

Who Owns Print? By Christian Bell

Indeed it's a good question and we may also want to ask "Who should Own Print". Corporations spend considerable time and effort managing and maximising investment in areas such as IT, HR, Facilities and other direct spend areas. However they typically overlook a huge but hidden commodity – Print.

If we agree with Aberdeen that between 2-3% of a corporates ENTIRE spend is print this oversight is a major one. One reason why this occurs notes Christian Bell from POINT SA is that the commodity is frequently 'ownerless'.

Bell continues "Who does and who should own this significant commodity. Marketing would seem to be the obvious answer but then we need to consider procurement or even Finance. One challenge in embarking on a print management programme is to find the correct business sponsor. Savings of 20% + which we are proving should be motivational enough, but in reality corporates are caught up with finding the true 'owner'. These projects are either delayed or worse still shelved as a result of this.

In my view Procurement should take the lead and take proof of concept to the Marketing department. Procurement are best placed to lead a print management programme but they need to be trusted by Marketing to deliver the same quality and delivery timescales. The irony is that marketing typically find the process threatening or indeed believe that they can deliver the savings themselves. The reality is very different. Savings are always achievable by streamlining vendor numbers, ensuring the print work is routed to the most capable supplier and managing the process more closely. However the experience of POINT shows that these savings are small compared to what can be delivered by specialist print management companies. These independent vendors bring highly experienced print buyers and web based technology to the party.

Furthermore , continues Bell, marketing print may only represent 40% of the entire spend, so we need to look deeper and wider to find the silos. Other areas with major spends are Corporate affairs, learning/development, HR, transactional print and Corporate Social Responsibility. Centralising these areas of spend may seem daunting but if they can be routed through a central print management centre (PMC) the job is made simple. Compliance needs to be driven from on high. Once the PMC is established all printed items can be procured in a far more efficient manner. Savings are leveraged further by economies of scale, paper management programmes, Digital Asset Management libraries and variable data solutions for business cards for example.

A true PMC is much more about supply chain value-add than just savings. POINT are one of the few companies that can offer a broad based approach to the solution. Delivering savings of 34% in some cases is a significant local success story, but we look 'outside the box' also. The experience we have gained from over 3 years' active print management best places us to run the PMS and secure the Ownership.

Who owns Print? We do. From a business card to POS to the Report & Accounts to Outdoor to Training Manuals and everything in between. The PMC is more than just self funding we typically deliver 300% ROI on top. The key is to make the decision to embark!

