

Printing centrally vs Printing in-store?

Historically simple shelf edge price tickets were printed in store and all other point of sale printed materials were printed centrally and distributed to each store individually. Economically the model made sense and worked for most retailers. However in today's world the process is too slow for marketing and commercial functions to get their offers in store quickly enough. Typically it takes about a week, sometimes much more, from Marketing deciding that they want to promote an offer to that offer becoming available to customers in-store. With the number of products on offer in many supermarkets at over 30% and rising this time delay is unacceptable from both a commercial and a competitive perspective.

Why does it take so long?

There are variations between retailers but once the commercial decision to make a promotional offer has been agreed the launch of a promotion typically follows these steps and elapsed times.

1. Details of the offer are sent to the team who create the art work
2. The art work is created (1.0 day)
3. The Marketing team check the accuracy of the artwork and make corrections (0.5 days)
4. The finally agreed artwork is sent to the central printer (1.0 day)
5. The central printer prints all the materials (0.5 days)
6. The printed materials are packed and a box is sent to each store (1.0 day)
7. The store unpacks and sorts the material (0.5 days)
8. Store staff correctly place all the materials in-store with locally produced price tickets (0.5 days)
9. Point of sale IT systems are updated and the offer goes live to customers

The way to become more competitively effective while still keeping down costs is to reduce the time taken on these steps or, if possible, eliminate some steps altogether. That is exactly what Pierhouse's NetTickIT software has been designed to do.

For example by using customised standard templates in NetTickIT the marketing team just insert the product and price details and the software automatically produces the artwork in a range of different sizes and formats. The templates can then be sent directly to the central printer saving about 2 days. NetTickIT even puts the tickets and point of sale materials in the best sequence for the central printer to print and distribute in the most efficient and cost effective way. This speeds up printing and distribution saving even more time. Additionally it can also work out which stores need a piece of point of sale and which don't. This saves wasting printed materials as well as time in-store sorting through materials that are not relevant to them. This can save at least another day.

For most Retailers printing large in-store posters and point of sale centrally is the most logical and effective solution particularly when the materials are not time critical. But what about smaller point of sale materials and price tickets that are time critical? Most marketing teams want their offer to be in store as soon as possible, preferably same day. This is not viable using central printers but it's very easy to do with in-store printing facilitated by NetTickIT. As well as all the advantages that NetTickIT add to central printing in-store printing also gives head office information about what has been printed in each store so they know that actions have been taken. All the tickets are produced with just a few clicks and no training is required to print the ticket and POS materials in store walk order.

A major feature of in-store printing is the production of emergency tickets or POS to replace damaged or lost tickets. These can be produced on demand using the very latest information because it's accessed directly from the head office database not from pre prepared PDF's. This means more product selling time and not having to take products off the self whilst waiting for new tickets from central printing. Of course local printing is also very helpful to produce professional looking Manager's specials which help the products sell much quicker than hand written signs.

In conclusion most retailers need both in-store printing and central printing but how they use them varies dependent upon factors such as market conditions and authority levels given to in-store staff. It's from this basis that Pierhouse designed their NetTickIT software. The overall objective is to meet the flexible needs of retailers to print where they want and when they want and get the best results from their in-store marketing.

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