10-point checklist for judging the real quality of print

primedata

Data-driven print is a digital strategy. So your new checklist for judging the value of your print pieces is suspiciously similar to a digital marketer's checklist. Use this checklist to move past paper, ink and colour and make sure your print is truly driving results.

☐ **Is it secure?**
Will your job be successful if your data is used inappropriately? Ask for secure firewalls, facilities, policies, practices, data transfer and staff police checks.

☐ **Does the printer pay attention to data quality?**
They should consider not just address correction, but names, duplicates, deceased and moved individuals.

☐ **How many data analysts are supporting your print?**
How skilled are they? They're a bit like the traditional pre-press team. They scan for issues, report, correct and prepare files for merging. It's hard to think of good quality variable digital print (VDP) without good quality data.

☐ **Can you economically print full colour text and images on both sides of a sheet?**
If so, this probably means using newer inkjet printers instead of toner-based laser. It also means you're no longer pre-printing offset printed shells and imaging on them.

☐ **Can the print process be simpler, to save time and plan resources?**
Full-colour VDP can often eliminate the need to pre-print offset shells, ship, store and use them for black-only print. This can save hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars in project management time for a frequent mailer.

☐ **Can the print process be faster?**
Can online activity automatically trigger print? Can it be printed and mailed next-day?

☐ **Is it always on time, as promised?**
We'd expect an email to be delivered within small tolerances, why not printed mail?

☐ **Are there artwork considerations that affect cost?**
Toner printing is often priced by the click, while inkjet inks can be more expensive with high coverage.

☐ **Are there artwork or paper considerations that affect suitability?**
Digital printers apply ink/toner differently and things like blocks of colour or scores can have different outcomes. There are different considerations depending upon the print media, as there are for the screen size.

☐ **Can you print lots of versions with very little extra cost?**
This lets you test scenarios, segment and measure results inexpensively. You can measure:

☐ Cost to print
☐ Cost to produce and manage
☐ Click-through conversion rates (since print can drive online activity)