

July 21, 2008

Abstract

Customized Communications: Advanced VDP

Report Fast Facts

Published: July 2008

Pages: 15

Tables & Figures: 5

Price: \$595

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Abstract

This document provides a definition for Advanced VDP as part of the Customized Communications White Paper Series, and identifies the market opportunity for suppliers and print service providers in the In-plant/CRD and commercial print market segments. It also provides examples of applications and strategies for selling into each market segment.

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Introduction

This document defines advanced Variable Data Printing (VDP) and identifies the market opportunity for the supplier of VDP solutions and the print service provider. It discusses the need for document owners and marketing professionals to deliver more relevant and effective business and marketing communications, and outlines how advanced VDP solutions can be employed by print service providers to help marketers and document owners achieve business goals. It also contains examples of applications and discusses benefits for corporate communicators, marketers, and printers.

Research shows that in both the business to consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B) environments, audiences prefer personalized and relevant content in business and marketing communications. In a world where the average consumer is bombarded by some 3,000 marketing messages daily, targeted and personalized printed communications can significantly improve audience response and enhance the overall fulfillment of business objectives.

In direct marketing, even the simple use of a recipient's name and address with minimal variable imagery (perhaps based on known demographics such as age or region of the country) can facilitate a successful campaign. With a quality data source and the strategic segmenting of messaging to target specific groups within a defined audience, response rates and campaign results improve dramatically.

Current technology is tearing down barriers to the adoption of variable data strategies. These barriers have historically included cost, complex implementation, and risk. Print service providers who are already comfortable with entry-level variable data printing can now take advantage of this growing market demand by implementing advanced VDP solutions, which are easier to use than ever before. Advanced VDP solutions enable marketers to leverage one or more databases of information to develop relevant communications that improve the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. By accessing a quality multi-table data source and strategically segmenting the messaging to specific groups within a target audience, campaign results can be dramatically improved.

Advanced VDP utilizes multi-table or relational databases such as Oracle, SQL, dBase, and Microsoft Access; complex, dynamic document composition; and sophisticated and complex business logic. Some applications allow business rules to be programmed through the use of a user-friendly graphic wizard, but, in most cases, knowledge of advanced scripting with VBScript, Microsoft SQL, Java, and XML are necessary skill requirements.

By moving from entry-level to advanced VDP solutions, print service providers can differentiate themselves in the marketplace and improve their profitability while moving deeper into the marketing supply-chain. They become a high value partner to their customers and an integral part of the campaign development process. They open the door to higher margin product and service offerings with new revenue streams and greater potential for customer retention. For suppliers to the industry, advanced VDP solutions offer the opportunity to sell more hardware, software, and services. Marketers benefit through deployment of more effective campaigns. Even end-consumers benefit as they begin to receive more valuable, relevant communications that are targeted to their interests and needs.

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