



Transforming advertising and marketing production

“ Staying competitive in a dynamic marketplace is critical to most organizations. Partnering with Affinity Express has allowed [us] to capitalize on their scalable workforce to deliver reductions in turnaround times and ad production efficiencies. We believe outsourcing is a cost effective option provided the product/process fits an outsourced model and there is a strong partnership during implementation and execution. In the end, it's all about the customer and delivering an effective and accurate direct mail advertisement on time. ”

**Director of CS Planning and Development**

Case Study

## Marketing services company increases profits through Affinity Express ad production services

One of the leading media and marketing services companies in the U.S. needed a partner for marketing services ad production. The company uses direct marketing to reach consumers based on market dynamics and changing consumer media habits, reaching 100 million shoppers each week and nine out of ten U.S. households. Plus, the company supports 15,000 advertisers, offering a wide range of media and marketing services to clients.

### Challenges

In response to the economic downturn, the company decided to focus on reducing costs, increasing production efficiencies and pursuing the greatest growth and profit opportunities for the future. The company was committed to provide clients with innovative, value-oriented media.

Graphics production and account management functions within the company were decentralized across nine different locations, making for high overheads and process inefficiency. The company looked at available options for centralizing and decided to become one of the first companies in the direct marketing industry to implement outsourcing at this scale.

### There were several objectives behind the outsourcing initiative:

- Lower costs
- Reduce turn times
- Better handle seasonal fluctuations in volumes
- Centralize and streamline processes

### The Affinity Express Solution

After a thorough review of capabilities and operations, the company decided to contract with Affinity Express for marketing services ad production. The company selected Affinity Express because of its extensive expertise in offshore graphics production with high-volumes and tight turn times and proven results for respected category leaders in consumer products, retail and newspaper publishing.

Affinity Express handles ad design, including new builds, pickups with revisions, pre-flighting client-supplied files and page assembly for a specific client product, which is distributed to over 66 million households nationwide. Affinity Express has integrated its workflow with the client's systems. Completed designs are returned in one day and Affinity Express handles approximately 1,000 files per week.

In addition to offshore production, Affinity Express maintained staff at the client's location for several months to respond to quick-turn requests and traffic files to its operation in India. As a comfort level was developed and joint efforts at process improvements continued, Affinity Express was able to eliminate this onshore presence and provide additional savings to the client.

### Client Benefits

Affinity Express ad production services enabled the client to streamline operations from nine to four graphic services hubs. The discipline and processes that were developed to enable outsourcing of ad production



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to Affinity Express have influenced operations at the client's other graphics locations.

The company states that Affinity Express is meeting the desired cost savings and turn time goals. In addition, working in partnership with Affinity Express has resulted in the removal of cycle-time from the wrap graphic production process, allowing the sales organization more time to sell advertisers. Most importantly, the measure of success with outsourced ad production is when clients are not aware that ads are being produced offshore. The company believes the Affinity Express output is high-quality and seamless.

Affinity Express continues to fine-tune processes and work with the client to improve and develop workflows as both their needs and business changes. Employees from the Affinity Express India operation occasionally spend time at the client's office to review current business practices and learn

about any updates required based on the changing direct mail environment. There are also annual meetings to discuss strategic opportunities for growth and new products. Affinity Express is currently exploring the feasibility of electronically tagging the client's offline print for easier conversion to online vehicles.

### **Value delivered**

Affinity Express has delivered consistent cost savings, increased efficiency, compressed production and review cycles and reduced time to market. Beyond these measurable results, the partnership between Affinity Express and the client has continually evolved and strengthened; providing an excellent example of how the best outsourcing relationships work.

As a result of their profit-maximizing initiatives, the company's net earnings for the second quarter of 2009 more than doubled compared with the same period in 2008.

## **About Affinity Express**

Affinity Express is the leading onsite, onshore and offshore provider that is 100% dedicated to high-volume advertising and marketing production solutions. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Affinity Express maintains production centers in Pune, India and Manila, Philippines. Affinity Express delivers services 24 hours per day and six days per week, producing products in more than 30 software packages and multiple platforms. The company manages its unique creative process with a continuous improvement approach based on Lean Six Sigma, so that clients receive reliable output with fast turn times for their mission-critical digital files. The comprehensive, customized advertising and marketing production solutions of Affinity Express help clients lower production costs, generate higher profits and gain a competitive edge, without having to invest in establishing and maintaining these capabilities internally.



For more information, contact  
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