



IN-PLANT PRINTING AND MAILING ASSOCIATION

# INSIDEDGE

A Newsletter for In-House Printing and Mailing Professionals

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## How to Bulletproof Your In-Plant in Today's Economy

As organizations drill down for ways to become financially leaner, Colorado Springs School District's in-plant is in an enviable position. "Financially speaking, our department is managed very differently from most school district in-plants with respect to total responsibility and accountability," shares Production Printing Manager Joe Morin with a hint of pride. "We operate as a business on all levels, not-the-least of which are financial and service."



The department, which employs 14 at its main facility and 5 at satellite locations, is a full chargeback operation including salary, benefits, materials, capital equipment purchases, depreciation, utilities, etc. Because they are 100% self-supporting and receive no subsidies, there would be no monetary gain in slashing their budget.

"Over the years I have advised those looking to improve and grow their in-plants, to begin by bulletproofing their financial foundation. To show value an in-plant must be able to assume financial responsibilities like a commercial business, and at least break even at year-end," Morin explains. "Sometimes this can be accomplished solely by the workload of the parent organization. However, in the majority of cases, (ours included) it is beneficial to establish community partnerships to insource additional work during production cycle lows." At no time has the bulletproofing philosophy been more critical than in today's economic environment.

Shouldering responsibility for printing, copying, mailing, 250 convenience copiers, as well as identification cards for the district's 29,000 students, 4,500 employees and contractors, their business model is fashioned to assure self-sufficiency and technological sustainability.

All of the 105,000 customer requests received annually are entered into the PrintSmith MIS for pricing, barcode tracking of work-in-process, and final billing. At the end of each day, completed orders are posted and an electronic closeout transfer occurs through the district's

PeopleSoft financial system that evening, providing all internal customers real-time budget management. At the same time, invoices are mailed to external customers for their completed projects.

Offering one-stop shopping, the in-plant's quality, and turnaround particularly in the 4-color arena are enviable. In addition to the traditional printing and copying, wide format posters and banners; computer engraved plaques/awards, as well as direct/bulk mail services are available.

Approximately 130,000 pieces of mail are processed annually. Most of which has been produced in their shop and bulk mailed to customer supplied addresses lists. These lists are filtered through AccuZIP postal automation software to maximize printing and mailing efficiencies and processing discounts. Last July they upgraded the mailroom equipment from Hasler-Neopost WP150 meter and scale to the WP 250 model to handle the increased workload of both mailroom and printing customers.

Customers are continually surveyed to assess new requirements, spanning everything from technology and throughput, to environmentally-conscious decisions and efforts to reduce emissions, energy and waste. Decisions regarding new services are always customer and data-driven. For example, in assessing their disaggregated sales data, they began to notice a pattern of increased color copying. They might start researching new ways to meet the demand through improved technology and/or processes. "Good financial and production data is key to executing solid business decisions."

Morin's best long-term money-saving tip, "You have to spend money to make money." Investments in technology improve throughput, competitive edge, process reliability, customer service, in addition to reducing production costs (energy, waste, labor).

"It is vitally important to diversify (products, services, and customer base) to be successful and add value to your parent organization," he has found. "View the in-plant as a commercial business within your organization, and benchmark yourself against the best in order to continually improve and grow."

To view the Production Printing web site for Colorado Spring's School District, visit [www.d11.org/printing](http://www.d11.org/printing)

**Core equipment fleet includes:**

2 – Heidelberg 9110 printers w/bookletmakers

1 – Ryobi 524 HXXP 4-color

1 – Standard/Horizon 30-bin collating/booklet making system

1- Mitsubishi DPX polyester plate setter

PrintSmith MIS for job entry, billing, tracking, and data collection

18 computer workstations located across 6 different production locations across the district, used for billing, tracking, prepress and design.

Software supported: Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop, Quark, MS Office products (Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint).

EFI Storefront that integrates with PrintSmith MIS