



Going Boldly to Market

How retailers win by outsourcing print services.

When retailers look to the future, the only constant seems to be change. In this hyper-competitive marketplace, they know that winning customers means increasing speed to market and boosting their brand's wow factor.

Kimberly Stephens, Managing Director of Western Region Sales at FedEx Office, shared some of her thoughts about how retailers can stand out from the crowd and gain efficiencies by using outsourced print services.

Q: What kind of retailers are using outsourced print?

A: The term "retailer" is pretty broad these days. There are traditional brick-and-mortar retailers, there are online retailers and then there are combinations of both. All can use outsourced print, but the brick-and-mortar retailers can really capitalize on it to differentiate themselves.

Q: What trends do you see that might benefit these retailers?

A: The trends I see are the result of changes in consumer behavior. Although online ordering is more popular than ever, there's some consumer fatigue around making returns. People want instant gratification. As a result, people are shopping at brick-and-mortar stores again. Customers want to make purchase decisions with an item in hand, rather than on screen. Shopping at local stores can also be a social event, which online shopping isn't. So this trend is something retailers should keep an eye on.

We're also seeing retailers become involved with events again. Big retail shows and conferences are a great place for retailers to make a splash.



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— Kimberly Stephens, Managing Director of Western Region Sales, FedEx Office

Q: If a retailer wanted to make a big impact at a mall, conference or other high-traffic areas, what would you suggest?

A: Signs and graphics are particularly useful for promotion, branding and education. Since people are frequently looking down at their phones as they walk, floor graphics are a great way to drive retail messages. Also, large-format print that stands near escalators — like retractable banners — works well. And posting bold graphics on or near elevators is another creative way for retailers to stand out.

For conferences, retailers have the opportunity to spend time planning how their booth will look. So they can use retractable banners, floor graphics and bold signs to create an unforgettable space. Creating a great visual for customers is imperative for a brand, and helping produce these pieces is where we shine at FedEx Office.

Q: What about other kinds of print? Direct mail, for instance?

A: In retail, it seems like whatever is old is new. And it's the same with direct mail — all of a sudden, it's made a huge comeback, especially for those retailers selling online or selling subscription-based services. We're seeing a lot of retailers growing their business with direct mail at FedEx Office right now.

Q: That's surprising. Where do you think that's coming from?

A: It's funny — my 16-year-old son recently wrote a marketing plan for a business class, and direct mail was part of his plan. I was surprised, so I asked him why he included direct mail. His response? "Research." This response made me laugh. So yes, analysis shows direct mail has made a big comeback — in fact, it's growing exponentially every year. The response rate for house lists was 9% in 2018 — that was double that of the previous year.* Perhaps it's because social media, email blasts and promotional texts are so pervasive. People are tired of seeing them.

So it's refreshing now to get something in the mail that's fun and not intrusive. People like to be alerted to sales, receive coupons and get any message that drives them to the store. Direct mail doesn't distract your customer from their work like email blasts can. It doesn't interrupt them like a promotional text. And since everyone is getting less and less mail, direct mail all of a sudden feels like a different form of marketing. When a retailer adds personalization to the direct mail mix, they can stand out even more. Customers engage when they feel their favorite brand is speaking directly to them.



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Q: Why would a retailer outsource its print to FedEx Office?

A: Retailers outsource print to FedEx Office to expand their capabilities and their speed to market. We're able to develop, quote, print, execute and get everything to where it needs to be faster than an in-house print center ever could. Between our print network and shipping capabilities, we offer what no other printer can offer. Utilizing our print and ship networks means campaigns get out very quickly.

Also, a brand needs its colors to be absolutely consistent. Since so much of what's being designed is digital, especially in the large-format print world, there really isn't a better company to ensure that than FedEx Office. We use the same G7 certified equipment across the country, and our calibrating process is second to none. We also have a color management team that works with our customers to make sure we portray their brands correctly.

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1,400+ locations.”



Q: What about cost savings?

A: A side benefit of printing with FedEx Office is that a company can also gain efficiency and save on cost. For instance, being able to print on demand means there's reduced waste. A traditional press job often requires huge print runs that need to be stored, which is an added cost. The pieces then become unused, obsolete and are thrown out. Printing on demand eliminates this scenario, creating considerable savings. There's also cost savings in shipping because with our network, we're able to print and deliver close to the point of need.

Those are hard costs, but there are also soft costs, such as how we contribute to a company's sustainability goals. We often help our partners measure how much more sustainable they've become by working with us. Plus, we can often minimize or sometimes eliminate transportation needs. As an example, we recently printed and distributed a marketing campaign for a large electronics retailer. With a FedEx Office within 3 miles of 98% of the customer's locations, we were able to quickly deliver a campaign to their 1,400+ locations. As a result, we helped them reduce their carbon footprint since we didn't have to put the printed materials on airplanes. There are so many different ways FedEx Office can bring value.

Want to learn more about how your company can stand out and become more efficient with outsourced print? Request a consultation at [fedex.com/businesssolutions](https://www.fedex.com/businesssolutions).