

Overview

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Eliminating physical inserts

A print service bureau wants to reduce the number of physical inserts that they have to add to envelopes by printing full color electronic inserts in blank areas on credit card statements.

The print service bureau prints statements and one-to-one advertising brochures for a variety of customers. The customers send their resources and print job data to the service bureau. The pre-press staff uses a document composition tool to create AFP jobs. The AFP print jobs are submitted to RICOH ProcessDirector, which sends them to ten duplex InfoPrint 4100 systems. After the jobs are printed, they go to post-processing to be folded, inserted, and mailed.

The service bureau asks all their customers to submit required resources with every print job; they do not store resources indefinitely. Many of their customers (such as credit card companies) include inserts in the envelope with their statements. Some problems with this arrangement are:

- Inserters often ruin mailpieces, so they frequently have to reprint individual statements. Reprinting adds time and cost to the process.
- Customers tend to ignore the inserts, separating them from the statement immediately after opening the envelope and discarding them.

The service bureau would like expand its offerings to include full-color variable-data printed using an AFP color solution. They also think that they can save time, money, and paper by reducing the complexity of the tasks that their inserters do. If the inserter only has to fold each statement and put it in an envelope (instead of adding two more sheets of paper, folding, and inserting), it has fewer opportunities for ruining mailpieces.

The solution

The service bureau works with the Ricoh team to create a solution based on its existing process and environment that will help their customers move away from using physical inserts for advertising and toward electronic inserts. They hope to eliminate one of their inserters by printing full color ads directly in blank areas or on sides of customer statements.

If a credit card company can identify data and rules that determine the characteristics of each customer, the electronic inserts can be targeted for each statement. For example, the bill could show an ad for a minivan, a sports car, or a motorcycle depending on the demographics of the customer.

Implementation

To take advantage of this new color capability, the service bureau makes a few changes to their workflow:

- They add a duplex InfoPrint 5000 system and configure RICOH ProcessDirector to submit print jobs to it.
- They give guidelines to their customers so that it includes guidelines for using color images and logos in addition to fonts and graphics.
- They train the pre-press department is trained to use a graphics application for color profile management and image normalization.
- They add a step to their process to make sure that their customers have followed the guidelines. If they have not, the pre-press staff adjusts the resolution and input color profiles to conform to the guidelines before they submit the print job.

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