

July/Aug. 2026



Critical Issues: Don't try to solve everything at once.

Through your deep strategic analysis (internal and external), financial ratio analysis, and goal-setting, a plethora of issues emerged that you need to address. Let's refer to these as "critical issues."

Five questions to ask your paper merchant this week.

With the recently announced tariffs on many Canadian imports expected to take effect on August 19, 2026, now is a good time to have a conversation with your paper supplier.

America was born in print.

Nearly 250 years later, Mary Katherine Goddard's work stands as a powerful reminder that printers have always done more than produce documents—they have helped preserve history and strengthen democracy.



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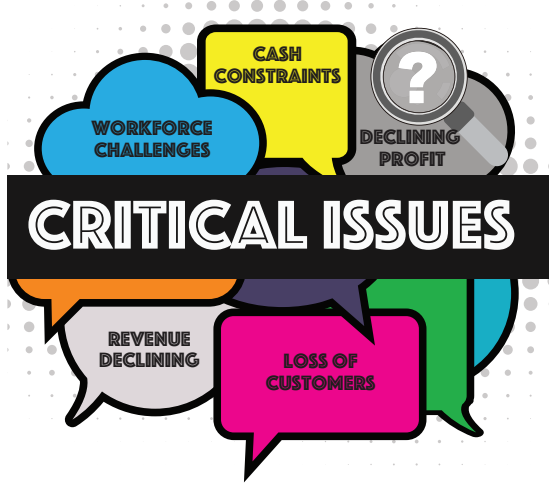
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Featured Article:

“When your team works together to develop a critical issue list, narrow it to the top three to five, develop a plan to address those critical issues, and monitor progress... they become UNITED, which is very powerful!”

SIGNATURE

July/August 2026 | Published by Print & Graphic Communications Association

Print & Graphic Communications Association is the trade association serving the paper, print, packaging and mailing community in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, District of Columbia and Delaware.

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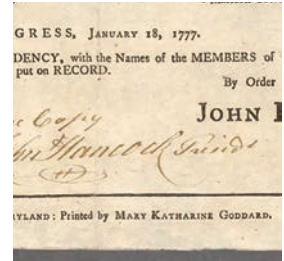
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Critical Issues:

Don't try to solve everything at once. Solve what matters most first!

Through your deep strategic analysis (internal and external), financial ratio analysis, and goal-setting, a plethora of issues emerged that you need to address. Let's refer to these as "critical issues."

These may include the following:

- An aging workforce and hiring challenges
- Some key customers buying less
- Not generating enough new prospects
- How to use AI in different areas
- What new equipment is needed
- Too much waste
- Rising sales with declining profit
- Losing too many customers
- Web-to-print isn't generating more revenue
- Average revenue per job is declining
- Our social media marketing is not generating prospects
- Too many customer complaints
- Not consistently delivering on-time
- Not enough employee training and development

- Production efficiency is lagging
- Cash is constrained by inventory and accounts receivables.

And the list could go on and on. So... how do you handle an intimidating list of critical issues???



A team, with members whose thoughts are welcome and listened to, will generate more creative thinking than a single leader alone in a room."

A research book I am reading points to an effective plan for addressing a long list of critical issues. The author developed and validated their approach by working with multiple companies.

First, with your team, develop an extensive list of potential critical issues needing addressing. You will see "team" often in these steps. A team, with members whose thoughts are welcome and listened to,

will generate more creative thinking than a single leader alone in a room. Also, it's good for everyone to consider the question (what are our critical issues) before a meeting and then bring their thoughts to the table. That's critical thinking! Make sure the list includes any potential critical issues. Write them down (log the points made in every step of this process and share those notes).

Second, again as a team, determine the top, most important, critical issues that need addressing. The author is big on limiting this list to three top critical issues, maybe five. This approach directs your team's focus on THE most critical issues. Great strategy execution needs the right priorities. Following too many paths to the top of a mountain may not get you there, so find the ones that lead to the summit.

Third, together as a team, determine a strategic plan to address the most important critical issues. Meet regularly to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. And start this process all over again each year.

Again, a team approach is vital. Yes, a team approach brings more thinking power to the table. But also, when your team works together to develop a critical issue list, narrow it to the top three to five, develop a plan to address those critical issues, and monitor progress... they become UNITED, which is very powerful!

Dr. Ralph Williams
Management Professor
Jones College of Business
Middle Tennessee State
University ■



Member News

Diamond Packaging Celebrates America's 250th

DIAMOND
packaging

As print nerds here at PGCA (especially Kim Tuzzo), we were pretty excited when the Diamond Packaging Recipe for American Craft™ package arrived at our offices. The limited-edition collection, designed as a year-round reference tool for packaging professionals, contains 20 cards showcasing iconic historical sites across America, using a stunning array of decorative effects. You have to see it in person to appreciate the reticulated relief on the Mount Rushmore card, the holographic reflection on the Lincoln Memorial card or the luminous foil glow on the Seattle Public Market card. Our thanks to Dennis Bachetta, Marketing Director and Maddy Beikirch, Marketing Specialist and Design Engineer, at Diamond Packaging for sharing their creation with us. Visit <https://www.diamondpackaging.com/page/98/america-250/>. How is your company celebrating the 250th anniversary? Let us know at info@printcommunications.org. ■

How is your company celebrating the 250th anniversary?



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Atlantic

Five Questions to Ask Your Paper Merchant This Week

A Practical Checklist for Printers

With the recently announced tariffs on many Canadian imports expected to take effect on August 19, 2026, now is a good time to have a conversation with your paper supplier. Even if the full impact is not yet known, understanding your exposure can help you avoid surprises. [Visit our blog at printcommunications.org to read more on this topic.] As of this writing, the tariffs are expected to take effect.

Here are five questions every printer should consider asking.

1. Which of the paper grades we purchase originate from Canadian mills?

Start by identifying which of your regularly purchased grades are manufactured in Canada. Ask your representative to provide a list of affected products, including:

- Coated papers
- Uncoated freesheet
- Book papers
- Cover stocks
- Digital papers
- Specialty grades
- Paperboard

2. Do you anticipate price increases, and if so, when?

Ask whether your supplier expects:

- Immediate price adjustments
- Future mill price increases
- Temporary surcharges
- Existing quotes to be honored
- Contracts to remain in effect

3. Are there comparable alternatives available?

If certain Canadian grades become more expensive or difficult to obtain, ask whether there are suitable alternatives from U.S. or international mills. Topics to discuss include:

- Availability
- Printability
- Color consistency
- Sheet sizes
- Digital compatibility
- Lead times

Testing alternatives before they are needed can help minimize production disruptions.

4. Should we change our purchasing strategy?

Rather than making assumptions, ask your supplier whether they recommend:

- Maintaining current inventory levels
- Purchasing additional inventory before implementation
- Delaying purchases
- Adjusting ordering frequency

Every company's situation is different depending on inventory capacity, cash flow, and the mix of paper grades used.

5. What other supply chain issues should we expect?

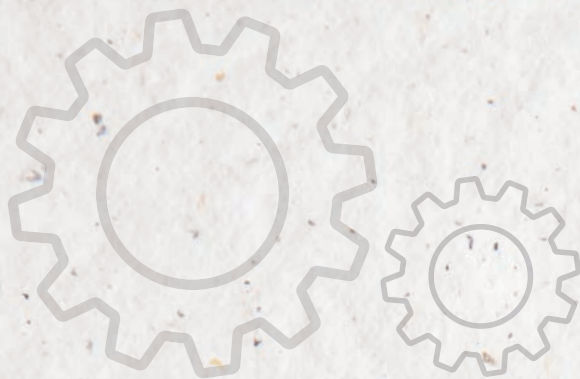
Price is only one concern. Ask whether your supplier anticipates:

- Longer delivery times
- Product allocations
- Transportation delays
- Mill production changes



Knowing which products may be affected is the first step in evaluating your exposure.

Understanding the timing is just as important as understanding the amount.



- **Grade substitutions**
- **Order minimum changes**

Understanding these possibilities can help your production and customer service teams plan accordingly.

Additional Steps to Consider

In addition to speaking with your supplier, companies may wish to:

- **Review estimates for jobs that extend beyond August.**
- **Consider shortening quotation validity periods.**
- **Evaluate whether contracts should include paper price adjustment provisions.**
- **Communicate proactively with customers about potential market changes.**
- **Monitor inventory carefully while avoiding unnecessary stockpiling.**

Stay Connected with PGCA

PGCA is actively monitoring the implementation of the Canadian tariff announcement and its impact on the printing and packaging industries.

As additional information becomes available—including clarification of affected paper

grades, product classifications, and any exemptions—we will continue to keep members informed through alerts, newsletters, and legislative updates.

If your company experiences significant cost increases or supply disruptions related to these tariffs, please let us know. Member feedback helps PGCA better understand the real-world impact on our industry and supports our advocacy efforts on your behalf.

Contact Tim Freeman at tim@printcommunications.org or (716) 691-3211. ■

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for login assistance.**

Talk More Print

Two college students – both print majors – started a podcast and talked their way to bright futures in the industry they love.

Podcast Hosts:
Tara and Mackenzie



We wanted to promote this industry we both love, so this became a passion project. There's so much more involved in it than running a printing press. We wanted to highlight all the opportunities.”

It started with a suggestion.

Kelly Mallozzi, VP and program director at Girls Who Print – the world's largest professional network for women in the printing industry – told Tara Seth and Mackenzie Griffin, “You should do a printing podcast.”

“It was just that simple,” Seth, 22, said.

Never mind that she and Griffin, 21, had no experience with podcasts. Both were friends and print production majors at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan, and had spent their college careers focused on print, not broadcasting. And both, at different times, led their university's Graphic Arts Association, which allowed them to travel to conferences and meet industry insiders like Mallozzi.

Their podcast, “Talk More Print,” premiered March 14, 2025 and they recently shared with Meredith Collins, editor-in-chief, *Paper Matters*, how they got started and what they've learned. [*Paper Matters* is published by Domtar. The Spring & Summer 2026 edition is focused on how the next generation is rediscovering the quiet power of a printed page.]



Meredith Collins: How amazing to start a podcast in college. Congratulations.

Tara Seth: Thanks. We both love to talk, so . . .

Mackenzie Griffin: We felt like we might be naturals.

MC: After Kelly suggested the idea, how'd you get started?

MG: We wanted to promote this industry we both love, so this became a passion project. There's so much more involved in it than running a printing press. We wanted to highlight all the opportunities.

TS: Our first goal was to fill a gap that exists between people just starting out in printing and industry veterans considering retirement. We, and all our peers, are trying to start our careers.

We thought our podcast could help pave the way for recent graduates and educate hiring managers on what our generation can offer.

MG: Exactly. The workforce is aging, and the industry needs new people. So, we started with a late-night brainstorming session where we figured out, among other things, what the heck to even call ourselves.

TS: We thought it'd be fun to somehow include our names. When we came up with “Talk More Print” and realized it contained a T for Tara and an M for Mackenzie, it clicked. We wanted a simple logo, and the initials T, M, P allowed us to have that.

MC: Did you design the logo?

In unison: Yes.



MC: So far, your audience has been students, young professionals and print industry insiders, especially those making hiring decisions. But could that change? Now that you've graduated and started your dream job, Mackenzie, might "Talk More Print" evolve? And I'm assuming you'll continue "Talk More Print" after you've both graduated?

TS: Oh, we'll definitely continue.

MG: I could see our audience evolving and expanding, but we also cover such a wide range of topics that I think we're already attracting a lot of different people. And people have been amazing. We've gotten so much incredible feedback. A woman messaged me on LinkedIn just to say how proud she was of us. I about cried because I was like, we're actually doing something really good here.

TS: People are excited that someone younger is this passionate about this industry.

MC: How do you prepare for each taping?

TS: We create an outline. And then, whatever happens, happens.

MG: Most of our outlines are under a page. It's just a quick bulleted list with an introduction and a few questions we want to ask. But we wing everything else.

TS: Only about 30% is actually planned. It's more fun that way and feels more authentic. We don't want this to sound scripted. You learn more about a person when you let the conversation naturally flow. I never think of what I want to say ahead of time.

MG: Whereas I have bullet points of things I want to say. We balance each other out.

MC: Do you have any guidance when creating the show?

MG: It's really just us. MJ Harper, a friend in the television and digital media production program, helped set this up and taught us how to do all our own editing, which I do.

TS: Doing this basically on our own has been such a fun aspect of the podcast.

MC: How do you decide what topics to cover?

TS: We look for guests who can teach us something.

MG: When we started, we chose things we were both passionate about – recruiting, helping new graduates break into the industry. There are a lot of myths about what our generation wants in the workforce, which became a big part of what we covered.

MC: What are some of those myths about Gen Z?

MG: That our generation doesn't really want to work – or at least not in an office. But, in our industry, people are very visual and hands-on. We want to be in the office. Yes, a work/life balance is something we – and a lot of people – want now. But that's not the same thing as not wanting to work.

MC: What has "Talk More Print" taught you?

MG: I think we've gotten a lot better about not taking ourselves too seriously. Everybody has been chill. We began to realize that we don't have to become experts before we interview an expert.

Everybody comes in authentically and wants to have a great conversation. So, I've already learned how to have casual conversations with people who are older and much more experienced in this industry. And that's helped in my job.

Also, this isn't as scary as we thought it would be.

TS: I agree. We have such an ingrained fear of failure, and we put a lot of pressure on ourselves. We really wanted this to work; we wanted to be good at it. Finding out you really can do hard things has been a great life lesson.

We wanted people to like "Talk More Print". Our fear was that we might put in all the work and find that no one cared. But they do.

And there's something just as important as other people enjoying our work – we enjoy it. We're having fun, and we're learning.

MC: That's a great lesson: that outside validation isn't the be-all, end-all.

TS: We've also learned interviewing skills, and I feel like we're getting better at asking questions that aren't so generic. Learning to ask good follow-up questions has been huge, because we started out with a list and would just ask one and then move on to the next. Now, I think we're better at turning this into a conversation.

MC: How do you promote the podcast?

MG: Mostly through LinkedIn. Everybody is on LinkedIn. Word of mouth is also big. We have "Talk More Print" business cards and pass those out every chance we get.

MC: Mackenzie, I hear the podcast helped you land your job. Tell me about your work. And was there anything specific about the podcast your employer liked?

MG: I think it was mostly that we had the ambition to do it.

I'm business development lead for Pageworks in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They built this position for me, specifically based on my strengths and what I like to do, which is the coolest thing ever.

MC: Tara, you're in your last semester. How's your job search going?

TS: I'm reaching out to a lot of different places. I'm flexible since I don't know exactly what I want to do. I like sales, marketing, process improvement, project management. So, I'm really open to any opportunity out there.

Listen to "Talk More Print" on YouTube and on Spotify.

From Domtar's *Paper Matters*. Used with permission. ■

PGCA's Golf Outings

A Big Hit with Printers

Ray Bubar Golf Outing

Golfers kicked off a beautiful day at Terry Hills Golf Course in Batavia, NY with golfer survival kits in eye-catching packaging, generously donated by BCO Industries of WNY. Sixty golfers toasted the memory of Ray Bubar, industry icon and golf fanatic by enjoying camaraderie *(and a few drinks)*.

Thank you to all of our golfers, sponsors, and supporters for making another Raymond A. Bubar Classic a memorable day.

Event sponsors:

Canon, Konica Minolta, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy, Lindenmeyr Munroe, Paylocity, Transamerica, Zenger Group

Hole sponsors:

BCO Industries of WNY, Ferrara Fiorenza PC, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy, ITU AbsorbTech, Shipman Print Solutions



Maryland Golf Outing Recap

Printers, vendors and sponsors enjoyed a great day of golf at the Woodlands Golf Course in Windsor, Maryland. Thanks to our sponsors who helped make the outing a great success!



Premier Sponsor

Canon

Silver Sponsors

BW Wilson, Konica Minolta, MCS Printing Services, Sharda Paper

Hole Sponsors

Atlantic Graphic Systems, BCO Industries, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy, ITU AbsorbTech, K&W Finishing, Komori, Prisco, SGM Bindery





Golf Outing Photo Captions (Left to Right)

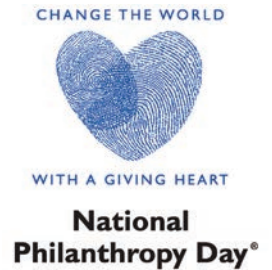
Ray Bubar Golf Outing:

1. Zenger Group golfers: Chris Zenger, Bob Maurer, Jim Bubar (retired), Joe Zenger, Andrew Zenger with Patrick Young photobombing!
2. Hodgins Engraving golfers: Jason Dorman, Mary Dorman, Michelle Humes, and Ben Humes
3. Joshua Wink (second from right), Lindenmeyr Munroe hosted Peter & Joel Coon, Elma Press and Dan Trent, D & D Printing
4. John Strauss, Flower City Group, Joe May and Ross Kraft, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy and Shane Chatham, Flower City Group
5. PGCA Intern Clarise Wawrzyniec with golfer swag.
6. BCO Industries' Golfer Survival Kits

Maryland Golf Outing:

7. Randy Clifford, BW Wilson; Paul Buohl, Moore Direct Mail Production; and Jesse Webber, BW Wilson
8. Darrell Brow, Canon; Brian White, Creative Print Group; Dave Ashton, Linemark; and Joe Pertucci, Creative Print Group
9. Steve Schwartz, Ironmark; Steve Weigman, Strategic Factory; and Marty Blair, Peabody Press
10. Greg Kestler, General Formulations; Adam Silver, Worth Higgins; and Jon Jones, BW Wilson

Steve Zenger Honored as Outstanding Philanthropist



It was no surprise to us at PGCA that Steve Zenger is being honored as Outstanding Philanthropist during the 2026 National Philanthropy Day celebration later this year, presented by the Association for Fundraising Professionals, WNY chapter. Steve, president of Zenger Group, chair of (at the time) PIA from 2007-2009 and member since 1987, is known for his generosity of time and resources and support of the local print and business community.

The nomination from WEDI (Westminster Economic Development Initiative) stated, "Whenever his services have been needed for the organization, be it his time, talent or treasure, he has been willingly there and has made himself available as WEDI navigated the intricacies of a capital campaign and invited influential members and organizations of the community to be excited and involved in the project."

Steve served on the board of WEDI, a non-profit inner-city business incubator on the West Side of Buffalo from 2016 thru 2025 including four years as Board President. He has also served on the board of directors and executive committee of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership since 2006, as a Trustee of Daemen University in Amherst, NY since 2019 and on the board of the ECIDA (Erie County Industrial Development Agency) since April of 2026.

On the occasion of the Association's 100th anniversary celebration in 2022, Steve Zenger had this to say:

"Just out of college and starting my career in printing, my late father, George Zenger, taught me that business success is about trust. Trust comes with relationships ... with customers, vendors and industry colleagues. Tim Freeman was among the first industry contacts I made. My most valuable and fruitful industry relationships came from involvement with the PIA. My father also taught myself and my brothers how important industry service is and my involvement with the PIA board has been among the most rewarding experiences of my career."

Steve Zenger and his fellow honorees will be celebrated in November at a luncheon at Riverworks in Buffalo, NY. Congratulations, Steve, on your well-deserved honor! ■

America Was Born in Print...Unsung Heroes of American Printing

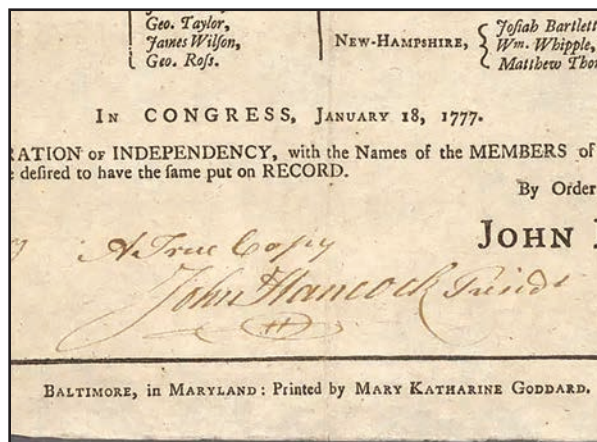
Mary Katherine Goddard: The Printer Who Gave America Its Signatures

When Americans think about the Declaration of Independence, they naturally remember Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and the other Founding Fathers who signed the historic document. Far fewer know the name of the printer who helped ensure that future generations would know who those signers were.

That printer was **Mary Katherine Goddard**.

In January 1777, six months after independence was declared, the Continental Congress commissioned Goddard to print a new broadside of the Declaration of Independence. Unlike earlier copies, which omitted the names of the signers, her edition boldly listed all 56 names beneath the Declaration, publicly identifying the men who had pledged "their Lives, their Fortunes and their sacred Honor" to the American cause.

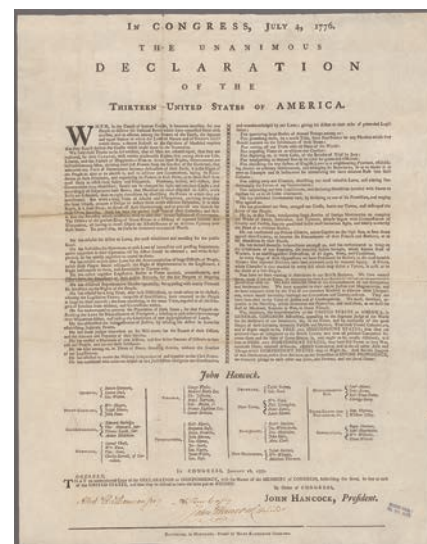
Operating a printing business in Baltimore during the Revolutionary War, Goddard was one of the few female printers in colonial America. She published newspapers, printed official government documents, managed a bookstore, and served as



Baltimore's postmaster. Accepting the assignment to print the Declaration with the signers' names was an act of courage. Had the Revolution failed, those names—and those who helped publish them—could have faced severe consequences.

Today, the **Goddard Broadside** is recognized as one of the most important printed documents in American history. It reminds us that the ideals of liberty and independence reached the American people not only through the words of great leaders, but through the skill, dedication, and courage of the printers who put those words into the hands of citizens.

Nearly 250 years later, Mary Katherine Goddard's work stands as a powerful reminder that printers have always done more than produce documents—they have helped preserve history and strengthen democracy.



- Original copies of the 1777 **Goddard Broadside** are among the rarest and most treasured documents of the American Revolution.

The Modern Connection

From the colonial broadsides that announced independence to today's packaging, labels, books, direct mail, educational materials, and commercial printing, the printing industry has remained essential to informing, educating, and connecting people. Mary Katherine Goddard's legacy reminds us that while technology has changed dramatically, the mission of print—to communicate ideas that matter—remains as important today as it was in 1777.

*This article is part of PGCA's **America Was Born in Print** campaign celebrating America's 250th anniversary. Through this series, PGCA is highlighting the printers, publishers, and printed works that helped shape our nation while promoting awareness of the vital role the printing industry continues to play in American life. ■*

Why She Matters

By printing the first widely distributed copy of the Declaration of Independence bearing the names of its signers, Mary Katherine Goddard helped transform one of history's most important manuscripts into a public declaration of courage, accountability, and national purpose.

Did You Know?

- Mary Katherine Goddard printed the first widely distributed Declaration of Independence listing all 56 signers.
- She operated one of the most respected printing businesses in Baltimore during the Revolutionary War.
- She also served as Baltimore's postmaster—one of the earliest women to hold such a position in America.

Photo: <https://www.nypl.org/events/exhibitions/galleries/beginnings/item/3570>

PGCA's Mike Vares

Serves As Technical Chair at SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference

This year, the 2026 SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference took place June 1–5 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, GA. With a record number 7,000+ students competing, the week consisted of 115 hands-on skill and leadership events, with our focus on graphic communications.

The Graphic Communications competition was once again run by Mike Vares, Director of Development, PGCA (center back in photo, next to Wilson Howe, Konica Minolta), as the Technical Chair, and supported and judged by industry experts and educational volunteers

from around the country. The contest this year was broken down into six parts: Industry Knowledge Test, Mock Job Interview, Production Planning, Desktop Publishing/Layout & Preflight, Digital Press Operations, and Offset Press Operations/Simulation. Eighteen of the top graphic communications students from around the country competed this year for the top recognition in our industry.

The highlight this year was thanks to industry partner Konica Minolta, who provided a new-to-market digital press (C5080) for the students to learn

and compete on. Wilson Howe, Product Marketing – Production Print, Konica Minolta, was on-site to help run it and train the students.

In PGCA's territory, we had Jestina Narvaez of Lehigh Career & Technical Institute out of Pennsylvania place Bronze in the High School competition.

The SkillsUSA partnership of students, teachers, and industry works together to ensure a skilled workforce for the future. According to Debbie Bohan, Technical Committee member and The Foundation for Graphic Communication Education

(FGCE) Administrative Director, "The Graphic Communications Contest has our best-trained students being taught by our most devoted teachers."

Learn more about SkillsUSA

The 2027 Competition is looking to grow even more by attracting more competitors, bringing in new equipment, and getting our industry more involved in helping shape the next generation of employees. If you want to learn more or get involved, contact Mike Vares at mike@printcommunications.org. ■



Upcoming Events



Sept.

■ JOIN US FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENT

PGCA VIRGINIA GOLF TOURNAMENT

September 16, 2026

Hunting Hawk Golf Club,
Glen Allen, VA



■ EMERGING LEADERS WORKSHOP

3-part workshop

September 2, 9, 6, 2026 | 11:30 am to 3:00 pm

This three-part virtual workshop series is designed to equip emerging leaders with actionable tools that drive innovation, operational excellence, and customer impact, as well as the confidence to lead effectively in today's evolving workplace.

Sign up for all three workshops or the classes individually

Sept. 2 **Developing New Managers –**
From Contributor to Leader

Sept. 9 **Change Management –**
Navigating Uncertainty with Confidence

Sept. 16 **Teamwork and Team Building –**
Creating Cohesive, High-Performing Teams

■ MAILPIECE DESIGN CONSULTATION (MDC) RECERTIFICATION

3-part workshop

October 20, 21, 22, 2026 | 1:00 to 2:30 pm
(class on Oct. 22 ends at 3:00 pm)

This virtual mailpiece design workshop teaches mailing professionals how to design mail to enhance its compatibility with the US Postal Service® automation equipment. It also coaches mailers on how to achieve lower postage prices through automation design for themselves and their customers. The MDC is a mailing professional certification offered in partnership with the Mail Systems Management Association (MSMA).

The final session will begin with a Postal Update presented by Leo Raymond of Mailers Hub.

Visit www.printcommunications.org/events for more details on these events and to register.

Webinars

■ WEBINARS WITH KELLY MALLOZZI

SALES BRIEF

Beyond the First Answer:
Why Great Salespeople
Don't Rush to Respond

August 20, 2026 | 1:30 pm

MARKETING BRIEF

The Cobbler's Shop: Why Printers
Struggle to Market the Thing
They're Best At

September 3, 2026 | 1:30 pm

■ WEBINAR

PRINT ESTIMATING

Continuing Education Course

10 week course | First class starts:

September 9, 2026 | 2 to 4 pm

Beyond the Renewal: Rethinking Health Benefits in a World of Rising Healthcare Costs

GILROY
KERNAN
&
GILROY

By Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy (GKG), PGCA's Strategic Insurance Partner

For print employers, attractive healthcare benefits are no longer just a nice-to-have. They are a key part of recruiting, rewarding, and retaining the skilled employees needed to keep operations running.

For decades, we've seen health plan decisions in the print industry follow a familiar cycle: receive the renewal, negotiate with the carrier, compare a few alternatives, and hope for a smaller increase next year. However, as health insurance premiums continue to outpace inflation, it has become increasingly more difficult to sustain that approach while controlling costs and competing for talent.

GKG has seen success in helping print employers across the U.S. go beyond the typical renewal cycle to stay competitive in today's labor market and look at health benefits as a strategic business investment.

Understand Your Funding Options

After years of working hand-in-hand with print businesses, we understand that there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to rising healthcare costs.

There are a range of health insurance plan funding models that make sense depending on your company's size, workforce demographics, financial goals, and long-term strategy. We know the print industry is facing unique challenges, like an aging workforce, claims impact, and competition for talent, which are also worth considering.

For some, a traditional fully insured plan may still make sense. Others may benefit

from exploring level-funded arrangements, self-funding, ICHRAs, captives, or other approaches.

The bottom line: don't chase the newest solution. Understand the full spectrum of financing options and choose the structure that best fits your business.

Take a Look at Your Data Strategy

Healthcare costs have outpaced inflation for decades. According to the 2025 KFF Employer Health Benefits Survey, in the last five years we've seen a 26% increase in family health insurance premiums, while inflation and average wages have risen by 23.5% and 28.6%, respectively.

The question isn't whether costs will rise, it's whether your funding strategy, data, and employee benefits plan are keeping pace.

Data can help employers see what renewal numbers alone cannot. Claims trends, pharmacy spend, chronic condition patterns, preventive care participation, and utilization data can all point to opportunities for earlier intervention. For print employers, that information can support smarter decisions around funding, employee communication, wellness initiatives, and long-term cost control.

There's Never a Bad Time to Strategize

We get it – making decisions that impact your employees' well-being and your business's bottom line can be daunting.

The question is no longer, "How do we reduce next year's increase?" It is, "How do we build a healthier, more productive workforce while controlling costs over the

next five years?" For print employers, the answer starts with a broader discussion about strategy, data, funding, and the employee experience.

If you're ready to stop treating health benefits as an annual purchase and start managing your program as a long-term business strategy, a conversation with GKG is the first step to finding a solution.

To learn how GKG helps print employers evaluate health benefits strategy, visit gkgrisk.com/printers or contact Ross, Sarah or Andy. ■

"GKG helped us turn a major benefits challenge into an opportunity. Instead of absorbing a 50% cost increase or scaling down our health insurance plan, GKG offered us a more strategic path forward. Today, we're able to provide our employees with comprehensive benefits typically associated with much larger organizations, without sacrificing financial stability."

— **Joe Olivo**, President,
Perfect Communications,
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News Flash:

They're Not Just Here for the Paycheck



By Kelly Mallozzi,
Principal,
SuccessInPrint and
VP/Program Director,
GirlsWhoPrint

Remember when we all got into this business because of commission? Yeah, well, times have changed. Our Gen Z friends are out here looking for "purpose" (I know, I know, but stick with me). They want to know how their 9-to-5 grind actually matters in the grand scheme of things. And honestly? We've got a pretty cool story to tell about how print makes brands shine. We just need to stop being shy about it.

Time to Ditch Your 1995 Recruiting Playbook

Here's the deal: if your idea of recruitment is still posting on LinkedIn and praying, you're doing it wrong. These kids are living their best lives on TikTok and Instagram, and - brace yourself - we need to meet them there. And please, for the love of whatever deity you pray to, stop with the 7-round interview marathons. Nobody's trying to join the FBI here.

Plot Twist: They Actually Want to Work Together

Hold onto your hats, because this might shock the "every salesperson for themselves" crowd:

- They're into this whole "team success" thing (wild, right?)
- They want mentors who don't treat them like they're clueless
- They expect actual feedback, not just annual "you're doing fine" head pats
- Work-life balance is non-negotiable (and maybe they're onto something)
- They want to see their career path laid out clearer than crystal

The Two-Year Reality Check

Here's some tough love: if you're expecting your fresh-faced sales newbie to crush it in three months, you're living in a fantasy world. It takes TWO YEARS to really get this print sales thing down. Yes, you read that right. Two. Whole. Years. Deal with it.

Tech Talk: Time to Embrace Your Inner Digital Native

Let's get real. These kids were born with smartphones in their hands. Instead of rolling our eyes at their constant device-checking, maybe we should leverage their digital superpowers? They might just teach us a thing or two about connecting with customers in ways we never thought possible.

The Bottom Line

Look, we can either evolve or watch our industry take it on the chin and lose the great talent to other industries. Gen Z might do things differently than we did, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. They're bringing fresh ideas, tech-savvy approaches, and yes, maybe a slightly different worldview to our industry. Truth? We could use a little shaking up.

So let's stop clutching our pearls about "kids these days" and start building the kind of workplace that makes them want to stick around. Because spoiler alert: they're not just the future of print. They're the now. ■

Sign up for a Webinar!

Webinars with Kelly Mallozzi

August 20, 2026 | Sales Brief – Beyond the First Answer: Why Great Salespeople Don't Rush to Respond:

Great salespeople resist the urge to jump in with fast answers. Instead, they slow the conversation down, explore why the buyer is asking the question, and uncover the pressures, goals, and risks underneath. By understanding the real need first, every recommendation becomes more relevant and compelling.

September 3, 2026 | Marketing Brief – The Cobbler's Shop: Why Printers Struggle to Market the Thing They're Best At:

Printers create stunning, persuasive marketing for every client: yet rarely turn that same skill on themselves. This brief unpacks why print professionals default to industry jargon and inside-baseball language instead of the plain, benefit-driven storytelling they'd insist on for a customer's brochure and shows simple ways to finally practice what they print.

Register at www.printcommunications.org/events.

Missed a Kelly webinar? Recordings are available in the Members Only area at www.printcommunications.org

Kelly Mallozzi is a sales coach, marketing consultant, speaker, blogger, and podcaster with 30 years of print obsession to brag about. Her mission is to help print companies drive sales and customer loyalty through content strategy and sales process optimization, all with an eye on culture, workforce development, and personal skills optimization.





USPS MTAC July Update:

What Printers and Mailers Need to Know

The U.S. Postal Service's Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) met in July to discuss the Postal Service's financial outlook, operational changes, pricing, and upcoming initiatives affecting commercial mailers. PGCA is represented at MTAC by Tom Carroll of Matrix Imaging Solutions, ensuring our members have a voice in discussions that shape postal policies and mailing services.

Here are the highlights most relevant to our members.

USPS Continues to Face Financial Challenges

Postmaster General Dave Steiner acknowledged that the Postal Service continues to operate under significant financial pressure. He outlined three priorities for strengthening USPS:

- Seeking congressional support to fund universal service obligations and six-day delivery.
- Continuing efforts to improve service while reducing operating costs.
- Pursuing pricing strategies and promotional programs designed to maintain mail volume.

Although financial challenges remain, USPS leadership expressed confidence that operational improvements are beginning to show positive results.

Network Changes Continue

USPS is continuing its nationwide network transformation. Among the announced changes:

- Existing facilities will be upgraded rather than constructing many new facilities.
- New Regional Transportation Hubs activated in Memphis and Greensboro.
- Twenty-two additional Sorting & Distribution Centers will be established over the next 90 days.
- Mail entry locations for drop shipments may change as the network evolves.

Companies utilizing destination entry or drop-shipping should closely monitor USPS announcements to ensure shipments continue moving efficiently.

January Postal Rate Increase May Become the New Standard

One of the most significant announcements involves postal pricing.

USPS has asked the Postal Regulatory Commission to allow future Market Dominant rate increases to occur in January rather than July. If approved, the next increase could take effect in January 2027 at an estimated 4.5%.

The proposal remains under regulatory review, with a decision expected in August.

For companies that budget mailing expenses annually, this could change planning cycles and customer pricing strategies going forward.

Address Quality Improvements Continue

USPS continues development of its NCOA+ API, designed to streamline address maintenance and improve mailing list quality through automated processing.

The Postal Service hopes to launch the platform later this year, pending regulatory approval.

Election Mail Preparations Underway

With another election cycle approaching, USPS is focusing heavily on operational readiness. Initiatives include:

- Standardized employee training.
- Outreach to political campaigns regarding mailpiece design.
- Increased coordination with state election officials.

The goal is to maintain reliable, secure handling of election-related mail throughout the process.

Additional Items Worth Watching

Several other developments discussed during MTAC may affect commercial mailers over the next two years:

- Potential expansion of the FAST appointment system to additional destination facilities.
- Continued modernization of package barcode systems.
- New promotional programs planned for 2027, including Direct Mail Discovery and enhanced impact messaging.
- Pilot testing of photographic proof of package delivery.

These initiatives remain in various stages of development but illustrate USPS's continued investment in technology and operational improvements.

PGCA's Voice at MTAC

Many postal policies affecting commercial printers and mailers are discussed and refined through MTAC before implementation. Through PGCA's representation, our association is able to provide industry feedback and remain informed of developments that could impact member businesses.

We appreciate Tom Carroll of Matrix Imaging Solutions for representing PGCA at MTAC and helping keep our members informed of important postal developments. ■

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Print University New Course: Substrate Strategies for Print Success

The secret to better print quality, smoother production, and stronger margins? It starts before the ink hits.

Most printers obsess over color management, press performance and workflow efficiency. All critically important. But there's a foundational element that influences every single one of those outcomes – and it doesn't always get the attention it deserves – the substrate.

Whether you're running paper, vinyl, film, textiles or rigid materials, your substrate choices ripple through every stage of your operation. They affect ink compatibility. Finishing performance. Production speed. Customer satisfaction. And ultimately – your bottom line.

If your shop is making substrate decisions based on habit, availability, or price alone, this course will change the way you think about one of print's most powerful profitability levers.



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quoins2pixels



Tracking Sales

Finding ways to increase sales is normally at the top of the list for most businesses. Tracking those sales is crucially important because of the fluctuating variable costs of goods sold in our print products.

Here are some metrics to consider:

Sales by customer; by industry

Sales by customer; by year

Sales by customer; tracking Value Added and/
or Contribution

Sales by customer; by product line

Sales by sales rep using above metrics

If you're not using these metrics, the thought of making the changes is often daunting, but not impossible. It takes a bit of planning, and it may involve changes in billing procedures, but once accomplished, the information provided will offer data which will guide sales strategy and more importantly, increased profitability.

Maximizing Value

Printing is short turn around, custom manufacturing. Frequently that means the delivered job doesn't look like the project originally discussed and quoted upon.

When the customers change the specs it's essential they understand there is a cost involved. Every change should be acknowledged and a cost for making it communicated to the customer immediately. The decision to charge for the change is not always an easy one since there are relationships to consider, but better to inform the customer of the substance of the change prior to waiving it. Even if the change is easy and small, people expect it may cost something. A key point to remember is when we charge for customer alts, we are maximizing the value of our product as well as generating additional sales dollars.

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 PGCA, Joe is available to expand on these articles, or aid with projects. Contact Joe at jspolanco49@gmail.com. ■

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