



WHY FRANCHISORS NEED A COMPREHENSIVE PRINT STRATEGY

*How a Managed Print Strategy Can Ensure Consistent Branding, Drive Productivity
and Boost Profitability.*



Table of Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	3
Why a Print Strategy is Important	4
Printing is Essential to Branding	6
Franchises Have Unique Printing Challenges	8
A Print Strategy Increases Profitability	10
A Cohesive Print Strategy Saves Time	11
Conclusion	12
About Availe	12

2020 AVAILE | All Rights Reserved. This material may not be reproduced, displayed, modified or distributed without the express prior written permission of the copyright holder. For permission, contact: (480) 967-7468 or email: help@availe.com.

SUMMARY

Digital communication is changing the nature of business, but print is still an indispensable component of any franchise business. Yet despite the amount of money spent on print materials for everything from marketing to sales to other assets shared company-wide, the total cost is often poorly understood because it encompasses everything from the installation of hardware to technical support to on-going supplies and service costs.

This paper explores how a managed print strategy, executed by a reliable third party who understands the relationship between franchisor and franchisee, can save money and increase productivity for franchisors by unburdening corporate IT departments and freeing up resources at the franchisee level.

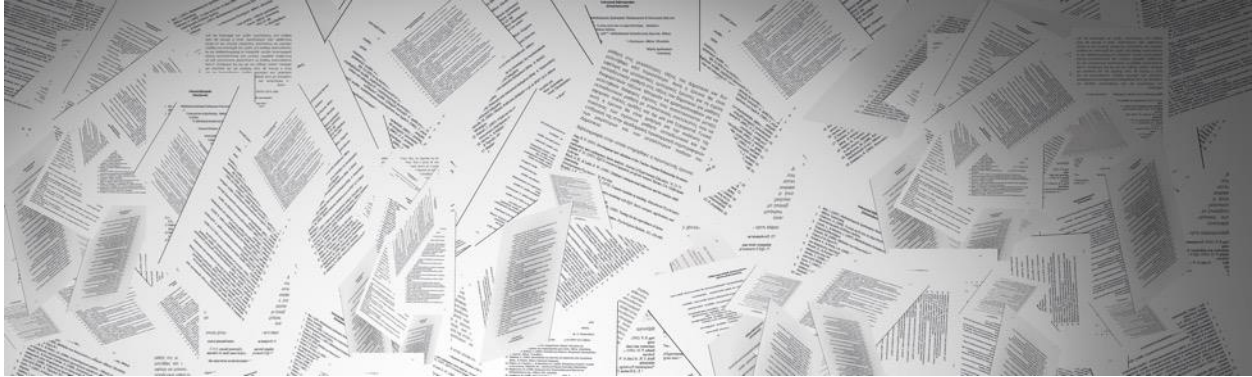
It discusses the importance of a print strategy in the context of the unique needs of franchisors and franchisees such as deploying printers and copiers at new locations and accounting for regional differences across franchise businesses. It shows how a managed print partner offers the flexibility that franchise businesses need. The paper also analyzes how a managed print strategy can improve company-wide branding by allowing the franchisor to keep tight control over a company's image, as well as, how it allows franchisees to shift their focus from printing to more immediate business needs, such as serving customers.

INTRODUCTION

Business may be increasing digitally, but despite the migration of functions to the Internet, we do not live in a paperless world. Printed materials are still a fact of life for many businesses, particularly for franchisors responsible for building a brand across many locations. Print remains an indispensable part of the workflow for marketing, sales, human resources, and even sharing important information company-wide and/or with customers.

However, print is rarely, if ever, top-of-mind for busy IT departments, much less upper management. Franchisees rarely receive top-level guidance and support when it comes to print, which is often managed in-house on a location-by-location basis. Many businesses muddle through with this arrangement, unaware of the costs to both franchisor and franchisee. A thorough review of print's role in business reveals just what can be gained by taking a proactive approach to print – one of the least understood areas of any business. As such, printing costs are often undocumented, uncontrolled, and unpredictable.

A proactive print strategy, executed by a reliable third party who understands the relationship between franchisor and franchisee, can dramatically unburden a franchisor's IT department.



WHY A PRINT STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT

The true cost of print is poorly understood at nearly every level of business. Franchisors often assign print and copy decisions to the Help Desk. Often times, this is not the most cost effective and efficient solution for franchisees.

The numbers make the argument for adopting a broad print strategy. According to the Gartner Group, businesses spend up to 3 percent of their annual revenue on printing costs.¹ However, the same study shows that, through coordinated print services, it is possible to save up to 30 percent of those costs.

“CIOs should quite rightly look to cut costs in IT and look to value add in their organization (sic), but they should also look to where the business is unnecessarily incurring costs,” Roswell Jones, a research vice president at Gartner’s CIO research group, told CIO.com. “Print may well be – with some decent analysis – a place to highlight some opportunities for further savings.”²

At the same time, competitors are moving to adopt their own cohesive print strategies. A survey by the Computer Technology Industry Association of about 400 IT and business executives directly involved in their company's print and managed document operations showed that about half of enterprises already use coordinated print services in some capacity. Meanwhile, only 20 percent of small businesses do so.³

Franchisors who offer their franchisees these services will be providing a competitive edge.

Digging deeper, an across-the-board print strategy offers franchisors and franchisees the following advantages:

- Franchisees are supplied with the correct equipment for their operations, at every location. Unmanaged equipment varies widely from location to location. Some may even be grossly under-equipped for their needs.

- Taking print and copy management out of the hands of franchisees frees up time and resources to channel into other profit-generating areas of the business. Replacing and customizing equipment eats up time and energy. Those resources can be used in other, more profitable ways when a comprehensive strategy is implemented.
- A comprehensive print strategy fosters important relationships with manufacturers, which can translate to better service, deep discounts, and further understanding of a franchise business's unique needs.
- Printer management in all its facets, including hardware, software, and logistics, is complex in itself. Working with a company that understands print relieves a great deal of pressure for both franchisor and franchisee.



PRINTING IS ESSENTIAL TO BRANDING

Building a consistent brand across many different locations is one of the keys to a successful franchise business. Printed materials have a vital, but often-overlooked role in this process, including everything from menus to coupons to signage to promotional materials. Ensuring that all printed materials produced are high quality can build a corporate brand by:

- *Offering consistency and predictability across franchise locations*
- *Encouraging franchisees to focus on profits and running the business effectively, rather than putting energy into creating and managing print collateral*
- *Allowing the franchisor to keep tight control over the company's image*

For these reasons, paper is still a critical part of building relationships with individual customers and the public at large. As such, franchise businesses need to know that they can print high-quality materials consistently and distribute them efficiently.

Without knowing that franchisees can reliably print high-quality materials at their locations, maintaining a consistent brand can be a source of anxiety. Poor-quality printers can create a number of branding difficulties, from producing incorrect colors to not being able to print at a high enough resolution to create attractive materials.

The quality of printed materials at franchise locations also diminish over time if franchisees find themselves making “a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy” of what were once fresh marketing materials.

In this way, it is easy to see how poor-quality prints can negatively impact the value of a brand.

Many franchisors, wary of their franchisees' printing capabilities, choose to print centrally and distribute materials via US Postal Service or overnight delivery to their members.

A large retailer might print shelf cards off-site and distribute the cards to each individual location. It is inefficient, but the headquarters company can be assured of the print quality. The print-then-distribute method does not allow for quick turnarounds or sudden changes in a particular market. It can also result in a great deal of waste and massive, unnecessary shipping costs. However, when franchisors know that their franchisees have good-quality equipment, they can push files electronically to locations where they are printed as needed.

The ability to have good, consistent printing gives franchisors the peace of mind knowing that if they send a document to a location electronically, the franchisee can quickly and easily produce a high-quality result.

Distributing materials for franchisees to print allows complete control over the content and ensures brand value when the right equipment is at the franchisee location. In addition, this method also eliminates waste, saving both the franchisor and franchisee money, as only the desired quantity of printed materials needed is actually produced on site.



FRANCHISES HAVE UNIQUE PRINTING CHALLENGES

To successfully implement a comprehensive print strategy, it is important to work with a vendor who understands the franchisor / franchisee relationship, from the coordination needed to open new franchise locations to managing regional differences in nationwide chains. When embarking on a coordinated print strategy, be sure to work with a vendor who understands the dynamics between franchisor and franchisee.

These are some of the advantages to working with a managed print partner who specializes in franchise businesses:

A comprehensive print strategy tailored to franchise businesses can help strengthen and build the relationship between franchisor and franchisee.

With the correct equipment, robust support, and a well-developed print strategy, franchisees can worry about their core business and not printing and copying.

A comprehensive print partner offers the flexibility that franchise businesses need.

Different locations have unique needs that are often dependent upon regional location and season. For example, retailers in the Southwest may carry swimwear late into September, unlike stores in the Northeast. A cohesive print strategy allows a business to customize promotions and other printed materials specific to individual needs of the franchise.

A comprehensive print strategy can help franchisors eliminate Help Desk calls related to printing.

Printing calls are difficult and time consuming for IT departments. Working with a managed print partner is a benefit to IT departments, now free to divert resources to mission critical and Help Desk issues.

A comprehensive print partner with franchise experience can ease the process of opening new franchise locations. The process of opening a new franchisee location may not seem like it has much to do with print, but it is important to work with a managed print vendor who understands how this works. Plans are often subject to change, based on permits, business loans or legal issues.

Managing the delivery and installation of printing equipment at new locations is an important part of the build-out phase. A vendor familiar with this process can ensure that equipment arrives at the best possible time.



A PRINT STRATEGY INCREASES PROFITABILITY

There is a strong financial case for a cohesive print strategy. Managed printing decreases the total cost of ownership for franchisees, leading to better profits for both franchisor and franchisee.

Coordinated print services can provide the ability to consistently track printing equipment, supplies, and costs across the entire network of franchisees. This enables the franchise business to make better decisions about how to reduce costs.

Enabling franchisees to print efficiently provides an immediate return on investment in terms of productivity and cost savings in the following ways:

- A coordinated print services company can negotiate discounts from manufacturers for hardware, supplies, installation, and support to decrease overall printing costs for the business.
- Left to manage print on their own, franchisees will make ad hoc purchases that often result in equipment that only lasts a few months. The cycle then repeats itself, with franchisees purchasing additional equipment that will soon need to be replaced, wasting time and money.
- Reliable, decentralized printing actually increases efficiency by drastically reducing or eliminating the franchisor's shipping expenses for printed materials.
- Working with an outside company that has expertise in print, hardware and software, and manages a nationwide team of technicians, reduces the expense of technical support, repairs, and other services to the franchisor.



A COHESIVE PRINT STRATEGY SAVES TIME

The biggest savings to be found in working with a coordinated print company is time. A cohesive print strategy, including full installation and implementation of printers at existing locations, can increase productivity for franchisors and franchisees by unlocking hours of staff time in the following ways:

- Installation by a third party takes the franchisee out of the process, putting it in the hands of an expert who can manage implementation and product installation.
- Managed print vendors can coordinate with general contractors and other vendors during the build-out of new locations to ensure that equipment won't be delivered before the optimal time.
- Franchisees operate in crisis mode for anything outside of their core business, particularly when it comes to printing. Automated supplies replenishment and coordinated print services eliminate the "supplies fire drill" at the franchisee location, keeping everyone working on the core business. Not only does this save the franchisee money, it keeps the business focus where it belongs.
- Rather than suffering downtime when equipment needs to be repaired, a coordinated print program can incorporate the use of "hot swaps" which entails sending in a new machine for the broken one to ensure the business is still able to print. Franchisees need not worry about managing their own repairs and returns.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line is this: When franchisors put in place print solutions for franchisees that provide standardized printing equipment, support and services, everyone wins. Productivity goes up, expenses go down and, most importantly, profits increase.

The less time both franchisor and franchisee spend on print, the more time can be spent building the business and serving customers, ultimately leading to more profit. And with a smart, comprehensive print strategy, less of those profits will go to printing.

ABOUT AVAILE

Availe, Inc. was formed in 1995, to provide printing solutions for businesses. Today, our business is focused on multi-location, nationwide customers and their digital output needs. We are direct distribution partners with an emphasis on digital output -- color laser printers, multi-function copiers, and faxes.

Along with product sales and support, we have successfully designed and implemented solutions such as multi-vendor nationwide repair, custom MICR check printing, migration to laser-based forms, host data manipulation, and hot-swap repair. We are specialists in solutions catering to the franchisor/franchisee business model with a deep understanding of the challenges and requirements surrounding print and Help Desk support from both headquarters and franchisees' perspectives.

Contact our team: (480) 967-7468 for more information or [email us: help@availe.com](mailto:help@availe.com).

REFERENCES

1. Gartner Group <http://www.lasercare.com/downloads/gartnergoldmine.pdf>
2. CIO Quote [http://www.cio.com.au/article/315420/print_last_bastion_cost_cutting_/](http://www.cio.com.au/article/315420/print_last_bastion_cost_cutting/)
3. CompTIA Study
<http://mspmentor.net/managed-services/comptia-study-managed-print-services>