



KEYPOINT
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SERVICE AREA(S):

Production Workflow

GUIDANCE

MANAGING YOUR PRINT PRODUCTION

A GUIDE FOR SMALL SHOPS

JUNE 2018





Introduction

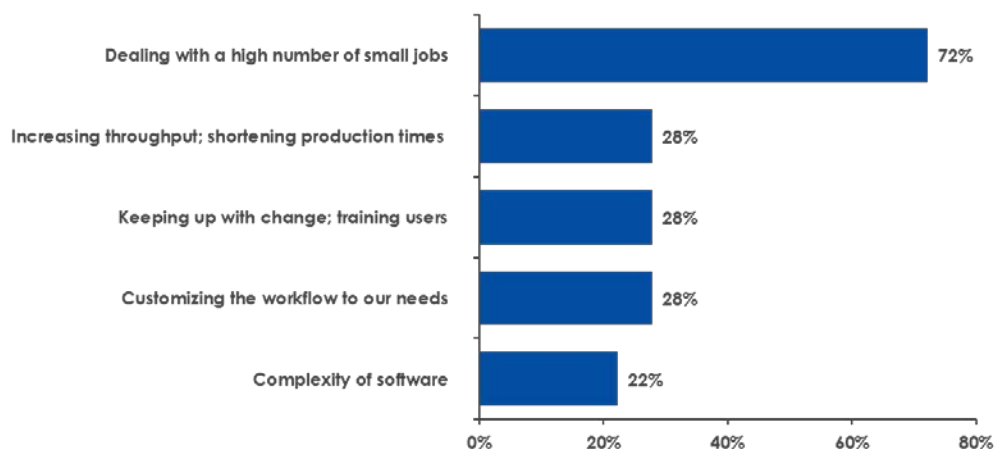
Every print shop faces some common challenges when it comes to managing the process of moving print from the point of sale to the point of delivery. Both small in-house printing operations (or “in-plants”) and small print-for-pay (or “PSPs”) face the same issues as their larger counterparts, but they often have fewer resources and less dedicated support. The best practice is to adopt workflow processes and solutions that help to automate, focus on efficiency, and decrease their operational costs while increasing throughput and freeing up employees to work on more productive tasks. Adopting cloud-based solutions provides the widest array of options, which is why printIQ is becoming a leader in flexible print management for smaller print shops.

What Makes Your Shop Unique?

The printIQ solution set is based on years of experience in print shops of all sizes, picking the best practices to support all types of workflows that support the manufacturing of commercial, label, packaging, wide format, and signage applications. Deciding to make the leap into any new workflow may seem too hard – after all, work is getting out the door today! Why change?

However, when you look at your production workflow, what do you see? Is your shop built around a software-based flow of work, from the point of quoting to the point of delivery, or do you have islands of automation linked by spreadsheets, sticky notes, whiteboards, phone calls, and a sneaker-net of handoffs? If your workflow is not efficient, neither is your shop.

Figure 1: Top 5 Workflow Bottlenecks for Small PSPs



N=18, Respondents with 1-9 employees

Source: U.S. Production Software Investment Outlook, InfoTrends 2018



For small shops in North America, workflow automation and efficiency are not a high priority according to Keypoint Intelligence – InfoTrends research¹; most in-plants and smaller print service providers consider optimizing and automating their workflows a lower priority, focusing instead on faster machines or new finishing solutions. While new print and finishing capabilities can help to grow the business, without an efficient workflow those investments may not produce the anticipated results. That’s where a cloud-based solution like printIQ makes it easy for PSPs to adopt best practices without breaking the bank. The cloud-based solution looks at your business the way you look at it, instead of trying to shoehorn it into print Management Information System (MIS) concepts developed for a different generation.

Keeping more efficient presses and finishing equipment active requires attention to the quote, the management of the workflow, including file submission and prepress, the management of the production floor and the inventory that feeds it. For production printers with fewer employees, these functions are even more critical. The IQCore modules make it easy to set up the quotes for faster turnarounds and more consistency. And if you have not stepped into the world of online payment, their Payment Gateway opens the door to better cash flow management. A real-time secure payment processing interface is built into the IQCore.



The printIQ Core is made up of 8 modules that create a seamless, end-to-end estimating, ordering and production workflow. From online quoting to shipping printIQ has you covered.



The printIQ Plus range offers Approve for integrated proofing initiated directly from the production workflow, and Store+ allowing you to offer a logistics operation from within your print company.



The Connect Modules offer you a plethora of options that will automate, integrate, and innovate your business. The Connect range offers 4 categories comprising: API, Automate, Pre-Press, & VDP.

Because print is a manufacturing process, with materials handling, inventory and fabrication functions, the IQCore Workflow Manager and Factory Manger work in coordination to not only help you move work efficiently through your production floor but also capture data that will help you manage your business. Scheduling and communication errors, which can be costly, virtually disappear. And inventory outages become a thing of the past because it is integrated into the IQCore, completely aware of both quotes and job onboarding to ensure that orders are launched as needed, minimizing inventory hold time.

¹ Source: *U.S. Production Software Investment Outlook*, InfoTrends 2018



Additional features give you job tracking to give everyone a transparent view of all work in process. No more calls to the production floor or customer service person because every job has its status updated as it moves through the production process notifying appropriate stakeholders at each production step.

Adopting the Cloud for Shop Management

One of the reasons cited by respondents to InfoTrends surveys for not updating or automating current production workflows comes down to the challenge of bringing in new software and integrating it with the processes used to run the shop, combined with the costs of new licenses. printIQ's cloud-based tools embrace integration with a wide array of tools to create exactly the workflow needed and opens the door to expanding capabilities over time. For example, printIQ is already integrated with popular tools like Enfocus Switch, Esko, Ultimate Imposition, XMPie and Chili Publish, but the most powerful feature for small PSPs might be the ability to get online with a customer-facing digital storefront with very little internal effort. That portal is built to make it easy for customers to engage over the web, on their phone, or on a tablet, and comes without the integration challenges and complex feature sets of many standalone digital storefront applications. All of this plus a Software as a Service (SaaS) model that means you pay monthly.

With almost 70,000 small print for pay providers in North America according to government issued NAICS data, flexibility will be a requirement to stay ahead of the competition.

Streamlining the cost to acquire customers, care for customers, quote jobs and bring them on board in the most efficient manner helps to expand margins. The low hanging fruit is the ability to automate repetitive steps, standardize quoting, and optimize job onboarding routines.

Do You Know Your Single Source of Truth?

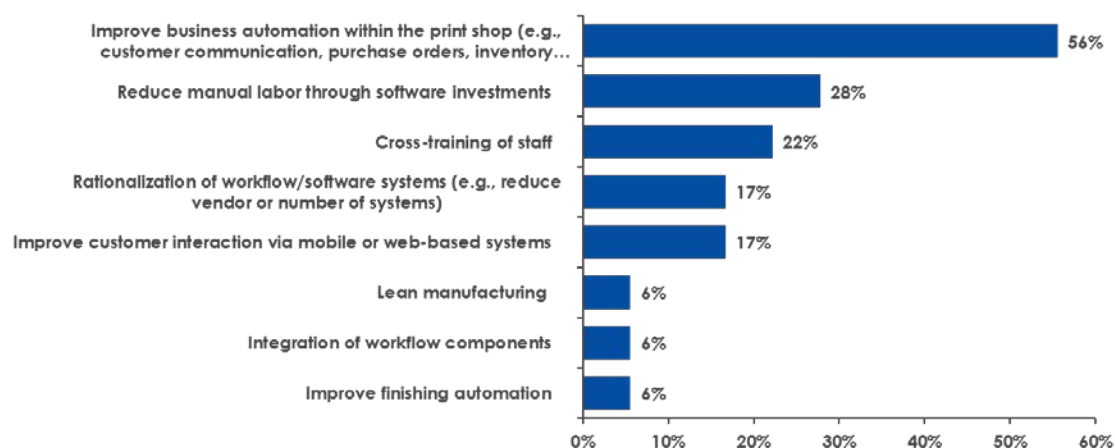
Deciding to move to any new management system for production workflow usually comes after reviews of current productivity and deep dives into local competitive markets. Rethinking strategy often leads to new initiatives that include revisiting workflow initiatives. Smaller shops must control costs, so automation and use of modern print and workflow management tools become table stakes on the road to success.

When InfoTrends asked PSPs about their workflow strategies and initiatives, it became clear that workflow automation is being considered, but it is equally clear that change is daunting. If your print shop experiences misquoting of jobs, constant phone calls to verify and correct job specifications, confusion about what jobs are due out the door first, or concerns about profit margins, you are a candidate for a new approach to print workflow management. If you are not sure who your largest customers are and if those customers are still profitable for you, you should be considering a new approach to your workflow. If you are experiencing inconsistent use of your printing capacity, you are a candidate for change.



A move to a cloud-based print management ecosystem opens the door to transforming your print shop into a well-oiled machine and executing on the most common workflow initiatives for Small PSPs. The workflow becomes the reliable single source of truth about every job accepted for production. And, with a cloud-based infrastructure paired with a Software-as-a-Subscription (SaaS) model, the cost to bring the solution in-house and operate it effectively brings modern tools without severely impacting capital.

Figure 2: Top Workflow Initiatives for Small PSPs



N=18, Respondents with 1-9 employees

Source: U.S. Production Software Investment Outlook, InfoTrends 2018

Where printIQ Fits in Your Plan

printIQ is the innovative newcomer to the North American print market. Bringing years of experience in Australia and New Zealand to the United States, the printIQ team uses the tagline, “far more than just an MIS.” They characterize their unique approach to managing the print operation as a Management Workflow Solution, with a framework that includes eight core modules that can be extended with the IQPlus modules that bring both approval management and pick ‘n’ pack options to smaller PSPs that might be out of reach on a licensed platform basis. IQConnect opens the doors to:

- APIs
- More automation
- Connectivity to prepress tools to guide print work to the prepress system.

printIQ has also partnered with Zapier to link to more than 1000 web applications to create a truly unified business and production workflow, perfect for the small shop using a variety of apps to manage the business.



Another feature of the printIQ solution is how they enable capturing accurate, timely shop floor data. InfoTrends knows from our 2016 North American software investment survey that two of the top reasons for not capturing shop floor data are because of resistance by staff and the amount of time it takes. With this in mind, printIQ decided to offer a couple of flavors: first, there's the desktop terminal with start and stop timers, or a tablet using touchscreen functionality.

Then there is the traditional barcode scanner that can be utilized by operators. However, the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach to the problem that printIQ have developed saw them creating an app that staff can download to phones and capture the information with a device and interface that are already familiar. The phone's camera can also be used to scan barcodes to speed up the process.

For many smaller shops there are two challenges that can be daunting: growing to additional locations and building analytics-based strategies for growth. printIQ have two options to consider that address those concerns. The first is IQextend, a set of options that enable additional sites, no matter the size, from a single master agreement. The best part of this option is that you can use different branding and set up separate web-based frontends under the same agreement. This is a great option for shops looking to expand into new markets of offerings or adding acquisitions to the portfolio.



IQextend allows you to add another internal site, a second factory, or even a full satellite location. With options for single and multiple merchant facilities and accounting systems, the choice is really over to you.



The Further range will help you take the next step with your business, from key analytics and automated courier booking, through to capacity planning, data capture, and even job ganging.

IQfurther addresses the challenge faced by many PSPs to build an environment that helps them compete against larger organizations. IQ Analytics opens the door to more than just data. It populates the printIQ dashboards with real-time intelligence that leads to the best decisions. Beyond better analytics, IQfurther includes optional modules for automated freight quoting and



booking. For efficiency, look at the capacity planner, data capture, and job ganging modules for maximum efficiency.

Print shops looking for a new or different solution for managing the many aspects of their operation should give printIQ a close look. If you operate a small PSP or a small in-plant print operation, this is a solution to review. It is scalable as you grow and extensible if you grow into other print formats like wide-format work or packaging.

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