

June 25, 2008

Abstract

Customized Communications: Multi-Channel Communications

Report Fast Facts

Published: June 2008

Pages: 26

Tables & Figures: 19

Price: \$995

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Abstract

This document provides a definition of the Multi-Channel Communications segment for the Customized Communications White Paper Series and identifies the market opportunity for print service providers. It discusses the needs of document owners in the In-Plant/CRD and Commercial market segments, provides examples of Multi-Channel applications, and includes representative listing of Multi-Channel Communications solutions.

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Introduction

This document provides a definition of Multi-Channel Communications. It discusses the need document owners and marketing professionals have for more relevant and effective business communications, translating those needs into opportunities and requirements for print service providers who wish to effectively serve those customers. It also provides examples of Multi-Channel applications and a representative list of Multi-Channel Communications solutions available in the marketplace.

The formerly manageable world of marketing that primarily used print and mass media has exploded into countless micro-communications channels. Familiar media has been augmented with the rapid run-up of the Web, search, e-mail, blogs, satellite radio, chat, video on-demand, interactive television, and even the small-screen iPhone. All of these new channels create a demand for interfacing with more media types and new marketing channels, and that means greater operational complexity for the graphic communications service provider who wishes to participate in these new business areas.

There are significant changes on the customer side, as well. While graphic communications service providers historically dealt with a relatively small number of players within the customer account, generally in the purchasing arena, marketing professionals are much more engaged in the purchasing process than ever before. In today's market, the challenge for the Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) extends beyond brand management. There is an increasing expectation that marketing professionals will fill the sales pipeline with predisposed prospects, optimize customer value, and be accountable for demand generation by establishing clear market differentiation and conducting integrated multi-channel campaigns. There is extreme pressure on the CMO and their staff to deliver a measurable marketing return on investment (ROI). Yesterday's mass media strategies are being replaced with precision targeting strategies and comprehensive integrated marketing campaigns that address those target markets.

Current technology is also tearing down barriers to the adoption of Multi-Channel Communications strategies. Barriers have historically included cost, complex implementation, and risk. With today's technology, you can now take advantage of this growing market demand by implementing an entry-level Multi-Channel Communications offering, leaving the door open to increase the sophistication of that offering over time. This approach is a viable means of gaining a foothold in the more lucrative value-added marketing supply-chain, and a must-have solution in the customized communications toolkit for print service providers that have committed to transitioning to a high-value provider of marketing services.

Multi-Channel Communications solutions can utilize single- and multi-table databases, simple to complex design and composition tools, and basic business logic that can be programmed via a user-friendly wizard interface. Hosted Application Service Provider (ASP, or sometimes called Software as a Service (SaaS)) solutions can be implemented without the need for extensive in-house IT resources. This approach allows you to immediately begin delivering new, higher-margin revenue streams as the service provider, while setting the stage for deeper, stronger customer relationships as you begin delivering against the marketing professional's need for measurable return on marketing investments.

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