
What They Think?

Market Intelligence for Printing and Publishing

The Number 1 Factor in Successful Print MIS Implementations

Implementing Print MIS software is an undertaking that touches every corner of your business. The belief system you go into this process with determines your success more than any other factor.

By Jennifer Matt

Print MIS solutions are complicated because the systems touch every corner of your print business. Most print MIS implementations fail, often miserably, meaning they fail to meet the expectations of the printer who wrote the check.

The number one factor in the success of a Print MIS implementation is the attitude of the printer.

What do I mean by attitude? It really comes down to one basic belief system.

Belief System A: Are you looking to force your workflow “the way you do business” into a commercial Print MIS solution?

OR

Belief System B: Are you looking at the commercial Print MIS solution and figuring out how to mold your business processes to best fit into the Print MIS software solution?

Behind Belief System A (like door number one in a game show) you will find months and months of frustration, a lot of money spent on “customization”, too many hours to count of your team describing how and why this software won’t work for your business, and finally almost zero return on your investment. For those who really don’t get enough with one round of this, they buy another system and rinse and repeat the process over and over again.

Behind Belief System B you will find some complaining employees about changing things where the only defense is “this is how we’ve always done it”, a few employees might quit who refuse to change (probably good for your business), an implementation that results in a positive ROI on your investment, and your use of the Print MIS technology aligns with the vendors so you’re a happy camper traveling down their product roadmap with them.

It is that simple, really – everything about your Print MIS implementation is rooted in your attitude on this belief. Are you so invested in your workflow that any system you implement has to bend to this perfect workflow? I used the word “perfect” on purpose, really how many printers have a perfect workflow?

Workflow is a process that you're constantly iterating and improving on, so why not see a Print MIS implementation as an opportunity to evolve, change, adjust your workflow to the way that optimizes your use of the Print MIS you just spent a sizeable investment on?

Do you know how liberating this attitude is? Instead of printers asking question after question after question that starts like this; can your system handle order entry by a CSR that only types with only their left hand while standing on one foot? You would have a line of questions like this; we have customers who require a PO before we do any work on their projects, how would you recommend best handling this business requirement in your Print MIS?

The first statement isn't a statement, it's a command, "please make your system bend to my will." The other is a question about what is the best way to solve this business challenge in your system. There is a huge difference between these two different attitudes. Your workflow should be in a state of constant iteration – this does not mean it changes every day, it means you're looking for ways to improve it every day. Why then when it comes to Print MIS implementations do printers dig in and defend their current ways of doing business like it's their first born?

You have way more control than you think you do, YOU as a leader. You need to set the attitude of, we are willing to question everything and "bend" our workflow into what best fits into this software. This is radical. This is not the norm. This is necessary. If you want one way to prevent a Print MIS implementation disaster, start here because you have 100% control of this.

About Jennifer Matt

Jennifer Matt has a passion for the online world and how print software can be leveraged to both differentiate your print business and make it more efficient. Jennifer writes, speaks, and consults with printers worldwide who realize their ability to leverage software is critical to their success in the information age.

She is the managing editor of the WhatTheyThink Print Software special interest area. Jennifer has written two books; Web2Print and Make Great Software Decisions: A Guide for Printers, both of which are distributed by EDSF, a non-profit serving the print industry where Jennifer serves on the Board of Directors. Jennifer lives and works in San Francisco, CA USA.

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