

Outsourcing Transactional Print and Mail: The Time Is Now!

Achieving Efficiency, Growth and a
Better Experience for Consumers
and Internal Stakeholders

Many organizations are reevaluating their communications needs – from data composition through delivery and archiving – and discovering the benefits of outsourcing. Those who outsource transactional print, mail and digital delivery of critical communications such as bills, statements and notices are able to focus more on their core business, while being protected from hidden risks.

The operations of transactional print and mail have changed in ways that we couldn't have imagined just a few years ago. Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations faced challenges in this area – a shortage of skilled workers, ever-changing regulations and customers who expected to be communicated with according to their specific preferences.

Now that we're nearly two years into a persistent global health crisis, the landscape has only become more complicated. Skilled workers are even harder to come by and retain, supply chain disruptions have stretched resources even thinner, postal rates are increasing and consumers' communication preferences are a moving target. Consumer expectations continue to drive the demand for more relevant messaging and a uniform experience across channels. In addition, data security concerns and regulations are growing more complex.

All of these factors are causing businesses to reevaluate their internal operations for critical communications and make choices that will help them become more efficient and to manage risk.

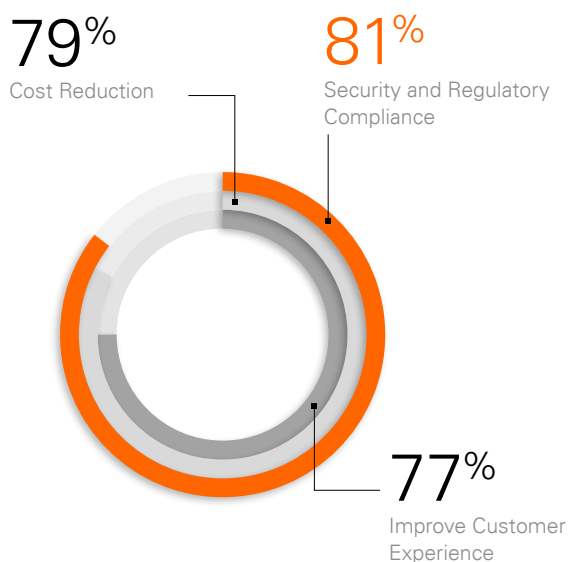
Heightened Security Concerns

Not surprisingly, well-publicized email scams and security breaches have caused consumers to be more protective of their personal data. Organizations are keenly aware of this. When business respondents to a recent Keypoint Intelligence survey, were asked to rank the importance of various business objectives, security and regulatory compliance was the top-ranked strategy, followed by cost reduction and a desire to improve the customer experience.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents who scored these top three objectives as a four (important) or five (most important). Businesses clearly understand that data security is front and center in their customers' minds, but they are still working to contain their costs while delivering an improved customer experience.

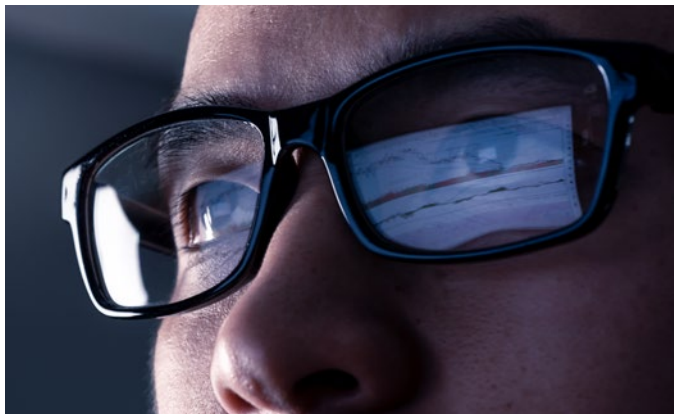
Figure 1: Importance of Business Objectives

On a scale of one to five with one being the least important and five being the most important, how important are each of the following business objectives to your transactional communications strategy over the next two years?



N=364 Enterprise Respondents in the U.S. and Canada
Source: "Annual State of Transactional Communications Business Survey," Keypoint Intelligence, 2021

Consumers trust the enterprises they do business with to protect their personal data. Any breach of this trust may result in a negative customer experience at best, or defection to a competitor at worst. At the same time, businesses must meet new and existing regulations designed to protect consumer privacy, and keeping up with these ever-changing rules can be quite daunting.



Supply Chain Headaches

In the COVID-19 era, another unexpected challenge has profoundly affected businesses that print and mail communications. Supply chain disruptions have resulted in an unprecedented paper shortage. Yet, despite these paper delivery challenges, enterprises are still tasked with efficiently and effectively delivering highly personalized communications to consumers through their preferred channels. Supply chain problems are affecting businesses of all shapes and sizes, and additional disruptions should be expected in the future.

In short, today's businesses continue to weather a storm that COVID-19 created. How will they navigate to safety?

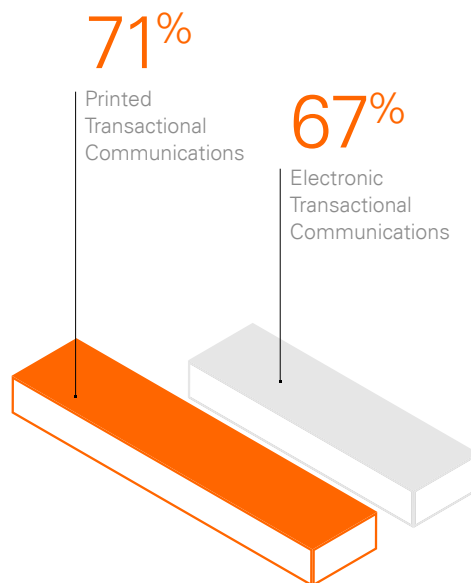
Finding a Safe Harbor

Outsourcing printed communications can help address these business pressures, while yielding substantial business benefits. Now is a pivotal time to act. Businesses looking to be more efficient and manage risk should solicit the help of an experienced provider that focuses on transactional print and mail, has expertise in physical and digital distribution, and guarantees the security of consumer information in the process.

Why outsource? Most importantly, if document production and delivery are not among their core competencies, organizations run the risk of delivering a negative consumer experience and impacting overall business performance. In the interest of efficiency and growth, enterprises should focus on what they do best and rely on a trusted partner to support all their communications needs – from data composition through delivery and archiving. Turning to a single-source outsourcing provider can help reduce costs, enhance the consumer experience and drive a seamless migration to digital document delivery.

More and more businesses are seeing the wisdom in this course of action. Based on the research from Keypoint Intelligence (Figure 2), over 70 percent of enterprise respondents were outsourcing at least some of their printed transactional communications. And roughly two-thirds of respondents were producing some of their electronic transactional communications externally.

Figure 2: Share of Enterprises That Are Outsourcing Transactional Communications



N=364 Enterprise Respondents in the U.S. and Canada
Source: "Annual State of Transactional Communications Business Survey," Keypoint Intelligence, 2021

Of those enterprises that were printing their transactional communications externally, 67 percent reported that they were using the same provider for managing both their print and electronic document delivery.

Enterprises that were not producing printed transactional communications externally were asked to specify the single most compelling reason to outsource in the future, and the top responses included improved efficiency (27 percent), reduced costs (23 percent), and improved quality of customer communications (20 percent). In addition, 81 percent of enterprise respondents agreed that they would prefer to work with fewer third-party vendors that provided a broad range of services rather than relying on a higher number of more specialized vendors.

Keypoint Intelligence's year-over-year research further confirms that the share of outsourced printing that was handled at the enterprise's own site increased by 15 percent between 2019 and 2021.

The Bottom Line

Today's business landscape is more complicated than ever, and additional disruptions are likely as supply chain issues linger, data security concerns increase and postal expenses continue to rise.

Now is the time to explore a new kind of experience in communications. As businesses strive to accommodate consumers' ever-changing communication preferences in the aftermath of the pandemic, it is especially important to establish a trusted partnership with a consumer communications provider that enables organizations to focus on their core competencies and, in turn, generate greater profits.


Thousands of clients across a wide range of industries trust Fiserv to deliver exceptional customer engagement, accelerate digital adoption and drive greater profitability – all while reducing costs, operational complexities and risks.


About the Author

Teresa Zwiener is a vice president at Fiserv. She has more than 25 years of experience in customer communications management and document delivery through print and digital channels. Zwiener has held various leadership positions in product strategy, account management, client implementation and sales in markets such as banking and financial services, insurance, telecommunications, utilities and cable. In her current role, she strives to help clients accelerate growth, improve consumer engagement and reduce costs.

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