Breaking Bottlenecks:

Using the Kodak WPA Process to Recognize Opportunity in Your Workflow

KODAK

Introduction

"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it."
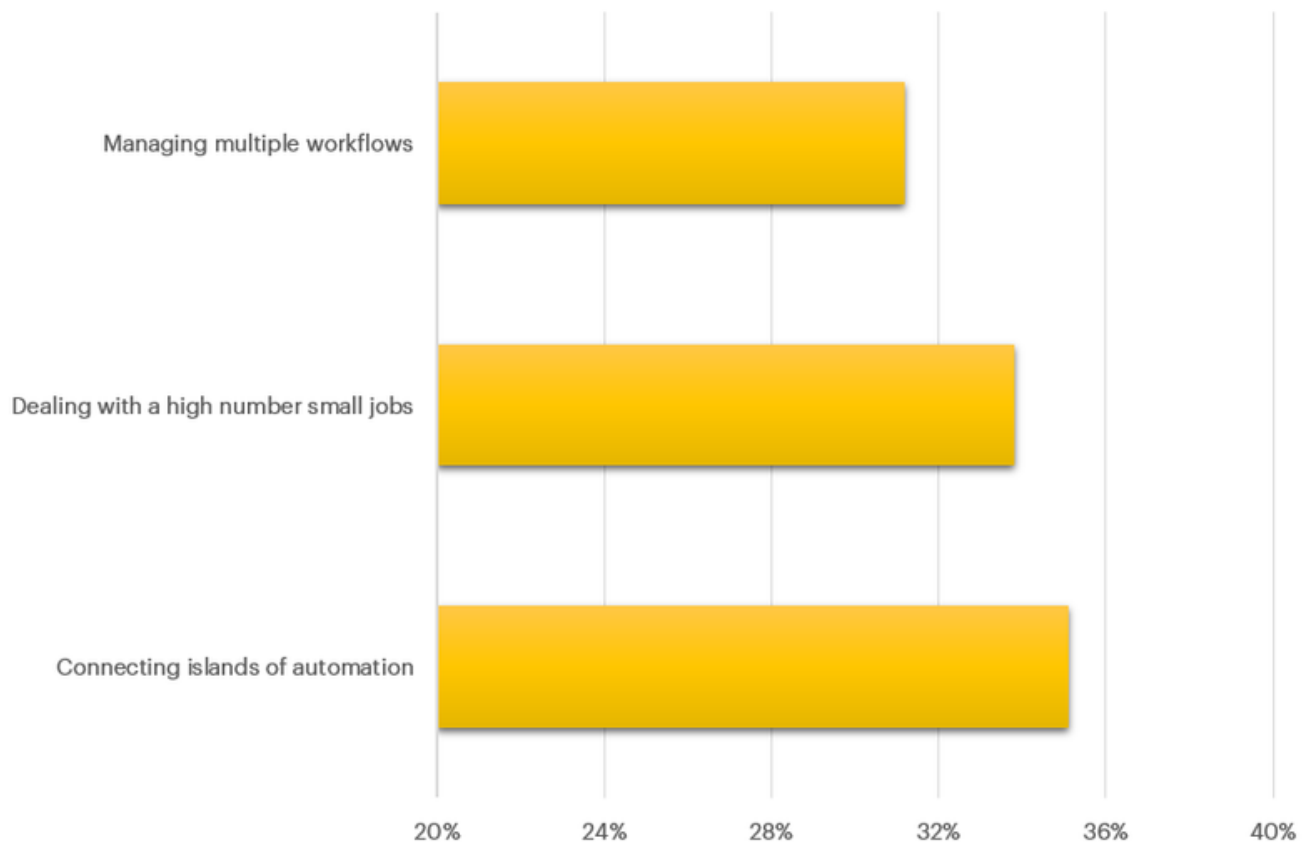**-Peter Drucker**

But what happens after this initial assessment is conducted? The need to improve efficiency of workflows increases as margins continue to shrink and customers demand more. When assessing bottlenecks, it's clear that print service providers (PSPs) need to pay attention to the entire workflow, from job submission to delivery. Using a workflow assessment, PSPs can look at where the bottlenecks and inefficiencies are occurring within their process, and use this data to improve. But what happens after this initial assessment is conducted?

This e-guide will discuss the importance of workflow assessments as a cycle, rather than a standalone process. Furthermore, it will demonstrate how the Kodak Workflow Process Assessment (WPA) achieves this and therefore serves as a differentiator for PSPs.
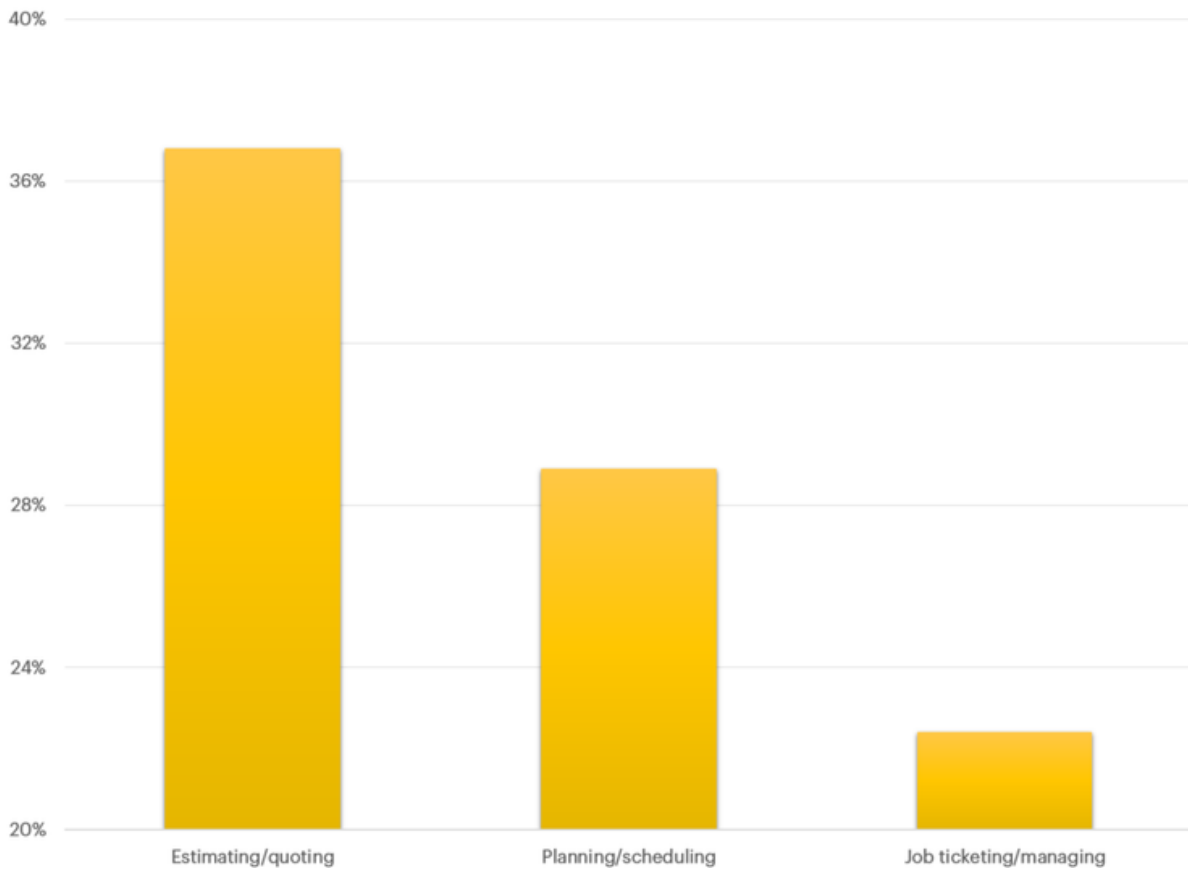
Crunching the Numbers

For print service providers (PSPs), where exactly do inefficiencies and bottlenecks lie? In 2016, InfoTrends asked PSPs to identify the biggest issues or inefficiencies with their workflows.

Among a list of 15 items, PSPs ranked the following as the top three inefficiencies:

PSPs were also asked what technical bottlenecks they faced and reported the following top three problem areas:

Looking at this information, the top three items all seem to relate to the front-office of the print production workflow. For many PSPs, this may come as a surprise. Shouldn't workflow inefficiencies normally occur during the print production process?

When looking at the state of their print business, many PSPs will focus on the print production process for areas of improvement – and they aren't wrong to do so. According to this same survey, 45.6% of all costs occur during the printing process. But there's more to the story here. In addition to the 45.6% of costs tied up in production and printing, 54.4% of all costs are tied up in the pre and post-production workflow, including the following:

- Internal creative
- External creative
- Editorial
- Product management
- Warehousing/archiving
- Fulfillment/shipping/distribution
- Inventory obsolescence

A key component of the pre-production workflow is business communication. To understand the true cost of business communications, an organization must examine every stage of the document lifecycle. Many still tend to focus on the final print "cost per page" for ink or toner on paper in assessing document production costs. The real cost of documents, however, includes time, resources, and money spent in document processing, including authoring, design, revision control, ordering, warehousing, distribution, and inventory obsolescence.

Focusing on 54% of total costs associated with the pre and post-production workflow can result in significant improvements in cost and efficiency . InfoTrends research shows that printing accounts for less than half of the total cost, depending on the type and complexity of the document as well as the length of the print run. For very large print runs, printing and fulfillment/distribution become the predominant costs. But smaller runs, and more specifically, on-demand digitally printed runs, tend to incur higher costs associated with the process that takes place before and after printing.

So how does a PSP begin to understand the inefficiencies of their own workflow? Moreover, where can PSPs find wasted time, materials, or productivity? The key to unlocking a more efficient and profitable print business is unearthing these inefficiencies; this is where there is opportunity for improvement and growth.

Recognizing Your Potential

Kodak recognized the importance of not only identifying and improving these inefficiencies experienced by customers, but of finding a process that continually measures the entirety of the workflow process – including before and after – to ensure continued improvement and success. This is where the Kodak Workflow Process Assessment (WPA) comes in. The WPA is Kodak's formal methodology for collecting, analyzing, and presenting assessment results to PSPs.

Through this process, Kodak provides PSPs with a measurable and continuous means of understanding their workflow process and furthermore unlocking its potential in the face of an ever-evolving marketplace.

The Kodak WPA process is broken down into three crucial components:

Discovery

During Discovery, Kodak's specialists conduct a one-day on-site workshop to review the PSP's current workflow. They observe all process steps, documents, users and delivery channels, including current technological capabilities. From there, specialists are better able to identify improvement priorities and what challenges are presented by current performance metrics.

Analysis

This two-to-three-week process continues offsite, where specialists continue to identify improvement opportunities. During this time, the current and proposed process workflow is identified, and the processes are integrated into workflow as well as a customer communications platform. Using this information, a solution demonstration is developed, to be presented and delivered to the PSP.

Delivery

After the analysis process is complete, Kodak returns to the PSP's production facilities and present a thorough demonstration of the current processes and challenges, and a proposed solution. This solution is aimed to line up with the objectives of the PSP and will include implementation recommendations and guidance for continued success.

A Continual Cycle

It is important to understand that the Kodak WPA is not an audit. Traditionally speaking, audits occur as an isolated assessment, that offers temporary solutions to a PSP's inefficiencies and technical bottleneck issues. Instead, the Workflow Production Assessment is a cyclical process that continues to work after the initial assessment is complete. By tracking results of the proposed solution, PSPs can use the results to troubleshoot and assess whether these solutions are helping them meet their goals. From there, they can adjust their workflow to cut costs and increase efficiency.

Kodak WPA in Action: A Case Study

A commercial printer with four sheetfed presses, one half-web press, two offset presses and a Kodak NexPress 2500 Digital Production Color Press. The company has annual revenue of approximately $16M and 120 employees.

Implementations Based on Analysis
• Automatic job archiving
• Automatic RIPing and proofing through KODAK INSITE Prepress Portal Software
• Automatic imposition of PDF files
• Automatic virtual proof (VPS) creation

Results
• Spoilage reduced on press with potential savings of over $50,000 per year
• 20 labor hours per week saved through auto archiving, equating to approximately $27,500 per year
• Five operators produce approximately 600 plates per week while also running the digital press, surpassing the operation capacity of typical commercial printers of this size who have 10 to 14 operators in prepress
• Printer posts just under 0.3 LH/P with KODAK PRINERGY Workflow software, compared with the 0.7-0.9 LH/P posts of most commercial printers
• Job cycle time reduced from 3-4 days to just hours while achieving a higher level of service and quality by using Prinergy Workflow software and Insite Prepress Portal software.

Conclusion

As the print industry continues to evolve, PSPs must adapt their workflow processes to the times. Success comes from having a thorough knowledge and understanding of their workflow, recognizing touch points and the bottlenecks associated with each. If these bottlenecks are not easily identifiable, an assessment is necessary. Once a print business identifies the ways in which their workflow process is siloed, inefficient or otherwise hindered, PSPs must invest in comprehensive, all-encompassing tools that allow their workflow to function seamlessly and intuitively, from job processing to completion. With the PRINERGY software platform, Kodak continues to evolve its solutions to meet the needs of the shifting market conditions, giving their customers tools, data and resources that allow for continued success and growth.

Summary: The Keys to Success

• Understand Current Workflow
• Establish Metrics for Success
• Make educated, data-driven decisions
• Adjust Workflow Process
• Track results of your refinements
• Quickly and accurately trouble shoot problems
• Continue to adjust Workflow Process

To learn more about how Kodak can help improve the efficiency of your print business visit www.kodak.com/prinergy