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**[0:00:00.8] DC:** This podcast is sponsored by XMPie, transforming communications and print businesses across the globe, for more than 20 years. Learn how they can help you enhance and grow your services at XMPie.com and through the links in the show notes.

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:18.9] DC:** It takes the right skills and the right innovation to design and manage meaningful print marketing solutions. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse, where we explore all facets of print and marketing that create stellar communications and sales opportunities for business success. I'm your host Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. Thanks for tuning in. Listen long and prosper.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:46.4] DC:** Hey everybody, welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse, this is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. We have two guests today from across the pond. Jay Mustafa, the Managing Director at Thirst Creative Limited in London. Thirst Creative's focus is on connecting with client objectives and developing lasting relationships. Whether crafting a logo, developing a new identity, creating marketing literature, or producing online communication, they've got you.

Phil Gaskin is the Business Development Channel Manager for UK, Ireland, and Middle East at XMPie. XMPie is a leading provider of software for cross-media, variable data, and one-to-one marketing. They offer solutions to help businesses create and manage, highly effective direct marketing and omnichannel campaigns. Hello gentlemen, welcome to the program.

**[0:01:44.1] JM:** Hi Deborah.

**[0:01:45.0] PG:** Hi.

**[0:01:45.1] DC:** Phil can you please let everybody know about your work at XMPie, how long you've been working with Jay and his team at Thirst Creative, and why your partnership has been a success?

**[0:01:57.5] PG:** Of course, yes. So, I've been at XMPie now for over 11 years but I've worked in the print industry in the UK for actually, over 30 years in total. My role at XMPie allows me to work with printing companies like Thirst Creative and help them adopt and benefit from XMPie software to protect print volumes and grow revenues, and also extend reach by diversification and automation so they become more competitive as well.

I've known Jay now for – it's almost 10 years actually, nearly a decade, Jay, and it was Jay who initially approached XMPie. I will let Jay explain the full story but essentially, first, it started to lose work for not being able to provide online ordering capability for print, and they needed a way to automate the business to compete against other businesses. Many of these businesses were much bigger.

And so, really, they were looking for something, a way of being able to, if I can say it, Jay, kind of punch above your weight, really, and so that's really how the conversation started, and for the last nine years, Thirst has been using XMPie software.

**[0:03:00.8] DC:** Excellent. So, Jay, can you let our listeners know about the work you do and who you do it for and we did have a pre-webinar conversation. So, I'm fascinated that Phil is calling you a printing business.

**[0:03:15.4] JM:** Yeah, thank you very much, Deborah. So yes, I'm Jay from Thirst Creative. We've been going now, as a business for in excess of 20 years now. We are what we like to call now over the years, I mean, our business has diversified. We started off as a small design team, which then sort of moved into repro, and then we had our own presses, all production. We pivoted the business over the years over recent years now to be much more of what we like to call a full-service creative company now.

So, what does a full-service creative agency mean? It means, basically, we can create the campaigns in-house from logo designs or multi-channel campaigns, for example, all the way

through to production. So, everything is done under the one roof. Some of our customers will include some big PLCs. So, some of the largest retail companies in the country along with some big gaming companies, to our small businesses as well, local businesses who we looked after for many, many years and we just still continue to do so.

So, we do have a broad spectrum of clients that we like to look after in a number of ways, from their design needs through to their marketing, all the way through to production.

**[0:04:22.8] DC:** I mentioned what I said about the printing company. I visited your site, and I saw that you were involved in printing but it's not like a typical printer site where you go there and says, "Hey, order your A4 brochure here," or your business card or your logo or whatever you might need. So, I was really confused but this is a massive shift from printer as a marketing service provider, to a creative agency that happens to have printing equipment. So, can you elaborate on that, the choice really, to put the creative part first?

**[0:04:58.6] JM:** Absolutely. So, like I say, my background is a graphic designer. That's what I studied to do and then great many moons ago when I got into the industry back in the 90s, you know, repro was quite a new thing, well, in terms of CTP for example, it didn't even exist. So, we kind of always, as a business kind of try to embrace the new technology and where it was all going, and whilst that gave us a good living and that, in turn, went into the life and indeed, digital presses, which we still have to this day, it was quite obvious that the industry is ever-changing and our focus became on the creative side of the business, the automation, the storefronts, et cetera.

So, whilst the print is a very big part of what we do, our focus has been on the online systems that we've embraced, and that service that we can offer our customers and potential new customers and the print has become a byproduct of that. So, we actively find ourselves now, we're not actively going out for the print if you like because that is a very saturated market and very competitive.

And you know, whilst back in the day, there will be these online printing solutions, we would be able to argue actually the quality is not there. They've actually come a long way now. So, what would differentiate us from the other companies out there online, really, is our software, now

online offering. What we can do, what added services can we give you as a business, which will make you want to use Thirst, you know, that maybe these online businesses can't do for you?

**[0:06:29.5] DC:** I mean, just being able to speak to a human is the first thing that comes to mind when I think of that. Okay, so it's such an interesting situation. There was obviously a catalyst that for seeking out XMPie and bringing them into your business but you actually have two sides of your business that can benefit from the software at the same time, and it's like, a little chicken or egg here. You know, was the print pushing the need for personalization, or were you trying to sell personalization then you need the presses to you know, cooperate? So, tell the story, Jay.

**[0:07:04.3] JM:** Yes. So, in terms of personalization, that's something we try to dabble with but obviously, anyone who has dealt with personalization, without a decent software on your side, it was a very time-consuming job indeed, you know? Just getting the files out and ripping them, et cetera, and just doing a basic mail merge was just completely painful. I guess, from our point of view, really, the whole point of looking to put something like this in place was that the business was ever-changing, and there was a demand to obviously, move with the times and put an online solution.

So, what else we're still able to do a very basic direct mail campaign in the mail merge, you know, via sir, madam, et cetera, you know, the industry was changing and the customers' needs were changing as well. So, we could see that that's really where it was going, particularly with a lot of you know, in our battleground, if you like the people that we were dealing with, and I guess it's something we put off because at the time, you know, you're looking at it and thinking, "Well, do we have the skillset for this?"

Where do we even start to put this sort of systems in place, you know? So, it was quite a daunting task for us coming from a design background but then all of a sudden, found ourselves, you know, as you – it's kind of traditional life of a printer, I guess with some in-house digital but I guess, the catalyst for it was a very big contract that we had for many, many years decided to tender out the contracts and one of their requirements was they must have an online store.

So, at that stage, we're sitting there, thinking, "Okay, you know, how are we going to go about doing this?" So, to cut a long story short, I reached out to a customer that I was doing a lot of work with at the time because I knew they had an XMPie in place, and I spoke to them and they immediately vouched for this software. Needless to say, we went for this work and this was to an account that I had for in excess of 10 years at this stage.

But unfortunately, we lost out on that contract, for the simple reason, even though our pitch was great and I promised them that I would get XMPie in place and we'll be up to speed, they were just more comfortable going with somebody who obviously had these solutions in place, it was tried and tested, et cetera. So, I lost a big part of our business and a very valuable client or a big chunk of that work simply because I didn't have this software in place.

And then, literally, within probably three to six months of losing that work, another customer of mine, again, you know, who made up a big part of our business was – had a similar request and they said, "Look, you know, we've got all of these work, it needs to be put on an online platform. You know, we're going to put this out to tender." At that stage, I thought, "Well look, we can't mess about."

"I need to really think about bringing this in-house regardless of whether I've got any kind of light work for it." Which is where my conversation with Phil started. I'm happy to say, obviously, Phil was very accommodating. We put XMPie in, an interesting, you know, for a small business like us as well to make that kind of investment into our business was a huge step and a massive gamble for us but we identified that this is a risk that we have to take.

It's not even a risk worth taking, it's something we had to do if we want to stay current, and you know, keep our customers onboard and indeed, grow the business. So, we actually made the decision having spoken to Phil and his team to put XMPie in place with no customers at the time. I thought, "You know what? Let's just get it in." I know that was going to give me a quick transfer in the contract.

And I'm pleased to say, we did tender, you know, we won that contract, and it's still a store, we have it in place now 10 years later, and you know, that story itself has got over 2,000 life items on at any one point. You know, without XMPie, that would never have happened.

**[0:10:38.7] DC:** Yeah, I mean, the proof point wasn't necessary that you can find new business at the time but it was certainly that you were going to lose current business if you didn't modernize in some way to you know, I call it "customer convenience" and that's what it's all about. Phil?

**[0:10:54.2] PG:** I wish there were more businesses like Thirst where it's so forward-thinking and prepared to take that risk because you know, often, people, they don't want to invest in this technology until they go the business to actually drive it but what Thirst has demonstrated is really all the things that myself, along with many other people in the industry have said for years, which is, you know, it's all about not focusing necessarily just on business to consumer work.

But focusing on the more lucrative business-to-business services and delivering very sticky services which, you know, Jay has been amazing at delivering, you know, testimony there being companies that have been with him for the whole duration that he's been using the software.

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**[0:11:35.7] DC:** Are you looking to elevate your game, take your bottom-line customer relationships, and events to the next level? Then, I want to work with you. I'm Deborah Corn, the Intergalactic Ambassador to the Printerverse. I engage with a vast, global audience of print and marketing professionals across all stages of their careers. They are seeking topical information and resources, new ways to serve their customers and connect with them, optimize processes for their communications and operations, and they need the products and services and partnership you offer to get to their next level.

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:12:36.9] DC:** It's interesting that you know, the position is that, you know, making an investment and I understand it costs money. I get that but that making the investment is the risk

and that not making the investment is not the risk, which is really what I think the problem is. If you want to fight over two cents a piece of print with somebody, enjoy yourself but if you want to make your business and your communications valuable for your customer, I don't see a risk, I don't see what the risk is there. I think the risk is the other way. Jay, would you agree with that?

**[0:13:13.9] JM:** I think you're 100% spot on. So yeah, absolutely. I mean, from my perspective as well, you know, I think maybe while moving our industry will agree, you know, we don't give it a second thought whether we upstate you know, our finishing line for example. We're upgrading that or we got grading our presses. This is something that we do without giving it a second thought, right?

You know, even now, you know, our digital presses coming to an end of life, so to speak, whatever that means but we're now at a stage where you know, we're going to swap that out and we'll happily spend an excess of a hundred thousand pounds just to put a machine in which essentially is going to do a similar job with a few more embellishments. So, this is something we've been announced that we do, without even thinking twice about it, right?

Whether it's our large format, our finishing, our guillotines, et cetera. I think there's some kind of acceptance that, "Okay, these things, we need to constantly keep upgrading our machines and investing in." But I think, in terms of you know, MIS or store fronts and things like that, it's something that we see as a nice to have, I think, as opposed to a must-have. Actually, I would disagree and I would say, it's a must-have.

I think the new press, the new guillotine, the new laminator with foils, they're nice to have actually, in my opinion, but I honestly believe, it's the front of the business, you know? Whatever it is your MIS, whatever it is your XMPie, or whatever software you should choose to put in-house, I think that's what you need to focus on because that's what essentially is going to give you your customer retention and also, your new business.

**[0:14:42.0] DC:** The right message at the right time to the right person doesn't happen on the press. The software enables that but to your point, that's what happens up front, and again, I understand that XMPie costs money. So, I'm not just pushing that to the side but there's cost

and then, there's worth you know? So, what does it cost versus what is it worth? Retaining one client for 20 years or 10 years is worth, you know, the cost of the product.

Let alone, you can go after new customers but I also try to explain to printers as somebody who is a print buyer in the advertising agencies for more than 25 years, people who bring new ideas or new ways that I can help my clients connect with their customers or connect with consumers or create engagement or create longevity or customer retention and loyalty in some manner, what is the risk if they don't do that in this day and age?

And I would also turn around and say, "Look at the things that you receive." And when you look at them and you say, "This has no value" because it's just dear occupant, and you're perpetuating that with your customers, then you're a part of that same system too, and I get it. I understand it costs money, I know that but I don't see how static prints really has a place in this world unless you're doing gigantic volumes anymore.

The marketing landscape has changed and I believe it's getting even smaller. More touch points, would you agree with that, Jay?

**[0:16:22.5] JM:** Absolutely. Yeah, I think it's all about the touch points and you know, that's right, and I mean, to put it into perspective, you know, once upon a time, you know I could argue all day long with my customers that actually, yes, I agree, you can go and get your jobs printed online with X, Y, and Z or the guy down the road, and my quality is going to be superior. I would always be able to vouch for that because you know, I have prided ourselves on having the best, whether it was a CTP life of presses or digital presses.

In reality is now, it's just become a commodity, right? And the technology has moved on and I think, you know, you got to be honest and say that everything is much of a muchness in terms of quality. I think the bar is very, very high now. So, what is that added service now that we can offer our customers? And this is my point about the print now becoming a byproduct. I don't want to belittle that at all, you know?

Our print production is still extremely busy to the point where I still have to outsource elements of work because sometimes, we have a bottleneck in our production but a lot of that bottleneck



is coming because of the automation we have at the frontend, which is causing all of these orders to come down the line, you know? So, that's a very real problem. So yeah, like I say, you know, having these systems I place is great.

And going back to the cost side of it, whether it is your MIS, whether it is XMPie, whatever it may be, once we've made the purchase, and this is what I will stress to anyone listening is that you've stunned them, then like anything else, you've got a software support fee that you pay, and that's it. So, you only purchase it once. So, in terms of XMPie as an example, we made that purchase 10 years ago.

And yes, there's a monthly cost that I pay for support, which is brilliant by the way but that's it. So, I pay for the software, that's mine, and there's no limit to the amount of stores. So, I refer to this one big store that I have, which you know, we get a lot of work from but it's actually probably number 13 or 14 stores in the background that just run themselves. You know, I maybe upload a new product to that once every few months at most.

You know, we can manage that very, very easily, and the work just comes, and as I say, it produces work for our production.

**[0:18:22.0] DC:** So, the cost was worth hundreds of thousands of dollars of business for you over the years.

**[0:18:27.5] JM:** Absolutely. I mean, in terms of XMPie, if I had to put a timeframe on it, I would say, once I landed this initial store, probably paid itself off easily within 12 months. It's funny because I'm always looking at the business and looking at numbers like most MDs do, and for example, with just the XMPie alone, and we've integrated it with our MIS system as well, we've got time to save us over a whole month, man hours just booking the jobs in.

So, when you look at it like that, it's astounding really, and the mind boggles when you actually work out the amount of kind of bottlenecks there were within the business before, and that has all been alleviated with just having this automation at the front.

**[0:19:08.9] PG:** The MIS that you refer to there, Jay. I mean, when you took on Store Flow then, nine years ago, it was a great way that you know, you enabled bringing more business in, you saw, you know, you saw the results of that but what it also identified was there was a bottleneck then in taking all of those orders and processing them at the backend. Even though we provide functionality there, you needed a way of being able to automate further.

And so, XMPie introduced Optimus with an MIS solution that was completely integrated into Store Flow. So, you were able to take orders online, have people place those orders but then, for them to be completely automated through to production, which also made even more benefits to Thirst.

**[0:19:52.0] JM:** Absolutely. I mean, sometimes you know, they say, “Be careful what you wish for.” And I think that was the case. So, we put XMPie in place and it was wonderful. All of a sudden, we’ve got this influx of orders, and yes, it’s brilliant. You’ve got the Free Flow card and it’s fully automated, all these coming in goes straight onto my press but then we’re at a stage that’s like, “Well, hang on a minute, you know, I need to get these all booked in.”

You know, I need to create my job dockets, et cetera, et cetera, all the way through to my accounts package. So yeah, so we’re looking around the market and we identified Optimus as being the one for our business. It was just the great MIS system, and yeah, absolutely, XMPie managed to integrate that with the APIs and they’re just talking to each other because what was happening is we’ve gotten in all these orders coming in via XMPie.

But then I’m happy to have to have someone just dedicated to just literally typing this into my – at the time, my other – which is a FileMaker Pro system that I built myself many moons ago, and someone just copying all of that information into that, and then in turn, once the job was done, obviously, we had to create the job docket, delivery nodes, then through to my accounts package for my accounts team to get the invoices sent out.

So, all of a sudden, you know, whilst it was great, we’re getting in this influx of orders, it was creating bottlenecks and pinch points down the line in the business. So, we took a long hard look, and very similar to the XMPie, so that’s why we need to sort of make this jump. So, we put

Optimus in place, and the guys were brilliant, the guys between Optimus and XMPie, I was just sat on the call with them, just overseeing what they were doing.

But between them, they got it all done. They made sure it ticked all the boxes and the requirements that we need to do some business. In terms of automation, anyone who is afraid of, you know, “Where do we even get started from?” The best way I can describe it now, you know, we’ll have an online order, which will go through the system, show it fruitfully, three block, or onto our hot folders, wherever it’s large format, digital, et cetera.

That goes straight through to MIS system, which produces a job docket, which gets printed out into production that then produces the delivery notes, all of the different requisitions, all the way through one click of a button to my accounts package, and an invoice is sent to my customers, and that’s fully reconciled with my accounts package as well. So, I think most people listening, they’ll – I would have just sort of skimmed for later, their pitch points and bottlenecks to their business, and I’ll be able to relate to it.

And the reality of it is their pinch points, areas of the business, which let’s be honest, is not really making you money. You’re not working on the business. These are just the admin part of the job. Now we’ve got that fully automated, it’s great, and like I say, we now got a problem where you know, it’s – I wouldn’t say it’s a problem but it’s more of a challenge with the production.

You know, I’m now outsourcing work because we’ve got that level of work coming in now but that’s not a problem because obviously, we can take care of it that way but yeah, that’s the way we’ve integrated the two, you know? It’s just been a godsend for us.

**[0:22:33.7] PG:** I made reference earlier, Jay, to how you’ve really done all of the things that I preach to people when I’m talking about what our software can do, and in particular, you’ve also been very successful in diversifying what you’ve been doing as well. Maybe if you could share a little bit about that.

**[0:22:50.3] JM:** Actually, yeah. I think, what I would say to a lot of people is that you’d normally look at the software and probably say to yourself, “Well, this is for the big boys.” You know, small

and SME like me, this is probably a, you know, not something that we can embrace or upsell or you know? But one thing I realized very quickly in putting this software in, all of a sudden, I was able to compete with the big boys at this industry because we are a small firm at the end of the day, you know?

In terms of, you know, our perimeters, our plant list, et cetera, just especially the number of staff, you know? Basically, it's not a level playing field to a certain point, however, once we've embraced this technology, all of a sudden, well actually, I can play with the big boys but not only can I play with them, I can actually be a lot more competitive because we are a lot leaner and like you say, you know, we're able now to go into our clients, and whereas, we'll may be looking after their print process before.

Now, we have these systems in place. You know, I can say to my customers, "Look, where are your pinch points, you know?" I can say, "You know, we're not just here to print your advertising campaigns or design them." Actually, you know, listen – I walk into customers and I might see some merchandise hanging around their factory floor and I'll say, "Well, why don't you give that to me? I can look after that in our factory, put it on the storefront, and then you can call it off."

"I can have inventory levels on there." So, all of a sudden, we're doing much more than just the print and the design service for these customers. We're looking after their, you know, their whole kind of infantry levels and really helping them and we're kind of putting the kind of MIS system in place for them if you like.

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**[0:24:17.4] DC:** Printspiration is streaming across the Printerverse on the Project Peacock Network, and our mission to provide education and resources for print customers, students, and printers around the world has never been more accessible. Watch what you want, when you want, where you want. It's free. Visit [ProjectPeacock.TV](https://ProjectPeacock.TV) to access original programming, and replays from our online events. Learn about the Peacock partners and companies featured in our shows. Join our mailing list to learn about new episode premieres, and series launches, and create a free account to make watchlists. Ready for your close-up? Get your Peacock show on

air by visiting [ProjectPeacock.TV](http://ProjectPeacock.TV) and request your partnership proposal today. Peacock long and prosper.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:25:09.2] DC:** You had customers that you could go back to and say, “Hey, well, these things we’re not doing with you, give us a shot or you know, let’s do an AB test with your creative, and see if something more personal or something different moves the needle with you.” And always so you can get them over to you know, really creating more valuable communications for their company at the end of the day.

I’m curious about the new business that you are going after. Is it that you have to explain to them about omnichannel campaigns or are they versed in it and my second part of that question is how are you educating the customers if they don’t know what an omnichannel campaign is and more importantly, how is your team selling them or do you ever print salesforce who’s also talking to people about doing creative or the creative’s pitching and saying, “By the way, we can also print for you” or are you just positioning it as a one-stop-shop with your teams together in those pitches, kind of like advertising agencies usually do?

**[0:26:19.9] JM:** These are all things that we all come across in everyday life, whether it’s a text message you’d leave someone out on mobile phones or if it’s an email that hits our inbox, and it’s just trying to educate. So, obviously, we deal with certain marketing teams that they know, and they will come to us and say, “Look, we’ve got this multi-check touchpoint campaign. Can you look after the personalities?”

“Actually, yes, we can, and here’s some case funds, et cetera.” But then you got other customers that we go into and we say, “Well, you know, this is what we can do for you.” And it’s not until you explain it to them in layman’s terms there are plenty of jobs. They’re like, “Well, of course, that happens.” Every time I go to my local supermarket, you know the following day I’ll get a text message, we have an offer to purchase that product.

You know, Big Brother is indeed watching us but it is actually breaking it down and saying, “Well, you know what? There’s no kind of wizardry going on in the background here really, this is all

quite straightforward stuff and these is things that we can help you with.” You know, we read your SMS, and to your point, yeah, I know a lot of customers don’t realize that we can do that. I’m not sure what where they think they’re going to get this service from.

And I think, this is where a lot of agencies and printers if you like, or design customers or companies do themselves a disservice by not shouting about what it is we do, and so we just don’t put ink on paper, you know? We’d been looking after the data for years and you know, we can beat an omnichannel campaign for you and this is what it consists of and this is what it could look like.

In terms of new business how we go about it, again, it depends on who we’re talking to but for the most part, you know, there’s a few case studies that I like to kind of shout about, which has been really, really good for us and I like to go in but I like to always work backwards. So, I will look at the customer and I’ll say, “Well, okay, what is it exactly, you know, they’re trying to achieve?” And it’s been as most of the time is making money, right?

So, I’ll be looking at their product and their businesses and say, “Well, let’s work backwards.” And then from there, we’ll try and dissect, “Well, what is the best campaign that I can put together for you?” Not necessarily from a design perspective. Obviously, that’s something that we do, it is our bread and butter but how can we make this work for the customer? Where are they going to get the best ROI?

You know, where are they going to get the best engagement? And then that’s how we start the conversation. So, it varies from client to client but I like to go away and then go back with client as the second sidestep, which is what I pride myself on, you know? But just to really try and understand their business and go back to them with a brief. That’s what I like to do really as a business to say, “Listen guys, I think you know, you got a wonderful business there.”

“I am not telling you how to run it but this is what I think we could help you with and this is what I would do if I was you and I’d love the opportunity to put that into practice for you.” And then obviously, the first couple of campaigns otherwise be happy to kind of work with them, do a discounted rate just to prove our worth.

**[0:28:58.0] PG:** What do I see Jay is just how trusting your customers are, the relationship that you've built, built with them, and the trust of the level that they're also even uploading their own data, their customer data automatically for you to produce with that complete end to end automation.

**[0:29:16.8] JM:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's funny, isn't it? Because when you first start dealing with any new customer or doing this work for the first time if any, leaving encumbered, you know, you get all manner of different NDAs to sign, et cetera, et cetera, and we are at a stage now of our customers where of course we have them all in place and with any supplies that we choose to use as well.

But now, it's much more of a case of, "You know what? You'll get it done. You know what you're doing, listen, guys, this is what we want to achieve, how are you going to do it for us?" And they just – you know, I think the best thing is you know our customers know we're a safe pair of hands. I think once you've done the first campaign and you've executed it and they realize it's not just sales folks, you know?

We've actually seen it and like I say you know, you have your, you know, you judged on your results on you, and when they can see that ROI and they can see that money in their coffers and that sort of people walking through their door, it answers itself, and I always say to my clients as well, "You know, we will be judged on the success of the campaign and you're going to tell me how successful this campaign is."

It's not me, you know I can go and shout about it as much as possible but you're going to be the first one to come back to me and say, "Well, actually, you know, no. It didn't work, this product didn't sell," or, "No, we didn't have anyone walk through the door." But I am pleased to say you know, all of our campaigns always hit the spot.

**[0:30:28.8] DC:** On your website, you highlight several case studies and you just said that you love sharing them. One that really stood out for me was MotorVillage and I'm wondering if you can take everybody through all of the touchpoints of that campaign and share any results that you're allowed to speak about to the Printerverse.

**[0:30:50.7] JM:** Absolutely. So, that's a really interesting one actually. So, again, much as I was saying before, that was a customer that historically we just produce a bit of printing collateral for them, you know, direct mail piece at best, we could be just this sir or madam, a very generic piece, which let's be honest, it's not going to really resonate with anyone and probably just end up in the recycling I'm afraid, it's a shame to say but that was just the way it was.

So, they came to us because this was just at the time of the pandemic where the new plates were coming out that autumn, so we're just coming out of that, and the thing is we're really, really suffering getting people into the showroom obviously after lockdown as you can imagine. So, they approached us and said, "Look, what can we do? Obviously, we've got this sort of run-of-the-mill direct mail that we do but you know, we need to get people back into the showrooms."

So, I sat down, I said, "Well, okay, clearly you must have some kind of database of anyone who's leased a car from you over the last few years or who has purchased?" Et cetera, et cetera, they said, "Yeah, absolutely, we've got all of that." I said, "Well, brilliant." So, it will be like the last time before, so let's start backwards. So, we want to get them in, so let's build a multi-touchpoint campaign for you.

So, rather than just sending out a generic flyer to read to post saying, "Come to our showroom" which let's be honest, no one is going to really engage with you know, people being cautious about going out and indeed as well, let's say that was to work and all of a sudden, you had an influx. Who's to say you're going to have the salespeople, enough salespeople at the time to look after me walking through that door, you know?

So, we need to make sure this is targeted, you know? We only get one shot at this. So, we went away and we came up with this campaign where we sent out an SMS because email, was almost dead, it wasn't working for them either too much at the time. So, we decided to send an SMS out and we put together a nice calendar app for them and we said, "Right, we got this for sales date in the office over this four or five-day period," which is the event we're going to run.

So, we built a calendar whereby we could send a text message out to anyone who had purchased a car, who we know it's probably time to upgrade their car or replace, their lease is



coming to an end. So, we were able to send a text message to say, “Click on the link, we’d love to invite you into our showroom for this event, and you can book an appointment with your preferred salesperson.”

And obviously, that was well, it gave them a little bit more kind of hope because you know, being the pandemic, people are very cautious. So, they could click on appointment marketing and what we did we followed out, we have a direct mail piece as well, which is specific to them. So, if we knew you know, that person purchased an SUV for example, then maybe we’re going to entice them with the new one.

So, we were able to really, you know, personalize that piece of print for them just to make it more engaging. So, it’s a multi-touchpoint campaign that we did for the first time for this customer and it was fantastic. In terms of you know what results they got, all I can say is that was the most successful event that they had in years, and bearing in mind, that was in between – in the middle of the pandemic really.

Just in between the two lockdowns we had I think speaks volumes and it was such a cost-effective and easy campaign to put together for them but one that we’d still do to this day and it just works.

**[0:34:00.0] DC:** It goes back to was the cost of that campaign worth selling ten cars or two cars or how many cars made it worth it for them let alone the fact that they had engagement whether somebody bought a car or not if they made a calendar appointment, they are still engaged in some manner and/or if they don’t opt out, you have the ability to keep communicating with them. So, there’s value everywhere there, right Jay?

**[0:34:29.3] JM:** Absolutely, and this is exactly what I’m saying, and again, going back to my earlier point, once you’ve made the – this sort of jump and you’ve purchased the software so to speak and you are versed in using it, actually putting these campaigns together are not expensive at all and that’s the thing, and again, it’s actually kind of the next thing, right? People listen to this will be thinking, “Well, that’s great.”

You know, I hear about this omni channel and touchpoints, and we hear all about all of these different marketing terms out thrown around but I'll put it in layman's terms, it really is just an SMS, an email, or a piece of print and it's something that we can all do and once you've done it once, it's actually very easy to put together. It doesn't say, it takes very little time, and it is very cost-effective.

**[0:35:06.9] PG:** You started earlier on Jay and I have known you for years and you said about the very early attempts of personalization, you know, just put in a name on and stuff but what you're describing on that campaign was not really personalization. I mean, included personalization but it was about relevancy and I think the thing and I am guilty of it as well is that we just forget that you know, that is actually very, very easy to achieve when everybody thinks of personalization is just to get somebody's name on something.

**[0:35:33.7] JM:** Yeah, absolutely. I think that that's just it. I mean, in the old days, you know you'd see a name literally up in the clouds, I think, "Wow, what's that kind of wizardry? It's great." But you're right, it has moved on a lot from that and it's you know, it's just basically – I mean, I've always said you're kind of only as good as your data but when a customer comes to me with their data, you know for us to put these campaigns together, for us, it is very, very straightforward.

It is very – you see, we've got it all at our fingertips now. It's so user-friendly, you know? And we can really make some real bespoke campaigns and execute them and get them out the door real quick as well, that's the other thing to say. So, getting back to what you were saying, in the very early days when we were doing the loyalty scheme for the casino group that I still do to this day, believe it or not, you know, that would take me the best part of the day or two just to cleanse the data and just to do what I needed to do in order to end up with this CSV file that I then had to painstakingly merge.

If I told you that process is now only probably under sort of 20 minutes using XMPie, and on 19 of them 20 minutes is me just double checking that the data is okay because we are dealing with monetary value so I can't allow it to go wrong or it's actually I could just chuck the CSV file, that's it, and it would just do it in minutes at that, you know? So, it really is, it's unbelievable, really.

[SPONSOR MESSAGE]

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[0:37:27.1] DC:** I would characterize the moment that you won with MotorVillage is when they called you and said, “Help us,” instead of, “Here’s an order for 5,000 postcards that we’re going to mail to our mailing list with some generic information about a car event.” And to your point, most people would have probably been like, “I’m not going to a car event right after the pandemic,” you know?

So, it was more – I want to say, calculated but not in a bad way. Strategic is a better – a better word for it but the fact that they came to you to collaborate and it’s a brand, you know it is a brand, that speaks volumes to the trust and authenticity that you have created with that customer. So, you’re not an order taker, you are actually a participant in what they’re going to do, making the best advice for them as far as the channels to use and the order that they’re used in and how to follow up with people.

And at the same time, you’re educating them and at the same time, you’re educating that customer as well. With that knowledge, it becomes more valuable to their company because they have more information about how they can do things moving forward and that brings me to the difference between loyal customers and sticky customers, and how XMPie is helping you create either, and how do you define them. There I am with my compound questions.

**[0:39:01.5] JM:** Well, do you know what? That’s another great question. So yeah, absolutely. Let’s be honest, you know, times are hard out there, they’ve been hard for quite some time for a

lot of people. So, I don't blame my customers for looking out online, it's a very competitive market that we're dealing with as with other sectors, right?

So, for me to have, let's say, a customer that maybe produced their quality brochure for years, they're now able to go out and get very competitive quotes, and it's hard for me to compete sometimes. So, customer loyalty, it's not necessarily a bad thing on the current spot, they've got to do what's right for them, right? So, if they can get it a lot cheaper and let's be honest, there's certain companies that I just not able to compete with, just because of their sheer purchasing power.

So, I think that sticky is a really good word. Well, having these systems in place has enabled us to do is build that relationship with that customer and have these stores in place, whereby, you know, it works well. Unless I go and do something really bad to mess that relationship up or really let this client down, why would they want to go anywhere else? And then for somebody else, and I'm not going to sort of get too complacent here because that could potentially happen but once you put these systems in place, I'm giving the customer a very difficult decision.

For them to go elsewhere, will be such an upheaval and it will be so cost and labor-intensive, and indeed, for any other client or customer to come or another supplier, I should say, to come and try and maybe take my clients, you know? Because it's been a lot of work. So, once these systems are built and they're put in place and they're working, you know, what we get from a lot of our customers is, "You know what? We're sticking with you because it's not worth the hassle we're changing."

And that could just be a simple portal where they order their business cards from, which I must say, we've got several of them where people order them from all over the world but it works, and then also the beauty of it is the production, as I said like I was saying before, the print becomes a byproduct. Well, we get them anyway by default because don't forget, everything that goes through these online systems, we're privy to.

It's a lot easier for the customer just to say, "Well, you know what? You might as well just take care of that, you know?" So, it compliments the production and it does create stickiness with the customer for sure.

**[0:41:05.3] PG:** What you said there, Jay, very much, you talk about stores and that's what they are, they're e-commerce portals but you know, it's kind of more about the surface that you're delivering. What you're describing is marketing portals. You're delivering that as a very sticky service for those people.

**[0:41:20.3] DC:** What he's describing is customer convenience. I don't know how many times I have to say this to people, think about your own world and what you will deal with and what you won't deal with, and do I really want to have one vendor that I'm getting a PDF from and then I have to source it, to print it somewhere, and then I have to supply my mailing list to this person. I mean, talk about losing control of your data in some ways.

I'm not trying to be scary or anything like that but I was a customer, you want everything in one place, and to Jay's excellent point, I'm going to be sticky to that process, and there is going to be – have to be something so horrific that happened for me to move that process, and I've done this before with digital asset management systems. Now, to Jay's point, that something catastrophic has to happen that all of a sudden everyone is like, "We can't work with this printer anymore, this marketing service provider anymore."

Or, the client is like, "We have our own person that we want to deal with and we want to move everything." And in all of their wisdom and you know, that becomes a ridiculous expense and most of the time, it doesn't work out for the agencies because now, that or the company is actually loyal to the client because they know them and they're not loyal to the agency, and Jay's shaking his head because we don't like that.

We want to be in control of the loyalty there. We want our printers loyal to the agency, not to the clients either because that really messes everything up. The last point I want to make about this is we always speak about workforce development in the printing industry but we never really address it on the customer side, and this is really workflow automation for them as well. Ten people can have access to that portal, versus one person.

Like I did in the advertising agency, that knowledge was in my head about the job. I mean, we had job jackets, but the last conversation I had with people wasn't documented somewhere. I mean, you know, there were emails, maybe you stuck in your job jacket but there was no formal

record of it and yes, we did use FileMaker Pro but it was for status reports. It wasn't for an, you know, billing, it wasn't for – and time management.

It wasn't anything for a creative process, and I just, you know, looking at the industry moving forward, if everybody is not focusing on customer convenience, I just don't see how people stay around. The last example I'm going to give is that my dry cleaning just ordered me that and this sounds – this might sound crazy, there's no more people in my dry cleaner. Oh, sorry, there is one person in the back, just in case there's a crisis with the machine, right?

I go in there, I put in my phone number, I stick my dry cleaning down the shoot, I get a text that they've received it. I go about my business, I get another text, it's ready, and it doesn't matter what time I want to go. Now, the door is wide open in the dry cleaner. I don't have to go there from you know, nine to five every day and you know, when you work, you can't always get to the dry cleaner.

Now, I get my text, I go pick it up whenever I want, you know, it comes like on a – like a, you know, the dry cleaner thing, it just comes to the portal. I pick it up, I stick in my credit card, and I'm out the door. That's dry cleaning, you know? That is where we're moving, and tools like XMPie are what is facilitating this for print businesses, for marketing businesses, for marketing communications companies, like Thirst Creative.

And I just want to thank you for sharing your story and what it has been worth to you to partner with XMPie. Everything you need to connect with Jay and Phil is in the show notes. I want to thank you, gentlemen, so much for your time. Thank you all for listening to this podcast. Until next time, everybody, print Long, XMPie-long, and prosper.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:45:42.9] DC:** Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through [printmediacentr.com](http://printmediacentr.com), we'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

[END]

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