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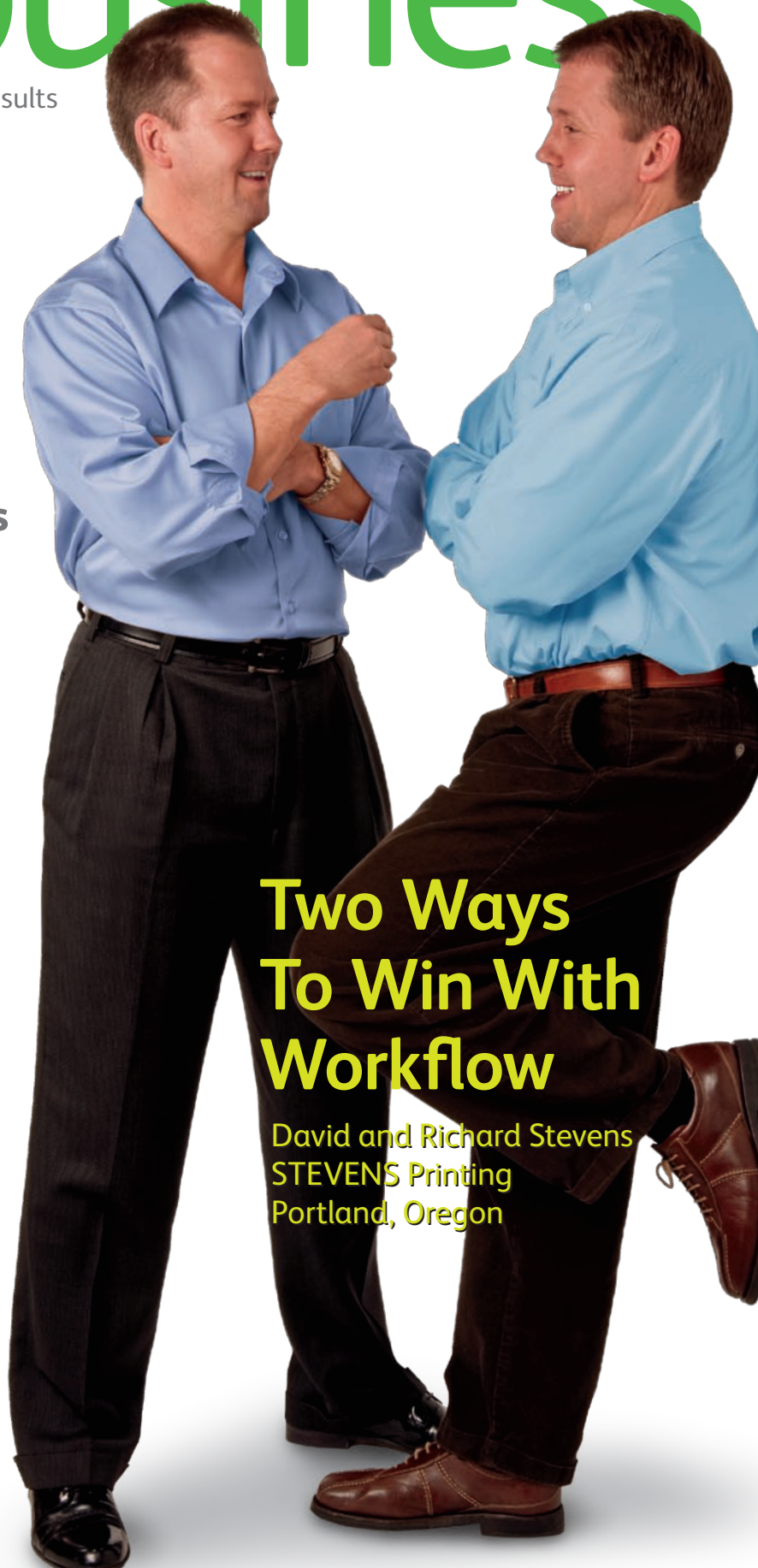


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Close the Loop

Transpromo thinking that's end-to-end

... By Dave Squires

You've surely read much of the buzz following

transpromo, and you know it is far from a new concept. This isn't even the only article covering transpromo in this magazine! Maybe your operation has already incorporated promotional messages into the transactional documents you produce, or maybe you're thinking about investing in some new technology so you can produce this type of communication.

Regardless of your current abilities, if you're thinking about transpromo, you need to be thinking end-to-end. What might impact your document on its journey from data collection to mailbox delivery? Think about the comprehensive processes that contribute to producing documents. Fine-tuning processes may be necessary when you add transpromo to your roster of applications; these applications deserve attention to detail in order to justify the additional investment in materials and creative services. Your systems and processes may not work the same after incorporating new transpromo applications with higher tolerances. Make sure you analyze your processes from end-to-end, and make sure each one is contributing and not detracting from your final mail piece.

Current economic conditions have undoubtedly affected every organization, no matter how successful you have managed to be during the last 18 months. This has created an opportunity for mailers, capitalizing on eager marketers that want to reach every potential customer. Increased demand for direct mail during a recession means that mailing lists will surely be tapped for potential business. Piggybacking promotional messages on your documents can be a great way to potentially attract current customers to do more business with you. You may already have transpromo capabilities, and communicating this ability to management and the marketing department can increase the value of the crucial service that your mail and print center provides.

Get in the Transpromo Mindset

So you've been convinced by the flood of information on transpromo that you need a piece of the action. If you're just now planning integration, you need to put yourself in the mindset to think about all the elements needed to produce a quality transpromo document. The most necessary element already exists in the data that your company collects with Customer Relationship

Management tools. The deeper the information, the more refined your messages can be. More information will enable more targeted messages that will produce better response rates.

Transpromo is another opportunity to attract current customers to do more business with you. Think of it like the checkout line at the grocery store. Items (with their messages) are placed there with the typical shopper in mind, vaguely understanding what might persuade the typical shopper to make an additional purchase at the last minute. But what if the store knew what you had purchased in the past and could make suggestions of what you might like to purchase? And what if the products at the checkout lane could change with every customer, depending on their interests, demographic, geographic location, and any other type of personal information that could be mined from your history as a customer?

Transpromo-like messages have been used very successfully with Internet shopping, offering you one last item that you might have looked at earlier or a suggested accessory to go with what you are purchasing. Bringing this level of personalization to transactional mail documents is the future because of the increasing clutter and spam online and the opportunity that has been opening up from declining competition in the mailbox.

While you're still thinking transpromo, put yourself in the shoes of someone opening your transpromo mail piece. The perfect application is a half-fold; this requires the reader to only open one fold, with more information displayed as soon as the document is removed from the envelope. Transpromo mail pieces have the best chance of making an impression on the reader because part of the document has information the reader needs (i.e. statement, invoice, payment). Appropriateness must also be reviewed. Make sure that your messages are in line with the type of transactional document, and that the transpromo piece is a good fit.

Full Color Investment—Thinking Outside the Envelope

Eye-catching transpromo is best served in full color, which comes at a price that put it out of reach for some smaller mailers. To add customized messages to

the outside of a mail piece, think about incorporating technology that can print spot color messages and images at high speeds on the outside of the envelope. Clear, quality print will ensure that your messages can be read by the recipient. Since you have invested in technology to create these documents and put them in the mail stream, you want to make sure that nothing along the way will detract from your document.

Special formats of mail pieces, such as self-mailers, pressure sealers, postcards, and wrapping (both poly and paper) can catch the recipient's eye and effectively deliver the message. When you are considering mail wrapping systems, feeder flexibility, ease-of-use, and tight tolerances on the final wrapped piece should be a high priority to allow for future expansion based on needs and the demand for a quality final product.

Creativity Is Paramount

You have invested some marketing dollars or resources into crafting messages that will catch the reader's attention. Invest equally in developing a mail piece that will catch the reader's attention before the messages have a chance to reach them. Spark interest at the mailbox, intriguing the reader with your creative delivery or personalized messages. This is where you can help your marketers succeed in 'breaking through the clutter.' Adding variable print can further enhance customization. Document composition plays an important role in incorporating promotional messages. The "promo" part must be worked seamlessly into the document, like product placement in movies.

Every point of contact with a customer, from web activity to customer complaints, should be tracked so that marketing can capitalize on the information and leverage the data in transactional documents. For now, regardless of your level of participation in transpromo, make sure that you are thinking end-to-end to ultimately produce a quality mail piece.

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