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**Advancing Print Procurement: New Approach**  
*Print buying must change as the print industry changes*

*by William Gindlesperger, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, e-LYNXX Corporation*

Some say print is going the way of the typewriter. Given the meteoric rise of electronic communications and the tools available for sending and receiving text and graphics, they are to a certain extent correct. Print, as we know it, has forever changed thanks to the Internet, social media and e-book devices such as Apple's iPad and Amazon's Kindle. And, this is just the beginning of a new era of mass communication that is changing how we access information. It's a cultural change as much as a technological change.

Of course, saying print is disappearing as an industry is an overstatement. Print, however, is changing... and changing dramatically. Printers are struggling. Predictions are about 9,500 printers in the United States will disappear by 2020. That would leave about 27,000 printers down from a high just a few years ago of 36,500. These are Printing Industry of America (PIA) numbers.

The ranks of print buyers also are thinning. There are about 23,000 corporate print buyers today and several times that number of buyers that purchase \$5,000 or less a year of print -- direct mail, commercial print, marketing materials, documents, labels, customized packaging, CD ROMs, premiums, logo apparel or anything that requires the reproduction of an image on a substrate (paper, plastic, textiles, magnetic media, etc.)

While there are fewer printers and fewer print buyers, according to Gartner Research, print procurement continues to grow as an outsourced business process within corporate America. New procurement methods and technology are why. Companies with robust procurement technology and large databases of granular market and supplier information are well positioned to bring efficiencies and cost savings to print supply chains according to Gartner.

This observation reflects the changing needs of an industry that is modernizing and becoming more sophisticated. Gone are the days when the buyer could just depend on a few printers from which bids could be requested in hopes that one would be reasonable. Many of those printers are no longer in business. It is incumbent upon the buyer today to use the latest in procurement advances to broaden its supplier base and strengthen its process for procuring print.

New procurement methodology makes it possible to match print buyers with printers of their choosing anywhere in the United States. Instantaneously. This is done automatically on a job-by-job basis. Because each of the printers in the buyer's database is thoroughly vetted, the buyer knows that regardless of any other factors the printer will deliver quality products on time. The buyer also knows that suppliers in its database will be the same dependable group considered for all of its work, and that the computer will only invite bids from suppliers capable of doing a particular type of job.

Because printers are anxious for work, the new process encourages low bidding to fill downtime -- typically times that printers hold in reserve for key customers to run unscheduled projects. With 30% of their production capacity free at any given time (national average), printers welcome the opportunity for work that will fill work-load gaps. Lowering pricing to fill production schedules is a common practice in the industry, and one that makes sense. Doing work for a lower fee is better than not having any work at all. Staff and equipment are not idled. Used as a strategy consistently, this approach can increase a printer's bottom line annual profitability by about 10%.

By using a system that identifies low bids from qualified suppliers, the print buyer benefits by reducing its cost for procured print by 25% to 50%. That is just one benefit. The system also improves efficiencies, controls, reporting and communications without e-mails. Full transparency occurs because every detail of the process, from start to finish, is displayed and then captured on the web-based communications and workflow system. It becomes a valuable archival reference for future projects.

This new approach is doing for print buyers and printers what the iPad and Kindle are doing for publishers and consumers. It uses advances in technology and methodology to give print buyers instantaneous choices, greater options, more predictable results, enhanced quality, clearer communications and better use of resources. It provides the printer with a dependable source for winning work through a fair competitive bidding format.

It is this approach that will strengthen the print industry... helping it to not only survive, but thrive.

**About the Author**

William Gindlesperger is a nationally recognized entrepreneur, inventor, author and consultant in print and procurement. He founded ABC Advisors and its successor, e-LYNXX Corporation, in 1975. Under Mr. Gindlesperger's leadership the firm has grown to become North America's procurement authority. Print buyers and suppliers alike have benefited from his insight and innovation.



Mr. Gindlesperger has directed major in-plant studies in both the private and public sectors and is highly regarded for his knowledge, advice and work on behalf of firms in matters pertaining to the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). He has testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration regarding government print and procurement policy. He also has worked directly with numerous Congressional and Senatorial members and staff and has advised Congress on the development, operations and future of GPO print procurement and the federal print program in general.

He was a founder and chairman of Printing Industries of America's (PIA) PrintPAC (political action committee) and has been recognized for his contributions to PIA and services to the printing industry. He was inducted into PIA's Ben Franklin Honor Society of print industry leaders in 2009 for his lifetime contributions to the print industry. *Supply & Demand Chain Executive* honored Mr. Gindlesperger by including him in its 2010 listing of the most influential leaders in the supply and procurement profession.

Mr. Gindlesperger invented the methodology that optimizes cost reduction in the procurement of specification-defined goods and services. He has been granted two separate business method patents by the U.S. Patent Office, first for the competitive procurement of print and then for the competitive procurement of all customized and specification-defined goods and services.

Under Mr. Gindlesperger's leadership, e-LYNXX has grown into the leading print management and procurement licensing firm in North America. e-LYNXX has been exclusively endorsed by Printing Industries of America (PIA) and has been named one of the top 100 procurement firms in North America by *Supply & Demand Chain Executive* magazine.

His firm handles more than 200 on-going consulting assignments at any given time. Among its contracts is one with Educational & Institutional Cooperative Purchasing to assist colleges, universities and other institutions nationwide with procurement and print-spend management.

A native of Chambersburg, Pa., Mr. Gindlesperger is a graduate of Dickinson College.

**About e-LYNXX Corporation**

e-LYNXX Corporation, the North American procurement authority, is exclusively endorsed by *Printing Industries of America (PIA)* and *Educational and Institutional Cooperative Purchasing (E&I)* and recognized as a top 100 procurement firm by *Supply & Demand Chain Executive*. Founded in 1975, e-LYNXX has three divisions. • American Print Management provides enterprise print procurement solutions and patented competitive methods to reduce costs for direct mail, marketing materials, packaging and other procured print. Results include enhanced quality and service levels, efficiencies, process control, transparency and procured print cost reduction of 25% to 50%. • Patented Procurement Method grants patent licenses for supply chain optimization. Results include substantial reduction in existing costs of competitively procured goods and services. • Government Print Management offers U.S. GPO bid services, access and assistance. Results include filled downtime, operational stability, improved cash flows and increased profitability. [www.e-LYNXX.com](http://www.e-LYNXX.com) – 888-876-5432

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