

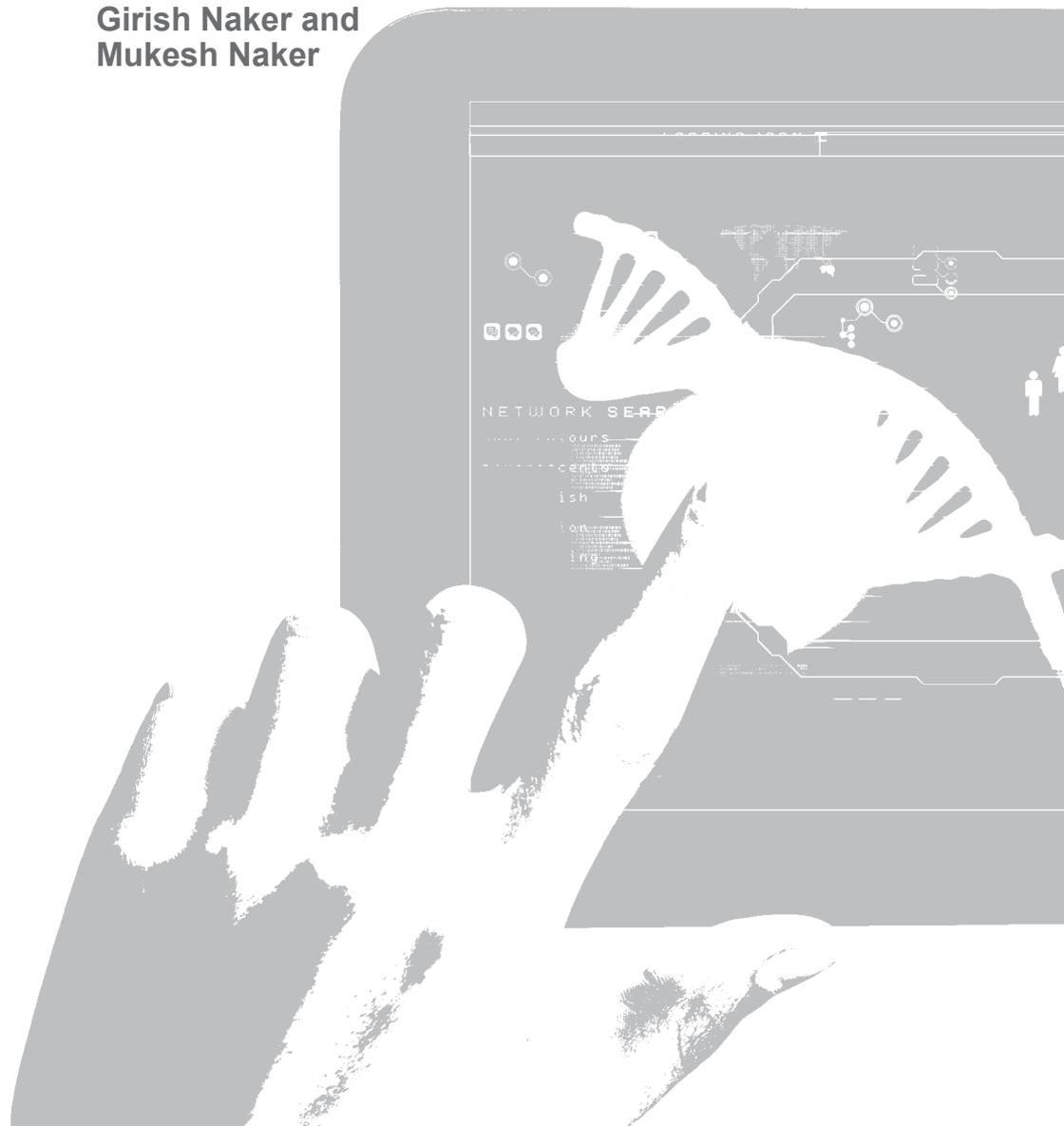
ADOPTING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO YOUR BUSINESS' PRINT AND DESIGN

Girish Naker and Mukesh Naker



ADOPTING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO YOUR BUSINESS' PRINT AND DESIGN

Girish Naker and Mukesh Naker



Copyright ©2013 Girish Naker and Mukesh Naker

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the author(s).

Edited by Tom Stevenson
Cover design and page layout by NABO

Member of NABO
To join visit: www.nabo.biz

INTRODUCTION

It's amazing how great design and printing can transform a business. While printing is often treated as an afterthought at the end of the design process, it is the key element that can really make or break a project. Indeed, print and design have evolved considerably over the years, so the best companies can provide their clients with services that go beyond simply printing the files they are presented with, offering support with everything from marketing and data management to distribution and mailing.

Having been deeply involved in both print and design for many years now, we have seen first-hand what a difference a first-rate design and printing service can make to a growing business, but also how much time and money can be wasted if a project is poorly managed. That's what originally inspired us to set up Evolution Print and Design, in order to offer a more flexible, bespoke approach to print management and also what led us to write the guide you now hold in your hands.

Continued overleaf ►

In the pages that follow we will explain the differences between a conventional printing company and one that takes a modern, bespoke approach to print and design, offering you the support you need to ensure each and every project is delivered on time, to budget and achieves the best possible return on your investment.

If you bear these things in mind when deciding which print and design company is right for you, you'll enjoy a great working relationship with them for many years to come and will be able to concentrate on making the best use of your printed material in order to grow your business.

And that's when you'll start seeing a real difference in your business' bottom line!

Girish Naker and Mukesh Naker
Evolution Print and Design Limited

WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT FROM YOUR PRINTED MATERIALS?

It may sound like an obvious question, but it's important to gain clarity on this if a project is to run smoothly and deliver the expected results. Do you want to grow your database through an intensive leafleting campaign? Do you want to improve your staff's performance by offering them higher quality technical material? Do you have a new product that you wish to showcase in a brochure? It's important that you consider this carefully and discuss it in depth with your chosen print and design company. The more information you can give them the better, as they will be better equipped to deliver what is required on time and to budget.

If your print and design company is clear on this, they will be able to advise you on which options would be most appropriate. For example, if you were looking to create a brochure for a new model of sports car, everything about the design and materials used would have to be of the highest quality, whereas if you were looking to create a new label for a brand of baked beans, such time and expense wouldn't be justified. If they are unable to produce what is required in-house they should be upfront about it and be able to refer you to someone who can (an experienced print and design company will have built up a wide network of contacts and should be able to recommend an appropriate specialist).

The next aspect of this stage is any additional services that will be required along with your printed materials, such as special finishes – shape cutting, laminates, varnishing, foil blocking etc., as well as mail merges, email marketing and e-newsletters, logistics or dispatching. As with the print and design itself, a first-rate company should have no problem referring you to someone to take care of special requirements like this. Although if they are able to offer additional services like this in-house, as we are at Evolution Print and Design, then so much the better, as it will make the execution of the project far more straightforward.

Your print and design company should take as much time as is necessary to understand your requirements before beginning work on a project. No two businesses are alike, so a truly exceptional print and design service needs to be completely bespoke, not based on templates. This includes familiarising themselves with your existing branding and marketing materials. If something has worked particularly well in the past, they might

advise you to build on that, whereas if something has not proved to be effective, they should be able to offer an alternative solution. Regardless, the material they produce should reflect your business and its brand in the very best light.

Investing a little extra time early on like this can save a lot of time and money further down the line and makes sure you receive exactly what you want for the price you expected.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE YOUR OWN DESIGN TEAM? HOW INVOLVED SHOULD THEY BE IN THE PROCESS?

Many companies have their own design teams as full-time members of staff nowadays. If this is the case with your business, your print and design company will be able to liaise with your own designers to get things moving forward, taking the time to understand their skill sets and how best to complement their work. In some cases, this might involve little more than your designers sending the appropriate files over to be prepared for print, while in others there may be gaps in the design work that need filling, or certain elements that need refining. Much of the time, it can be faster for your print and design company to simply make the required changes themselves, rather than initiating a back and forth exchange with your own designers, as this can often push projects past their designated deadlines (which are almost always very tight when it comes to printing!).

Bear in mind that there has been a dramatic shift in the way designers work over the years. Whereas designers used to generally gain their practical experience in manufacturing and printing as a matter of necessity, this isn't so much the case any

more. As more and more design work is handled with computers, their skill sets have generally shifted more towards the IT aspects of things. Unless a designer has a deep understanding of the printing processes. They may be able to create the most beautiful looking material on their computer, but the printed results won't necessarily reflect that quality or even, in some cases, add value to the end product, yet may add considerable cost to the project. A good print and design company should be able to pick up on this and advise you accordingly.

If your print and design company has taken the time to properly understand your requirements, they will know exactly what is needed, so you can have complete confidence in their ability to do this. Allowing them to get involved in the design stage early on can often prevent last-minute emergencies, such as artwork being sent to print, only for you to discover that it's not going to work and will need to be sent back to the design studio and another print run arranged. For example, at Evolution Print and Design, we have access to our own extensive photo library, packed with images that we already know are suitable for print, which we offer our clients access to. This solves the problem of clients' own designers choosing images that look great on a computer screen, but aren't of suitable resolution to print.

Although there's no reason to discount the high quality work your own designers have already produced, there's a very strong case to be made for allowing one experienced individual, who understands your branding and objectives, to take overall charge of the project in this way, making sure everyone involved is communicating properly and working towards a common goal.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MATERIALS TO PRINT ON

There are a wide variety of papers and alternative materials available, and the one you choose should ultimately depend on what your printed material will be used for. For example, 130 gram matt or gloss paper is generally a good and versatile option for leaflets and flyers, but wouldn't be necessary for a simple label, as in the example of the tin of baked beans we used earlier, where a lighter, cheaper paper would be more appropriate.

One very important point is that you need to be absolutely clear what you are ordering, especially if you are arranging your printing online. A lot of cheap print is sold on the internet. The principal ways they do this are by focusing purely on the cheapest production method and taking little or no interest or responsibility for the content, its use or purpose. One way these sorts of companies reduce cost is by reducing or eliminating customer service elements, so if you decide to go this route, make sure that what you are paying for is actually going to be of the expected quality, finish and suitable for your purpose. This is another reason why it's so important that you engage with your print and design company to discuss your requirements, as they will be able offer you time to go through your project and a full customer service back up, in order to advise you on the available options and help you make an informed decision about how to proceed.

A further advantage of the bespoke approach is that you'll be able to incorporate special requirements, which wouldn't necessarily be available from online printers, into your material. This could include anything from special shaping and cutting to an unusual varnish, colour or finish. The possibilities are virtually limitless, so be sure to ask your print and design company about what they can accommodate – you may well be pleasantly surprised at what they can offer. Furthermore, an experienced company will possess the skills and connections needed to fully implement your ideas while still keeping the associated costs manageable.

This level of personal attention goes far beyond that offered by conventional printers, but the results will more than justify the extra effort. You can't guarantee that you'll have someone within your business with the skills and experience to manage every aspect of a project from start to fruition. Although your designers may do such a fantastic job that the material can be passed straight on to a conventional printer that you've found online or through the Yellow Pages, the bespoke approach takes out so much of the guesswork and minimises the chances of any nasty surprises occurring at any point in the process. Indeed, many of the common problems that plague the print and design process can be pre-empted before they even occur.

Furthermore, a print and design company that takes the bespoke approach will have the experience to offer inventive suggestions that may not have occurred to you. For example, you may have a particular idea for your material that could be implemented for a fraction of the cost, without necessarily compromising on quality. This is the sort of knowledge that's only gained from years of hands-on experience.

WHAT IF MONEY IS A SERIOUS CONCERN?

No business has an infinite amount of money to spend, so you'll almost certainly have an idea in mind regarding what you want to spend on your printed material. However, an experienced print and design company should be able to accommodate this and ensure you get the best possible return on your investment.

As we have already touched on, a first-rate print and design company will have built up a wide network of trusted contacts and suppliers and developed strong working relationships with them. Furthermore, they will already have an in-depth understanding of the machines and processes involved and so should be able to negotiate the best possible deal for you – something that companies who offer a fixed price list won't ever be able to do. A professional print and design company will know exactly what their suppliers are able to deliver and will be able to liaise with them on your behalf, so this process needn't affect your own working hours.

If what you are asking is genuinely not possible within your budget, they should be completely upfront about it and explain the costs involved in clear, practical terms, but also be willing to suggest alternative solutions that may not be what you had envisaged, but will still prove effective.

Speaking from a personal point of view, at Evolution Print and Design, we always aim to fulfil our clients' requirements without compromise as much as possible. If money is a concern, we've often found that we can bring the costs down by looking to our suppliers and paper merchants for support. Rather than simply saying 'no' if a client's requirements are pushing costs above what they have the budget for, we will work closely with them to find a solution that satisfies everyone involved. Another way in which Evolution Print and Design have helped our clients is by looking at the long-term product cycle and seeing how the costs could be spread and evened out, in order to make it more affordable for them.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN MAILING OUT OR DISTRIBUTING YOUR PRINTED MATERIAL

Once you have received your new printed material, it's time to start mailing it out or distributing it in order to generate serious business growth! You may also want a copy of the material to be uploaded onto your website. Ask your print and design company to adapt a file for this purpose.

At the time of writing, the Post Office has recently changed the rules regarding stamps versus franking, which means many businesses have been hit with unexpected costs, especially if they are sending packages that are an unusual shape or size. However, your print and design company should be able to support you in this regard and ensure that postage doesn't become a serious ongoing expense for your business. Indeed, at Evolution Print and Design, we have achieved this several times for our clients, often leading to a considerable saving that can be invested in other aspects of the business.

The actual solutions involved will vary depending on what you are mailing out and how regularly, but whatever the solution ends up being, having someone else take care of it will save you a considerable amount of time overall. Be sure to talk to your print and design company about this when you first engage with them. You'll be pleasantly surprised at what they may be able to achieve on your behalf.

WHY EFFECTIVE DATA MANAGEMENT CAN HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PRINTED MATERIAL

As your business expands, so too will the amount of data you need to keep track of and store in an orderly fashion. This will prove vital once you start marketing with your new printed material, as you are likely to see your database expand very quickly, which is why we at Evolution Print and Design offer a data management service to our clients in order to help them make the most of their data.

For example, if your database of prospects has grown very quickly, we'll be able to work through the whole thing and ensure there is no duplication within it and that the information inside is all worth using. Additionally, some data may have been entered incorrectly, e.g. postcodes or email addresses, so it is important to check for such errors. This may sound like a trivial job, but it can save you a considerable amount of money in the long run. If someone has ended up on your database multiple times (through filling out two separate forms for example), then the next time you do a mailing, you'll be paying for them to receive the same material multiple times – a nuisance for them and an expense for you. Note that any database will have at least a 10% annual churn.

Although checking a database like this isn't necessarily especially complicated, it can be extremely time-consuming, so it's a good idea to outsource this kind of activity, so your staff can concentrate on more important work.

Email marketing and e-newsletters can complement your printed material communications. These can be highly cost effective and a good print and design company should be able to adapt your printed or new digital material for this purpose. They should also be able to help you effectively send them out, as well as manage subscription issues and data updates and also give you reports that help you to follow up on leads and measure the performance of the campaign. At Evolution Print and Design, we can offer this level of service.

WHY A WEB PRINTER CAN NEVER COMPETE WITH A TRULY BESPOKE PRINT AND DESIGN SERVICE

The internet has provided businesses with a wealth of opportunities for strengthening their brand, boosting their profile and winning new clients, including a more efficient, cost-effective way to market in the form of web printing. The way this works is simple: you simply find a web printer you are happy with, upload your material through their website, then allow them to prepare it for print. It really is as simple as that. However, while this sort of service is indeed quick and cheap, it is very far from perfect...

There are several reasons for this. First of all, these companies keep their costs down by printing in bulk, grouping several clients together without offering any of them any preference. Although the results can be acceptable, given the significant improvements in the quality of printing machines over the years, it's still about as far as you can get from a bespoke service, especially if you have something unusual in mind for your printed material.

On the other hand, conventional printers use a costing system that we refer to as 'cost plus'. This is when the company looks at their machines and decides that they need X amount of return from them, then set their prices based on the actual man hours involved delivering a project (as opposed to the money the finished result will bring to the client's business). The problem with this approach is that the costs can gradually creep up over the years by as much as 25%, which means those people who handle the buying process are often determined to always go with the cheapest quote, while quality is a secondary consideration. Furthermore, the printer will only be focusing on their machines, as opposed to what the best process will be for your job.

A bespoke print and design service like Evolution gets round this by working with several printers, allowing them to choose the best one for each job, based on both cost and quality. This is essential in our opinion –we always tell our clients that they should be speaking to someone who understands printing before they start thinking about budgets. The finished product will always be better if you start with the desired result in mind and allow an expert to suggest the best solution for bringing it about.

MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION

Of course, it doesn't matter how good your printed material is if the right people never get to see it! This is why marketing and distribution needs to be considered in parallel with your printing requirements. This is a serious consideration for all of us at Evolution and we are constantly looking for new ways to help our clients get more out of the material we produce for them. We're only in a position to do this because we have worked with a wide range of clients all over the UK over the years – we know exactly what is involved in successful distribution in terms of logistics, economies of scale and the differences between different areas of the country.

We have discovered a wide range of solutions in this area. For example, we worked with one company that had multiple branches all over the country and a group of standardised forms that needed to be regularly mailed out to them. Originally, the different branches had to contact the central office whenever they needed a new batch of forms and the staff there would mail them out. This was incredibly time-consuming for the staff at the central office and meant that the other staff would often be left waiting for the forms they needed. Fortunately, we solved this by storing all the different forms we had created for them electronically, so every time a branch needed more, they could just contact us directly and we'd print and send them out within 24 hours. The head office wouldn't be involved until they received our invoice, so the whole system was much more straightforward for everyone involved.

Once again, this level of personal service can make all the difference to your business, so do make sure to ask about the level of support you will be offered when considering which printing company is right for you.

CONCLUSION

We hope this guide has provided you with a fresh perspective on the subject of print and design and that you now have a better idea of how to go about selecting someone to take care of your printing requirements and how to develop a great working relationship with them.

If you refer back to this guide and bear in mind the things we've discussed whenever you begin a new project, you'll be amazed at how effortless the process becomes and what a dramatic improvement you'll see in the quality of your printed material.

We wish you and your business the very best and hope we will get a chance to show you these principles in practice in the future!

ABOUT EVOLUTION PRINT AND DESIGN LIMITED

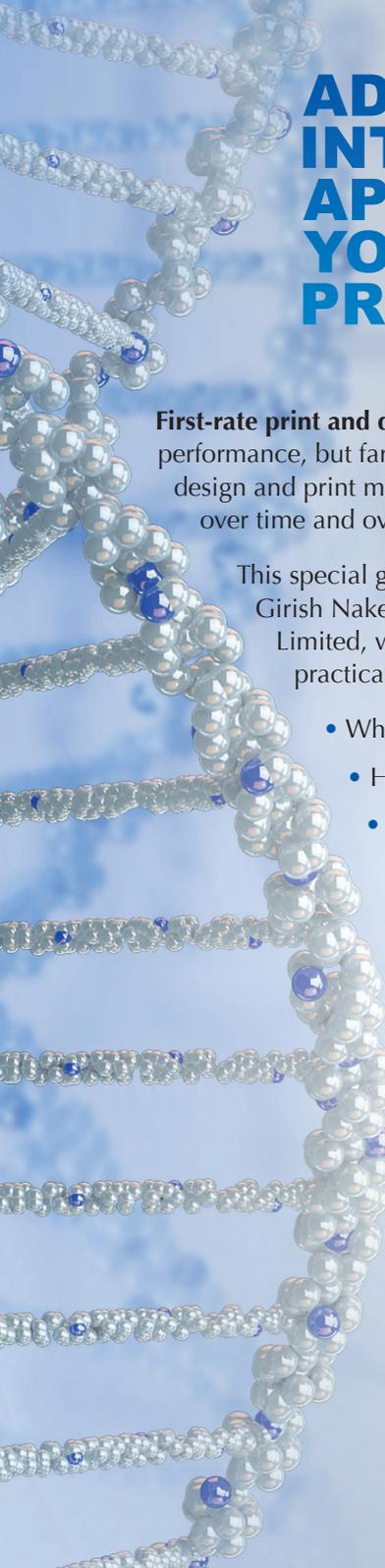
At Evolution Print and Design Limited we have more than 250 years' collective skills and experience in print and design, allowing us to offer a service that is totally bespoke to each and every client. Having worked with businesses in virtually every conceivable industry all over the UK, we appreciate that there is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' solution when it comes to successful print management, so we'll work closely with you every step of the way to make sure we have understood your requirements and are able to exceed your expectations.

Our wide-ranging experience also allows us to offer you support in other areas, including:

- Data management
- Email marketing and newsletters
- Mail merging
- Storage
- Logistics
- Translations
- Transcription
- Copywriting
- Exhibition & display panels
- Promotional & marketing items

Just visit our website to find out more about how we can help you and to arrange your no-obligation printing assessment, during which one of our experts will look closely at your current printing process and offer practical advice on how it could be improved...

www.evolutiondc.co.uk



ADOPTING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO YOUR BUSINESS' PRINT AND DESIGN

First-rate print and design can make all the difference to a business' performance, but far too many businesses are making do with poor quality design and print management, finding their projects constantly pushed over time and over budget as a result.

This special guide from design and print management experts, Girish Naker and Mukesh Naker of Evolution Print and Design Limited, will ensure that you never fall into that trap, offering practical advice on such topics as...

- Why a bespoke approach to print and design is so powerful
- How to make the most of the budget you have available
- How to identify the right print and design company and develop a great working relationship with them
- Some of the unusual ways a print and design company may be able to help you

If you follow Girish and Mukesh's advice, drawn from over 38 years' experience working with clients all over the UK, you'll soon be utilising printed material that showcases your business at its very best and helps bring you closer to your long term goals.

www.evolutiondc.co.uk

EVOLUTION 
PRINT AND DESIGN LIMITED