



Transforming advertising  
and marketing production

# Newspaper group saves costs and improves turn times through Affinity Express ad production services

The client is a large media company. It owns several of the country's major daily newspapers, apart from interests in cable networks, television and radio broadcasting, magazine and business publishing, Internet businesses, and real estate.

## Challenges

U.S. newspapers had already been facing numerous challenges, and the recent economic decline exacerbated the dire state of the industry. Total newspaper advertising revenue fell 16.6% in 2008. Classified advertising, which is under a lot of pressure from online ventures like Craigslist, fell almost 30%, and real estate classifieds fell 38%.

As a result of this decline in advertising revenues, compounded by readers turning to free news and entertainment on the Internet and the heavy debt burdens weighing down some major media companies, the U.S. newspaper industry is in the midst of a historic restructuring.

Previously, the company had disparate processes and tools across the enterprise with mostly internal design staff and some external suppliers for production services. The company wanted to significantly reduce the costs of ad production and streamline and centralize processes across the organization.

In response to the industry and internal challenges, the company took decisive action. Print and online ad production is a critical, revenue-generating function for newspapers, and the company decided to outsource the process in order to reduce costs and improve business efficiency.

## The Affinity Express Solution

The company selected Affinity Express in 2008 as a strategic partner to provide a comprehensive solution for advertising services.

There were several reasons why the company selected Affinity Express as a partner:

- **Flexible transaction-based ad production pricing:**  
The Affinity Express business model enables clients to switch from the traditional fixed costs to variable, wherein the company pays only for the ads produced, ensuring a guaranteed and quickly realized impact on the bottom line.
- **Design capacity and skills:**  
As the leading provider of outsourced advertising and marketing production, Affinity Express has the skills, experience and capabilities to deliver services in accordance with the client's expectations.
- **Minimized risk:**  
Affinity Express manages the delivery of ads to agreed-upon service levels covering creative quality and turn times.
- **Structured processes:**  
The Affinity Express structured delivery methodology, including configuration work books, training tools and user documentation, had proven results for approximately 100 newspaper properties in the year prior to contracting with the client.
- **Access to state-of-the-art technology:**  
Clients can use the Affinity Express Service Bureau (AESB), a Software as a Service (SaaS) technology, without any capital expenditures or maintenance costs. Clients also benefit from the ongoing enhancements to AESB.
- **Disaster recovery:**  
Affinity Express provides business continuity support for both technology (primary and disaster recovery data centers in the U.S.) and services (Philippines and India platforms).

## Client Benefits

The company uses Affinity Express services for print and interactive web ad production and marketing collateral for commercial clients. Affinity Express produces more than 100,000 ads annually for just two of the properties served.



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### **Some of the major benefits Affinity Express brings to the client are:**

- **Cost savings:**  
Affinity Express enabled the client achieve more than 50% reduction in production staff and more than 40% savings in the ad production process.
- **Quick turn times:**  
The bulk of ads are produced overnight, within 12 hours from input to output. The balance is typically completed during the same day for support of revisions and requests from sales people and advertisers. Affinity Express also provided significantly improved turn times on interactive ads.
- **Assured quality:**  
Workflow is engineered to support quality output with automated interfaces to order booking, preflight software for quality image and file validation, electronic proofing and approval tools to manage the sales process with advertisers.
- **Optimum utilization of in-house skills:**  
By outsourcing ad production to Affinity Express, the client gained the ability to focus internal staff on more critical projects.
- **Efficient processes and increased productivity:**  
All client properties use the same processes and workflow, job functions and measurements for performance. The centralized ad production workflow allows

shared production between all client properties, increasing both service levels and staff utilization.

- **Change management:**  
In addition to taking on ad production, Affinity Express has supported critical change management from sales through delivery and provided user training to lead the company into a common process for all users.
- **Relationships with advertisers:**  
The support provided by Affinity Express enabled the company to reinforce relationships with existing advertisers as well as add new ones for its websites.

### **Value delivered**

Affinity Express set up efficient processes and state-of-the art technology that enabled the company to reduce costs, reallocate staff to other critical projects and gain access to new technology and tools. Most importantly, the client is assured that products delivered by Affinity Express will meet the client's exacting standards and specifications.

Affinity Express also supplied the expertise required to rapidly refresh the client's technology and optimize ad production cycles. As a result of this relationship, the company has strengthened ties with its advertisers and also added new advertisers, all resulting in a transformation of operations for multiple newspaper properties.

## **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 Affinity Express at  
(847) 930-3205 or visit [www.affinityexpress.com](http://www.affinityexpress.com)**