

# 10 Signs That it's Time to Outsource Your Print Management

Retail signage, promotional collateral, displays, direct mailers and print marketing—you need to deliver these brand-defining touchpoints while keeping costs low, ROI high, and schedules on time.

## ARE THESE 10 INEFFICIENCIES HOLDING YOU BACK?

- 1 Rising Costs of Procurement and Distribution**  
 If brand innovation and growth lead to higher rather than lower total costs, something is amiss. Outside of procurement, also consider the efficiency of creative, fulfillment, and distribution processes.
- 2 Missed Deadlines, Leading to Rush Fees and Lost Opportunities**  
 If you're frequently missing deadlines or being charged special rush fees, there is probably an efficiency bottleneck somewhere in your process. Delays can mean missed opportunities.
- 3 Declining Material Quality**  
 Print materials often create first impressions of your brand. If you notice declines in consistency and quality, a process inefficiency may be cutting into profit margins while leaving customers unimpressed.
- 4 Lack of Buying Insight, Leading to Waste**  
 Waste can accumulate in warehouses, retail locations, and even salespeople's trunks. Without visibility into your true needs and what is or isn't being used, your processes can't be fully efficient.
- 5 Rogue Spending by Other Departments**  
 Employees may circumvent approved purchasing procedures, wanting to "just get it done." This can lead to wasteful duplication, lost opportunities for leveraging spend, and a culture of distrust and rivalry.



### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

when it comes to print procurement, a lack of knowledge can have serious consequences.



## WORKING TOGETHER

Marketing and procurement should be working towards the same goals: improving revenues, lowering costs, and winning more customers.

- 6 Inconsistent Output Due to Lack of Defined Standards**  
Wrong Pantone colors, inconsistent substrates & sizes, and off-brand content make a poor impression. Hidden inefficiencies in your process can compromise standards across print orders and channels.
- 7 Limited Feedback Loop With End Users**  
You can't improve unless you know what's working and what isn't. Without a built-in method for soliciting, evaluating, and implementing feedback, your process is not as efficient as it should be.
- 8 Inability to Shift to Different Options Due to Vendor Limitations**  
You need the ability to pivot to different vendors or outputs based on changing needs and different locations. If you're locked into a small handful of approved vendors, you can't stay appropriately nimble in your marketing efforts.
- 9 Ill-Defined Process and/or Lack of Supporting Technology**  
Without clearly defined best practices and the technology stack required to execute them, chances are that systematic inefficiencies are undermining your profit margins and delivery timelines.
- 10 Misaligned Incentives Between Procurement and Marketing**  
Marketing and procurement need to work in unison to improve revenues, lower costs, and win customers. Siloed processes are inherently inefficient, compromising brand quality, consistency, and loyalty.

## 3 MODELS OF MARKETING SUPPLY CHAIN EFFICIENCY

From creation to procurement, fulfillment, and distribution, every link in your marketing supply chain should contribute to speed to market, cost-efficiency, and brand consistency at every touchpoint. Consider these three models.

### Fully In-House Print Procurement

Success or failure rests solely on the shoulders of your own internal team. This gives you full oversight—but only if your team has the time, budget, and procedural insight to manage the marketing supply chain with the care it requires. Most don't.

### Fully Outsourced Print Procurement

Lacking the necessary experience, knowledge, and resources, many companies partner with a print procurement expert, allowing the internal marketing team to focus on its core job. However, many companies are uncomfortable with giving up that much control over brand voice and execution.

### The Balanced Approach: Print Management Outsourcing

For many, the happy medium is a sort of hybrid between in-house and outsourced print procurement. Your marketing and procurement teams maintain control over the process, outsourcing only the management of the procurement to a trusted partner. Outsource not print procurement but print management. In this hybrid model, your marketing and procurement teams maintain full control, input, review, and oversight. Your partner adds sourcing expertise, purchasing leverage, extensive vendor networks, and proven best practices to deliver cost savings, faster time to market, and dramatically improved efficiency.

You should never settle for anything less than the very best print marketing materials to represent your brand. Maintaining in-house control over brand quality and procurement—while outsourcing print management to a trusted partner—can deliver the savings, flexibility, timeliness, and distinction that truly set your brand apart.

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