

EPISODE 560

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:01] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the future of print, from physical to digital, an XMPie Podcast Conference. XMPie is shaping the future of personalization with its award-winning platform to streamline the communications workflow, and to put their customer at the heart of the conversation, wanting then advanced personalization. Take your direct mail to the digital age. Offer more from your packaging services. Automate your print ordering. We'll cover all that and more. We hope you enjoy the show. And now, over to our conference host, the intergalactic ambassador to the Printerverse, Deborah Corn.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:42] DC: Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts from the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your intergalactic ambassador. More specifically, we are here with the second episode of the XMPie Podcast Conference. As a refresher, XMPie is the leading provider of software for cross-media, variable data one-to-one marketing, offering solutions to help businesses create and manage highly effective direct marketing and cross-media campaigns. This is our second session and we are going to focus on direct mail. Our guests are experts in their field, and it is an honor to welcome them to the conference.

First, we have Mike Scrutton, the Director of Print Technology and Strategy at Adobe. We are also joined by Rob Mothershead, the Senior Analyst of Marketing Strategy & Technologies at the United States Postal Service, which I will also refer to as USPS, for everybody out of the United States. Of course, we have Scott Houck, the Director of Business Development for Customer Experience Initiatives at XMPie. Welcome, gentlemen. I am really looking forward to this conversation. I am a big fan of direct mail, and more importantly, meaningful direct mail. Mike, let's start with you. Please, let everybody know a bit about you and what you are currently doing at Adobe.

[0:02:07] MS: Thanks, Deborah. It's great to be here. I've been with Adobe 25 years now. Spent my entire career in the world of print. I'm the part of the – with the part of Adobe, but the

company started 40 years ago this year. Everything about print. You don't work at Adobe though, without having a little bit of a view of the whole end-to-end process from how the stuff gets created, to how it goes out the backend. That's me. I'm the print guy at Adobe.

[0:02:33] DC: Rob. I always look up everybody's LinkedIn profile before the podcast and I did notice that one of your first jobs, you were a speech writer for Audi, the car company. How does a speech writer for a car company end up at the post office? What does your current job entail?

[0:02:50] RM: Thanks, Deborah. That's a great question. I ask myself that every day, almost. The issue is that what I learned as a speech writer and copywriter in the advertising world and for brands is that great communication is made even better when data and proof points and evidence are brought forward. That's a major theme in my life. Golly, I'm an English major, but I'm also a statistician, among other things. That pivots me right into direct mail.

I have a background in direct mail as a practitioner. One of the wonderful things that I learned about it as both a medium and as a channel is how measurable and how the communication, changing the communication itself can actually change how people react and how they respond.

My work inside postal right now is focused on how USPS can help bolster the direct mail industry and all of its participants from the marketer to the actual end recipient. How do we make direct mail more valuable to people who receive it? That includes, how can we make it a better, more manageable, more valuable channel for the companies that are in the – call the middle section, like the printing community, how they can participate in how we can help them be more successful.

[0:04:20] DC: Well, thank you so much for joining us today. It's always an honor to have the post office, amongst the Printerverse Podcast. Scott, welcome to the program. Thank you so much for participating in your own conference, as it is. I also looked you up and you are a graduate of Clemson's Graphic Communications Program. Go Tigers. Let's give a little plug for that as long as we're here, and then please let everybody know about your role at XMPie. What I mean by a plug was, how the program helped you enter into the printing industry.

[0:04:55] SH: Excellent. Go Tigers. I appreciate the shout out. Absolutely. Everything that I've gotten to today after 30 some years in the printerverse, if you will, started at Clemson University, in my experience with their graphic communications program. One of their philosophies that I would plug for everybody on the call is they want to make sure the students have real-life experience. We had to do internships. That was one of the best things that came out of it for me, both from a business and networking perspective, and also, put everything practically together.

There's a great culture there. The students there are available for people on this podcast to leverage for, from internships to full-time positions, of course. At XMPie, one thing I would mention is that I've been doing this, like I said, for a long time. I just recently came back from Adobe MAX, and I was able to get my 35-year pin for using Adobe solutions, so Illustrator 88. For many of the young people that we just talked about, they probably don't know that Illustrator with called Illustrator 88 back in those days, the actual year.

I've been fortunate to be around the best of the best software technology in our industry, after again, going back to Clemson getting my first taste at a commercial printer that used Scitex back in the day. I'm passionate about personalization. I appreciate the opportunity of talking about that world.

[0:06:17] DC: Excellent. Now, Mike, I didn't do – I did some research on you, but I don't want to waste my time, because I'm so happy that Adobe is here and is speaking about print and is passionate about print. This session is obviously talking about direct mail. I really want to start with you, because without your software on tools, which most people on planet Earth use for file creation, none of this will really happen. Now, in a lot of ways, Adobe would not have to have a vested interest in how these files are ultimately used, whether they're kept electronic, or they are set to printing devices. That is not actually true. Adobe does have a vested interest in the files being used for print. I'm hoping that you can comment on that. Also, let everybody know how you're here to support and the future is filled with print for Adobe.

[0:07:19] MS: Yeah, very much so, Deborah. I mean, print definitely got the company started 40 years ago, like we said. It was creating postscript. How do we convey a way of printing electronically when computers were coming out of their primordial swamp? That company got

started. Thanks, Scott, for the shoutout for Illustrator all those years ago as well. Print back then was one of the primary democratized ways of sharing information. You might not be able to start your own TV station, or radio station, but you can certainly print your own stuff, your own fliers, your own new sheets, etc.

Maybe in our perception, it might have taken a little bit of a backseat, since the use of the Internet and text messages, or websites and online news services. Print always remained relevant to us in that time. Print is digital. At the end of the day, we're designing things, but we can now print anything and any type of quantity down to one. We've got really good at that with our – whatever it is doing in the industry.

I think, while it's true that people design for screens these days, people are still designing for print. It remains a very persistent media. If you look around the room you're sitting in, or look around the street you're walking down listening to this podcast, or if you're driving, look around you, how many of the things that you're seeing have been printed? Literally. I mean, looking around your house, or the street. So much of what we see has been printed. Somebody has designed it electronically. It may have been printed electronically, but it's sitting there, it's printed, and it's persistent.

That's one of the really cool things about the media is that, particularly from a brand and a marketing perspective, it's very difficult to just flick past, just scroll past. It sits there, it nags you, it reminds you. That really ties into direct mail really nicely as a media, because the messages that we see people were trying to share through direct mail might be very similar to the ones that they might also be trying to share electronically, but really hard to ignore.

Opening your mailbox, you see this printed message. You put it on your mantel. It stays there staring at you. You leave it lying around your kitchen like I do. It stays there. Print is a really exciting media for us, because of its persistence and its ability to convey a message to somebody over a period of time. We may well have tools that allow you to create digitally, or the metaverse, or whatever these other places are as well. But that digital contact point, turning it into print has become supremely important, and remains very, very important, and isn't going away. We'll be printing for another 5, 10, 20, 30 years, until we all move off the planet and start only staring at our holodecks maybe.

[0:10:10] DC: To your most excellent point about that you can't go probably a minute without seeing something printed, whether it's in your house, or standing outside, I would dare to say that that happened because of PDF. I'm really interested to know some of the ways that Adobe is working with the printing industry, because as sophisticated tools like XMPie come along, and an offer printers the opportunities to offer amazing opportunities for engagement with their customers, through direct mail, through packaging, through all those other mediums, there still has to be a direct relationship with Adobe, because the way I explain it to print customers and students even is that digital presses are computers and PDFs are the files that program the computers.

At some point, you have to have a very tight relationship with the software companies and the press manufacturers. In the broadest sense, can you just address the investment you're making in those relationships?

[0:11:21] MS: Yeah. PDF is at the heart of everything we do, particularly from a digital document, or print workflow perspective. One of the things that our founder, John Warnock did when he actually was writing code himself for the very, very first versions of Acrobat, he wanted to create something which would allow you to display something on the screen, or on any surface, be it digital, or be it physical and retain the same level of information. The printers world, the PDF was seen to be a digital proof. That's how it got started. What's so magical about the format is the way that it's self-contained and unambiguous. If you're doing it right, you've defined all the colors correctly, and the fonts correctly and the layout correctly, and can look identical, whatever type of surface you're viewing that content on.

What we do from a print perspective, it's about taking, again, that electronic definition of what it is, and turning it into reality, irrespective of what device you're printing on. You might still be making plates, and printing something in a high volume. You might be printing just a unit of one, because you're printing a very personalized direct mail piece for a very specific consumer. We want the underlying technology to be capable of taking that definition, and reproducing exactly what the designer and a brand expected with no surprises, irrespective of the actual print technology that's being used to reproduce it. Is it a CMYK device? Is it a CMYK orange, green violet, chocolate coating device, foils, whatever?

To have that digital master that you can reproduce on any device with no surprises. I know you have my colleague, Mark Lewiecki on a couple of episodes back, talking about how some of that underlying technology works in cyber print space. Having that digital master and being able to reproduce it is supremely important. That's why we like working with the guys at XMPie in particular, because they're also onboard with this as well. They usually, actually have to use some of our platforms. It's just as important to make sure the content is being created in a way that can be interpreted in an unambiguous manner, so that again, the printer can then reproduce exactly what the designer had in mind, and deliver exactly the experience that the brand had in mind to the consumer.

[0:13:43] SH: Yeah, excellent. I'd like to build off that as well, to Mike's point, to what we do at XMPie and what I look at it from a creative, or pre-press perspective from my past, is take it upstream and recognize that hey, the creatives that are coming up with this amazing content, they want that to happen all the way down through the process, whether it's for one, or for millions. What our philosophy was that XMPie and is at XMPie is to embrace the Adobe side of the equation. As Mike mentioned, the technology from Adobe, we leverage and are the most successful partner with them with Adobe InDesign server. That allows us to take the original creative, do the data and the business logic to make it as personalized as relevant and possible without ever changing it out of its InDesign structure, they may had and optimize the output for the digital presses to take it all the way down through the process.

[MESSAGE]

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[0:15:20] DC: You know, when I describe it to designers, I try to avoid a data conversation at all costs, until it has to come up. Until then, I say to them, it's a PDF. It's that simple. You just send as many as you want. The printer doesn't care. It's the same workflow, it all works the same. We'll get into that. I know as a print customer, but I don't think we've ever saved the PDF correctly. Even to print, you always need a pre-press person. The point is that, I think when they hear PDF, they feel like there's a security blanket. They know PDF.

This is not something that is foreign to them. The magic really happens with the software, with the print shop and with everybody talking together, so that we understand the needs of the market and how to best serve the print customers, ultimately, to keep these systems as something that they can manage and use. We are talking about direct mail. I want to turn to the Post Office for a second. I just want to say, this is a foundational point only. Printers in the United States, we understand there's been postal increases, there are fluctuations in the Post Office. Everybody is doing their best to navigate that, where this is not this conversation, take that up with your local Post Office or postmaster to join.

What we want to talk about here is that, even with that situation going on, there has still never been a better time to utilize the mail channel to reach people and communicate. The mail moment emerged during the pandemic. People were taking family photos walking to the mailbox. It became an activity. It became something you could do and wave across the street to your neighbors. I mean, my postal carrier, his name is Tony. We became great friends during the pandemic. I know everything about this guy. We 6 feet away from each other had water and conversations during, because I go outside at 3:00, because it was something to do. With mail still remaining one of the strongest communications in the marketing mix, how is the USPS supporting mailers these days through technology and anything else you want to add?

[0:17:49] RM: Thanks, Deborah. We are laser-focused on postal service on improving our systems, our network, and ultimately, the services we provide to everyone in the United States. That includes the mailing community, and specifically, the printing community. We've invested heavily and we're investing even more heavily in information technology. Much of that is to help make our own operations operate better and run more smoothly. However, there are pieces of

our initiatives, some of our initiatives are focused specifically on how to improve the user experience for people who not only receive mail, but those who send mail and are in the supply chain, so to speak.

On the one hand, a project that I've been heavily involved in in the past is a service called informed delivery, which provides an alert notice sent via email to recipients who sign up and register for the service, so that you get an email every day, and it shows you effectively black and white industrial images taken directly from our scanning equipment. Let's you know, this is coming in your mail. Be ready to see it. It's been wonderfully successful.

We've run it from, I think when I was first involved in it, we had maybe 25 users, and now there are 50 million registered users of this service. That's a very proactive proof point to say, mail and direct mail are not – we're not sitting still. For the actual mailing community, we have a service called informed visibility that provides information to the mailers and to their agents, and I'm using that term loosely, to show, here's where your mailing is in our process. Here's how it's proceeding through our organization and through our network. Soon, it will be, it's been delivered and you can have confirmation of that. We're making lots of investment in the channel to support the industry all along the way.

[0:20:10] DC: You were very humble about the informed delivery, sir, because I believe the last number I heard was an 85% or 88% open rate on those 50 million emails that get sent. It's a ridiculously high open rate. Also, there are other opportunities, which really fit in perfectly with XMPie and in its ability to generate digital marketing as well with the ride-alongs that come with the informed delivery emails.

I actually got one today, which is a four-color image that an advertiser can put in that, letting you know that this is coming. Or, it's also clickable, so it's a second form of communicating with people. This is an amazing opportunity to be involved in. Scott, I'd like to bring you in, because this is all really to get the most out of all of this to make people look at that postcard, when they get that informed delivery and say, "Aha. I can't wait to get that in my hand." Personalization, customization, making mail more meaningful is in your wheelhouse. Please, just how is XMPie supporting all of this and helping, whether it's making the PDF process more easy, or whether it

is helping to educate your customers to help educate their customers on why they should take advantage of this direct mail moment in a meaningful way?

[0:21:46] SH: Sure. What I'll do is I'll lay it out from the crawl, walk, run type of scenario. Right off the bat, what I would say going back to the InDesign side of things is we built plugin to plug into InDesign so that it'll be much easier for people to get started, to be able to set up this more advanced, personalized type of direct mail, even at a desktop level. Then we expand that out to server levels for much higher quantities. Then the other aspect of that is also extending the value by also being able to introduce within our platform and actually in other platforms, the ability of doing digital channels, such as email, or text message, or even adding personalized video as well to the equation.

Then, the next aspect of that is extending the value of the actual print piece itself. Going into some of the categories you're just talking about, for instance, if somebody is doing personalized direct mail, they can have a QR code that's not only personalized, but allows somebody to either go to an experience, see a video, maybe an AR experience around it. That's the personalized side. If you go to even non-personalized mailing and informed delivery and so on, the opportunity for the retailer to have a link there to take somebody to a website, even if it was general at that point, they didn't know who the person was, other than the address, that can then start a digital, or personalized engagement, even if you didn't start with that from day one when you started doing the campaign initially. Those are a couple examples of how you can start easily, but get into these more advanced capabilities.

[MESSAGE]

[0:23:21] ANNOUNCER: You're listening to the future of print, from physical to digital, produced by XMPie, the personalization platform that powers the print industry. If you're not adding a digital channel to your print direct mail, you're not maximizing its potential. Inject direct mail into your digital marketing campaigns with XMPie. Add only channel capabilities, such as landing pages, emails, images, and personalized videos. Transform direct mail from a standalone marketing tactic with no measurable ROI into an effective touch points in an omni-channel campaign. Learn how at xmpie.com.

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[0:24:02] DC: In the previous podcast, Dave and I had a great conversation about why, the whole why of personalization customization. A lot of it boils down to not just how you're educating the printers on what's possible with your technologies, but also helping them educate their customers on that. Regarding direct mail, how are you achieving that?

[0:24:30] SH: Yeah. One thing I can tell you fairly recently from an XMPie perspective as I came back from Adobe MAX. There were 6,000 plus creatives that were there. The originator, so moving upstream. We feel like we have an obligation of making those upstream aware of these capabilities, because we know that and we're all on this, called the capabilities of the technology. But sometimes it's harder for the print community, the printing companies, or sales reps to get that message all the way up into the brand and marketing people that need to hear it.

One of our processes is to take part upstream in the creative communities, such as that. What we're also doing is we have recorded video sessions that we have in what's called our campus, campus.xmpie.com, where we continuously bring additional educational materials to help. Then again, going back to Clemson, we have Clemson RIT, Bowling Green, University of Houston, Cal Poly, all where we facilitate providing them access to the XMPie capabilities, so that they can early on understand the value of personalization and direct mail, so that we're catching them early in the process, so that when they go out into the real world, they have that understanding. Because again, we're fighting against the digital channels, if you will, as far as mindshare, and a lot of the students and others in these organizations want to go those directions. We want to make sure they're understanding that value of print and how it can meet or exceed what these other channels can do.

[0:25:58] DC: Okay, Mike, you wanted to chime in, and then we're going to pull in Rob, too.

[0:26:03] MS: Yeah. I think, one of the interesting things that I've seen over the last 20 years or so is how a lot of the students and the colleges were being taught, they wanted to design for the web. They all wanted to be web developers and creating these online experiences. Maybe some of the print well took a bit of a backseat.

I think what we've seen in some of the organizations these days is that the team that does print marketing is very often separate to the team that does “digital” marketing. I put digital in air quotes, those text, email channels, they can be separate. I think, one of the opportunities that we have as an industry is, as Scott said, to re-educate people about how these things can be shared. Heck, the tools are capable of sharing the same assets across digital channels and print channels and can be used for direct mail.

I think, one of the other issues that we've seen is that the people who are in their email only with mindsets for the sending out marketing messages, they assume, well, we can do everything unique print, when I was used to it 10, 15 years ago. Print means everybody's going to get the same message. That's a misconception that a lot of people have is print is your grandfather's direct mail, where you just had the same mailing going to everybody, you just bubble jet a different name and address on the front.

That couldn't be further from the truth, particularly because of the large volumes of digital print equipment we have these days. That digital printer doesn't care if it's printing exactly the same message a 1,000 times, or a completely personalized message uniquely, one-offs a 1,000 times for both 1,000 different recipients, it's no different. The printer doesn't care. When you're handing that over to USPS to make that delivery, you can have that personalized experience, even through print, go figure. These worlds really had the ability to come back together, particularly then when you tie it into things like QR codes, or other ways of responding.

You can even have that virtual click of a scan of a QR code, or a special coupon that you text to a phone number or something. You can have the benefits of what we're used to from a digital marketing world and use it in this physical direct mail world as well.

[0:28:17] DC: Yeah. The Post Office is actually very much invested in this in the United States. There are annual promotions and incentives, which include digital marketing and using an omni channel mix. Rob, I know you wanted to comment, so just take it away.

[0:28:33] RM: Well, regarding promotions, Deborah, this is not in my area of expertise. But I know that there are many promotions offered by USPS that can benefit your printing audience.

One of those, for instance is participate in informed delivery and there's a discount available. Another is, for instance, use QR codes in your mailings. There are discounts available. Those things are very important to us in terms of promoting and elevating the channel by providing and showing additional value that can be generated through proper use of, or appropriate use of technologies.

I think that's one thing that I'm hearing from listening to Mike and Scott is that in our analysis, what we – how we've come to get to know each other is that what we learned when we started with the postal service learning, when we started looking at the technology landscape around direct mail, is that this is not – I don't want to say it's not rocket science, because there's a lot of technology diligence and value in the software and systems that are available. These things are available now. They're not far future. They're available now. This integration can happen without a lot of effort. Using tools, technologies, platforms and applications that can make this integration across channels valuable to everyone, including your printing community.

[0:30:03] DC: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. I mean, everybody has a real-life example of this, whether you've gone to a site to look for shoes, and now that's following you around. Where it's falling short is I'm not getting that direct mail postcard saying, "Hey, you were on my site." I also know that the retailers are having a serious issue now with abandoned shopping carts. They're looking for all these technologies to trigger emails and text messages and all the things that, by the way, I'm going to completely ignore if I didn't buy the lamp, or the shoes to begin with.

If I now get a postcard in the mail, "Hi, I'm your lamp, and I miss you. You left me in the shopping cart." If you come scan this QR code right now, which is a mobile shopping incentive at the Post Office, you can get a discount for that, go buy the shoes, click here, or the lamp and we'll give you a little incentive. Buy this one, we'll give you a discount on something else, or whatever incentive that they want. The point is, it all has to work together.

What's really interesting is that I honestly did not even know until we had our pre-conversations about this conference, that XMPie can aid in those – I like to call them electronic, because it gets confusing with digital presses. I call them electronic communications. Scott, I really would love to ask you to let everybody know how XMPie is providing this opportunity for print and digital to work together. Because honestly, Adobe's creating a way for us to program the

presses. The Post Office has the infrastructure and the process for us to get these printed materials into people's hands. Everything else, including generating the marketing materials is really left up to the printers, let's just say in your arena. Please, let everybody know.

[0:32:18] SH: Sure, thanks for the opportunity. There are a couple areas that I could address with that. Again, this goes back to our founders and I'll just put a plug for Jacob Aizikowitz, who has a white paper on modern VDP that I would definitely want everybody listening to have access to. From our perspective, even early on, what we've done is we've allowed and again, it's hard not to talk about this without talking about data, but what we've done are a couple of things. One is we've recognized, obviously, direct mail as the channel. We've also recognized that these retailers and marketers are communicating via email, text messaging, digital websites, and also personalized video, for instance.

What we've done is we've set up the overall solution, so that one set of data in business rules, the decision that Deb needs to get this image and this offer versus somebody else, that one set of data in business rules is driving the print piece, the email, the video, every channel in our case, and that goes back to Mike's point earlier, most people don't understand that can happen and they think of the siloed, "Okay, we have to do one thing for direct mail, go to a whole another department to do email and set up for digital and all that." Whereas, we can help bring that together, especially for this print community, so they can extend out their channels

Another quick note on philosophy on this as well is we also right from day one said, okay, we want the print community to be able to design in InDesign and Photoshop for instance. We want those who are doing video to be able to leverage Adobe After Effects for those who are building websites. There are so many different tools that people use for that and for email. We allow them to design and setup the variable information, or the content objects in the appropriate design medium of choice as well way upstream. Those are a couple aspects of that.

The value, what people forget as well is that is that the end game is much higher response and return on marketing investment, and analytics around all of those touch points versus siloed analytics and reports they have to go out and dig up.

[MESSAGE]

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[0:34:56] DC: I would also add that one of the biggest value propositions in all of this is high. We're a modern printing and communications company. Because we understand that the world does not just operate on ink and paper. As a matter of fact, more of our lives are probably not ink and paper these days, but it works as a system. This is a way for printers to really get out of the conversations about, well, I can do it for three cents less than you and say, well enjoy yourself. Do it for three cents less. I'm actually going to charge you a dollar more, because what is the value of three new customers in a lifetime? What if they're buying a house, or a car? Does it matter what that postcard costs, or postage? Or, I needed to understand data a little in order to make it happen?

I think there is a unique perception and selling point for printers, if they really embrace the fact that they can do this. Let me just ask you in your conversations, Scott, what do you think the biggest objection is? Is it, I don't know how, this is not what we do? Or I don't know how to discuss it with my customers?

[0:36:20] SH: Yeah, great question. A lot of times, again, the D, or the data word, a lot of times clients will say, "Well, we don't really have good data." What's interesting about that is it doesn't necessarily have to start, or it shouldn't hold you back, if you don't have all the data you think you need, because you can actually use these techniques we're talking about to actually do campaigns to try to garner and get additional data to then move forward. That's probably the most common one. Again, the siloed one as you get into the bigger brands in the enterprises, there are people doing – that are doing the direct mail versus the email and the other, especially things like video, other channels, they're really siloed, so that's an objection as well.

What I would put out as a challenge maybe to Adobe and the USPS while we have them and maybe your audience is how can we work together to get this messaging upstream to the marketers and the creatives, so that everybody is aware of this, more so than they may be today?

[0:37:17] DC: Let's go to Mike and Adobe. How are you helping the printers understand what is all possible with PDFs? I know that there's PDFVTs now, for variable technology. Is it PDFVT, or VD?

[0:37:31] RM: VT. Variable Transactional was the original acronym. It was to enable all that stuff as well. What particular for those who might have heard the buzz words about our PDFVT file is that it's a game that digital master we talked about. It also contains all the information at high fidelity for the different records that a customer would have. For example, let's say that we are recreating a personalized flyer, and I own a pet shop. I've got some data. I happen to know that some of my customers buy a lot of dog food, some of them buy a lot of cat food, some of them buy a lot of bird seed. Maybe I've got that information, or maybe if I've been on their website, and they put something in their basket.

Well, it means that very easily, I can create a mailing for them, which maybe favors pictures of cats, or dogs, or birds, or maybe offers on the coupons on the right type of food that maybe they're more likely to buy and come back into my store. What's key about the PDFVT file format that XMPie produces is that actually, it can be very, very optimized as far as size is concerned. You can have a PDF file that refers to a 100 customers, or a 1,000 customers, or 10,000 customers and not massively increase the size of the files that you're passing around. Doesn't slow down your system. It doesn't take hours and hours and hours to generate these files, because they're very, very compact.

Inside the PDF file, it reuses a lot of data. They don't have to worry about how that happens, but basically, it only has to store everything once. The picture of the bird food, once. The picture of the cat food, once. A picture of a dog food, once. The only thing it has to store multiple times are that personalized information, certainly your name and address, maybe anything else that you want to have just for that one customer, but reuses a lot. It can travel very, very quickly and be

very fast to generate the files. It also then improves the print time as well. It doesn't slow you down at print time having to do a lot of additional work. That's some of the technology we've got under the hood.

It's very difficult for, I know Scott and I, we both – I think of myself as more of a print guy and he's creating stuff. Whereas actually, a lot of what we're also doing is he's creating stuff very often at a print site. I'm also preparing for print, but actually, but creative. It's the boundaries merge. There's certainly a lot more that we could be doing, as the guys have said in terms of making this easier for folks. I mean, one of the problems I think that we sometimes have is because everything is siloed. A direct mail campaign can take days, or weeks to put together. Sometimes that data can be stale by the time the customer receives that thing.

I think, one of the challenges that we have as an industry is people creating tools and services is, well, how can we help reduce that timeline? How can we help something to be reactionary, so that when a customer does something, they get a mailing two or three days later, rather than having to wait two or three weeks before something, when they forgotten that they ever wanted that lamp that they had earlier.

[0:40:37] SH: Another aspect, or maybe even an extension to what Mike is talking about, is that we can take that integrated campaign that the XMPie as a platform provides with these multiple touchpoints and be able to map that out into an overall campaign. Once you have that, especially as a printing company in a business, you can then utilize that, clone it, make it another campaign for either that same account, or an additional talent, because it worked. Then you can exchange the content and the creative and offer that to others.

Then the last part of that is that thing, if you will, call it a campaign, can then actually be put into an online ordering web to print solution, for instance, from XMPie, so that campaign can be on demand, so that somebody can go in externally, edit the campaign, customize it for them, and then launch it through the same web to print portal that you're offering their business cards and other marketing collateral.

[0:41:33] DC: Exactly. I mean, it's an excellent point with digital printing technology, and the Post Office on the corner, it is a system that everybody should be capitalizing on, especially

now. Rob, for your final words to encourage people to utilize the amazing United States Post Office.

[0:41:55] RM: We're on the cusp of celebrating our 250th anniversary, or birthday in the United States. I think we're actually older than the country and the Constitution. We're here to serve. We are here to improve our efficiency and our effectiveness. We're here to help drive growth, or help enable growth in the industries that your listeners are involved in. We stand ready to help however we can, including delivering mail on time and in the way that it needs to be delivered.

[0:42:31] DC: There are still actually three promotions left this year that printers can register for and take advantage of. As we've mentioned, they come up every year. Just go to the United States Post Office website and search marketing promotions and incentives. It took me two seconds to find it. It's actually very neatly outlined with the requirements. It's actually, the discounts, or they're different. It depends upon what program you're into. There are some very interesting rebates, where you get credits back from the post office. Everybody should be looking into it, and certainly advising their customers to take advantage of these things. Just thank you so much for joining us here.

Scott, thank you. I believe it was you. You mentioned Jacob's white paper, which I will put links to everything we've talked about from Adobe, from the Post Office. Actually, I could put the incentive link in the show notes, which I a 100% will do. We're going to include everything from XMPie as well. I really like you to have the final word here, as far as for everybody out there who is on the fence about opening this door with their customers, what is your best advice for starting?

[0:43:51] SH: First, I would say I can understand that and appreciate that. What we've got here with this call today exemplifies the highest levels of marketing direct mail that you could potentially even do. From our standpoint, whether you're just getting started and maybe you're just doing some small quantities, you can start with our base plugin into InDesign. That's a great way to get started, get things going, do some internal testing, some marketing for yourselves and for some of your clients. Then eventually, some of our accounts that are doing the millions and millions a day type of volume, you can build up to that. We can scale to that.

Then also, this vehicle, or this approach that we take allows you to then maybe have a better bridge into these other digital channels, and we can help you with that. Again, the challenge statement I always put out to our clients and our team is we're – because of this Adobe methodology we talked about and so on, we're providing unlimited creative, unlimited personalization and unlimited delivery. Challenge us on that. We'll be glad to help you with that process.

[0:44:57] DC: Gentlemen, thank you so much for your time and expertise. I really appreciate it. I certainly appreciate all the listeners for dedicating their time and attention to this subject. Next up in the conference, we are talking about the evolution of packaging with Dave Baldaro XMPie. Until next time, everybody, make male matter long and prosper.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:45:20] ANNOUNCER: The future of print from physical to digital, an XMPie Podcast Conference was produced by XMPie and presented by the intergalactic ambassador to the Printerverse, Deborah Corn. If you liked the show, tell a colleague, or leave us a review. We're on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn @xmpie. Our team is standing by to answer questions and help you solve your communications challenges. Get in touch with us at xmpie.com.

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