

Technology Corner:

Can a Digital Storefront Save You Time & Money?

by Peggy Gordon

I received a call the other day from someone who was really jazzed about the idea of putting their marketing pieces up on a digital storefront. They had a beautiful vision of their sales reps going online to order their own collateral—personalized with their unique contact info—without anyone in Marketing having to lift a finger.

But wait—this company had only **two** collateral pieces. Would a storefront even make sense for them? Or would setting one up be “more trouble than it was worth?”

It depends.

In this case, the company had over 150 sales reps (lots of users), spread out across the country (lots of locations).

Those two little pieces added up to hundreds of small, custom orders a year that someone had to manage. Two simple templates on an automated online ordering site (a digital storefront) could relieve a whole lot of pain. And so we began talking about a storefront in earnest.

The bottom-line benefits of a digital storefront are significant **when it fits the way your company distributes its marketing materials:**

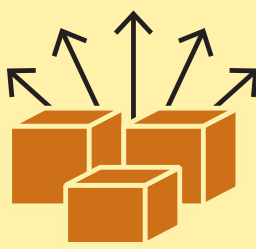
- Dramatic office labor savings
- 24/7 access & super-easy reordering
- Automatic order tracking
- Automatic low-inventory email notifications
- Built-in, sophisticated usage reporting
- Reduced warehousing/inventory costs via print-on-demand
- Templates for customization & personalization
- More efficient proofing cycle via soft proofs
- Lowered procurement costs
- Fewer errors in job submissions

How do you know if a digital storefront is a fit for your company?

If you can answer “Yes” to at least one of the following questions, then your company should explore setting up a digital storefront of marketing assets:

1. Does your company have numerous print pieces that ship to a many different locations?

Managing multiple collateral pieces—particularly when there are only subtle differences between them—and keeping up with delivery details for a large number of locations demands a solid system of organization. Digital storefronts store your shipping details in the same system that holds the artwork and order histories associated with every piece on your storefront. They also provide thumbnails, form numbers, and job descriptions for all items, which are organized into meaningful categories. This saves time.



2. Does your company have numerous pieces that are exact reprints?

If you have marketing pieces that you reorder on a regular basis that are stable, that is, not frequently updated, then putting them on a storefront for associates to request makes good sense. If the usage is high, you can offset print and store them at EBSCO Media, allowing users to order fulfillment through the site. If the usage is low, then you can print digitally on an as-needed basis to avoid waste due to obsolescence.



3. Does your company have pieces that get customized for many different users?

Templates are a great solution for companies with a big need for customization and personalization. Business cards, sales sheets, event invitations, and direct mailers are classic examples of marketing pieces that have the same basic design for all users, with minor—but crucial—differences in content such as name, address, phone, email address. Even photos and logos can be changed within a template to match the requirements of the user. Marketing controls the branding while users serve themselves.



4. Would a self-serve storefront speed up ordering?

Storefronts are accessed through single sign-on, so access is secure and can be granted directly from your company’s intranet. Once a user is logged in, the system can pull from the user’s profile information to populate templates, access address books, track orders, and review order histories for tremendous time savings and a big boost to accuracy.



Every digital storefront is built to suit because every company has unique marketing needs. But the goal for all is to increase efficiency and reduce costs. If you think a digital storefront might benefit your company, then I encourage you to request a demo as a next step. We’ll walk you through live sites, answer your questions, ask some questions of our own, and give you an honest assessment.

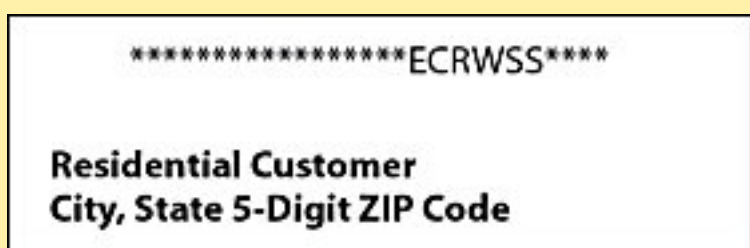
[Click here](#) to request a Digital Storefront Demo.

Direct Mail Savings:

USPS Introduces Simplified Addressing

Small businesses and saturation mailers take note—the Postal Service has some news that will cut your costs and make mailing easier. Effective Jan. 2nd, the Postal Service has extended their simplified addressing option to include flat-size mail pieces and irregular parcels.

Simplified Addressing allows you to mail to a generic recipient without a complete delivery address. Typically this looks like:



Simplified Addressing eliminates the need for mailers to maintain an updated database of delivery-sequenced addresses because you are mailing to all active addresses on a carrier route. You don’t need to purchase a list or pay to sort one. This is particularly helpful for local businesses and national retailers having a local nexus.

The key is that the mailer must supply enough pieces to provide complete distribution to each active delivery (residential and/or business). EBSCO Media can help you determine the delivery statistics for your mailing to specific zip codes and carrier routes.

Contact your EM sales rep for help planning a Simplified Address mailing.

[Click here](#) for more info on Simplified Addressing from the USPS.

Tell Us Your Story & Enter to Win

Have you had a really good experience with EBSCO Media? Did we meet an impossible deadline or solve a tough design challenge? Did your sales or customer service rep go the extra mile? If so, we’d love to hear about it!

What do you think we do best? Share your story with us and you’ll automatically be entered to win a groovy new iPod Touch. We’ll announce the winner in the next issue of *EMideas* and share some of our favorite feedback.

To share your story [click here](#) or email Peggy Gordon at pgordon@ebSCO.com.



Tell us what we do best for a chance to win an iPod Touch. Scroll down for more details!

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