

# Digital Print - Every marketer's best friend - Part One

Every marketer should recognize their greatest ally as the Digital Printing Press. Fast, flexible and variable, digital printing facilitates marketing tools like 'one-to-one' and Print on Demand (POD). This article is the first of 2 parts that will explain these tools and how using them can impact positively on your print campaigns.

*Variable Data Printing - the enabler for 'one to one' marketing.*

We all know that in an ideal world, no one should be exposed to any form of marketing without reading their own name on it. We know that 'one-to-one' marketing has been "the answer" for over a decade. We also know that in reality however, the technology has not existed for this to actually happen...or at least not to the extent that our clients demand.

Digital printing answers to the calls of 'one-to-one' marketing. Using digital presses, Variable Data Printing (VDP) is now available in South Africa. In truth, the technology to customize marketing materials has existed for quite some time but only in black and white. Black and white, however, often isn't even an option if you truly want to connect with your client's target market.

With this technology available, marketers can now respond to clients' demands with fully customized, colour printed marketing materials. With VDP every single page that runs through the digital press can be unique - this doesn't merely refer to the postal details, rather, it allows text, data and images on each individual page to be completely customized. Every single document is different from the previous one, each put together to ensure maximum response from customers.

An example: A retail store has a database containing information on all of their account holders. Sue Jones is one of their loyal customers. The database shows that Sue loves shoes and accessories; that her husband is a wine fundi and that she has a 17 year old daughter and a 9 year old son. When the retail store uses digital VDP, they are able to send Sue a brochure with a beautiful pair of shoes on the front, the inside right is decorated with images of matric dance dresses and wine promotion covers the inside left. The back is plastered with Spiderman products. The retail store has, in one brochure, communicated to Sue's entire family in the most relevant way possible!

The question often raised at this point however, is cost. Printing customised documents will be more expensive than a 100% homogenous print-run, it's true. But the increased return far outweighs the additional investment. Case studies have proven that when variable data components are used in direct mail pieces, responses can go up with as much as 36%, average orders with 25%, repeat orders by 48% and overall revenue with a phenomenal 32%.

Creda Communications has just installed a brand new HP Indigo press in their Johannesburg plant. The quality produced by this machine is excellent - entirely comparable with litho, achieving 90% of the entire Pantone gamut, at high speed while including variable data components and the whole batch dry as they come off the press: ready to be scored, folded, cut or varnished / foiled, if required.

If you are at a stage where you feel the ideas your agency is offering are getting stale, VDP might just be the answer. Address customers individually. They'll appreciate it and so will your clients.