

PressLines

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Should You Fulfill Your Own Print and Promotions?

Today's business model requires marketers to meet unique and dynamic fulfillment requirements. Customers, whether they are an in-house sales team, a distributor network, retail outlets or end consumers, expect to receive materials quickly.

These new market realities challenge many mid-market organizations to develop the supply-chain management expertise to fulfill frequent orders with speed and accuracy while also meeting the exacting requirements of each customer. Yet coordinating multiple vendors for printing, fulfillment and distribution is a time-consuming hassle that can easily spiral out of control.

That's why marketers increasingly outsource their

literature fulfillment requirements to outside specialists – often their printers. Good print and fulfillment outsourcing partners offer the flexibility to efficiently handle complete programs as well as ala carte services.

What to Look for in a Fulfillment Partner

Seek a partner company that understands every aspect of the fulfillment value chain and provides these important core competencies and benefits:

■ **Supply Chain Visibility.** Gaining greater visibility into the supply chain gives you the information you need to manage your business from a demand-based perspective. Look for suppliers that can provide real-time inventory reports to trigger reorders as well as track your shipments from the time they leave the shipping dock until they arrive at their destination.

■ **Rapid Response.** Does the company have the experience, automation and supply-chain knowledge to fulfill orders at the speed and frequency your customers require? Can their systems deliver complete, accurate orders in rapid cycle times customizable to meet your needs? Combining print and fulfillment in one efficient facility can also cut cycle times while reducing costs.

■ **Logistics Management.** Fulfillment partners should be experts at managing your critical inbound and outbound shipping events to attain the optimum balance of cost and speed. Their systems should have the ability to "rate shop" alternative carriers by different Zip Codes as well as identify opportunities to consolidate shipments for even greater savings.

■ **Economies of Scale.** A larger ➤



fulfillment operation often has the ability to negotiate better freight rates than either you or smaller service providers. Transportation is a price-per-pound-and-mile world, so teaming up with a company that has volume and negotiating clout is much to your advantage.

■ **Stability and Commitment.**

Fulfillment operations tend to

come and go. Look for a partner with a longstanding track record and the resources to invest in new capabilities.

■ **Continuous Improvement.** The marketplace constantly changes, and you want a partner that doesn't accept status quo. Your fulfillment source should periodically review pre-established fulfillment

and distribution metrics, which provide an ongoing opportunity to evaluate performance and to better meet your changing business strategies.

■ **Improved Asset Allocation.**

Outsourcing to the right partner instantly gives you world-class fulfillment services without incurring the infrastructure costs. You can ►

Ripon puts Affinity's Fulfillment in Motion

Affinity describes itself as America's champion for the fun, freedom and adventure of Recreation in Motion – and with good reason. The company is one of the nation's largest providers of outdoor recreation media and clubs, all of which serve America's recreation vehicle and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. If there's a North American enjoying the outdoors, there's an Affinity club, media outlet or event dedicated to that consumer. The company's four business units consist of:

- Affinity Media
- Affinity Clubs
- Affinity Events
- Affinity Ventures

A Long-term Relationship Based on Trust

As you can imagine, such a diverse offering requires a lot of literature fulfillment services, and Affinity entrusts several major components to Ripon Printers. Those include the Good Sam Network (the RV equivalent of five-star camping grounds) fulfillment needs as well as bulk and single-copy book orders.

"Ripon Printers has provided both fulfillment and book printing services for Trailer Life Publication for more than a decade," says Kim Souza, who manages the program. "We do not consider them a vendor. We consider them a partner in our business. They are responsive, respectful and they always go the extra steps to support our changing business needs. From printing, to storage, to

efficient and cost-effective fulfillment, we can count on them to keep us and our customers happy."

"It's not so much what Ripon does," echoes Bulk Sales and Good Sam Network Manager Debbie Brown, "but how they do it. I can't praise Ripon's fulfillment specialist, Luann Packer, and her team enough for contacting me whenever there is the slightest thing out of whack. So many fulfillment houses are willing to just let things slide."

Handling All the Details

More specifically, Luann checks for electronic notifications at least twice daily indicating order requests. Streamlining the process was Ripon Printers' IS department's ability to automatically route Affinity's ftp transmissions directly to fulfillment. Luann and her team then prepare and ship custom multi-component kits that include letters, stickers, logos, certificates and a number of other items the campground properties use in promoting themselves as Good Sam's Parks.

According to Brown, "Ripon makes sending files and everything else so easy. Once I know a file is delivered, my job is done."

And that gives everyone, including Debbie and Kim, more time to put Recreation in Motion.

For more information about Affinity's wide range of programs, please visit www.affinitygroup.com. To learn how Ripon Printers can help provide fast, accurate and cost-effective fulfillment solutions for you, please contact your representative or send an email inquiry to sales@riponprinters.com.

Ripon's Fulfillment Services

- Demand-based strategy
- Offset & digital hybrid print solutions
- Warehouse management
- Online order processing & management
- Digital storefronts
- Real-time reporting
- Print customization
- Logistics management
- Packaging & kitting
- Returns processing

focus your financial and human assets more strategically in areas such as product development, marketing and customer service. Outsourcing also moves fulfillment from a fixed to a variable expense.

Fulfillment and Distribution Services at Ripon Printers

Ripon provides cost- and time-efficient fulfillment and distribution solutions that reflect the high-level performance and attentive service you expect from Ripon. We have the capability to handle virtually any volume requirements, and our central location offers advantages for national distribution.

Establishing a fulfillment and distribution program with Ripon Printers is easy and hassle-free. To learn more about our fulfillment and distribution services, please contact your representative or send an email request to sales@riponprinters.com. You can also find Technical Information Sheets about our services by visiting www.riponprinters.com, or see the Mailing & Fulfillment section of our new video at www.riponprinters.com/fulfill.jsp. **RIPON**

I Hate to See a Good Deal go to Waste!

I have a confession to make. I love coupons and deals! It was painful for me a few Mondays ago to throw away an unused coupon for a free Angus Burger Snack Wrap from McDonalds. It had expired the night before, and my wife, Jeanne, talked some sense into me – getting the snack wrap and storing it in the refrigerator wasn't the best idea.

I'm also thinking about other deals today as I have an invitation this morning to go to the new Cousin's Subs at lunch to celebrate their grand opening with – get this – complimentary sandwiches, chips and cookies. While I can't go, I've been thinking hard about who I can pass this on to who might enjoy taking advantage of the invitation. I hate to see a good deal go to waste.

I suspect no one likes to waste a good opportunity, although how you define a "good opportunity" surely is different for each person. Sometimes it's just like finding a quarter on the ground – an unexpected bonus.

I tell the story often at Ripon Printers about how, when we give bonuses, employees are grateful but yet it's almost as though it's no big deal. However, the time



Andy Lyke

we gave out popsicles, you would have thought we were giving out gold! The difference? The bonuses are kind of expected, whereas we surprised people with the popsicles. As the MasterCard ad states, "Priceless!"

Our mission at Ripon Printers is "Committed to delivering Customer Delight," and hopefully we have found ways to delight you. While it wouldn't be a surprise, if there are ways we can further add delight to your interactions with us, please let us know. That would delight me much more than a coupon from McDonalds! **RIPON**



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FIRST CLASS MAIL
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Ripon Printers is a
Wisconsin Green Tier Participant

4 PressLines

2010 Contest Year ends with a Bang!

We are pleased to report success in two of the last print contests of the season.

In the 2010 Premier Print Awards – also known as the “Benny” competition, we received three Certificates of Merit. Sponsored by the Printing Industries of America for 61 years, this competition is often called the world’s most prestigious international print competition. This year, 3,200 entries were submitted with 1,070 pieces honored with one of three awards.

One of our three winning pieces – INSIDE NEW YORK 2010 –

garnered a triple contest play. In this competition, it won a third in the directories and source books category. In the Printing Industries of Wisconsin Badger Competition, it earned a Best of Category – first place in the soft cover books category. Another first place came in the Web Offset Association Print Contest in the soft cover, hard cover books category.

Our other winners were in web press printing – 1, 2 or 3 colors on coated or uncoated paper; and in the booklet or brochure series – digitally printed handbooks we did for our in-house video series.

This is the first year we submitted entries into the Gold Ink Awards and we were honored with a winner! The North American Publishing Company has been sponsoring this competition for 23 years. This year there were 1,200 entries in 47 categories.

Our homegrown “Great Tips!” series – complete with storage case – earned a silver award. Produced on our Canon imagePRESS C6000 color digital printer, these mini books cover Premedia, Bindery, Printing, Inkjet & Mailing, Comail and Marketing Do’s & Don’ts. Illustrated in full color and packaged as a box set, they are available upon request! **RIPON**