**3 Proven Strategies To Successfully Launch Online Print Business**

Post Covid, a lot of print companies are willing to get online. However, there lie challenges such as lack of technical expertise that holds print companies from taking a concrete step in this direction. They lose time and money in searching for online print solutions and thus fail to manage urgencies. Moreover, as the generic online print solutions are not made to address specific needs, print companies end up lost, in the long run.

**By 2030, online specification and ordering will be the norm for print**(whattheythink.com). The print orders will get shorter and increased expectation from buyers for same-day or next-day delivery will be the norm. Buyers would want to make service and price comparisons online. This will move the print industry to a platform economy that would need slicker workflows, efficient and automated web-to-print solutions for print ordering and estimation.

But before that, let’s address the challenges which stop print companies from investing in online ordering and estimation/ web-to-print solutions.

**Challenge #1**

**How to choose the right online platform? Web-to-print solutions or Generic E-commerce or get it developed with IT companies?**

Today the world is moving towards productization in every aspect of life to offer quick and consistent results.

The biggest challenge in developing a solution with an IT company or investing in generic E-commerce is that they don’t understand Printing. 40% of our existing customers have migrated to OnPrintShop as they could never launch the online print shop or hit the wall due to limitations in the existing solutions.

Therefore, print companies must evaluate their business internally before opting for a web-to-print solution to match their needs.

* What is your urgency to launch the online platform?
* Where do you want to focus your time - on your print business or on developing an IT solution?
* How do you make sure that the solution you are investing in will deliver results even in future?
* Does the IT team understand both Print Process and Online Technology?

Keeping the concerns of print companies in mind OnPrintShop’s web-to-print solution has specially designed solutions to support PSPs. In the post-pandemic world, when turnaround time is key, it is smart to opt for technology that helps you give the best experience to your customers and helps you learn the best practices to grow. Fundamentally, before selecting the right web-to-print solution the business must have clarity on - their customers, products, strengths and then analyze platforms accordingly.

**Challenge #2**

**How to analyze your print business to choose a suitable print ordering and estimation/ web-to-print solution for it and what kind of team to build?**

Most of the time, printers do not have clarity about their own business. They purchase unfulfilling web-to-print solutions and dread the implementation process as they missed asking the key questions and studying Proof of concept for their key needs while selecting the web-to-print solution. They even miss evaluating the solution and set up support, flexibility to custom develop or third-party integrations and solution upgrade process.

Few of the key questions print companies planning to migrate to a web-to-print solution must ask to **analyze their print business** -

* What problems your customers and internal team face in order processing?
* What is it that you lack in the ordering system and how the web-to-print solution fills that gap?
* How can the web-to-print solution help to process print orders quickly and efficiently?
* What integrations can you use with the web-to-print solution to streamline workflow?
* What can help you grow repeat business?

 Secondly, print companies must shortlist three to four **web-to-print solutions** which fit their business needs and then compare the key features, support and financials to make an informed decision.

**Challenge #3**

**How to smoothly transition from manual print processing to fully automated print processes or Change Management?**

Change is always tough as it is moving out of comfort zones. One of the common challenges is that customers are not ordering online and key team members are finding problems with the solution, regularly.

Here’s how PSPs can address these challenges -

**Step 1** - It is very important to share the ‘vision’ with the internal team as to how the web-to-print solution would help automate the process and offer consistent high-end services to customers; that would ultimately mean growth for the business and the company.

**Step 2** - Include key sales and production team, and a few key clients (if possible) during the evaluation process that would increase chances of success by up to 70% of the web-to-print solution.

**Step 3** - Create the right internal team, with the right attitude and who are result-oriented and who understand that any new system will take time and efforts to understand and implement.

**Step 4** – Define clear goals about using the web-to-print solution as the order management solution; where you start processing your current customer’s orders to automate the process. Once this is in place and the team understands the solution well; the next is to focus on getting new sales. Every company is in a rush to increase sales, but this needs patience and the right implementation strategy. As most companies fail at this stage and despite spending dollars in online marketing they fail to drive results.

**Step 5** – Have clarity on launch dates and plan it phase-wise instead of scheduling everything at the same time. Sometimes PSPs take 6 to 12 months to launch and are still not sure what the customers like or dislike till the launch of the store. Therefore, most successful companies launch in phases.

**Step 6** – Cultivate strong support and feedback mechanism from clients, the internal team, as an online business will need to keep optimizing and changing on regular basis to increase repeat and new business.

**The Bottomline**

Covid has pushed us to change the way we live and run the business. Transformation is key to survival and growth. Pre-Covid Printers had the luxury to move online at their own pace but today each one of us is pushed to set up an online option. So it is very critical to understand what it will take to migrate from manual to online print solutions. Besides, there will still be a need to have an omnichannel process, where few clients would still prefer to walk in but most would prefer a touchless experience.

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