthly invoice which covers all printing and distribution for the previous month. The invoice is accompanied by a comprehensive report which details stock movements, low stock levels and cross references to cost centres to make invoice allocation a quick and simple task.

## Scope of Service

The scope of the Computastat Group's PM programme is extensive and the benefits to the BPS are far reaching and include:

- Control of print and mailing budget
- Less wastage
- Stock ordering quantities are based on historical data rather than guesswork
- Administration time has been cut
- Brand is better controlled
- Service to regions and divisions has improved
- Quality control has improved
- Artwork is controlled and held in one location

**And lastly, printing and mailing costs have been cut. All the services outlined above are provided by the Computastat Group FOC as part of their Print Management Programme.**

## Ramblings of an Old Stager

### Do you embrace progress or shy away from it?

I have worked for Membership based organisations for the majority of my adult life and have seen enormous change. It's hardly surprising that the electronic database stands out as the development with the most far reaching implications.

For those of you who started their working life after the invention of the office computer just imagine for a few minutes what your life would be like if the typewriter and card index systems were the mainstays of the office environment! Hard to imagine isn't it? But maybe even harder to imagine is that back in the early 1980's, quite a number of senior managers were highly suspicious of the computer and resisted its introduction as though it were an instrument of the very devil himself!

### New Ideas

Although technology moves on, 'change' is still resisted by many. It's easier to maintain the status quo than to rock the boat. Introducing 'change' may result in short term headaches and it means putting your neck on the line! But it also means more rewards for those prepared to meet the challenge.

From my perspective the frustration of it all is that sometimes you really can provide a product or service which would make a significant and positive difference but cannot get passed first base because of a reluctance of some to embrace the possibilities of 'change'.

# The Features and Benefits of Print Management



Print Management is complex and far reaching with implications for all departments within your organisation. It is as relevant to marketing and membership as it is to administration and finance.

But perhaps it's most relevant to the senior management team who hold overall operational and financial responsibility.

**It has so many advantages and if introduced properly very few disadvantages. It will almost without question save you money, help you control budgets, improve brand consistency and give you many other benefits along the way.**

Opposite I summarise the main features and benefits of a print management service:

After many years of working in the sector it is my genuine belief that most membership organisations of any size would benefit from a programme of print management.

In my humble opinion, the management of printing and mailing is something that most membership organisations do not do well. Most waste, not inconsiderable amounts of money and resource because, for a variety of reasons, they have never seriously investigated the benefits of properly organised print management. I think the reason maybe largely because printing cuts across many disciplines and often no-one, below the head honcho, has total responsibility for its procurement.

**The print management equation is quite simple: if you place all (or most) of your printing with a print management company you will pay less for your printing and will get a number of important services free of charge. Its neither magic nor philanthropy on the part of the PM Company; its economies of scale and the benefits, attributable to good organisation.**

Think about it. Your organisation purchase printed items; letterheads, business cards, leaflets, brochures, application forms, folders, welcome packs, membership cards, banners, display stands, promotional goods and more. If you procure on an ad hoc basis from a number of printers you are a small customer to them all. On the other hand, if you buy all your printing from one specialist PM company you are transformed into an important customer with all the added advantages. You can expect an online stock system, management reports, consolidated invoices, free advice and samples; in short the red carpet will be rolled out!

## The future of Print Management

If I gaze into my crystal ball which I am apt to do on occasions, I predict that, in time most organisations will stumble across print management. And once they taste the forbidden fruit they will be hooked for life and there will be no turning back. Marketeers, administrators and accountants will all recognize the financial and organisational benefits of print management and wonder why they had not imbibed many years before!

- 1. Save money.** Print management will almost certainly save you money through improved buying patterns, economies of scale and streamlined storage and distribution. There are also indirect savings to be made though reduced administration and improved reporting.
- 2. Online call-off of centrally warehoused stock items.** All printed items may be centrally stored and called off via a secure website with real time stock control. The online system will incorporate all the usual functionality and security features you would expect from a modern stock control system (and is provided free of charge by the Computastat Group)
- 3. Control and management of all printed items.** A print management programme puts you in total control of all your printing and associated costs. Whether you simply wish to know what is being held in stock or you want a detailed analysis providing cost centre allocation of invoices, the system will deliver.
- 4. Budgeting.** All costs of design, artworking, printing, warehousing and distribution can be easily identified to make the budgeting process easier and more accurate.
- 5. Reduced administration.** Through dealing with one organisation rather than a plethora of different printers, your own administration will be far simpler. No more going out for quotations, chasing suppliers, interpreting and collating information or marrying invoices to delivery notes.
- 6. Expertise / advice / samples.** You can benefit from free of charge expert advice and support from true membership or Voluntary Sector specialists.
- 7. Organisational identity guidelines.** By placing all your printing with one source you can expect more precise and accurate adherence to organisational guidelines. Even in the 21st century printing is not an exact science and needs careful management. You will no longer have to concern yourself with why printer A's interpretation of your corporate colour is not the same as printer B's.
- 8. Online ordering of personalised items.** The online system caters for personalised, as well as stock items via a predetermined template. So, for example, if you wish to order personalised leaflets, posters or business cards via the system. Ideal to protect your brand if you have regions or branches which require their own supplies.
- 9. Archiving and control of artwork, images and samples.** Easy access and control of all your artwork and images. When you use a number of different printers and designers it is time consuming just to keeping tabs on where your artwork is stored let alone potential problems of copy write and image ownership.
- 10. Single point of contact.** Having a single point of contact makes life so much easier. All queries dealt with through one person who has all information to hand. All your printing may be managed and quality controlled by a specialist.

For more information about the Computastat Group's Print Management Programme please contact us on 01293 773221 or email [membership@computastat-group.co.uk](mailto:membership@computastat-group.co.uk)



## Charities

### Make the most of your communications

As a Charity, you rely on the generosity of your members and supporters for funding. As such, appeal letters, subscription renewals, welcome packs, event posters and membership application forms are all vital communications. They represent the life blood of your organisation; the means by which you raise the bulk of your revenue.

So it's crucial to get the most from these documents and mailings. A specialist Print Management company can help by advising on content, design, mailing configuration, postage options and much else. This could be by designing the reply slip to bolster response rates, by ensuring the pack is configured to attract the best postal discounts or it could be ensuring rules on Gift Aid or direct debit are adhered to and that VAT rates are applied correctly.

Much of this advice and help is given free of charge as part of the service. Certainly, at the Computastat Group we will do all we can to use our experience and expertise to help you achieve your goals and objectives.

Printing and mailing is complex and there are so many things to consider. The Computastat Group has many years of experience of managing, designing, printing and mailing for membership and donor based charities, societies and associations.

## Top Tip

Don't be afraid to ask for help and advice. If you are working with a voluntary sector or membership specialist the chances are that they will have plenty of experience which you can tap into. Very often advice will be offered free of charge. If you don't ask you don't get.

Often advice can take the form of a five minute conversation or it could involve retrieving samples from previous projects. At the Computastat Group we are designing, printing and mailing on a daily basis so have many examples, anecdotes and experiences which they can share with you.

**What has worked well in the past and what, indeed, has not. We are willing and happy to share our experiences. Please ask!**

## Our Services

- Design, Print & Mailing (including storage and distribution)
- Subscription Renewals & Reminders (full bureau service)
- Enquirer's Packs
- Welcome Packs
- Questionnaires & Surveys
- Lapsed Member Reactivation & Telephone Campaigns
- Membership Cards
- Fundraising Consultancy & Appeal Mailings
- Legacy Marketing
- Data Cleaning & Profiling
- Database Development
- Gift Aid Auditing & Promotion
- Online Print Ordering & Management
- Administration & Support Services
- Response Handling & Fulfilment
- Magazines & Newsletters
- Promotional Leaflets & Brochures

**The Computastat Group** specialise in membership marketing. Our focus is to help our clients to increase membership and improve on their return on investment. We have 20 years of experience working with some of the largest and most successful membership organisations in the UK as well as many smaller institutions, associations and charities.

### Print Management Audit

Why not take advantage of a **free of charge** Computastat Group Print Management audit?

During a PM audit we analyse how you purchase and manage the processes of buying, storing and distributing printed materials. If you allow us access to relevant invoices or costs we can demonstrate how we can reduce your costs and improve the level of service you are receiving.

For a free consultation please contact Andrew Atiyah, on 01293 773221 or email [membership@computastat-group.co.uk](mailto:membership@computastat-group.co.uk)

Written by:

**Andrew Atiyah** – With a background in finance, marketing and general management and over 25 years experience of working with the not-for-profit / membership arena Andrew focuses his attention on helping clients improve their ROI. With an in-depth understanding of database marketing techniques Andrew has written and run training programmes and seminars on membership and related subjects.

**Nick Pease** – Communications and copywriting: Nick is a highly experienced, award-winning copywriter who has worked for some of the most creative and successful London agencies (McCann-Erickson, TBWA, Publicis, The Creative Business). Over the years Nick has worked in every business sector and every medium, from television and radio through to direct marketing, B2B and online. Within Nick's experience he has worked with a number of membership-based organisations, including Amnesty International, Greenpeace, RNLI and The Royal Photographic Society.

Published by:

Computastat Group Limited,  
Smallmead House, Smallmead,  
Horley, Surrey, RH6 9LW

t: 01293 773221

f: 01293 786747

[membership@computastat-group.co.uk](mailto:membership@computastat-group.co.uk)

[www.computastat-group.co.uk](http://www.computastat-group.co.uk)



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