

publishing portfolio

Working with Printers

John Ball, Creative Pages



When thinking about the range and types of printers that any publishing company uses for the critical task of production, we too often focus on repeat orders and staying with existing relationships. There can be better options out there and often the existing suppliers could be performing more effectively.

This course provides the learners with practical advice on building successful working relationships with both new and existing suppliers.

Working with Printers enables the learner to:

- Manage the printer relationship effectively with clear communications, contract and standards
- Make the best use of existing and new suppliers in a balanced portfolio
- Understand the importance of the Printing Specification (Print Spec) and its part in obtaining the best deal
- Analyse quotes and set up and manage negotiations for price, service and quality
- Make contracts and agreements, set quality benchmarks and agree levels of service
- Assess suitability of potential suppliers and their competence to do the work
- Find out about the market for printers and the economics of competing businesses

Learning outcomes

Core principles

- Is a short or long term relationship best?
- How should I view competition?
- How can communications be effective?
- How many suppliers should I have?
- What ethical issues should I consider?
- How do I manage the risks?

Key skills

- What is the importance of the print spec?
- How do I handle quotes and negotiations?
- How do I place an order?
- What does a good contract look like?
- How do I keep prices competitive?
- How do I ensure product quality?
- When should I reject work?
- What is the best way to track key dates?

Placing work

- How do I decide who to order from?
- What kind of contract is needed?
- How do I prepare the material?
- What quality should I expect?
- How will I arrange quality control?
- How do I get delivery on time?

Developing supplier relationships

- What do I need to know about the printer and their business?
- How should I manage service levels?

- How do I develop my suppliers?
- How do I work with different suppliers on the same project?

Understanding the market

- Where do I look for new printers?
- How do I learn about the market?
- How can I keep up to date with trends?

Target audience

This course is designed to appeal to staff who are likely to be involved in selecting and managing printers.

Those who are new to purchasing and supplier management will find this course guides them through the key decision-points and attitudes they need to do their job successfully.

Those with more experience will value the opportunity to review their approach to managing suppliers, practise their skills and build on their experience.

Additional services

Blended learning: ½ day workshops available.

Tailoring: include your examples, processes and issues.

See also: *Negotiation Skills*.

Author: John Ball MBA is an experienced international print and publishing manager who enjoys providing help to others to do it better.