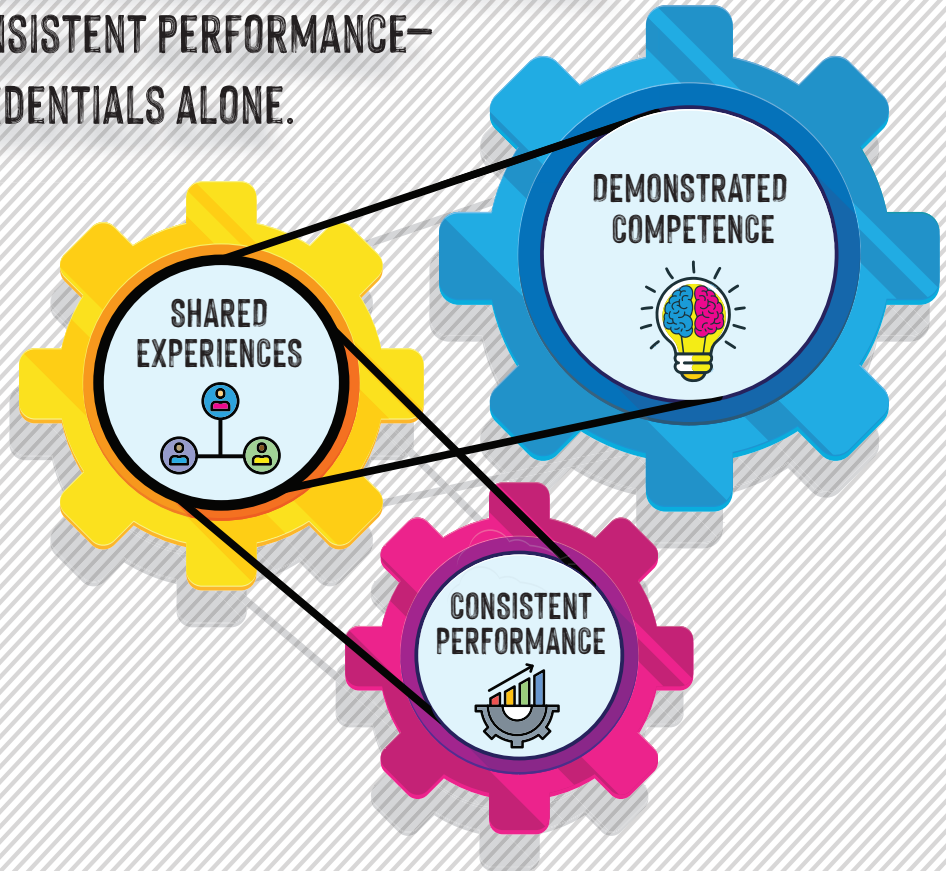


September 2026

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Strategy Is Not Built on the Best Ideas – It's Built on the Strongest Relationships

Ideas that shape an organization's direction are the ones championed by people who have earned the confidence of those making the decisions.

The Green Revolution is No Longer Optional

Back in 2021, we wrote that sustainability had shifted from a trend to an expectation. Just a few years later, the stakes have risen considerably. It's no longer just an expectation, it's becoming a legal, financial, and consumer-driven imperative.

Running Out of Rabbits: The End of Buffalo News Press

For 45 years, BNP quietly supplied its printed products to the East Coast, Canada, and, at times, the nation. Printing millions of copies a week for fashion magazines, commercial retailers, local newspapers, ...



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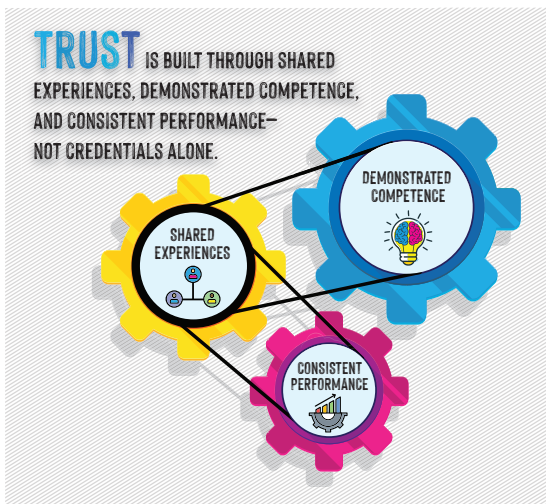
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“An idea, no matter how well researched, cannot shape an organization’s future if it never reaches the people responsible for making decisions.”

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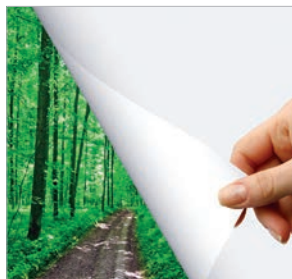


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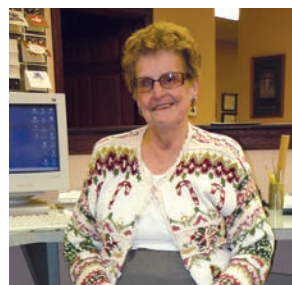
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Strategy Is Not Built on the Best Ideas – It's Built on the Strongest Relationships

**Lieutenant Colonel
(Retired, U.S. Army)
Charles D. Faint, DBA,
Faculty Member at
Thayer Leadership**

There is a common assumption in many organizations that strategic decisions are driven primarily by the quality of ideas. The best analysis rises to the top. The strongest argument wins. The most innovative proposal earns support. But in practice, strategic decision-making is rarely that simple. That's because ideas matter, but they seldom succeed on their own.

More often than not, the ideas that shape an organization's direction are the ones championed by people who have earned the confidence of those making the decisions. The quality of an idea is important. But the quality of the relationships surrounding it often matters even more.

The Meritocracy Assumption

Many professionals enter large organizations believing that success follows a straightforward formula: work hard, think clearly, communicate effectively, and good ideas will naturally receive

the attention they deserve. Experience, however, often reveals a more nuanced reality. Senior leadership meetings are not pure marketplaces of ideas. They are environments in which leaders must make consequential decisions under uncertainty.

In those moments, the credibility of the messenger inevitably becomes part of the evaluation.

- Who presents the recommendation matters
- Who has established credibility with the decision-maker matters
- Who has consistently demonstrated sound judgment over time matters

This is not necessarily a flaw in the system. It reflects how experienced leaders manage risk.

Trust Is a Form of Risk Management

Executives rarely have perfect information. They make strategic planning decisions while balancing incomplete data, competing priorities, limited time, and significant organizational consequences. Under those conditions, trust becomes an essential

decision-making tool. When leaders are forced to choose between an exceptional idea presented by someone they know little about and a good idea presented by someone whose judgment has been proven repeatedly, they often choose the latter.

The decision is not based solely on familiarity; it is based on confidence. Trust reduces uncertainty because it is built on a history of competence, integrity, and sound judgment. In that sense, trust is not the opposite of merit. It is one of the ways organizations evaluate merit over time.

Ideas Need Social Capital

Every organization operates with multiple forms of capital.

- Intellectual capital is what people know
- Institutional capital comes from formal authority and position
- Social capital is the credibility and trust that individuals build through consistent performance and strong relationships

Great ideas originate from intellectual capital, but they

often require social capital before they influence strategic decisions.

An idea, no matter how well researched, cannot shape an organization's future if it never reaches the people responsible for making decisions.

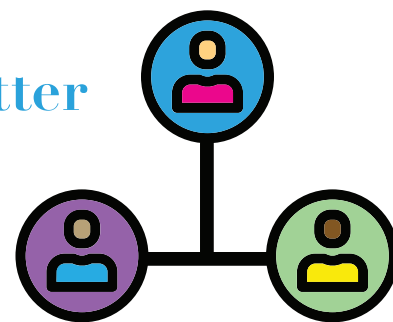
Relationships create access, and access creates opportunity for ideas to be heard, challenged, refined, and ultimately adopted. This explains why certain individuals are consistently invited into important conversations. They are not always the smartest people in the organization, but they have earned the confidence of leaders who trust their judgment.

A Lesson from Special Operations

Special Operations Forces provide a useful analogy. Elite military teams do not rely exclusively on the theoretically perfect plan. They rely on the people who have demonstrated sound judgment under pressure. Technical competence is expected, but trust is what allows teams to move quickly when conditions become uncertain. Every experienced operator has worked alongside exceptionally capable teammates who still needed to earn the confidence



Ultimately, the strongest ideas still matter —but they matter most when they are carried by people others trust.”



of the team before they were entrusted with the most demanding responsibilities.

Trust is built through shared experiences, demonstrated competence, and consistent performance—not credentials alone. Executive leadership teams function in much the same way. Strategic decisions are not simply evaluations of competing proposals; they are evaluations of the people presenting them and the confidence leaders have in their ability to execute.

A Historical Perspective

History offers countless examples of this dynamic. During World War II, General George C. Marshall exercised extraordinary influence not simply because he possessed exceptional strategic insight, but because President Franklin D. Roosevelt had complete confidence in his judgment. That trust enabled Marshall's recommendations to carry tremendous weight, even during moments of profound uncertainty. The relationship did not replace sound strategy. It amplified it.

Throughout business history, the same pattern appears repeatedly. Influential advisors, trusted executives, and respected team leaders often

shape major strategic decisions because they have established credibility long before critical decisions arise.

“**Ideas gain traction when they are paired with credibility.”**

What This Means for Leaders

For senior leaders, this raises an important question: Are strategic decisions being shaped by the strongest ideas, or simply by the most familiar voices?

Those are not always the same thing. Effective leaders recognize that trust networks are necessary, but they also recognize their limitations. They intentionally expand the circle of trusted advisors, encourage constructive dissent, and seek perspectives from people outside their immediate network. Doing so reduces blind spots while preserving the trust required for effective decision-making. The objective is not to eliminate relationships from the decision process. It is to ensure that trusted relationships do not become barriers to new thinking.

What This Means for Everyone Else

For professionals seeking greater influence, the lesson is equally important. Developing expertise remains essential, but expertise alone is rarely enough. Ideas gain traction when they are paired with credibility.

Credibility grows through consistent performance, reliability, collaboration, and relationships built over time. This is why networking, mentorship, and cross-functional collaboration are not distractions from meaningful work—they are part of how meaningful work ultimately influences an organization. The goal is not simply to produce better ideas. It is to become someone leaders trust when those ideas matter most.

The Bottom Line

Organizations do not choose strategy based solely on the quality of ideas, nor do they rely exclusively on relationships. They rely on trusted people to identify, evaluate, and champion strong ideas in environments where uncertainty is unavoidable. The most successful professionals understand that influence rests on both substance and trust. They invest

in developing expertise, but they also invest in the relationships that allow expertise to shape decisions.

By the time executives gather around the conference table to make an important strategic decision, the discussion is about more than competing recommendations. It is also about whose judgment has earned the confidence to be heard.

Ultimately, the strongest ideas still matter—but they matter most when they are carried by people others trust.

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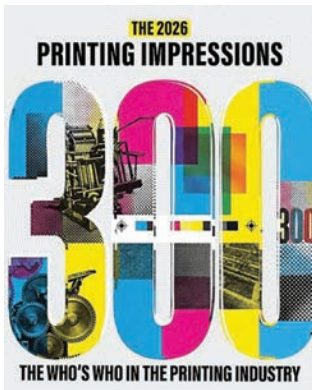
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Member News

PGCA Members in Printing Impressions 300 List of Top Companies



We were impressed to see 25 PGCA members in the Printing Impressions Top 300 printing companies in the



U.S. and Canada, as ranked by sales volume. Many companies had advanced multiple steps up the ladder from the previous year. Congratulations to these members on their success! ■

42	ICS Corporation	West Deptford, NJ	Matthew Bastian
57	Ironmark	Annapolis Junction, MD	Matthew Marzullo
63	Diamond Packaging	Rochester, NY	Karla Fichter
64	Hatteras	Tinton Falls, NJ	Bill Duerr
96	Heeter	Canonsburg, PA	Scott Heeter
103	Worth Higgins & Associates	Richmond, VA	Brian Losch
106	ANRO Inc.	West Chester, PA	James Spinelli
106	Intellicor Communications	Lancaster, PA	Michael Hurly
136	Compu-Mail, LLC.	Grand Island, NY	Anthony Marchioni
141	Alcom Printing Group	Harleysville, PA	Don Eichman
144	Bayard Printing Group	Williamsport, PA	Mark Lundberg
149	Strategic Factory	Owings Mills, MD	Keith Miller
167	CRW Graphics	Pennsauken, NJ	Dave Carpenter
169	Fort Orange Press	Albany, NY	Robert Witko
173	KM Media Group	Clifton, NJ	Jeffrey Kirschenbaum
178	Zenger Group	Tonawanda, NY	Stephen Zenger
195	Haig Graphic Communications	Hauppauge, NY	James Kalousdian
197	Innvoke LLC	Cranbury, NJ	Jay Ziegler
200	Mt. Royal Printing	Baltimore, MD	Gary Cayce
207	Art & Negative Graphics Inc.	Lanham, MD	James Myers
249	PDC Graphics	Southampton, PA	Jim Rosenthal
272	McClung Companies	Waynesboro, VA	Adam Monk
274	b squared inc.	New York, NY	Tim Boucher
285	Star Design, Print, Mail & Fulfillment	West Chester, PA	Al Swanson
289	The H&H Group	Lancaster, PA	Mike Williams

PGCA's Virginia Golf Outing

Printers, vendors and sponsors enjoyed a great day of golf at the Hunting Hawk Golf Course in Glen Allen, Virginia. Thanks to our sponsors who helped make the outing a great success!

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Photo Captions:

- (1) Chester Brown, Transcendia; Jon Jones, B.W. Wilson; Adam Silver, Worth Higgins; and John McKelvey, B.W. Wilson
- (2) Doug Ehlers, Lindenmeyr Munroe; Tyler Rick, Rickland Direct; David Arias, Lindenmeyr Munroe; and Luke Kiczales, Bamboolink
- (3) Jeanne Harvey, Sustana; Ryan Cunningham, Sharda Paper
- (4) John McMahon, Max Astor, Neil Gonyo, David Beales, all from MPS Printing Supplies
- (5) Jeff Sammons, Komori; Brian Losch, Worth Higgins; Mike Cardoza, Worth Higgins; and Matthew Brown, Worth Higgins
- (6) Byrrl Sheppard, BigEye; Ross Kraft, Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy; and Ron Shepard, Standard Finishing Systems



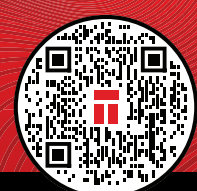
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The Green Revolution Is No Longer Optional:

What CPG Brand Owners Need to Know

“

With 77% of consumers saying they would stop buying from a brand found guilty of greenwashing, your packaging isn't just a marketing surface anymore, it's a compliance and trust statement.”

By Dennis Bachetta,
Director of Marketing,
Diamond Packaging

Back in 2021, we wrote that sustainability had shifted from a trend to an expectation. Just a few years later, the stakes have risen considerably. It's no longer just an expectation, it's becoming a legal, financial, and consumer-driven imperative. According to NielsenIQ's The Changing Climate of Sustainability report, three powerful forces are now converging to make sustainable business transformation mandatory. And packaging sits right at the center of the storm.

Governance Is Forcing the Issue

Governments across Europe and several U.S. states are rapidly moving from voluntary sustainability guidelines to binding mandates, covering supply chain transparency, carbon levies, and packaging-specific requirements like the EU's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products regulation. Greenwashing is increasingly in regulators' crosshairs, and vague environmental claims on-pack are becoming a serious liability. With 77% of consumers saying they would stop buying from a brand found guilty of greenwashing, your packaging



isn't just a marketing surface anymore, it's a compliance and trust statement. Folding cartons, made from renewable fiber and fully recyclable, give brands a credible, defensible sustainability story that can withstand that scrutiny.

Climate Costs Are Hitting the Bottom Line

Extreme weather events are disrupting raw material supply chains globally, driving up costs and forcing brands to rethink sourcing strategies. For CPG (Consumer Packaged Goods) companies still relying heavily on plastic or multi-material packaging, this pressure compounds quickly. Paper-

board-based folding cartons offer a more resilient alternative since they are sourced from responsibly managed forests, widely accepted in curbside recycling, and increasingly manufactured using renewable energy. Switching isn't just an environmental decision; in a world of spiraling resource costs, it's a financially sound one.

Consumers Are Ready But the Shelf Has to Meet Them

Consumer urgency is real: 69% of shoppers say sustainability has grown more important to them over the past two years. But 26% still struggle to find sustainable options on shelf, up

“

69% of shoppers say sustainability has grown more important to them over the past two years.”

from 18% in 2017, and confusing or unclear claims remain a top barrier to action. As we noted in 2021, brands have increasingly come to see sustainable packaging not as an added cost but as an investment in their brand. That thinking is now more relevant than ever. Clear recycling labels, honest sustainability messaging, and the visible shift away from plastic all signal to shoppers that a brand is walking the talk, and folding cartons are uniquely positioned to carry that message.

Brands Are Expected to Lead

The NielsenIQ data is direct: 46% of consumers look to brands first to take the lead on sustainable change, ahead of governments and retailers. The risks of falling short range from eroding brand equity to losing retail shelf space entirely. Packaging is often the first and most visible proof point of a brand's sustainability commitment. Choosing the right substrate and the right manufacturing partner is no longer a procurement decision made in isolation, it's a strategic one.

The Bottom Line

The window for gradual, piecemeal sustainability efforts is closing. Brands that act now — starting with the packaging their consumers see and touch every day — will be better positioned than those waiting for a perfect solution. We've been saying it since 2021: sustainability is an expectation. Now it's also an obligation. ■

Selling Promotional Products

By Bill Farquharson, Sales Vault

It's widely known the easiest sale you make is to your existing customer. They know you. They trust you. Blah, blah, blah.

That's what makes selling promotional products and branded apparel a no brainer. It's probably something they already buy from someone else. Or, if you're lucky, it's something they need but just don't know it yet.

I currently coach hundreds of people who sell promo. The Sales Vault is full of them. Most primarily sell print or signage, so these comments come from experience. Plus, I have sold it myself.

What I find is, there are two types of promo/branded apparel salespeople.

The first hands out a catalog full of various products. The second takes the time to learn the need and come up with some ideas.

You see, that's the biggest difference when it comes to selling promotional products and branded apparel versus print and signage: You have to create the application.

For example, you don't have to convince someone to put a sign outside their business. But selling promo almost always consists of planting a lot of seeds. That is, selling people on the idea of using promo to generate leads or retain and recognize employees and build morale.

So let me set your expectations both today: Initially, selling promotional products and branded apparel is going to be a lot of one-way conversations. Don't expect instant results. Follow a process of communicating your sales pitch to the right target market and then circle back later on.

If you're just starting out, this is going to be your experience for a while. But like any good farmer will tell you, you've got to plant the seeds in order to reap the harvest.

Get planting.

Need sales? Join the Sales Vault and work with Bill Farquharson.

Call Bill at (781) 934-7036. PGCA members get a discount on the subscription - visit salesvault.pro/partners/. ■



Running Out of Rabbits:

The End of Buffalo News Press

By Kelso Dux, Editor in Chief, M.U.V. Magazine (Moving Underrepresented Voices Magazine)

"We knew it was always trying to pull a rabbit out of a hat and find some way to keep going [and] we always seemed to find a way, but we... were running out of... rabbits." - Tom Majerski, BNP President.

Here at M.U.V., we value print as a cornerstone for building an accessible community. This summer we had the honor of printing our first edition through Buffalo News Press Empowered Print (BNP). However, only a month after we produced our edition, BNP unexpectedly shut down its printers and closed its doors. We sat down with Tom Majerski, BNP's President, to understand why.

For 45 years, BNP quietly supplied its printed products to the East Coast, Canada, and, at times, the nation. Printing millions of copies a week for fashion magazines, commercial retailers, local newspapers, and most recently M.U.V., this company captured the height of the printing industry's golden age.

However, in its almost five decades of operation, BNP has also seen the industry decline. A 2025 report showed that

around 40% of all local newspapers in the United States have shut down. This has severely impacted "access to reliable local news" and decreased available jobs in the industry. At its height, BNP was easily a 40-million-dollar company, yet it was a mere estimate of 12 million by its end - going from printing 7 days a week to only 5 days a week. With the national decline in print, BNP spent the last decade focusing on survival.

Those leading this effort of survival experienced this rise and fall firsthand, including that of its last President, Tom Majerski. Majerski attended McKinley High School with a concentration in print, "I went for printing, never thinking it was going to be a career." However, shortly after graduating, Tom Majerski was recommended for a job and hired by BNP's first President, Mike Kibler. Sitting at the same desk he was hired at 30 years ago, Majerski reflected on his journey at BNP, "[Mike Kibler] was a mentor to me. He hired me and I worked in pre-press for my first 10 years." Moving him from Prepress to Customer Service, Kibler wanted Majerski to take on more responsibility and had BNP fund Majerski's college degree in Business Administration.

Within the years he dedicated to BNP, Majerski got to witness how print shifted from predominantly manual to then

digital processes, "at the time, it was light tables and darkrooms, and it was all film... it was a very different thing 30 years ago." For example in order to build colors for the print images, technicians would have to do a process known as "stripping" that utilized an x-acto knife, a steady hand, and one's patience, "you would actually have to take the film and tape it to a clear material [then] you'd have to manually... line up register marks, and literally just try to get it perfect... so that the color was in the right spot. It became more of an art." The company continued to innovate with combinations of manual and electronic processes while still relying on the expertise and craftsmanship of its workers.

One of the first turns of trouble for BNP was marked by the passing of its President and lead visionary, Mike Kibler, in 2015. Alongside this devastating loss, the company had to swallow the loss of over 2 million dollars after one of their accounts failed to pay them. On top of this, the awards that recognized the value and work of BNP each year quietly discontinued their award category around 2020. This limited publishers like BNP from showcasing their work and credibility to future clients.

The next two chapters that hit were that of COVID and Trump's second presidency - which

truly laid the ground for BNP's shutdown. Like many other businesses, the transition after COVID was an uphill battle. The main struggles: paper and people, "It was after COVID that really started the decline of the company. Everyone wanted to print again, but the mills for paper just can't start up that quickly. So, we were on strict allocation for paper and we couldn't get any more paper than we had projected." Moreover, BNP struggled after the COVID pandemic to staff their production which impacted their ability to bring in new accounts, "It was very painful, because we had opportunities to get so much work, but we were basically turning things down." For example, when a printing company in the northeast shut down, BNP was unable to pick up their volume.

Then in February of 2025, BNP filed for Chapter 11 Protection, which permits reorganization for a company under bankruptcy. "At the time we felt good about it. It was a fresh start and we looked at the projections for our sales and things were looking good. For example, we were printing 32 million copies a month for Subway." Almost immediately after filing for Chapter 11, Subway severely cut back on its printing and BNP lost another account in Ohio.

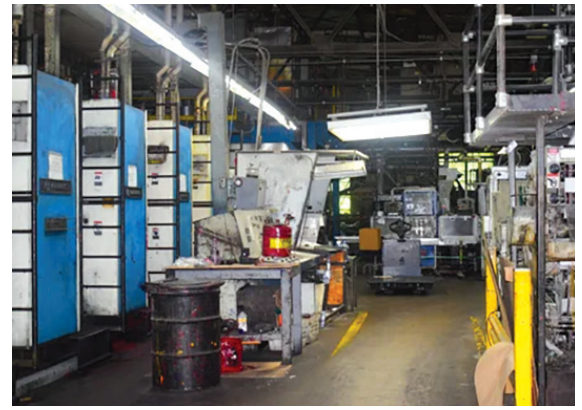


Photo By Kelso Dux

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“We knew it was always trying to pull a rabbit out of a hat and find some way to keep going [and] we always seemed to find a way, but we... were running out of... rabbits.”

Tom Majerski, BNP President.

Then Trump's tariffs hit. "Trump came into office and all of a sudden, aluminum, for our plates [to print], was getting hit." Trump's relationship with Canada severely impacted the printing industry with retaliatory tariffs from Canada. "At one point 30% of our business was Canadian... but... anytime we would ship something to Canada, we were hit with a 25% tariff... and absorbing that 25%... was another big blow." Furthermore, the industry was still reeling from the effects of the Canada Post Strike in 2024, which led many Canadian retailers to minimize its reliance on print marketing.

Up to the wire, President Tom Majerski and CFO Carl Rosati searched for solutions to keep BNP running; inquiring about outside acquisition, pitching new accounts, and brainstorming last-chance alternatives. However, they began to reckon with BNP's end after being informed that they were the newest victims of a cyber-attack by an international cyber company called Anubis.

The cyber-attack rendered their programs useless in printing, with the ransom demand of \$300,000, yet, BNP still had two jobs left. "We stayed for 14 hours that night... working with everybody to get one computer functioning ... We're gonna print their last

issue for them... and we're gonna finish on a high note." This was important to Majerski, "At the end of the day, you know, building those relationships matter, because, Tops [Friendly Markets] towards the end, they wanted us to survive, and [after] they put a job fair together, that's happening for our employees."

Two days later, Majerski gathered his night and morning crew to inform them that BNP was shutting down. "It was the hardest thing I ever had to do there... I grew up here with these people." The end was abrupt, but Majerski stands that "you never want to wave the white flag too soon." On July 8th, 2026, BNP ran its last run and a place that used to hum all day and night came to its gradual yet seemingly sudden stop. One month later, the space is frozen on that last day. Now strikingly desolate, it is still so clear that this operation was grand, vibrant, and full of life and history.

Ultimately, BNP's journey reveals the wider struggle of human-made, physical media not receiving proper investment in an ever-growing digital and AI-centered society. However, Tom argues that, "AI has the potential to kill digital advertising, because how often do you actually go to a website anymore?" He also pointed to the growing trend



Photo By Nicholas Christakis

in younger generations to pursue and appreciate physical media over digital, "[young people] are so not used to getting [physical media] that it becomes like a luxury. You get something in the mail and it has your name on it, you think, 'this is unique.'" Moreover, he argues that the current value of print is overlooked. "The sad thing about printing is that it is extremely effective. It's got the biggest return on investment of any type of advertising, hands down. The numbers will prove that everywhere and digital pales in comparison to that."

What felt like an immovable landmark of Buffalo ultimately met the expected fate of a Rust Belt city. However, one could argue that this fate was not inevitable. If we as a community lean into our local publications and the people who produce them, we can reignite the



Photo By Nicholas Christakis

perceived value in it. Buffalo News Press Empowered Print, as a company, was let down at many turns, but as a service, was never unnecessary. There is value in print as well as its history. Now more than ever we need to invest in the avenues that truly uplift our stories and feed our local economy. ■

quoins2pixels

“If we can meet our customer’s expectations and create clear channels of communications, we are creating value in their eyes...”



Commodity Pricing

In a recent article titled “Communicating Print’s Value in a Changing Industry,” published by *WhatTheyThink*, the authors shared their concern about the potential commoditization of print. Their premise being that value-based selling has been pushed aside with the industry’s focus on automation and digital production. The sad truth is that our industry has always priced its work as a commodity, which is the result of cost-driven estimating systems and technological changes.

In the past, the industry mantra was there were three legs to creating value for a customer. Speed (turnaround), Quality, and Price. You could offer two of these legs and make money but not all three. Automation, which began in the mid ’80s with computer driven typesetting, color separations, and film layout, allowed firms to offer all three legs and still be competitive. While this was occurring, digital tools were quickly making traditional print outdated, and printers quickly discovered that print was perceived by buyers as a commodity. Given the extreme competition, value-based pricing became difficult. Yet, many firms who were “first-to-market”

and utilized technologies as a marked advantage were able to lead and set expectations.

Eventually the rest of the herd caught up and commoditization followed. In the 80’s there were approximately 56,000 printing companies in the US. That number is estimated to be 21,000 in 2026 (Dept. of Commerce County Business Patterns). Which leads to the next question, and topic. How do we sell Value?

Selling Value

What is today’s “three legs?” First, we must understand that while price may open doors, it’s value which keeps customers. While value may change in the eye of the beholder, there are specific elements which are essential in keeping a customer and not making price a primary consideration. Here are today’s “three legs” to consider:

✓ Communication

Our sales force must be capable of ascertaining the needs of the customer and clearly communicate these needs to management and operations. This is also two-way communication. Both good news and not so good news should be shared quickly and effectively with the customer.

✓ Commitment

The printed product plays a key role in the customer’s business communication. Consequently, our entire team must commit themselves to delivering on customer’s requests. This means instilling a “can do” attitude from the front office to shipping, which also means hiring individuals who have this same DNA.

✓ Consistency

While consistent quality of product is essential, so are other practices. Do we bill according to our client’s requirements (rather than ours); Do we document our shipping/fulfillment per instructions; and do we maintain a consistent point of contact on our sales team (rep and CSR)?

Value is an intangible, but if we can meet our customer’s expectations and create clear channels of communications, we are creating value in their eyes, which is the key to any long-term business relationship.

Shifting Sands

Print is a weight-added business. Our product begins as digital media and through the production process we add weight – paper, ink, coatings, etc. The final product must then be shipped using USPS,

freight carriers, and/or our own vehicles. Historically, the cost of shipping, although not inconsequential, was not an issue for many print customers. Needless to say, logistic costs are, and will become, a bigger issue. While rising oil costs may be transient, changes occurring within the infrastructure may keep high costs around longer than we’d like.

The US Postal Service is facing monumental challenges and will continue to use increasing prices to keep it functional, and FedEx and UPS are facing their own challenges. While all these cost drivers are out of a print provider’s control, they will affect decisions by print buyers which can have adverse effects on our business.

Now is the time to become extremely proactive in our logistics’ management. Are we using the right carriers for our customers’ products? Are we taking advantage of shipping consolidators and their services? More importantly are we in communication with our customers about preparing them for any changes and offering alternate ideas? Can they accept “slower/cheaper” transportation? Since many print providers place a handling charge on shipping, are the

customers willing to accept direct charges, or is the print provider willing to absorb the handling charges?

While no one wants to be the bearer of bad news, engaging our customers is crucial. From their perspective the total invoice for print and logistics is one item, and it's important for our sales team to differentiate the cost drivers AND offer them alternate solutions.

Your Banker

While many of us wish to see a banker as a friend, having a banker say "NO" when that is the correct answer, should not be considered a negative. This is especially true if we have developed a relationship in which that person knows our business and understands the industry.

If you're asking the bank to lend money so you can continue your string of operating losses, you're asking them to commit suicide with you and that won't happen. On the other hand, if you have a game plan that will return a profit and generate the cash to pay off the loan, that's a different story. Better still, if you have detailed projections showing how this will happen, they can feel good about being your banker and very likely to say "YES."

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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#10 FAST FORWARD	1-1/8 X 4-1/2	7/8 LEFT	5/8 BOTTOM
6 X 9-1/2 BOOKLET	1-3/8 X 4-1/2	7/8 LEFT	2-3/8 BOTTOM
9 X 12 BOOKLET	4-1/2 x 1-3/4	2-1/2 LEFT	7/8 BOTTOM

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Upcoming Events



Oct.

■ JOIN US FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENT

PRINTOBERFEST

October 22, 2026 | 5:30 pm

Das Bierhalle, Bel Air, MD

PRINTERS & PINTS

October 21, 2026 | 5:30 pm

The Main Event, Farmingdale, NY

PGCA HR CONFERENCE

May 6 & 7, 2027

Turning Stone Resort Casino, Verona, NY

May

Webinars

■ WEBINARS WITH KELLY MALLOZZI

MARKETING BRIEF

October 1, 2026 | 1:30 pm

How to Make Your Marketing Go Micro-Viral: Discover how print businesses can spark “micro-viral” moments—content that spreads rapidly within tight-knit local and industry communities rather than the broad internet.

CULTURE BRIEF

October 8, 2026 | 1:30 pm

Train, Trust, Retain: Engaging Young People at Work: The best way to build loyalty with young talent is to invest in their development from day one.

SALES BRIEF

October 15, 2026 | 1:30 pm

When Is a Plane Ticket Worth It? A Practical Guide to In-Person Customer Visits: This brief explores how sales professionals can make smarter decisions about face-to-face meetings.

■ 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.

■ EMERGING LEADERS WORKSHOP

3-part workshop

November 3, 10, 17, 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

Nov. 3 **Developing New Managers –**
From Contributor to Leader

Nov. 10 **Change Management –**
Navigating Uncertainty with Confidence

Nov. 17 **Teamwork and Team Building –**
Creating Cohesive, High-Performing Teams

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

Forever In Our Hearts

In Memoriam: Joan Cialfi

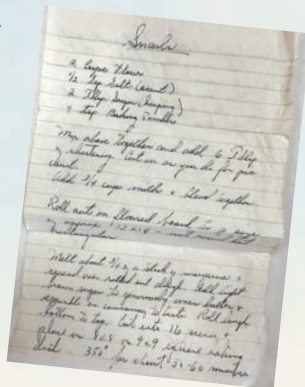


Joan Cialfi was hired by the Association (at the time PIA) when she was 65. Her resume cover letter said she was looking for a part-time job so she wouldn't become a "couch potato". Joan always arrived on time and always dressed "to the nine's", as she was trained in business school.

We used to joke that Joan could answer the phone with one hand and send multiple faxes with the other. She had no problem learning new computer programs or office procedures. Once we gave her a typing test and she clocked in at 102 words per minute with 100% accuracy.

Besides her office skills, Joan was an accomplished poet and baker. At Christmas time she would bake at least a dozen different kinds of cookies. Her recipe for snails and fruit cake were special favorites of the staff.

She finally retired from PIA 12 years ago, at age 85, after working for us for 20 years. Joan passed away on July 23rd at the age of 97. Her eyesight failed her in her last years, but her mind and energy were still incredible. We'd like to share two stanza's from Joan's poem about PIA and her recipe for snails, in her words and hope some of you will be inspired to try making them! ■



Poem By Joan Cialfi (excerpt)

Well, it's been nineteen years
I haven't said goodbye, as yet
When I finally do leave
Is anybody's bet.

The years have gone by so fast
I never really thought the role would last.
But the biggest pleasure of it all
Of course, the members of the cast.

Snails

Joan Cialfi recipe

Ingredients



2 cups flour
1/2 tsp salt (scent)
2 Tbsp sugar (heaping)
4 Tbsp Baking Powder



Mix above together and add 6 Tbsp. of shortening.
Cut in as you do for pie crust.

Add 3/4 cup milk and blend together.

Roll out on floured board to a size of approximately
12 x 18 - not round but rectangular.

Melt about 3/4 of a stick of margarine and spread over
rolled out dough. Add light brown sugar to generously
cover butter and sprinkle on cinnamon to taste.
Roll dough bottom to top. Cut into 6 pieces and place
in 8x8 or 9x9 square baking dish.
Bake for about 50-60 minutes.

Cool just a little and frost with just a
confectionary sugar frosting. Best served warm.

You can make these anytime and freeze them
and bake when you want to serve them.



Joan Cialfi and Daughter Mary

New York Member Legal Alert

Governor signs Landmark Personnel Records Law

What PGCA Members Need to Know



**Be In
The
Know!**

**Legal
Alert
S3460**

**Takes
Effect
Nov. 8**

**By Nicholas J. Fiorenza,
Association Counsel,
Ferrara Fiorenza PC**

On September 9, 2026, Governor Kathy Hochul signed Senate Bill S3460 into law, creating a massive shift in how New York State employers are required to maintain and disclose employee documentation. In an amendment to the New York Labor Law creating new section 210-b, this legislation grants both current and former employees unprecedented access to their personnel files. The new requirements mandate come with short compliance timelines and introduce employer notification requirements for “negative information” residing in personnel files.

The law takes effect on November 8, 2026 (60 days post-signing) and applies broadly to private and public sector businesses. Members are advised to review, and likely amend, their HR processes now to ensure compliance.

Key Provisions of the Law

The legislation introduces four new employer mandates that completely reshape workplace record-keeping:

1. Broad Definition of “Personnel Record”

Do not assume a personnel record is limited to your single folder in HR. The law defines these records expansively to include any physical or digital document that affects an employee’s qualifications, promotions, transfers, compensation, or disciplinary status.

This includes:

- Basic personal details, original job applications, and formal job descriptions.
- Performance evaluations, written warnings, and termination notices.
- Electronic files and data managed by third-party HR or payroll vendors.

2. Swift Record Turnaround and Request Frequency Rules

- Upon receiving a written employee request, employers must provide a complete copy of the personnel record within 5 business days at absolutely no cost to the worker. (Note: Pending legislative amendments in early 2027 may eventually extend this to 10 days, but businesses must prepare for the 5-day rule this November).
- Employees are capped at two requests per calendar year (unless an additional request is triggered by new negative information).

- The right to request files extends to former workers as well. Employers are now required to maintain these personnel records for at least three years following an employee’s separation for any reason.

3. Mandatory 10-Day Notification of “Negative Information”

In one of the law’s most significant provisions, employers must notify an employee in writing within 10 days of placing any “negative information” into their file. This applies to any documentation that could adversely affect their professional standing, future promotions, compensation, or disciplinary record. Compliance with this provision will require employers to carefully evaluate the creation of emails, internal memoranda and other operational notes which could fall under the broad definition of negative information.

4. The Right to Dispute and Rebut File Contents

If an employee disagrees with information contained in their file, the law provides avenues for employees to contest or remove their employer’s documentation. First, the employer and employee can mutually agree to remove or modify the disputed information.

In addition, and if the employer declines to remove the information, the employee now has the statutory right to submit a permanent written rebuttal statement that must remain attached to the disputed record for as long as it exists.

Enforcement, Fines, and Retaliation Risks

An employer's violation of Section 210-b carries significant legal consequences:

- The New York Attorney General can levy civil penalties ranging from \$500 to \$2,500 per violation.
- Employees have the right to seek court orders to correct or remove known false information from their files.
- The law explicitly prohibits punishing or retaliating against

any worker who requests their file or submits a rebuttal. Retaliation claims carry a private right of action, exposing non-compliant businesses to costly civil lawsuits.

Next Steps for Association Members

While technical clarifications and "Chapter Amendments" are anticipated when the legislature reconvenes in January 2027, the underlying compliance framework becomes live on November 8, 2026.

To protect your business, we highly recommend taking the following steps:

1. **Centralize digital and physical records** so they can be compiled and delivered securely within the 5-business-day window.

2. **Ensure supervisors** understand that informal, undocumented "notes" or emails regarding performance might legally qualify as personnel records—and that "negative information" triggers a strict 10-day clock.

3. **Establish a compliance protocol** including a clear, standardized pipeline for receiving, verifying, and fulfilling employee record requests.

4. **Audit and evaluate** the structure and content of existing personnel files.

Additional member compliance assistance is available by contacting Association President Tim Freeman at (716) 691-3211, tim@printcommunications.org or Association Counsel Nick Fiorenza at (315) 437-7600, njfiorenza@ferrarafirm.com. ■

“Members are advised to review, and likely amend, their HR processes now to ensure compliance.”

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GLEN Boehmer

Chairman

glen@sentinelinnovation.com

TIM Freeman

President

tim@printcommunications.org

STEVE Stankavage

Director of Environmental,

Health & Safety

sstankavage@printcommunications.org

tel: (570) 579-6497

KIM Tuzzo

Marketing & Programs Director

kim@printcommunications.org

MIKE Vares, IOM

Director of Development

mike@printcommunications.org

tel: (410) 207-5952

CAROLINE Wawrzyniec

Office Support Manager

caroline@printcommunications.org

Association Counsel

Ferrara Fiorenza PC

5010 Campuswood Drive,

E. Syracuse, NY 13057

tel: (315) 437-7600

www.ferrarafirm.com

NICHOLAS J. Fiorenza

Partner

njfiorenza@ferrarafirm.com

KATHERINE Gavett

Partner

kegavett@ferrarafirm.com

Insurance Partner

Gilroy Kernan & Gilroy

210 Clinton Road,

New Hartford, NY 13413

SARAH Armstrong

Strategic Risk Advisor

saraha@gkgrisk.com

tel: (315) 838-8083

ANDY Biernat

VP Strategic Risk Advisor

andrewb@gkgrisk.com

tel: (315) 794-6475

ROSS Kraft

VP Strategic Risk Advisor

rossk@gkgrisk.com

tel: (315) 794-6522

Get to Know PGCA Staff: Kim Tuzzo

As PGCA's Marketing/
Programs Director, Kim
Tuzzo helps keep members
informed and engaged
through the association's
key communication
channels, including email blasts, monthly
newsletters, and social media updates.



A self-described "print nerd," Kim loves the creative calendars, promotional pieces, and other printed materials members share with PGCA. She has been with the Association since the days of typewriters and fax machines—when PGCA's territory was still limited to upstate New York.

For Kim, the most rewarding part of the job has been building relationships with dedicated people across the industry—people who consistently go out of their way to support both the Association and the printing community.

Reach out to Kim about advertising opportunities, upcoming events, ways to get more value from your membership, or help finding the right answer to a question or concern.

A few things you might not know...

- Kim is a grandmother, cat lover, letterpress operator, blood donor, avid book, magazine and movie fan and published letter-to-the-editor writer.



Contact - Kim Tuzzo, (716) 691-3211 or kim@printcommunications.org. **Make Kim's day!** Send your calendars, cards and promo items to her at 636 North French Rd., Suite 1, Amherst, NY 14228.



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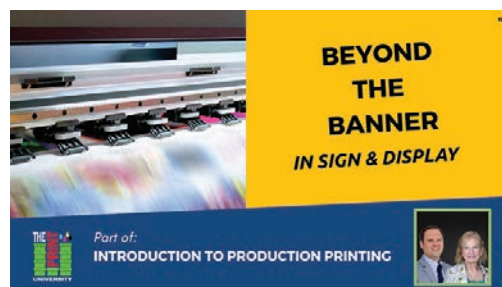
Beyond the Banner in Sign & Display

Pat McGrew and Ryan McAbee discuss how print providers can move beyond commodity signs and banners by using wide-format equipment for higher-margin applications such as printed décor, soft signage, textiles, rigid graphics, and specialty

displays. The conversation also covers how vertical-market expertise, value-added services, installation, and strategic application bundles can help printers differentiate their offerings and grow revenue.

Workflow Automation Around the Edges

This episode explores how print businesses can automate the "edges" of production, including customer intake, estimating, job ticketing, system integration, change orders, and invoicing, where manual processes often create errors and lost profit. Ryan McAbee and Pat McGrew also explain how AI, APIs, JDF/JMF, and workflow governance can help connect disconnected systems, reduce re-keying, and uncover new automation opportunities.



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