

A comprehensive color print-on-demand and document management solution from Lexmark helps Cincinnati Bell customize marketing materials for its business customers consistently, quickly and more affordably. With a variety of color laser printers from Lexmark, Cincinnati Bell reduces its costs by 30 percent and increases productivity by up to 50 percent.

Cincinnati Bell calls on Lexmark to solve cumbersome print-on-demand challenges

The Organization

Cincinnati Bell is long known for its industry leading performance, outstanding customer service and unparalleled delivery of products and services. As one of the nation's only fully integrated telecommunications companies, Cincinnati Bell continues to outperform its peers and create value for the company's shareholders, employees and customers.

The company provides a full portfolio of telecommunications products and services to the residents of Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio, Northern Kentucky and parts of Indiana. For business customers, Cincinnati Bell provides comprehensive communications products and services through dedicated sales teams, strategic support services and partnerships with many of the industry's top brands. Cincinnati Bell has approximately 3,000 employees and recorded revenue of \$1.3 billion in 2006.

The Challenge

A professional sales force handles selling Cincinnati Bell's services and products to companies. These "feet on the street" build relationships with customers and communicate the benefits of choosing Cincinnati Bell over the competition. Supporting the sales teams is a marketing and sales support organization that prepares product offerings and creates sales collateral designed to capture new customers and retain existing ones. However, the tools supporting Cincinnati Bell's marketing efforts were antiquated, cumbersome and costly.

Sales professionals had four methods of accessing brochures and marketing collateral:

- Some collateral was printed in bulk by an outside printer. These materials were shipped directly to the sales offices and stored

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Cincinnati BellSM

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in filing cabinets. Sales personnel would search through drawers to find the appropriate support tool for each sales call. This took precious time away from sales activities.



- Other pieces of material were shipped directly from the manufacturers, such as cell phone vendors, and were also distributed to the sales offices and stored in storage rooms.
- Some marketing pieces requiring frequent updates, including flyers, monthly specials and tariff schedules, were printed at the company's own reprographics center and stored at the sales offices. These pieces were ordered by the salespeople and manually shipped out as needed.
- Sales associates accessed a common data share containing documents, spreadsheets and slide presentations. These documents were printed on company-owned color laser printers at each sales office.

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Though each printing method held certain advantages, the disadvantages of each became increasingly apparent as Cincinnati Bell's sales organization grew and as the product portfolio continued to expand.

Bulk printing provided a professional appearance but manually shipping cases of materials to each sales office was expensive. Cases of pamphlets routinely were thrown away as limited-time offers expired or as terms changed. Printing flyers and tariff sheets in its own print shop permitted shorter print runs, but as jobs waited their turn, the sales staff's supply frequently ran out. Printing collateral on demand allowed sales associates to add their names and contact information for a personal touch, but also freed associates to tailor the content, resulting in multiple versions and inconsistent messaging. Lastly, waiting for printed material from vendors could take weeks and often arrived well after the actual product launch. Sales personnel were frustrated and complained that documents were difficult to find and when they could find what they were looking for, it was often outdated.

The impact of this complicated process was increased costs, lots of wasted materials, frustrated salespeople, a high administrative burden, and a delay in giving sales personnel the tools they needed to present Cincinnati Bell's products and solutions to business customers.

“We needed to help our salespeople stop searching for materials and spend more time selling,” said Julie Van Arsdale, Senior Manager of Cincinnati Bell's Business Markets Sales Support Organization. “We needed to make it easy for sales to have materials that would help them present a solution to their customers that was accurate, value added and that effectively represented the Cincinnati Bell brand.”

The Solution

For Van Arsdale, the latest biennial review of all marketing collateral provided an opportunity to rethink not just what appears in these documents, but the entire process of producing them. As a first step, marketing redesigned all of Cincinnati Bell's business materials with a more uniform size, appearance and consistent messaging.

The company's advertising agency proposed a standard color scheme and size, replacing the mix and match of layouts and colors that had sprung up over the years. Pamphlets were redesigned to a single size for a unified appearance and to reduce production costs.

A task force was assembled to analyze dozens of pieces of marketing collateral to prioritize content that needed to be updated, delete product brochures for devices that were no longer offered and reduce the number of support materials used by sales. In addition, the task force would assist in evaluating the proposed software and hardware solutions.

“To make sure our sales staff always presented up-to-the-minute information to customers, we made the decision to adopt a networked print-on-demand solution for Business Markets,” said Van Arsdale. “This approach would allow salespeople to go to one online location for all business collateral and to print it at the local sales office, making it easy for each sales person to print what they wanted, when they wanted it and customized for each business customer.” The print-on-demand solution would ensure that all the information was up to date, and eliminate outside printing, stocking and shipping of materials to the individual offices.

With a strategy in mind, Cincinnati Bell moved on to selecting a vendor to provide distributed, full-color print-on-demand services to all its sales associates.

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The ideal solution would:

- Provide salespeople with a single online source for all collateral needs
- Increase sales effectiveness and productivity
- Substantially reduce costs
- Minimize outside printing needs
- Reduce production print at its reproduction center
- Reduce storage and distribution costs
- Reduce waste
- Audit and track documents being printed by sales professionals
- Maintain a consistent marketing message to our business customers

Cincinnati Bell evaluated solutions from four hardware vendors, including rigorous testing of each company's color laser printers. The company also considered if the vendor could offer a comprehensive document management solution in addition to the color printing capability. Of the four vendors invited to participate, one declined to respond, one didn't offer print on demand software as part of the solution and the third locked the company into a 60-month, click charge arrangement.

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As a pilot, Cincinnati Bell installed a variety of Lexmark color laser printers, along with Lexmark's Document Portal software. Marketing flyers and other materials were loaded into the Lexmark Document Portal and tested by the vendor-selection task force, selected sales associates and sales managers. With this solution, salespeople could easily find, customize and print precisely the materials they needed and in the exact quantities they needed. Those materials that should not be customized were prohibited from modification.

Users were surveyed and reported they were able to easily find, customize and produce sales brochures more quickly and with fewer steps. The process was faster and waste shrunk to nearly zero. Supply rooms and warehouse space devoted solely to storing pre-printed materials were reallocated for other use. In hardware quality, Lexmark devices earned a 4.5 rating out of 5 from employees. In ease of use, Lexmark earned 4.1. Lexmark's Document Portal earned 5.0 rating, the highest possible, and its ease of use was rated 4.6.

“After two weeks, the word got out about our results, so we added another test group,” Van Arsdale said. “The quality of the Lexmark printers is outstanding and the employees in our pilot group estimate that they gained a productivity increase of between 25 and 50 percent.”

With the print quality of Lexmark's color laser printers, Cincinnati Bell was able to retire its old process of supplying collateral to sales and be assured that the documents its salespeople were printing would be professional looking and that the colors printed would precisely match its brand, and that of its vendor partners. In addition, all of the color laser printers were customized to automatically print on both sides of a sheet of paper so that waste was significantly reduced.

To help Cincinnati Bell estimate its costs over time, Lexmark consultants built a highly detailed cost-per-page model through an analysis of the company's redesigned marketing documents. Using the Coverage Estimator tool built into every Lexmark color laser printer, Lexmark calculated the exact amount of toner applied to each page. Using this tool, Cincinnati Bell was able to anticipate its cost basis before printing of the new marketing documents even began.

The Results

Cincinnati Bell estimates an immediate savings of about 30 percent and estimates productivity gains at between 25 percent and 50 percent. The company saved \$23,000 in the first three months that the solution was deployed.

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Additional benefits of the Lexmark solution include:

- One stop shopping for sales professionals to print collateral
- Easy to customize a flyer for a customer using a wizard-like tool
- Integrity of content maintained
- Up to date product and service information
- Corporate branding maintained through Lexmark’s Pantone Color Matching technology
- Overall heightened quality and consistency of its documents
- Print what I want, when I want, to whom and how much
- Reduce administrative burden on sales professionals

For the first time, Cincinnati Bell’s Business Markets team has the tools to measure the sales performance of its marketing pieces, allowing the company to expand the use of materials that work well and eliminate those that are less successful. The laborious and costly trashing of thousands of outdated documents is now just a memory.

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Based on the success of the pilot solution at Cincinnati Bell, the company is deploying a fleet of Lexmark color laser printers and the Lexmark Document Portal software throughout its entire business-to-business organization.

“With the Lexmark solution, we have literally changed the way our account representatives do business,” said Van Arsdale. “And those changes are having a profound impact on employee productivity, costs and will undoubtedly lead to more sales.”

Today, Cincinnati Bell’s sales associates print marketing materials on demand, customizing them for individual business-to-business customers. The process is faster, the documents look better, and performance can be measured. Costs are down and productivity is up, providing the sales staff with more time to sell. For Cincinnati Bell, Lexmark was the right call.