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PRINTING INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE & INSIGHT STUDIES AVAILABLE

- Four reports provide actionable insights for printing company owners

The Printing Industry Performance & Insights study analyzes performance and the outlook of the national print and graphic communications industry. Our thanks to the members who took the time to submit their data for these reports.

The objective of the studies is to provide leaders with actionable advice on how to more effectively manage their organizations. These studies are produced by "Dr. Ralph" Williams and the faculty at the Jones College of Business at Middle Tennessee State University.

Read on for more detail on these reports. Full reports are available in the "members only" section at printcommunications.org. Contact us at info@printcommunications.org for login assistance.

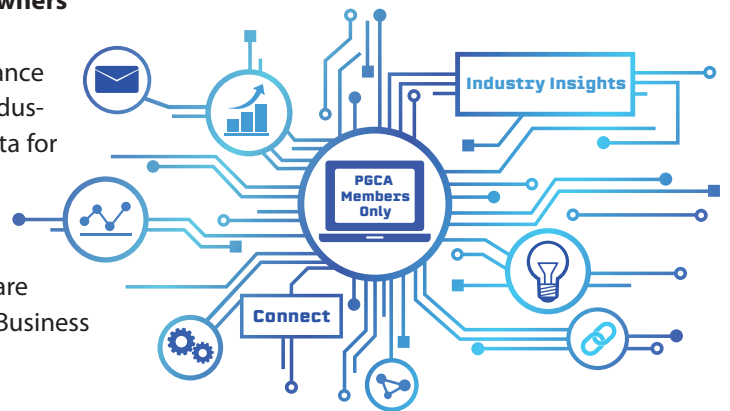
➤ More Printing Purchased? More Customers Added? Report

In the February/March 2025 "Printing Industry Performance & Insights" survey, the Jones College team dug into key trends shaping our industry. The pressing topics they explored included these two: Are printing company customers purchasing more or less printed products? And are printing firms gaining or losing more customers?

In this report, Dr. Ralph offers actionable insights into gaining more orders from new and existing customers:

To enhance customer retention, you might explore ways to effectively connect with customers. For instance, it may help if the company leader makes regular direct connections with customers, including ones he or she is not working with to manage projects. Those discussions might include questions such as "How can we improve?", "What do you need?", "How does the future look?", and others.

Sharing customer responses with your team may prompt ideas on how to respond to the customer and prompt improvement. As a former printing company leader, I know that daily needs may limit the time available to have these chats with customers. However, you might make these conversations a priority.



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COVER CONTINUED

Here are some other steps you might take to enhance customer retention and gain. As a team...

- Monitor the number of orders and revenue per customer, compare them to the recent past, and address positive (thank the customer) and negative (explore why) changes.
- As a team, set goals for adding customers and monitor performance. And discuss those results with your team.
- Determine a strategy and tactics to identify potential new customers and connect with them. Are your salespeople so involved with project management that they can't aggressively identify and connect with new prospects? If that's true, who in your office can explore potential customer possibilities?
- Share great experiences your customers have had working with your company (testimonials) through social media, on your website, and maybe in printed brochures.
- Seek referrals from current satisfied customers. Maybe provide a referral discount.
- Network with community groups, sign up for PGCA educational and social events, and attend conferences.

➤ A Micro Look at Printing Firms: Employee Counts, Adjusting Estimating, Effects of Other Mergers, & AI

In this report, the Jones College crew provides a view of various topics that individual printing firms deal with, a "micro" look:

- Employee numbers – number of employees per one million in revenue, employee turnover, and temporary employees.
- Estimating – how often to review the estimating system, passing along cost increases, measuring estimate wins.
- The effect of other mergers, acquisitions, and closures.
- Artificial Intelligence – Is AI use related to higher performance?, how printing firms are using AI, AI benefits, and AI challenges



Given the skills and knowledge employees need in our industry, employee turnover is disruptive. If your firm has a trend of over 5% employee turnover, you and your team might explore proactive strategies to reduce employee turnover. Here are some thoughts from Dr. Ralph:

- You might look at previous employee turnovers and try to find trends. Are employees departing for a common reason? If so, how can you address that?
- For employees you parted ways with, what could your firm do to reduce the chances of that happening again?
- Consider candid interviews with departing employees – ask questions and listen.
- Benchmarking your compensation and benefits against industry averages might help reduce employee turnover. PGCA conducts an annual compensation survey in conjunction with 14 other associations across the country.
- Helping employees develop through training might also help. PGCA provides training courses through The Print University – more than 80 on-demand courses and educational tracks on the fundamentals of print and graphic communications.
- Providing performance bonuses might also help. It did in the three printing companies I led. We discussed our performance goals with our entire team quarterly, sometimes monthly. After our year-end, I walked around the building and handed out checks to everyone in the building. (That was one of the best days of my year!) Our employees knew those profit bonuses were connected to our firm's performance. This helps commit employees to our firm, and we experienced low employee turnover.
- A recent study we conducted in our industry found that "workplace branding" (communicating how and why your firm is a good place to work) was important in successful recruiting. You can brand your firm as a good place to work through your website, social media, or through printed brochures. Recently, I have seen printing companies' workplace branding on LinkedIn. However, in workplace branding, it's vital that you have an "Employee Value Proposition (EVP)" - the value our employees gain for working at our firm. An EVP may include employee training and development, team participation, listening to employees, work-life balance, and other items. However, leaders must continuously show commitment to their stated EVP. Yes, we found that workplace branding and having an EVP positively affect recruiting. But one would think workplace branding and having an EVP also reduce employee turnover.

The last two reports are the following.
Download all four of these reports in the members only area at printcommunications.org.

- **2023-2024 Growth for Specific Printed Product Areas**
- **The Printing Industry: A Broad Overview**

Contact Dr. Ralph Williams at ralph.williams@mtsu.edu with any questions on these valuable reports.

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SURVEY ON TARIFFS**IMPACT OF CANADIAN TARIFFS ON U.S. PRINTING FIRMS**

—How Canadian Tariffs Are Affecting U.S. Printing Firms: Survey Results Reveal Uncertainty and Limited Impact—for Now

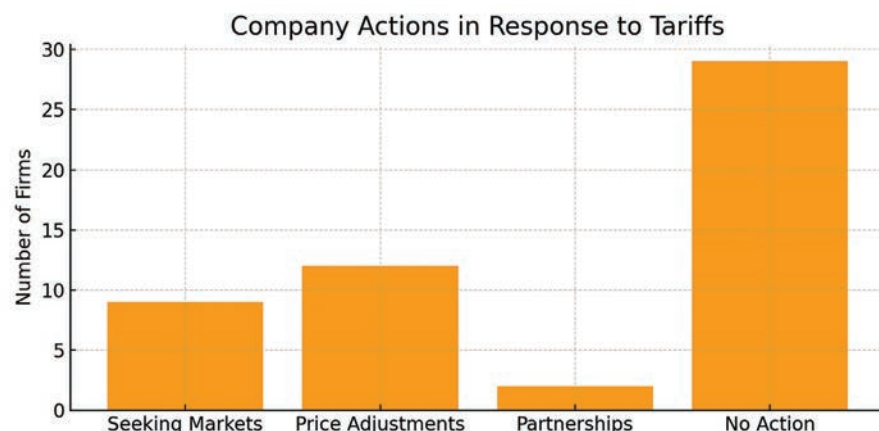
A recent survey of 69 U.S. printing firms conducted by the 14 regional associations sheds light on how Canadian tariffs are influencing business across the border. While nearly half (48%) of respondents reported doing business with Canadian customers, the financial exposure to Canada remains modest for most—62% of firms say those sales account for less than 5% of their annual revenue.

Despite the relatively small volume, several companies are keeping a close eye on the situation. Four respondents reported earning over \$500,000 per year from Canadian clients, indicating that for a select group, the stakes are higher.

Business Reactions: Mostly Cautious, Few Strategic Shifts

When asked how they're responding to the trade environment, most firms (42%) said they are taking no action at this time. A smaller segment is exploring responses such as:

- **Adjusting prices (12 firms)**
- **Seeking new markets (9 firms)**
- **Forming Canadian partnerships (2 firms)**

**Uncertainty Dominates Outlook**

Looking ahead, respondents are split on whether tariffs will significantly impact their businesses in the next 12 months:

- **28 firms (41%) expect a significant impact**
- **11 (16%) do not**
- **27 (39%) remain unsure**

This uncertainty may reflect inconsistent tariff enforcement or evolving policy discussions between the two countries. Open-ended responses echoed a “wait and see” attitude, with some expressing concern over pricing pressures and sourcing difficulties, while others have yet to feel any direct impact.

Conclusion

The current data suggests that while Canadian tariffs are on the radar of U.S. printers, the actual business effect remains limited for most. Still, a sizable portion of the industry is watching developments closely—and for those more heavily engaged in Canadian trade, the next year may bring changes worth preparing for.



RAMP UP THE FUN WITH PRINT & GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION'S EXCLUSIVE TOPGOLF EVENTS THIS FALL.

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What's included:

Three hours of golf with up to six golfers per bay.

Buffet dinner including BBQ brisket and chicken, cheddar mac & cheese, green beans, jalapeno corn bread, house salad, coleslaw, rolls, coffee, iced tea, soda and water.

Cash bar is available.

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Edison, NJ 08817

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July 31, 2025
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King of Prussia, PA 19406

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11:30 am - 1:30 pm☐ **June 4, 2025**The Craftsman Inn,
Fayetteville, NY☐ **June 5, 2025**Reikart Ballroom at Jazzboline,
Amherst, NY→ **Maryland Golf Outing****June 12, 2025**Woodlands Golf Course,
Windsor, MD→ **Topgolf****July 17, 2025**

Topgolf, Edison, NJ

**July 31, 2025**

Topgolf, King of Prussia, PA

August 14, 2025

Topgolf, Mount Laurel, NJ

→ **Raymond A. Bubar Classic****July 25, 2025**Terry Hills Golf Course,
Batavia, NY→ **PGCA Annual MD Crab Feast****September 11, 2025**Kurtz's Beach,
Pasadena, MD→ **Virginia Golf Tournament****September 17, 2025**Hunting Hawk Golf Club,
Glen Allen, VA

WEBINARS

→ **PGCA Management Training Workshops (2 part virtual training)**☐ **Lean Six Sigma,****June 4 & 5, 2025**

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

☐ **Project Management,****August 12 & 13, 2025**

1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Continued on page 8

HR CONFERENCE RECAP

OVER 150 ATTEND HUMAN RESOURCES CONFERENCE AT TURNING STONE

The annual Human Resources Conference was held this month at Turning Stone. Over 150 human resource managers enjoyed the conference held over two days. Conference attendees enjoyed outstanding presentations from Nick Fiorenza, Mike Dodd and Katherine Gavett from PGCA Association Counsel law firm, Ferrara Fiorenza PC.

Glen Boehmer, current PGCA Chairman of the Board, and CEO, Sentinel Innovation, Hempstead, NY, delivered an engaging presentation discussing how effective leadership, business performance, and employee well-being all start with taking care of yourself first.

Stay tuned for the next HR Conference, date to be announced!



Speaker, Glen Boehmer

Testimonials from Conference attendees:

"The performance review presentation by Katherine Gavett was one of the best I have ever had the pleasure of seeing. It's not often I feel lawyers are relatable, but these presentations did connect and were engaging."

"All speakers had very tangible takeaways to begin changing habits for improvement."

"Mike Dodd is always the best – great speaker, both humorous and informational."

"The legal presentations were very detailed and informative. I enjoyed the stories and opportunities to interact in the non-legal presentations."

"Legal review by Nick Fiorenza, in light of Federal environment, was excellent and very balanced/informative without being political."

"Enjoyed Glen Boehmer's presentation. I'm happy to see work-life balance is becoming more important to employers."



Speaker, Mike Dodd



Speaker, Katherine Gavett



Speaker, Nick Fiorenza

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WEBINARS CONTINUED

→ Webinars with Kelly Mallozzi

- ❑ Marketing Brief
June 5, 2025 | 1:30 pm
The Feel Factor: Why Print Wins in an Age of Digital Fatigue
- ❑ Culture Brief
June 12, 2025 | 1:30 pm
Culture Is the New Customer Experience: Building a Print Shop People Want to Work For (and Buy From)
- ❑ Sales Brief
June 19, 2025 | 1:30 pm
The Secret Sales Power of the Print Plant Tour: Turning Facility Visits into Closing Machines

Visit printcommunications.org to access:

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RECAP – FEMALE LEADERS IN PRINTING

A CONVERSATION WITH OUTSTANDING FEMALE LEADERS IN THE PRINTING INDUSTRY – RECAP!

In March, we interviewed some of the female leaders in the printing industry and had a fabulous conversation about careers, challenges, personal tragedies and successes.

These women have survived hostile workplaces, personal tragedies, natural disasters and not only survived, but thrived!

It was a great conversation we were proud to orchestrate. Thanks to the five ladies for being open about their experiences. Read the full issue at <https://bit.ly/March-2025Signature>

It's nice knowing there are other people that are going through some of the same things I go through in the printing industry. It's nice to know you're not alone.

— **Loretta Andrews**,
President, Graphic
Communications, Inc.,
Warminster, PA

What do you value about your Association membership?

I do think it's also part of an obligation, because how does anything get done, if you're not involved in associations? I think it's really important for the community.

— **Hallie Satz**, Former CEO & Founder, HighRoad Press, Moonachie, NJ

I really think it's an obligation. The people that are non-members benefit from the best things that the Association does.

— **Kathy Holmes**, K & W finishing, inc., Baltimore, MD

Since I'm on my own and have no one here I can really talk to, I call Melissa Jones for guidance. I've also talked to Nick Fiorenza, Association Counsel and Steve Stankavage about safety issues.

— **Kathy Keller**, Owner, Graphic Imaging, Pipersville, PA

Tell us how you got your start in printing.



At one point in time, I thought I'd be working for an agency as a graphic designer, but I realized that making books is more fun. It has become my passion.

— **Christine Bassil**, Vice President, NB Bookbinding, Clifton, NJ



I was recruited to help my dad part-time ... it was supposed to be temporary until he hired someone else, but I never left.

— **Loretta Andrews**, President, Graphic Communications, Inc., Warminster, PA



I accidentally created a business association that I was accidentally president of. I definitely have a way of getting myself into things.

— **Kathy Holmes**, K & W finishing, inc., Baltimore, MD

What are you dealing with lately in your business?



So it's completely insane right now, nothing's changed, everything's chaotic, which it always is. But the main thing is to keep evolving, or you will go static.

— **Kathy Keller**, Owner, Graphic Imaging, Pipersville, PA



They don't care if you're walking down the aisle at your own wedding, you better help the customer. It was the same culture I was used to.

— **Kathy Holmes**, K & W finishing, inc., Baltimore, MD



The key to leadership is showing you are at the helm. Sometimes this requires a leader to act like they are in control even when they are not sure of all the answers.

— **Hallie Satz**, Former CEO & Founder, HighRoad Press, Moonachie, NJ



Read the full issue at <https://bit.ly/March2025Signature>



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TAILORED INSURANCE THAT WORKS

PRESSED FOR ANSWERS: INSURANCE STRATEGIES BUILT FOR PRINTERS

Ross Kraft, LUTCF, CWCA, Vice President-Strategic Business Advisor, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy

How Commercial and Employee Benefits solutions can fuel growth for print businesses.

In today's market, commercial printers, packaging companies, direct mail shops, digital printers, label shops and other print industry businesses are navigating more than just ink and paper. They're grappling with labor shortages, increased claims pressure, rising healthcare costs, and insurance policies that may no longer reflect their true operations.

As a specialist serving the print and graphics industry, I've seen firsthand how the right insurance strategy, aligned with industry realities — can be a competitive edge, not just a necessity.

What Print Companies Are Asking Right Now:

"Are we overpaying for healthcare with little ROI?"

"Could we be getting a dividend from our workers' comp program?"

"Is my insurance up to date with our business changes to cover us properly?"

"Are our benefits attractive to compete for talent and recruit and retain press operators or finishers?"

These aren't just insurance related questions — they're growth questions.

Tailored Insurance Tactics That Work

Here's what's working for many of your peers across the PGCA footprint and beyond:

- ☐ **Health Plans That Contain Cost Without Cutting Quality**
We design benefit packages — including **Traditional offerings, ICHRA, Level-Funded and Captive programs** — that reduce waste and improve plan value.
- ☐ **Workers' Compensation With a Payback**
Many of our clients belong to print-specific safety groups or association-endorsed programs that return dividends when safety and claims are well-managed.
- ☐ **Better Coverage for Unique Risks**
We routinely assess:
 - Coverage for property of others that many print companies have on hand in their inventory, but often not accounted for on their policies
 - Printing equipment insurance pricing - there's an insurance strategy to how your policy covers large equipment that is an easy opportunity to save on premium that our specialty in the print industry has identified for our clients
 - Cyber liability as digital prepress and web-to-print platforms expand
- ☐ **Retirement Plans that Reward and Retain**
401(k) programs — especially association-sponsored MEPs — are helping printers compete for talent, while reducing fiduciary liability and administrative workload - including no longer being responsible for your 5500!

Larger print shop that is subject to audit? The Print and Graphics Retirement Plan is responsible for completing the audit for the entire plan and the cost is no longer yours alone to bear!

Why It Matters

Most printers aren't looking to overhaul everything — they just want to know what's working, what they might be missing, and where others are saving or improving.

If you're in the **print, packaging, or graphic communications** space and you're unsure whether your insurance is truly aligned with your business — let's talk.

Find out how the PGCA Insurance Advisors at Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy can help your business! Contact Ross Kraft, Sarah Armstrong or Andy Biernat.



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SALES REP SUCCESS!

FROM HIRE TO HIGH PERFORMER: THE HIDDEN WORK BEHIND SALES REP SUCCESS

By Kelly Mallozzi, Principal, SuccessInPrint

I am going to deliver an opinion that is going to make me very unpopular to most business owners who read it.

You might not like to hear it, (read it?), but I can also tell you that many people, including industry experts, consultants and even your fellow print business owners ultimately agree with me:

Hiring a new sale rep is not only really hard, but the amount of time it will take until he or she is consistently making you a profit is much longer than you are willing to admit. How much longer, you ask?

It's 2 years.

TWO YEARS until a new rep is pulling his or her weight.

If you feel like hiring a new sales rep is a quick solution to generate more revenue, you're wrong. In the long run, a good hiring decision will pay off, but hiring is just the starting line. The real work—and the real payoff—comes from what happens after the rep joins your team.

In my experience as a sales coach in the print industry, it takes a full two years before a new sales rep truly becomes profitable. That timeline can sound daunting, especially when budgets are tight and expectations are high. But skipping the crucial development period leads to higher turnover, wasted resources, and stalled growth.

Too often, new reps are handed a brochure, given a few customer leads, and told to "go sell." That's not onboarding, it's setting someone up to fail.

Instead, companies need to build an intentional ramp-up process. That means structured onboarding, regular coaching, product education, industry insights, and—most importantly—a realistic set of performance milestones. A new rep doesn't just need to learn your products and pricing; they need to understand your value proposition, how your customers buy print, and how to navigate an increasingly complex selling landscape.



It's not just about time. It's about leadership attention.

In their first year, a rep needs hands-on support, shadowing opportunities, feedback loops, and encouragement. By year two, they should be building confidence, refining their territory strategy, and beginning to bring in consistent business. If you stick with the process and invest in their development, the long-term return is significant.

Think about this: if you hired a press operator or estimator, you wouldn't expect mastery in 90 days. Sales is no different. It's a craft that requires investment, especially in a relationship-driven industry like print.

So if you're hiring a sales rep, ask yourself: Do I have the time, patience, and infrastructure to support them? If not, fix that first.

Your next top performer is out there. They just need the right runway to get off the ground.

Kelly can assist with new sales hires. Contact her at Kelly@successinprint.net or (773) 680-5134.



**Meet Kelly Mallozzi at one of our
Women in Print events!
See information on page 13.**

COMPLYING WITH ACH REGS

The movement of cash using ACH has become ubiquitous in the business world. It's easy and as secure as online transactions can be. To ensure this security and smooth operation, an organization exists – National Automated Clearing House Association (NACHA). The organization has developed guidelines to ensure transactions continue to move smoothly in a secure manner. Here's a brief overview of those guidelines:

- **Anytime a company sends or receives sensitive information it must be encrypted and for firms to stay in compliance they must update security protocols on a regular basis.**
- **When using ACH transfers you should be reasonably confident your customers/suppliers are who they say they are.**
- **Firms are required to make “commercially” reasonable efforts to ensure that ACH transactions are not fraudulent.**
- **If a firm still stores paper documents containing customer information, it must be stored securely.**
- **Firms should take “reasonable” steps to ensure that routing numbers are valid.**



Although many of these points seem to be rational, establishing processes to ensure confidential and secure transactions is a crucial part of today's business systems. Guidelines and additional information can be found [here](#).

Cash Is King

Since we're talking about cash management, what steps does your company take to maximize cash flow? Utilizing ACH transactions is one way to speed up the process. Another time-tested method is ensuring invoices are correct and meet all the terms required by the customer including the pricing which was quoted. Thus, we avoid the inevitable delays of “your invoice is incorrect,” which normally doesn't occur until the invoice is past due. Do you have set policies on when suppliers will be paid? By doing so, we can do a better job of cash flow planning. Do we have an established line of credit (LOC) with our bank? LOC can help meet the demands of meeting supplier and payroll requirements and extending credit to growing accounts. Are there other areas we can focus to improve cash flow? Yes, plenty. If you're willing to share, reach out to this newsletter's author and ideas will be shared in a future newsletter.

Should You Change Your Inventory Accounting?

Although it's not as critical in our industry as others, and since we are potentially facing increasing costs in our costs of goods sold, should we change our inventory accounting? It may be a way to maximize our year-end profitability. There are two frequently used GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) methods -- LIFO (Last In, First Out) or FIFO (First In, Last Out). FIFO assumes your oldest inventoried goods are sold first, while LIFO assumes that your newest goods are sold first. If you don't know what system you are using or haven't looked at it in a while, this might be a good time to explore with your controller or accountant about making a change.

Delivering Superb Customer Service

When print is perceived as a commodity, one of the major differentiators (which also helps improve our pricing) is providing world-class customer service. In a world where no one responds to online requests on a timely basis, responding in minutes can be a game changer. So, why don't more firms make the effort? One of the main reasons is priorities. From our front desk personnel through our shipping department, responding to customers, or prospective customers, should ALWAYS take priority.

Too frequently, in the heat of the battle, other internal/external priorities can take precedence. It could be making sure job information is entered properly; calling a supplier for an estimate; attending a meeting, or a handful of other “reasons.” Thus, management and supervisors must take the lead in setting the tone. If management doesn't prioritize, neither will the rest of the team.

AI in the Print Industry

Numerous articles are being written about AI (Artificial Intelligence) in our industry and its potential effects. As with any burgeoning technology, there's a lot of supposition, but nothing concrete – as of yet. Given the nature of this technology and how it is embraced in a variety of industries, it's a given we will see it affecting print. We will see software technology improve our quality control tools, as well as throughput; we will see software improve our ability to support our client's logistic and fulfillment efforts; and direct mail will be affected as AI will help further target marketing/advertising campaigns. What should we do? Don't be a pioneer. When the digital revolution exploded in our industry, the firms who made major investments in unproven technology didn't survive. We just need to monitor the technology and adopt when we see a true value proposition.

About the Author: quoins2pixels is written by Joe Polanco. The author has spent decades in the printing industry, and held various management positions within the industry. As a value-added service of Print & Graphic Communications Association, Joe is available to expand on these articles, or aid with projects. Contact Joe at jspolanco49@gmail.com.

WOMEN IN PRINT

SYRACUSE, NY:

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

The Craftsman Inn,
7300 East Genesee Street,
Fayetteville, NY

BUFFALO, NY:

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Reikart Ballroom at Jazzboline,
5010 Main Street, Amherst, NY

11:30 am - 1:30 pm



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PGCA LEAN SIX SIGMA VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

PGCA is pleased to announce our Lean Six Sigma workshop. This workshop will provide participants with the fundamental principles of Lean Six Sigma, and how to apply them to business processes, reduce waste, and deliver measurable results. Participants will gain an understanding of the DMAIC and DMADV problem-solving, and how to use common Lean Six Sigma tools and concepts, such as Value Stream Mapping and Kaizen, to facilitate process improvements. With the power of Lean Six Sigma, organizations can efficiently streamline their workflow and achieve operational excellence.

Workshop Objectives

- ☐ Define Lean, Six Sigma, and Lean Six Sigma
- ☐ Identify the principles of Lean Six Sigma
- ☐ Determine the phases of Six Sigma, using DMAIC and DMADV frameworks
- ☐ Recognize the principles of Lean Manufacturing
- ☐ Successfully implement Lean Process and Six Sigma into business practices
- ☐ Explore tools and techniques to drive change
- ☐ Identify the business advantages of Lean Six Sigma

\$225 for PGCA Members, \$350 for Non-Members
Includes Certificate of Completion

JUNE 4 & 5, 2025
1:00 – 2:30 PM



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DIAGNOSING HAZARDS

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - THE TRUTH ABOUT ACCIDENTS

By Stephen Stankavage, Director of Environmental, Safety & Health, PGCA



How many times have you heard “accidents happen?” Or “nothing you could have done; it was an accident?” It’s a common perception that accidents do happen and there is nothing that can be done about them. What if I told you that this is incorrect and that accidents, or incidents as they should be called, only occur due to one of two reasons and that all incidents are completely avoidable?

An incident is a significant event or action that leads to an outcome, whether that outcome is positive or negative and can be traced to one root cause. The root-cause is the one event or action that, if prevented, or not performed, would have completely nullified the incident pre-condition. This is why risk assessments are so invaluable to help identify possible root causes and develop countermeasures to nullify incident pre-conditions.

The truth of the matter is, incidents, whether they are in the form of injuries, chemical spills, equipment damage, vehicle damage, etc., are all caused by the same two things: unsafe acts or unsafe conditions. Moreover, research done by Du Pont in the late 1970’s found that unsafe acts can account for 90% of all incidents in the workplace with 10% of all incidents resulting from unsafe conditions. However, it’s important to note that determining if an incident is the result of an unsafe condition or an unsafe act is not the end of the investigation. Your true goal is to determine the root cause. Determining whether it was an unsafe act or condition helps lead to the root cause.

Let’s start with unsafe conditions. An unsafe condition is a physical discrepancy in your work environment. The existence of unsafe conditions is an indicator of complacency in the management team and/or inexperience, or a lack of training in the workforce. For example:

- 1. Weather / environmental conditions** – temperature and climate control, snow, water, ice, insects, etc.
- 2. Housekeeping and physical organization of the work areas** – improper stock, tool and equipment storage, spills not cleaned up, and blocked pathways
- 3. Physical hazards** – improper machine guards and poorly maintained equipment, and ergonomic design of equipment and workstations

Unsafe conditions are the easiest to correct because they are physically “right in your face” and easy to see which is why they result in only 10% of all incidents

Unsafe acts on the other hand, are more difficult to account for and can sometimes take years to identify and correct depending on the management’s knowledge and level of involvement. Unsafe acts cause four times as many accidents as unsafe conditions. An unsafe act is an action of an employee, but not necessarily the injured employee, that puts his or her person or another person in danger of being injured. For example, bypassing a machine guard to remove a jammed piece of paper while the machine is still running. The proper method of removing the jammed article would be to shut the press operation down, employ Lock out / Tag out measures, and then remove the guard and subsequently, the jammed article. However, history has shown

that many operators fail to take the extra steps needed to perform this safely resulting in the unsafe action and possibly injury.

The reasoning for an employee committing an unsafe act can be traced to:

- 1. Skill based errors** – training: whether from improper training, failing to understand training, overconfidence in their training or skills, and/or no training
- 2. Judgment and decision-making errors** - being rushed, delayed, ignored, task misprioritization, proper tool utilization, or errors brought on by physical or mental limitations like fatigue, anger, or boredom leading to inattentive actions, and intoxication or drug usage
- 3. Perception errors** – errors brought on by misperception of the situation – a false sense of security
- 4. Violations and failure of discipline** – failing to follow company rules and guidelines whether it be from voluntary actions of the employees or actions of the management team failing to correct violations

As mentioned above, 90% of all injuries occur from unsafe actions by your employees. The reason why they commit these actions should be the majority focus of management over the safety process because management is responsible for ensuring the work environment is safe for the workforce, the training of the employees to ensure proper operation of equipment and the safety of the operator, the tempo of work, and discipline maintaining the standard for a proper work environment. Therefore, the sole responsibility for prevention of unsafe acts lies with your management team's responsiveness to identifying hazard factors and quickly addressing those hazards affecting your work force.

This doesn't mean that the management team should work in a vacuum when diagnosing hazards, however. One of the greatest tools the management team has



... management is responsible for ensuring the work environment is safe for the workforce ...

in identifying and correcting hazards are the eyes and ears and the feeling of the workforce. The question is, how do you actively engage your work force in the safety process? Which leads to - what is your workforce's safety culture? What is a safety culture and how do you build a positive culture? Stay tuned, this will be next month's topic.

As always, PGCA and I are here to help. Stay safe friends!

PGCA's Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Department is ready to assist your company in navigating through the regulations, interpretations and guidance documents that make up the realm of environmental and safety compliance. Steve Stankavage can provide you with realistic, practical and economical solutions to your issues. Contact Steve at (570) 579-6497 or ssankavage@printcommunications.org.

About the Author: Steve Stankavage has over 25 years' experience in Environmental, Safety and Health with 16 years' experience in the printing industry. Steve came from the defense contracting industry but also has EHS experience in heavy construction, wind energy, waste management and academia. He assists Print & Graphic Communications Association members with OSHA inspection assistance, written safety programs and assessments, permit preparation, emissions tracking, forklift training and more.

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