

Opening the door to a

Print Assessment

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About Girish Naker

A Print Management Consultant with over 40 years of experience. A Management Accountant and a Warwick MBA.

My mission is to help executives in small and medium-sized businesses improve the return on print spend year-on-year. In the process, modernise, streamline, and simplify their print buying systems so executives can concentrate on what matters most to them.

His interest is efficiency through systems, efficient procurement processes and cost management.

Talks about **#print**, **#printcostmanagement**, **#management**, **#printingservices** and **#printpartnerships**

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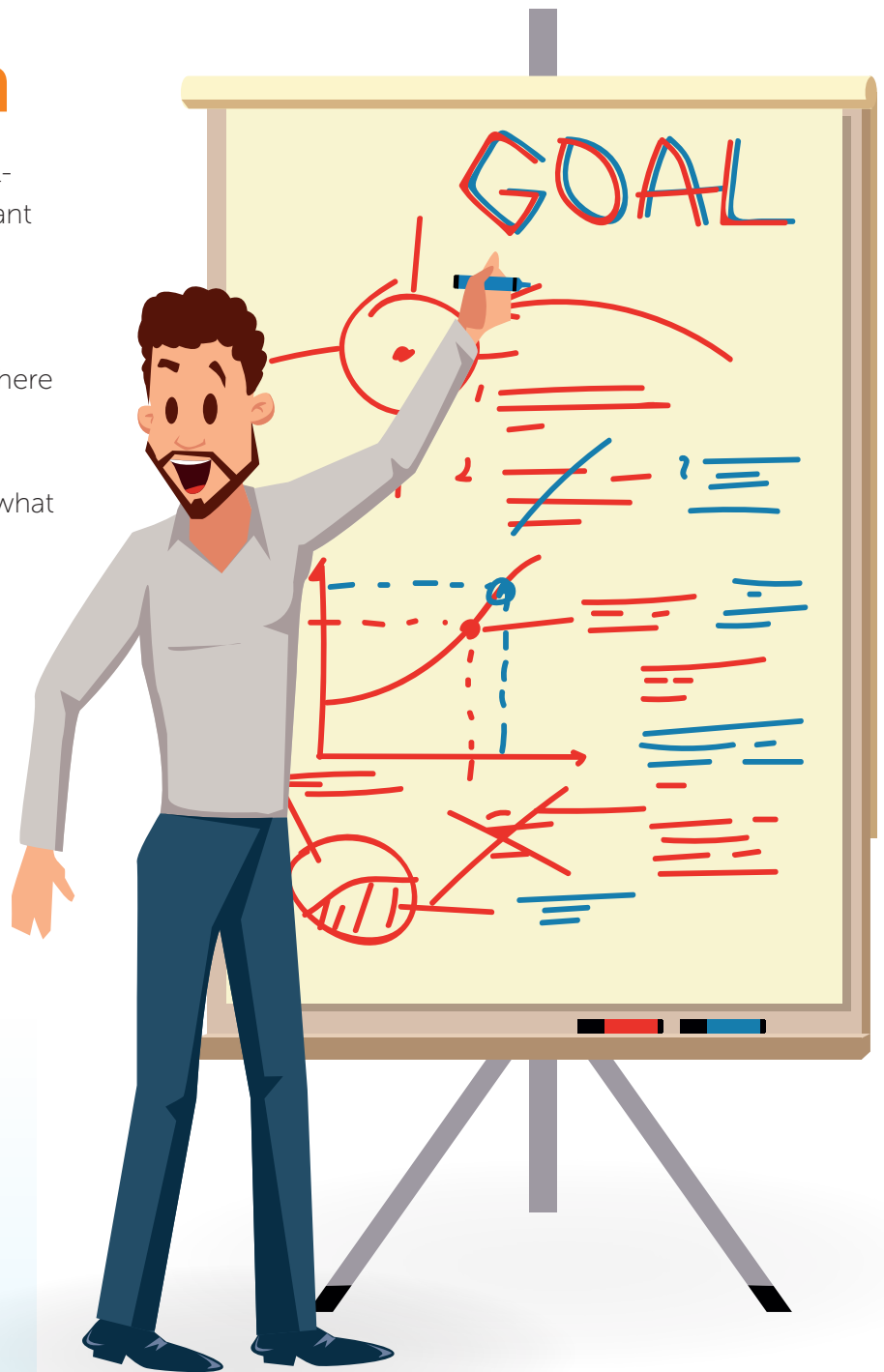


Introduction

Print assessment is a vital cog. A well-done assessment will have a significant impact on your print purchasing.

Whether your goal is saving time or saving costs, it's essential to know where your processes are today.

A thorough assessment will identify what is working well. It will highlight areas where attention is necessary.



Trust and Transparency Comes First

The assessment process needs to be frank, transparent, and independent. A separate set of eyes picks issues that often go amiss. You will have to be willing to share business-critical data. Of course, there will be some genuine concerns in the early stages of any new supplier relationship. These can prove to be difficult when a new supplier steps in.

While not handing over the keys to the business, you must be willing to share sensitive and business-critical data. Establishing how this information stays secure and safe is the first step discussed and must be agreed upon first. Like in any consultative process, the clarity of the issues and concerns are essential. A Print Manager can only be of value if they understand and establish the actual circumstances. The building of trust is vital. Therefore, both parties should try to break down barriers and address their concerns quickly.

Assessments can be time-consuming, and the effort and investment are worth it. Any implemented recommendations will start to show results quickly. There are always some simple recommendations and others that may need more time and thought.



Buying Systems

The key to improving your print supply chain is understanding how each link interacts and affects the other. Examining the procurement process will identify any reoccurring issues and their impact on the business.

Problems that remain unresolved produce a knock-on effect. It may create a chain reaction that continues to be felt further down the line.

Highlighting and forming clear solutions will make the transition path far easier. You will be looking to analyse:



Communications

Consider how quotes/purchases are detailed, confirmed, and recorded. Knowing how quickly they are transmitted, stored and backed up is critical.



Logistics

Monitor how delivery information and other communication are tracked and recorded.



Inbound

Record how printed materials are received, handled and stored by staff members on the company premises.



Payments

When/how purchase orders and invoices are raised, tracked, and recorded.

Buying Method

The next step is assessing the printing process's technical aspects. No one-size-fits-all solution runs across every thickness or particular paper stock, size and print finish.

The wide variety of printing options available may appear quite confusing. Guidance from the right print management team and a few simple tweaks, you will see a significant upturn in the quality:



Brand guidelines

Analysis of the brand guideline document to review consistency against actual printed materials. If one does not exist, creating the foundation to develop one.



Finishing

Checking that uniformity of print finishes extends across every format.



Optimisation

Reviewing the stock used for each printed item, from small to large format.



Response times

Assess the turnaround time from the order through to delivery.



Brand impact

How technical issues have affected the branding.

Efficiency

Post-Covid and Brexit, print-related costs are constantly fluctuating. It would be best if you had an insight into the market to ensure you continue to receive the best value. What may have given you a price edge three months ago may no longer be valid. In addition, ink, paper and logistical costs are all 'hidden' factors that will impact the price at the point of purchase.

A print management partner has better foresight of the volatility in the marketplace as they are constantly engaged in this area. They can identify and secure the best market prices on your behalf, taking into consideration:



Volume

Becoming aware of how much and often you are purchasing, how sometimes buying less or initially more can save you money in the long run.



Pricing

Evaluate the pricing comparisons. How can the stress on the budget be reduced?



Storage & Wastage

Understand how and where printed material is stored, maintained, logged and replenished. Evaluating historical disposal patterns and cost to the business. How sustainable and environmentally friendly current methods have proven to be.



Reprints

Either created by supplier, design or marketing issues, their financial impact and how quickly these have been flagged, investigated and resolved satisfactorily.



Payments

When/how purchase orders and invoices are raised, tracked, and recorded.

The Human Touch

The final part to consider is the staff. The valuable members of the team who are so crucial in making sure your current systems operate and ensure help implement any improvements.

Many people will influence a product's conception, design, production, sale, and marketing. Gaining their feedback will only offer further improvements:

1

Buying channels

The people/ departments currently purchasing and how they interact and correspond with each other.

2

Knowledge & Experience

This will provide an invaluable, real-time insight into how the buying process works and what this means to the people performing the role because of the ease/ difficulties.

3

Skill sets

Utilising the right personnel for the right job, correlating their strengths and weaknesses against the roles to maximise productivity.

4

Relationships

Maintaining solid relationships with suppliers and clear communication from both parties.

Summarising

There can be no half measures when performing a print assessment. Anything less will only produce underwhelming results. The list may seem exhaustive. When implemented correctly, the improvements will be noticeable and tangible. Working with a print management team provides an unbiased review.

Even if you feel that your current buying system is fully optimised, there is always room for refinement. The goal is always a print buying process that is more streamlined, organised and cost-efficient.





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