



## **DO YOU CARE ENOUGH ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT?**

7 bottom-line benefits to assessing your print and digital communications program (and the 17 tough questions that come first)

# INTRODUCTION

Marketing execution.

Print management.

Channel management.

Supply chain management.

Inside every facet of communications are inefficiencies that can increase costs, slow responsiveness, dilute your brand and drive down profitability. With today's demand for greater personalization and relevance across multiple channels, these challenges can become overwhelming.

## **Countering these challenges requires some introspection.**

Setting aside time to comb through just how communications are managed will often lead to some eye-opening issues. The kind of issues you may have been missing all along. They're also the kind of issues that can negatively affect speed, brand language and the bottom line if they go untouched.





# THERE'S A PAY-OFF TO PLACING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT UNDER A MICROSCOPE

Assessing a brand's communications ecosystem doesn't have to become a convoluted process. Generally, it contains three components:



Assessing the current state



Conducting a gap analysis



Identifying options to drive results

But is it worth the trouble?

**Short answer: Yes**

**Long answer: Keep reading, because here's what can happen when you make this a priority...**

# DRIVE DOWN COSTS

Driving down costs is important — that's a given. Where things get tricky is identifying just where and how to do it. Then you have to build a plan to execute against.

The reality is most organizations have strategic plans in place to control or reduce costs. However, the reach of those plans rarely extend far enough to include the management of their print and digital communications.

Achieving goals in earnest becomes much more realistic when you've captured current program costs, performed a gap analysis, prioritized recommendations, and developed an internal business case and roadmap.

**Try this:** Determine how you fare against industry best practices and what savings are possible.

## Questions to ask:

- What are the major areas impacting cost across the marketing execution supply chain?
- Do I have the expertise, resources and time to analyze and execute an in-depth cost improvement plan?
- Do I have the proper controls and visibility into my corporate-wide spend in this category?





## SPEED-TO-MARKET

Manual processes, lack of transparency, resource constraints, and decentralization can put a chokehold on efficiency and time to market. Within your print and communications programs, it's essential to automate workflows, deploy technology, and centralize your program data. This will grant you improved visibility, ultimately allowing you to react faster to changing business conditions.

The name of the game here is increasing productivity and accuracy with less resources and time. It can be done. It should be done.

**Try this:** Evaluate the impediments within your operational workflows that add risk, time or cost. By putting a lens on this, operational efficiency and streamlined workflows expedite time to market.

### Questions to ask:

- What are the impediments or challenges that create bottlenecks or slow processes within my print and communications supply chain?
- Are there visible manual processes that could be automated within my environment?
- Do I have resource constraints that hinder results?

# IMPROVE BRAND CONTROL

We learned this lesson long ago: You only get one chance to make a good first impression. Your brand is a representation of the company, the people, the quality and the ethics of the organization.

When sloppy design, wrong colors, old logos, and poor photos are used to communicate to your customers, prospects and investors, it can have disastrous effects. Effects that keep CMOs and brand managers up at night.

**Try this:** It's time to run a tighter ship and manage your brand with proper controls, guidelines and processes. By centralizing content, wrapping controls around it and developing processes that drive consistency across your platform regardless of product type or communication channel, risk is mitigated.

## Questions to ask:

- Where is all of my content located – and how accessible is it?
- What controls do we have in place to protect against inconsistencies?
- Am I resourced appropriately to manage my brand effectively?





# INCREASE ROI

Investing in your business to drive productivity gains, increase revenue and drive down costs is necessary to thrive. Maximizing those gains with the highest returns is key to success. Identifying the right investments in people, process and technology will lower costs, increase productivity and drive ROI for your organization.

**Try this:** Successful organizations are looking to automate workflows, outsource non-core functions, digitize where possible and seek alternatives to the status quo.

## Questions to ask:

- Where can technology help drive efficiencies within my environment?
- Do we have the internal means to identify and measure ROI?

# ACCELERATE DIGITAL MIGRATION

Digitization of manual processes and hard assets drives efficiencies and improves client responsiveness. Automation of manual workflows will lower the carrying costs and risk of managing and distributing traditional print communications. This will also enable your brand to communicate in alternate channels that match a customer's preferred method (e.g., email, mobile, social, direct mail or print).

**Try this:** From where we stand, investments in the digital experience yield improved customer acquisition costs and new channels that are better supported. Effective organizations are utilizing technology to migrate offline processes, aggregate and organize content and deliver their message with more efficiency through digitization.

## Questions to ask:

- Am I utilizing technology as effectively as I can?
- What costs are contributed to offline production, management and delivery of content?
- Am I communicating with my customers in a manner of their preference?







# OPTIMIZE THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Many organizations rely on traditional procurement processes like formal RFPs and bid requests of pre-defined specifications. While this practice is not wrong and can yield some important benefits, there are greater savings and benefits to be gained by understanding all of the cost drivers and workflows across the supply chain.

We understand that only 15% of program costs are derived from product, while 85% of costs are tied up in managing the program supply chain from creative design, procurement, supplier management, and warehousing through delivery (e.g., freight, postage, and obsolescence). Designing a process that allows your organization to capture, categorize and rationalize communication supply chain costs is paramount.

**Try this:** In order to reduce total program costs beyond the price of print, it's important to go beyond traditional RFP processes. It's also important to know that hiring outside consultants can be a costly endeavor, especially when you consider they aren't responsible for the actual execution of ideas.

## Questions to ask:

- Do I understand all the cost inputs within my print communications supply chain?
- Do we have the expertise, time and resources to impact these costs?
- Do I have too many suppliers servicing the same categories?

# INCREASE VISIBILITY TO SPEND

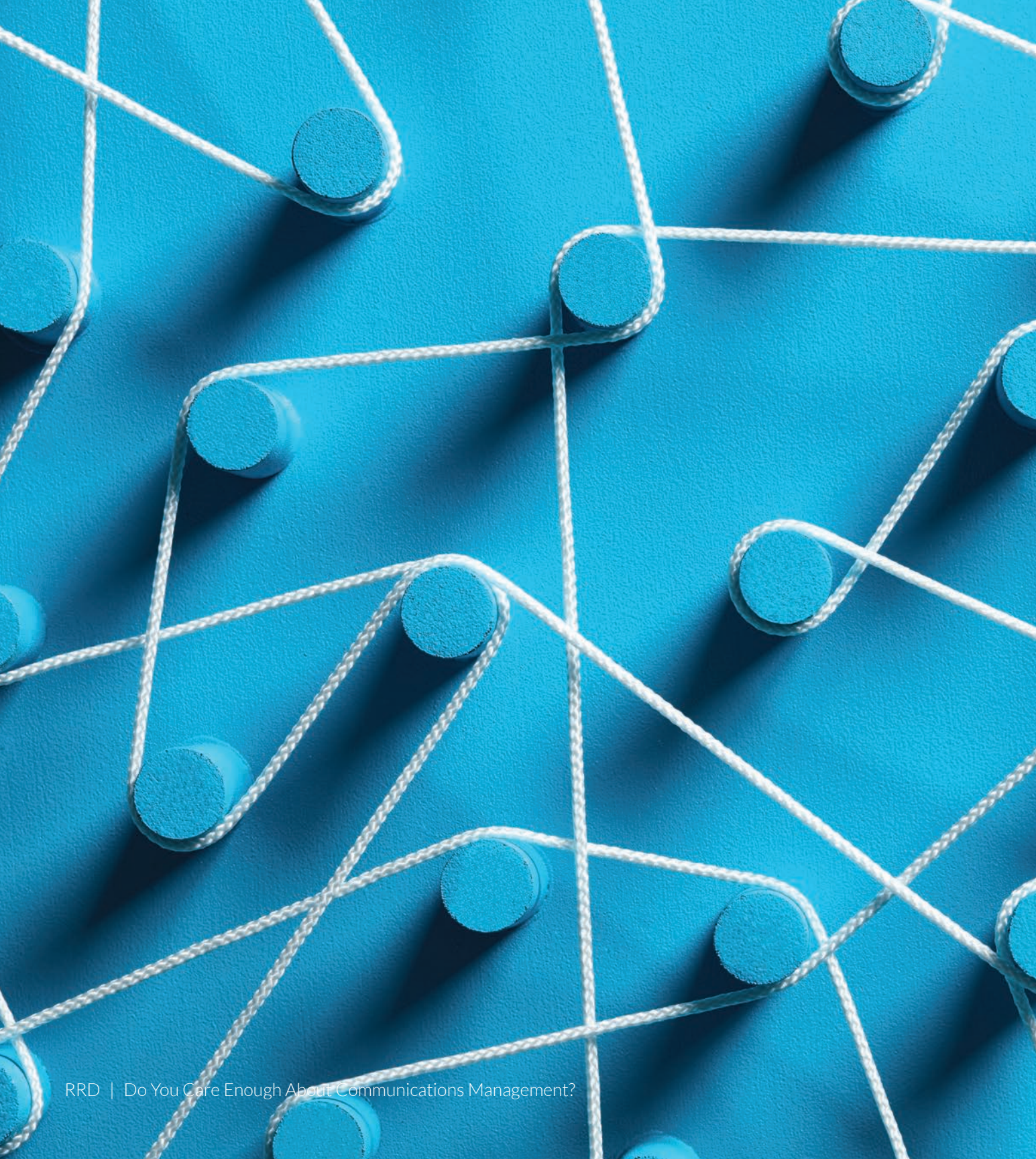
Today, complex print and communications supply chains, decentralized procurement models, and large supplier pools can limit visibility into category spends and program costs. Organizations cannot take action without transparency into true costs.

**Try this:** Unfortunately, general ledgers do not provide the level of insight and granularity required to truly understand total costs. Only with a grass roots assessment can organizations gather the necessary information to capture, categorize and rationalize those supply chain costs.

## Questions to ask:

- Do I have a full understanding my print communications' category spend?
- Does the organization have a defined plan to manage and reduce those costs?
- Does the organization have the right tools in place to monitor cost reduction achievements?





## IN THE END

**What happens when you take the time to ask these tough questions, yet the answers remain elusive?**

After all, trying to put a dollar amount on your brand's print and digital communications is no small feat. Your ledger says one thing. Your roster of suppliers might say another.

**Can you confidently get a grip on what's right?**

A comprehensive assessment of your communications supply chain is a proven approach for lowering your total cost of ownership. It also happens to help ignite improved quality, brand consistency, and accelerated cycle-times.

# WE'VE COVERED A LOT. ACHIEVE IT ALL.

At RRD, the Strategy and Consulting team asks the right questions, reviews the right data and delivers the right solutions. These experienced consultants deliver detailed feedback and recommendations through two levels of collaborative assessment:



**Level 1.** A fast, standardized assessment of best practices and quick hits.



**Level 2.** A customized, in-depth assessment designed exclusively for your needs.

It's time to drive efficiency and effectiveness through a broader, deeper analysis of your communications supply chain. **Put best-in-class communications management techniques to work for you.**

Learn how: [rrd.com/comms-mgmt](https://rrd.com/comms-mgmt)

