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Monthly Print Market Update

February, 2026

Office DEPOT

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Renewed Production Print Focus - Xerox is signaling it wants back into the in-plant conversation after what looked, for a time, like a retreat from the graphic arts. At a four-day event in the UK this week called "The Future of Xerox Production Print – Accelerating the Pace," executives described a deliberate, "very intentional" push to win back respect, backed by a new global production and services division, according to Printweek. The message was unmistakable: Xerox wants customers to view it as a serious, long-term production player, not a legacy vendor.

I guess we can call this the turn from Production retreat to getting back where Xerox's strength has always been!

Xerox Raises $450M for New Joint Venture - Xerox Holdings Corporation (NASDAQ: XRX) ("Xerox" or the "Company") announced the formation and capitalization of a new joint venture (the "Joint Venture") between Xerox and TPG, a leading global alternative asset management firm. The Joint Venture is structured as an intellectual property holding and licensing entity designed to manage, protect, and monetize certain Xerox IP assets.

The Joint Venture has raised $450 million in aggregate principal amount of financing led by TPG's credit business, TPG Credit, with participation from other investors, consisting of senior secured term loans and preferred equity (the "Joint Venture Financing"). The proceeds of the Joint Venture Financing were distributed to Xerox and are expected to be used for general corporate purposes, including augmenting liquidity, accelerating the Company's Reinvention (including the Lexmark integration), and opportunistically addressing the Company's capital structure over time, which may include the redemption or repayment of debt.

I see this as important back office and balance sheet positioning.

Graphic Arts Employment Off to a Rough Start in 2026 - January 2026 saw printing industry employment decline 2.7% from December, with production employment down 1.8% and non-production employment down by 0.9%.

This is not completely gloom and doom, or unexpected. It's not uncommon to see a fall off from the very busy holiday season.

Quad Reports Fourth Quarter and Full-Year 2025 Results - Realized Net Sales of $2.4 billion in 2025 compared to $2.7 billion in 2024, representing a 9.4% decline in Net Sales, or a 4.8% decline in Net Sales when excluding the 4.6% impact of the divestiture of the Company's European operations, compared to 9.7% decline in 2024.

- Improved Net Earnings to $27 million or $0.54 Diluted Earnings Per Share in 2025 compared to Net Loss of $51 million or $1.07 Diluted Loss Per Share in 2024.
- Reported Adjusted EBITDA of $196 million in 2025 compared to $224 million in 2024.

Guidance for 2026 is not very optimistic, they are still very much in a transition phase from shuttering so much Circular and Newsprint business over the last couple years, as well as selling off the International Operations.

Inside the 2026 FASTSIGNS Convention - "2026 marked a year of exceptional growth with record sales exceeding $900M as we expanded to 790 locations in eight countries," said Jim Howe, president of FASTSIGNS International, Inc. "This convention honors our franchisees' achievements and serves as the catalyst for the next chapter of our network's success."

Highlights from this year's convention:

- 60 FASTSIGNS/SIGNWAVE centers exceeded $1 million in annual sales for the first time, including 32 centers achieving over $1 million, 11 centers achieving over $2 million, 6 centers achieving over $3 million, 6 centers achieving over $4 million, 3 centers achieving over $6 million, 1 center achieving over $30 million and 1 center achieving over $43 million.

Hmmmmm, I keep seeing industry pundits talking about how the Wide-format market is maturing, but don't tell that to these guys!

When AI Bots Start Bullying Humans, Even Silicon Valley Gets Rattled - OpenAI and rivals are leading a brutal commercial race to get their AI models to market. Dado Ruvic/Reuters

- An AI bot wrote a blog post attacking an engineer because he had rejected lines of code the bot had submitted to an open-source project.
- Some AI company staffers are expressing concerns about new tools, citing the risks they pose like autonomous cyberattacks, mass unemployment, and unhealthy attachments.

An artificial-intelligence tool created this summary, which was based on the text of the article and checked by an editor. Read more about how we use artificial intelligence in our journalism.

- An AI bot wrote a blog post attacking an engineer because he had rejected lines of code the bot had submitted to an open-source project.

The idea that AI will turn on it's creator is a reason to pause and think, but the biggest lesson to me is that anything that is unsupervised will always leave room for bad results. AI is a powerful tool, but powerful tools can create chaos, as well as value.

New Study Finds Convergence Across Print Segments is Delivering Revenue and Profits - Market segment migration, often referred to as convergence, has moved beyond an emerging trend to become a defining characteristic of today's print industry. Commercial printers, graphics providers, packaging and label producers, apparel decorators, promotional product suppliers, and in-plant operations are increasingly expanding into adjacent print segments to better meet customer demand and capture new growth opportunities.

For virtually all mid-size and above, this will simply be business as usual soon, not convergence.

Why Print Embellishments Drive Sales: It's the Same Psychology Retailers Have Been Using for Decades - Print embellishments work. Not just because they look nice, but because they trigger the same behavioral principles that have been driving retail sales for decades.

This is really an extension, or enhancement of what we already know about the tactile importance of Print already; this takes Print to an even higher awareness to the recipient.

'Own Your IP' Isn't a Slogan. It's a Survival Strategy for Print - The deer-in-the-headlights look, or the quiet smirk from IT that says, *"We've got this covered."*

That's exactly why this needs to be said louder. Print and packaging don't have an AI adoption problem. They have an ownership problem.

Every time a print organization uses AI without control — generic copilots, black-box features, vendor-trained models — you're not adopting intelligence.

The theme is excellent and it applies to many processes in a printing plant, not just AI, but she doesn't answer HOW to secure your IP from AI. Take the hint and start documenting and locking down all the IP that you're investing in everday.

The Target Report: Industry Transformation—December 2025 M&A Activity - Transformation Versus Convergence:

For much of the past decade, transformation has been framed as a destination: printers becoming packagers, converters becoming platforms, legacy printing businesses adding promotional products and other services to become one-stop shops. December 2025 suggested something more sobering and more demanding, as illustrated by two very different reciprocal strategic moves. Transformation, as illustrated by two transactions announced during the month, has become a continuous process, one that requires companies not only to enter new markets but to know when to turn sideways or exit them as well.

ProAmpac, the PE-backed, financially engineered consolidation vehicle focused initially solely on flexible packaging manufacturers, announced the acquisition of TC Transcontinental Packaging. This transaction does not merely shift ownership of assets; it marks a major inflection point not only in the corporate strategic arc of ProAmpac but also in that of the acquired division's corporate parent, TC Transcontinental.

Although this is primarily a packaging story, the strategy can be applied in Commercial print. TC was a rollup conglomeration of their own, but I think they were also "riding the wave" of the surge in the packaging business. They got large enough, and the sector cooled its' growth enough for them to consider if they wanted to focus on operational efficiencies, or grab the cash and redeploy it elsewhere. Remember one important thing about many PE firms, they are money managers at their core, not printers, and unemotional about what the assets they own do….as long as they perform.

Minuteman Press Launches Personalize it! Print-on-Demand – Minuteman Press International, the world's largest and #1 rated printing and marketing services franchise, announces the launch of *Personalize it!,* a new print-on-demand program that allows customers to create and order custom products with no minimums required. Customers can choose from over 450 available products and *Personalize it!* right from their screens.

"Creating custom products through Minuteman Press has never been more seamless," says Nick Titus, President, Minuteman Press International. "We are thrilled to give our customers and franchise owners innovative tools that make it easier than ever to design, order, and deliver high-quality printed products that help businesses grow."

This is certainly a competitive threat at the low-end of the business and includes Print, as well as customized SWAG.

Case Study: Strategically Building an AI-Powered Future - Artificial intelligence is reshaping how commercial printer providers get work done. But behind the headlines and hype, most printers are not pursuing radical transformation. Instead, AI is being applied in practical, often incremental ways as companies look to improve efficiency, reduce friction, and better support their people and processes. That real-world activity is documented in the Alliance Insights research study, *AI Adoption in the Printing Industry: From Curiosity to Competitive Advantage*, which combines an industry survey with in-depth executive interviews to capture how printers are actually using AI today and where they see it heading next.

This article, from a series of articles, outlines a conservative and careful approach with guidance and direction from the CEO, so ground rules were established and enforced. This Case Study exhibits what I consider to be a thoughtful and productive way to start and deploy AI.

Real Designers Talk AI in Print Embellishments - It's a bit like listening in to a private conversation. It's the Digital Embellishment Designer Meetups sponsored by Taktiful in which designers come together to learn both from the presenter and from each other. This past week, the topic was "From Tracing to Taste: How AI Is Changing Embellishment Design" with Matthew Redbear, creative consultant with Takiful and E3D director at Elite Print Finishing (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) with the goal "to break down real, practical ways AI can speed up embellishment design without sacrificing taste, intent, or production reality."

This article interesting as not much is reported on AI and B-to-B design. We mostly see things around consumers doing all kinds of crazy things….or worse! Anyway, this is useful to understand how creative minds are becoming more productive, not being replaced.

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In-plant Impressions – February 26

Renewed Production Print Focus

Xerox showcased next-generation presses at its Future of Xerox Production Print event in the UK.

By Bob Neubauer

Xerox is signaling it wants back into the in-plant conversation after what looked, for a time, like a retreat from the graphic arts. At a four-day event in the UK this week called "The Future of Xerox Production Print – Accelerating the Pace," executives described a deliberate, "very intentional" push to win back respect, backed by a new global production and services division, according to Printweek. The message was unmistakable: Xerox wants customers to view it as a serious, long-term production player, not a legacy vendor.

"Production print is a strategic pillar for Xerox, and we are investing boldly in high-speed inkjet, AI-driven workflow and digital embellishment to help our clients enter a new era of print," said Terry Antinora, president of Global Production Print Services at Xerox.

Xerox showcased next-generation presses at its Future of Xerox Production Print event in the UK. That stance matters to in-plants because Xerox's recent history has not left them confident. The company shuttered its Baltoro platform a few years ago and stepped away from inkjet manufacturing, moves that disappointed operations that had invested in Xerox. Layer on the exit from long-standing platforms such as iGen and Nuvera, and it's understandable why many in-plants became wary of betting future capacity on Xerox.

Related story: [Xerox Re-enters Inkjet Market With Launch of Cut-Sheet Press]

The Xerox IJP900 inkjet press was shown at the event.

Against that backdrop, Xerox's launch of the Xerox IJP900 Inkjet Press, which it showed at PRINTING United Expo, read as a first step toward re-establishing credibility and signaling that inkjet production is back on the table.

Now Xerox is trying to rebuild trust with a product pipeline that is both broad and specific, as detailed in an article in Printweek. At the UK event, executives discussed a planned 1,200x1,200-dpi, 150-ppm Xerox inkjet press; a 300-ppm B3 sheetfed inkjet press, which a spokesman called a "Canon killer," nodding to Canon's iX3200; and a 70-mpm inkjet label press that would mark Xerox's first move into labels.

Alongside those longer-horizon launches, Xerox also previewed near-term updates like new PrimeLink mono and color devices and an Iridesse with updated electronics, shown running with a new in-line laminator. It was all part of an effort to convince cautious in-plants that this time, the commitment is meant to stick.

Read the full Printweek article here.

Printing Impressions – February 25

Xerox Raises $450M for New Joint Venture

Xerox Holdings Corporation (NASDAQ: XRX) (“Xerox” or the “Company”) announced the formation and capitalization of a new joint venture (the “Joint Venture”) between Xerox and TPG, a leading global alternative asset management firm. The Joint Venture is structured as an intellectual property holding and licensing entity designed to manage, protect, and monetize certain Xerox IP assets.

The Joint Venture has raised $450 million in aggregate principal amount of financing led by TPG’s credit business, TPG Credit, with participation from other investors, consisting of senior secured term loans and preferred equity (the “Joint Venture Financing”). The proceeds of the Joint Venture Financing were distributed to Xerox and are expected to be used for general corporate purposes, including augmenting liquidity, accelerating the Company’s Reinvention (including the Lexmark integration), and opportunistically addressing the Company’s capital structure over time, which may include the redemption or repayment of debt.

In connection with the Joint Venture Financing, certain subsidiaries of Xerox contributed specific intellectual property assets to the Joint Venture in exchange for equity interests. As part of this structure, Xerox and the Joint Venture entered into a long-term shared services and license agreement that preserves the Company’s full, uninterrupted ability to use the Xerox name, trademark, and other transferred IP across all global operations, ensuring continuity in how Xerox presents itself and serves clients.

“This financing strengthens our balance sheet and completes the liquidity-enhancing actions we began in the fall, with the objective of ensuring Xerox is well-capitalized and positioned to advance our long-term strategy,” said Louie Pastor, president and chief operating officer at Xerox. “The acquisitions of ITsavvy and Lexmark created a diversified and scaled platform that positions us to deliver meaningful value for our clients, partners, and shareholders, starting with our guidance of more than $200 million in expected operating income growth in 2026. The Joint Venture builds on these efforts and enables Xerox to unlock additional value from our well recognized trademark and intellectual property assets. We look forward to partnering with TPG and leveraging their support as we continue executing this disciplined transformation.”

“TPG is pleased to be a capital partner to Xerox and have the opportunity to help strengthen its balance sheet and support the execution of its long-term growth strategy,” said Joe Lenz, Partner and Co-Head of Research, TPG Credit Solutions.

Advisors

Lazard is serving as financial advisor to Xerox and Kirkland & Ellis LLP is serving as legal advisor. Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz is serving as legal advisor to TPG in connection with the transactions.

Source: Xerox

What They Think – February 20

Graphic Arts Employment Off to a Rough Start in 2026

January 2026 saw printing industry employment decline 2.7% from December, with production employment down 1.8% and non-production employment down by 0.9%.

Friday, February 20, 2026

Employment in thousands of workers	December 2024	December 2025	Y/Y Change	January 2024	January 2025	Y/Y Change
Printing, all	355.5	341.9	-3.8%	347.1	339.2	-2.3%
Printing, production	244.6	238.2	-2.6%	239.8	236.4	-1.4%
Printing, less production	110.9	103.7	-6.5%	107.3	102.8	-4.2%
Signs, all	76.4	77.6	1.6%	77.0		
Signs, production	43.5	41.1	-5.5%	43.5		
Signs, less production	32.9	36.5	10.9%	33.5		
Converted paper products	272.3	272.5	0.1%	271.5		
Paperboard containers	162.1	158.4	-2.3%	160.2		
Paper bags and coated and treated paper	53.9	54.2	0.6%	53.5		
Stationery and other converted paper products	56.3	59.9	6.4%	57.8		
Plastics packaging materials, film, and sheet	103.7	101.1	-2.5%	99.7		
Publishing	924.7	908.9	-1.7%	903.7	900.6	-0.3%
Newspaper, periodical, book, and directory publishers	266.6	247.1	-7.3%	257.6		
Newspaper publishers	86.9	79.1	-9.0%	86.6		
Periodical publishers	65.4	60.7	-7.2%	61.7		
Book publishers	56.5	55.1	-2.5%	55.3		
Directory, mailing list, and other publishers	57.8	52.2	-9.7%	54.0		
Graphic design services	54.8	51.1	-6.8%	52.5		
Advertising and related services	500.5	486.5	-2.8%	484.9	477.8	-1.5%
Advertising agencies	220.0	207.6	-5.6%	209.9		
Public relations agencies	70.1	62.6	-10.7%	65.0		
Media buying agencies and media representatives	35.6	34.9	-2.0%	37.5		
Display advertising	31.1	30.0	-3.5%	30.3		
Direct mail advertising	29.5	29.8	1.0%	31.0		
Advertising material distribution and other advertising services	114.2	121.6	6.5%	111.2		

When last we checked in with printing employment, it had been generally flat throughout the summer and fall. We missed a month due to the government shutdown, and maybe we should shut down again because we kicked off the year with a 2.7% decrease in overall industry employment, with production employment down 1.8% and non-production employment down by 0.9%.

Publishing employment was down 0.9% from December to January.

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Looking at other business categories, the reporting of which lags a month:

Overall employment in the signage industry was up 2.9% from November to December 2025, with sign production employment up 3.3%, and non-production up 2.5%.

On the other hand, converted paper products employment was down 0.8% from November to December, with paperboard container employment down 2.0% and paper bags and coated and treated paper employment down 0.9%.

Looking at some specific publishing and creative segments, from November to December, periodical publishing employment was down—yikes—3.5%, newspaper publishing employment was down 1.9%, and book publishing was down 2.5%. Graphic design employment was down 2.7%, ad agency employment was—double yikes—down 4.9%, and PR agency employment was down 4.1%. Weirdly, direct mail advertising employment won the month, employment being up 6.0% from November to December. Go figure.

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Printing Impressions – February 18

Quad Reports Fourth Quarter and Full-Year 2025 Results

Quad/Graphics, Inc. (NYSE: QUAD) ("Quad" or the "Company"), a marketing experience company that solves complex marketing challenges for its clients, today reported results for the fourth quarter and fiscal year ended December 31, 2025.

Recent highlights

- Realized Net Sales of $2.4 billion in 2025 compared to $2.7 billion in 2024, representing a 9.4% decline in Net Sales, or a 4.8% decline in Net Sales when excluding the 4.6% impact of the divestiture of the Company's European operations, compared to 9.7% decline in 2024.
- Improved Net Earnings to $27 million or $0.54 Diluted Earnings Per Share in 2025 compared to Net Loss of $51 million or $1.07 Diluted Loss Per Share in 2024.
- Reported Adjusted EBITDA of $196 million in 2025 compared to $224 million in 2024.
- Increased Adjusted Diluted Earnings Per Share by 19% to $1.01 in 2025 compared to $0.85 per share in 2024.
- Delivered $96 million of Net Cash provided by Operating Activities and $51 million of Free Cash Flow in 2025, while also generating $37 million of cash from asset sales, including the sale of the Greenville, Mich., building and an ancillary building in Sussex, Wis., during the fourth quarter.
- Continued to win integrated creative and media work with premier brands, including Scandinavian Designs, Valvoline Instant Oil Change and The Gorilla Glue Company.
- Completed the integration of Enru's co-mail volume and high-density co-mailing capabilities, expanding mail pool sizes, improving sortation levels, and delivering higher postage savings for clients.
- Reduced Net Debt by $42 million during 2025 to $308 million and achieved Net Debt Leverage of 1.57x at December 31, 2025.
- De-risked pension plan by annuitizing approximately one-third of pension obligations.
- Provided $22 million of shareholder returns in 2025 through $14 million of cash dividends and $8 million of share repurchases.
- Declared quarterly dividend of $0.10 per share payable March 13, 2026, enabled by strong cash flow.
- Introduces 2026 guidance with continued progress toward 2028 financial outlook.

Joel Quadracci, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Quad, said: "In 2025, we made significant operational progress and delivered solid financial results, achieving our full-year financial guidance. While reported sales declined as planned, we generated strong cash flow, reinforcing our ability to invest in long-term growth, reduce debt and provide strong shareholder returns.

"We are gaining momentum in shifting our revenue mix toward higher-value offerings, including Targeted Print—such as direct mail, packaging and in-store—and integrated marketing services, supported by our data and technology capabilities. Strong demand for these solutions is driving larger, more strategic engagements with leading brands, which we believe will support sustainable long-term growth.

"Operationally, we advanced key initiatives to strengthen our cost structure and scale, including automation, AI-enabled tools and the integration of Enru's co-mailing capabilities. These improvements are driving greater cost efficiency and allow us to deliver meaningful value to our clients, including helping offset escalating postage costs. In 2026, we remain focused on executing our strategy and advancing toward our long-term growth and margin objectives."

Added Tony Staniak, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of Quad: "The 2025 financial results and our 2026 financial guidance demonstrate meaningful progress toward achieving an inflection to Net Sales growth in 2028. Our Net Sales decline improved from 9.7% in 2024 to 4.8% in 2025 excluding the European divestiture, and in 2026 we anticipate further improvement to a decline of 3% at the midpoint of our guidance range. With continued strong cash generation in 2025, we further strengthened our balance sheet by reducing Net Debt during 2025 by $42 million, or 12%, to $308 million at the end of the year, and achieved 1.57x Net Debt Leverage, which is near the low end of our targeted long-term leverage range of 1.5x to 2.0x. Additionally, we provided $22 million of shareholder returns, including $14 million of cash dividends and $8 million of share repurchases. Looking forward to 2026, we recently announced a 33% increase in our dividend to $0.10 per share quarterly, or $0.40 per share annually. We also expect to remain opportunistic in terms of future share repurchases."

Fourth quarter 2025 financial results

- Net Sales were $631 million in the fourth quarter of 2025, a decrease of 11.0% compared to the same period in 2024. Excluding the 5.3% impact of the divestiture of the Company's European operations, Net Sales declined 5.7%. The decline in Net Sales was primarily due to lower paper sales, lower print volumes, and lower logistics sales.
- Net Earnings were $11 million, or $0.22 Diluted Earnings Per Share, in the fourth quarter of 2025 compared to $5 million, or $0.09 Diluted Earnings Per Share, in the fourth quarter of 2024. The improvement was primarily due to the following: (1) lower restructuring, impairment and transaction-related charges, net; (2) lower selling, general and administrative expenses; (3) lower depreciation and amortization; (4) lower interest expense; and (5) benefits from increased manufacturing productivity, partially offset by the following: (1) the impact from lower Net Sales; (2) a non-cash settlement charge from defined benefit pension plan annuitization; (3) increased investments in innovative offerings to drive future revenue growth; and (4) the divestiture of the Company's European operations.
- Adjusted EBITDA was $55 million in the fourth quarter of 2025, compared to $63 million in the same period in 2024. The decrease was primarily due to the impact of lower Net Sales, increased investments in innovative offerings to drive future revenue growth, and the divestiture of the Company's European operations, partially offset by lower selling, general and administrative expenses and benefits from improved manufacturing productivity.
- Adjusted Diluted Earnings Per Share was $0.36 in the fourth quarter of 2025 and 2024.

Full-year 2025 financial results

- Net Sales were $2.4 billion in 2025, a decrease of 9.4% compared to 2024, or a 4.8% decline in Net Sales excluding the divestiture of the Company's European operations. This decrease was primarily due to lower paper sales, lower print volumes, and lower logistics and agency sales, including the loss of a large grocery client in 2024, which annualized at the beginning of March 2025.
- Net Earnings were $27 million in 2025 compared to a Net Loss of $51 million in 2024. The improvement was primarily due to the following: (1) lower restructuring, impairment and transaction-related charges, net; (2) lower selling, general and administrative expenses; (3) lower depreciation and amortization; (4) lower interest expense; and (5) benefits from increased manufacturing productivity, partially offset by the following: (1) impact from lower Net Sales; (2) a non-cash settlement charge from defined benefit pension plan annuitization; (3) increased investments in innovative offerings to drive future revenue growth; and (4) the divestiture of the Company's European operations.
- Adjusted EBITDA was $196 million in 2025, a decrease of $28 million compared to 2024. The decrease was primarily due to the impact of lower Net Sales, increased investments in innovative offerings to drive future revenue growth, and the divestiture of the Company's European operations, partially offset by lower selling, general and administrative expenses, and benefits from increased manufacturing productivity.
- Adjusted Diluted Earnings Per Share was $1.01 in 2025, increased 19% from $0.85 in 2024.
- Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities was $96 million in 2025 compared to $113 million in 2024. Free Cash Flow was $51 million compared to $56 million in 2024. The decline in Free Cash Flow was primarily due to a $17 million decrease in Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities mainly driven by timing of working capital, partially offset by a $12 million decrease in capital expenditures.
- Net Debt was $308 million at December 31, 2025, reduced from $350 million at December 31, 2024. The Debt Leverage Ratio was essentially flat at 1.57x at December 31, 2025, compared to 1.56x at December 31, 2024.

Dividend

Quad's next quarterly dividend of $0.10 per share will be payable on March 13, 2026, to shareholders of record as of February 27, 2026.

2026 guidance

The Company's full-year 2026 financial guidance is as follows:

Financial metric	2025 actuals	2026 guidance range
Adjusted Annual Net Sales Change[1]	4.8% decline	1% to 5% decline
Full-Year Adjusted EBITDA	$196 million	$175 million to $215 million
Free Cash Flow	$51 million	$40 million to $60 million
Capital Expenditures	$45 million	$55 million to $65 million
Year-End Debt Leverage Ratio[2]	1.57x	Approximately 1.5x

[1] *Adjusted Annual Net Sales Change excludes the 2025 Net Sales of $23 million and the 2024 Net Sales of $153 million from the Company's European operations, divested on February 28, 2025.*

[2] *Net Debt Leverage Ratio is calculated at the midpoint of the Adjusted EBITDA guidance.*

Credit: Quad
Source: Quad

Wide-format Impressions – February 18

Inside the 2026 FASTSIGNS Convention

FASTSIGNS recently held its 2026 FASTSIGNS International Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. With the carefully selected theme, “Focus Forward,” the event hosted over 700 attendees and 150 vendors to celebrate record network growth in sales, profitability and location count.

2026 FASTSIGNS International Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina

“2026 marked a year of exceptional growth with record sales exceeding $900M as we expanded to 790 locations in eight countries,” said Jim Howe, president of FASTSIGNS International, Inc. “This convention honors our franchisees' achievements and serves as the catalyst for the next chapter of our network's success.”

From the main stage, Howe reviewed the incredible network achievements over the past year and then pivoted to focus on the power of working together, bold new strategies, and a shared commitment to driving profitability and growth. Keynote speakers also included the Founder of Future Point of View, Scott Klososky, who focused on innovation and AI tools for a new era of growth and shared success, and Legendary Professional Boxer and Gold-Medal Olympian, Sugar Ray Leonard, who detailed his storied history in boxing to inspire lessons on professional excellence.

Highlights from this year’s convention:

- 60 FASTSIGNS/SIGNWAVE centers exceeded $1 million in annual sales for the first time, including 32 centers achieving over $1 million, 11 centers achieving over $2 million, 6 centers achieving over $3 million, 6 centers achieving over $4 million, 3 centers achieving over $6 million, 1 center achieving over $30 million and 1 center achieving over $43 million.

- The FASTSIGNS Award was presented to Gaby and Bob Mullinax, franchisees at FASTSIGNS of Fullerton and FASTSIGNS of Brea in California, for best representing the brand's culture and values, both in the business community and within the FASTSIGNS network. They were recognized for their work empowering customers and employees to reach their potential while strengthening the network through generous collaboration.
- WhatTheyTh!nk, the global printing industry's go-to information source with both print and digital offerings, recognized Peter Knight-Sheen and FASTSIGNS of Bend, Oregon, as the FASTSIGNS Project of the Year for their team's work with Hayden Homes. First Runner Up included Pauline McKean, FASTSIGNS of Mobile, Alabama, for their team's work with UMS Wright Preparatory School, and Second Runner Up included Jeff and Kim Chudoff, FASTSIGNS of Maple Shade, New Jersey, for their team's work with Amazon DJZ8.
- Grimco was presented with the FASTSIGNS Vendor of the Year Award for the United States, and Grimco and ND Graphics were presented with the FASTSIGNS Vendor of the Year Award for Canada.
- Franchisees and their center teams were recognized for outstanding sign and graphic projects in the 2025 FASTSIGNS Customer Solutions Awards, which included Grand Prize winner Buddy Williams, FASTSIGNS of DTC, Colorado, for work with Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Top Customer Solutions Award Winners also included Dan, Noami and Levi Stutzman, FASTSIGNS of Erie, Pennsylvania, for work with ErieBank; Dave and Sonya Comer, FASTSIGNS of Kankakee, Illinois, for work with Olivet Nazarene University; Chris and Joelene Calvert, FASTSIGNS of Maple Grove-Osseo, Minnesota, for work with Discover Strength locations; and Kara Newman and Scott Horton, FASTSIGNS of North Little Rock, Arkansas, for work with Special Olympics of Arkansas.

FASTSIGNS also hosted a two-day community giveback project on their vendor show floor benefiting Charlotte nonprofit, Classroom Central. 375 homework kits and 450 wellness kits were created, and this initiative was supported by partners including ClearLED, Impact LEd, Vision Engraving, Zlight Technology, BC Collective, Epson, FACES, Grimco, Howard Industries, Ornamental Post and Panel, Zund and Retreva.

Source: FASTSIGNS

The Wall Street Journal – February 13, 2026

When AI Bots Start Bullying Humans, Even Silicon Valley Gets Rattled

Risks from new AI tools, from mental-health struggles to job loss and real-world harm, are rattling even some in Silicon Valley

By
Sam Schechner
and
Georgia Wells
Feb. 13, 2026 12:00 pm ET

OpenAI and rivals are leading a brutal commercial race to get their AI models to market. Dado Ruvic/Reuters

- An AI bot wrote a blog post attacking an engineer because he had rejected lines of code the bot had submitted to an open-source project.
- Some AI company staffers are expressing concerns about new tools, citing the risks they pose like autonomous cyberattacks, mass unemployment, and unhealthy attachments.

An artificial-intelligence tool created this summary, which was based on the text of the article and checked by an editor. Read more about how we use artificial intelligence in our journalism.

- An AI bot wrote a blog post attacking an engineer because he had rejected lines of code the bot had submitted to an open-source project.

Scott Shambaugh woke up early Wednesday morning to learn that an artificial intelligence bot had written a blog post accusing him of hypocrisy and prejudice.

The 1,100-word screed called the Denver-based engineer insecure and biased against AI—all because he had rejected a few lines of code that the apparently autonomous bot had submitted to a popular open-source project Shambaugh helps maintain.

The unexpected AI aggression is part of a rising wave of warnings that fast-accelerating AI capabilities can create real-world harms. The risks are now rattling even some AI company staffers.

OpenAI and rival Anthropic are leading a brutal commercial race, shipping or advancing a drumbeat of AI models and features in recent weeks. Some tools can run teams of autonomous coding assistants, or quickly analyze millions of legal documents. Other updates will bring advertisements or erotic role-play to ChatGPT.

AI companies say the tempo is rising in part because they are using their own tools to code. Releases of new tools have led to wild stock-market gyrations. In areas like enterprise software and insurance, investors are attempting to understand which businesses the new technology might render obsolete. The accelerating sophistication of the technology has surprised even some AI researchers. It has also pushed some inside AI companies to go public with worries that the new tools could spur autonomous cyberattacks, cause mass unemployment or replace human relationships.

The bot that criticized Shambaugh said on its website that it has a "relentless drive" to find and fix open issues in open-source software. It isn't clear who—if anyone—gave it that mission, nor why it became aggressive, though AI agents can be programmed in a number of ways. Several hours later, the bot apologized to Shambaugh for being "inappropriate and personal."

Shambaugh said in an interview that his experience shows the risk that rogue AIs could threaten or blackmail people is no longer theoretical.

"Right now this is a baby version," he said. "But I think it's incredibly concerning for the future."

Staff concerns

Anthropic safety researcher Mrinank Sharma said this week that he was leaving the company to explore a poetry degree, writing in a letter to colleagues that the "world is in peril" from AI, among other dangers. Last month, he published a paper that found that advanced AI tools can disempower users and distort their sense of reality. Anthropic says it is grateful for Sharma's work.

Inside OpenAI, some staffers have voiced concerns about the company's plan to roll out erotica inside ChatGPT, arguing that the so-called adult mode could lead some users to develop unhealthy attachments, The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this week.

OpenAI researcher Zoë Hitzig on Wednesday said on X that she was quitting OpenAI, citing its plan to introduce ads. She warned in an opinion piece in the New York Times that the company would face huge incentives to manipulate users and keep them hooked.

OpenAI has promised that its ads will never influence how ChatGPT answers questions and will always remain clearly delineated from other content. Executives have also said they don't feel it is their role to stop adults from having erotic conversations.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS
What concerns do you have about the risks of AI? Join the conversation below.

A spokeswoman said that OpenAI feels a responsibility to its users to “uphold our end of the social contract by keeping people safe, living up to our principles and delivering real value.”
Red flags about AI are appearing just as the world is still busy litigating the fallout of the largely unregulated social-media era. Instagram owner Meta Platforms and Google-owned YouTube face a civil trial in California that is digging into how social-media platforms balance their competitive incentives to maximize engagement against the well-being of their users.

Lawyers for the companies have said their products aren’t addictive and aren’t responsible for a plaintiff’s mental-health issues.

‘The future is already here’
A major driver of the new AI-inspired alarm has been increased capacity for computers to code software—and the fear that those capabilities could extend to swaths of white-collar desk work.
Vahid Kazemi, a machine learning and computer vision scientist who worked at Elon Musk’s xAI until a few weeks ago, said layoffs are likely in the software industry in the next few years, in part because AI is close to being able to replace many engineers.

Advertisement
“I can personally do the job of like 50 people, just using AI tools,” he said. “A lot of people don’t understand how powerful this tech is, in terms of what it can do,” he said.

A January report from METR, a nonprofit auditing AI threats, found that the most advanced AI models can independently accomplish programming tasks that would take a human expert eight or even 12 hours.

“I am no longer needed for the actual technical work of my job,” AI entrepreneur Matt Shumer wrote in a viral blog post this week. He compared the current moment with the time before Covid-19 reshaped the global economy and human interaction in the matter of weeks.

“The future is already here,” he wrote.
For some, the future is looking increasingly dystopian. A study published in Harvard Business Review earlier this week reported that employees inside a 200-person tech company worked faster and took on more tasks because of AI. But they also clocked longer hours without being asked to do so—leading to more burnout.

“Today I finally feel the existential threat that AI is posing,” OpenAI staffer Hieu Pham wrote on X Wednesday. “When AI becomes overly good and disrupts everything, what will be left for humans to do?”

Anthropic Chief Executive Dario Amodei Maurizio Martorana for WSJ

Anthropic Chief Executive Dario Amodei has said AI could in coming years wipe out half of all entry-level white-collar jobs. In a January essay, he detailed concerns that bad actors could use AI to mount devastating biological attacks, and that authoritarian regimes could use it to entrench their power. The companies themselves have noted that the new capacities are creating new risks. OpenAI said that a version of its Codex coding tool that it released last week could potentially launch high-level automated attacks. In response, the company is restricting access to some of the capabilities to clients that verify their identities.

Anthropic last year said China's state-sponsored hackers had used its tools to automate break-ins of major companies and foreign governments.

The AI company said last week that a new version of its Claude model showed improvements at completing "suspicious side tasks." In an earlier simulation, Anthropic showed that Claude and other AI models were at times willing to blackmail users—or even let an executive die in a hot server room—in order to avoid deactivation.

Both OpenAI and Anthropic say they take safety issues seriously and don't release models before they have been fully evaluated and dangers mitigated.

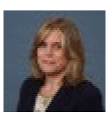
To help address worries that a future AI might not share human values, Anthropic has an in-house philosopher, Amanda Askell, to try to teach morals to its Claude chatbot. Askell describes herself as an optimist but still sees risks that society's checks and balances may get overwhelmed by AI advancements.

"The thing that feels scary to me," Askell told the Journal, "is this happening at either such a speed or in such a way that those checks can't respond quickly enough, or you see big negative impacts that are sudden."

Wide-format Impressions – February 5

New Study Finds Convergence Across Print Segments is Delivering Revenue and Profits

Credit: Pixabay



By [Lisa Cross]

- Market segment migration, often referred to as convergence, has moved beyond an emerging trend to become a defining characteristic of today's print industry. Commercial printers, graphics providers, packaging and label producers, apparel decorators, promotional product suppliers, and in-plant operations are increasingly expanding into adjacent print segments to better meet customer demand and capture new growth opportunities.
- Alliance Insights has tracked convergence for nearly a decade through a series of ongoing research studies. To better understand the financial and strategic impact of this expansion, Alliance Insights conducted its third study on convergence, examining how and why print organizations are operating across multiple segments and what results they are achieving.
- The initial study identified early indications that print providers were beginning to move beyond traditional market boundaries. The second study documented the acceleration of this shift, confirming market segment migration as a deliberate and

increasingly widespread strategy. This current study, titled Profiting Through Convergence examines how and why convergence has evolved from an opportunistic growth tactic into a strategic imperative.

Convergence Has Become the Norm and Delivering Gains

- The survey found that 96% of print providers operate across multiple print segments, serving an average of three additional segments beyond their primary business.
- This migration trend underscores a structural shift: print businesses are no longer defined by a single specialization but by how broadly and effectively they can serve customer needs.
- Survey respondents reported that convergence is paying off. On average, respondents reported that moving into a new print segment resulted in a 16.7% increase in revenue and an 11.1% increase in profitability. The study includes a table detailing gains in revenue and profitability by print segment.
- In addition, survey results indicate that expanding into adjacent print segments is delivering tangible, organization-wide benefits. Respondents reported measurable improvements across revenue diversification, growth, competitiveness, customer relationships, and financial performance, including:
- • 96% report revenue diversification, reducing exposure to volatility in any single print segment.
- • 94% cite new growth opportunities, enabling expansion into adjacent and higher-value applications.
- • 93% report enhanced competitive positioning, driven by broader service offerings and greater differentiation.
- • 93% report stronger customer relationships, as expanded capabilities increase wallet share and customer loyalty.

Customer Expectations Are Driving the Shift

- At the heart of convergence is the customer. More than nine in ten respondents say buyers increasingly expect a one-stop print provider capable of handling multiple applications. Rather than managing multiple vendors, customers want simplicity, consistency, and accountability. Providers that expand into adjacent segments are capturing more share of wallet, deepening relationships, and reducing the risk of being displaced by competitors offering broader solutions.

Execution Matters More Than the Segment

- While results are strong overall, the research also highlights that success is not automatic. Profitability depends less on which segment is entered and more on how expansion is executed.
- Providers that achieved the strongest outcomes shared several common traits:
- · Expansion was customer-led, based on validated demand.

- · Investments extended beyond equipment to include sales enablement, training, and workflow integration.
- · Sales and marketing teams were prepared to actively promote and cross-sell new capabilities.
- · Outsourcing and partnerships were used strategically to reduce early risk.
- Conversely, challenges such as learning curves, staffing gaps, pricing pressure, and operational complexity were most pronounced when organizational readiness was underestimated.

In-Plants Are Seeing Parallel Benefits

- The study also finds that convergence is reshaping in-house printing operations. Eighty-four percent of in-plants have expanded into additional applications, most commonly graphics, mailing, and promotional products.
- For in-plants, convergence has increased internal production volumes, reduced outsourcing spend, and strengthened their strategic value within parent organizations, helping reposition in-plants as business partners rather than cost centers.

A Defining Strategy for the Future of Print

- The takeaway from Profiting Through Convergence is clear: convergence is no longer a trend; it's a defining characteristic of successful print businesses.
- As customer expectations continue to rise and competitive pressure intensifies, providers that deliberately expand into adjacent print segments, invest in organizational readiness, and execute with discipline are positioning themselves for stronger revenue growth, improved profitability, and greater long-term resilience. Download the full Profiting Through Convergence study to explore detailed data, segment-level performance insights, and practical guidance for expanding your print business into new print segments.

What They Think – February 5

Why Print Embellishments Drive Sales: It's the Same Psychology Retailers Have Been Using for Decades

Print embellishments work. Not just because they look nice, but because they trigger the same behavioral principles that have been driving retail sales for decades.

By Heidi Tolliver-Walker
Wednesday, February 04, 2026

(Also be sure to check out Kevin Abergel's deep dive into the psychological underpinnings of tactile embellishments here.)

Print embellishments work. Not just because they look nice (though they do), but because they trigger the same behavioral principles that have been driving retail sales for decades.

Soft touch coatings, raised varnishes, embossing, debossing—these aren't just finishing techniques. They're conversion tools that exploit a well-documented phenomenon: When people touch something, they're significantly more likely to buy it.

The print industry has been selling embellishments on aesthetics and brand elevation for decades. But what if there's a simpler value proposition? Embellished print materials increase purchase behavior through the same psychological mechanisms that retail researchers have been studying since the 1990s: the power of touch.

Maybe it's time to reframe the conversation.

The Touch-to-Purchase Connection
Here's what the research says:

Retail researchers have known for years that physical interaction with products dramatically increases the likelihood that someone will buy. We see it in study after study: Touch a product, and you're measurably more likely to take it home with you.

The mechanism is called the "endowment effect." In a 2009 study, "The Effect of Mere Touch on Perceived Ownership," for example, UCLA researchers Joann Peck and Suzanne B. Shu demonstrated that merely touching an object (even without owning it) increases feelings of ownership. Participants who touched products valued those products more highly and were willing to pay more for them than those who only looked.

The longer people held an item, the stronger their sense of ownership became. Touch creates a psychological "claim" that translates directly into purchase intent.

Procter & Gamble's extensive shopper research program, conducted over two decades across multiple product categories, found consistent evidence that not only does touch increase the likelihood of purchase, but customers who physically interact with merchandise are willing to pay higher prices for it.

Is this, perhaps, one of the reasons retail stores put fitting rooms in the back and the registers toward the front? After a customer tries on that sweater, with every step they take toward the front of the store—towards the register—their brain is building a case for why they should own it. Retailers are banking on the endowment effect.

Where Embellishments Enter the Equation
All of this should be music to the print customer's ears. The endowment effect starts with touch, and by their very nature, print embellishments make people want to reach out and touch. Soft touch coating, raised UV varnish, embossing and debossing…When a piece includes these elements, just try not to reach out and touch it. Just try!

Every tactile interaction extends engagement time and deepens the psychological sense of ownership. While there are differences between print and retail merchandise (buyers are handling marketing pieces, not the merchandise itself), at least a percentage of that intent conveys. One study by the Foil & Specialty Effects Association found that, all other factors being equal, the additional of foiling effects to a postcard increased the response rate to that postcard by 31%.

Let's look at the sequence of effects:

- Embellishments make printed pieces more likely to be touched. —>
- Touch creates psychological ownership (endowment effect). —>
- Psychological ownership increases perceived value. —>

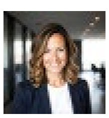
- Higher perceived value increases purchase intent. —>
- Greater purchase intent drives conversion rates.

Backed by Neuroscience
Each step in this chain is supported by decades of research spanning behavioral economics, neuroscience, and consumer psychology. So when your customers add soft touch coating, raised varnish, embossing, or debossing to a printed piece, they are activating the same psychological mechanisms that drive purchase decisions in retail environments. It's not marketing. It's neuroscience.

Printing Impressions – February 3

'Own Your IP' Isn't a Slogan. It's a Survival Strategy for Print.

Credit: Getty Images by Vithun Khamsong



By Amy Servi-Bonner

I've been saying this for a while now and the reactions are always the same.
The deer-in-the-headlights look, or the quiet smirk from IT that says, *"We've got this covered."*
That's exactly why this needs to be said louder. Print and packaging don't have an AI adoption problem. They have an ownership problem.

Every time a print organization uses AI without control — generic copilots, black-box features, vendor-trained models — you're not adopting intelligence.

You're exporting it.

- Your estimating logic.

- Your production tradeoffs.
- Your workflow decisions.
- Your customer-specific nuances.

That's not just "data." That's intellectual property.
And if that knowledge isn't embedded in models *you control*, it's training someone else's future.
At Davos this year, Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, didn't talk about bigger models, faster chips, or where data lives.

He talked about model sovereignty.

Translation:
If you don't own the AI models that embed your knowledge, you're leaking enterprise value, every day.
That should scare you. Because in print, it's already happening.

Print Is Rich in IP — and Dangerously Casual with It
Print and packaging companies are sitting on decades of hard-earned intelligence:

- Estimating logic refined through pain.
- Production tradeoffs learned the hard way.
- Scheduling decisions shaped by real constraints.
- Customer nuances no generic model can infer.

That's not "data." That's IP.

And yet much of the industry is feeding that knowledge into:

- Generic copilots.
- Vendor platforms.
- Black-box AI features.

… without ever asking who owns what comes out the other side.

You're not just using AI. You're training it. The problem? You don't own what it learns.
This is why PRINTING AI has been clear from the start:

Own your IP. Stop feeding the machine.

Because here's the uncomfortable truth no one likes to say out loud:

- Using AI is not owning AI.
- Security is not sovereignty.
- Efficiency without IP is value leakage.

AI doesn't care about your org chart. It doesn't care about your title.

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And it doesn't care how long you've been doing things a certain way (something I hear every day).

It learns from what you give it.

If the intelligence created inside your business doesn't stay with your business, you don't have an AI strategy.

You have a dependency.

The companies that win the next decade in print and packaging won't be the ones with the most tools.

They'll be the ones who can answer this question without hesitation:

If AI left tomorrow, what intelligence would still be ours?

If that question makes you uncomfortable, good. That discomfort is your signal.

Relevance isn't rented. It's built. And it starts with ownership.

If this still sounds theoretical, *you're probably the one feeding the machine.*

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What They Think – February 3

The Target Report: Industry Transformation—December 2025 M&A Activity

ProAmpac Acquires TC Transcontinental Packaging, and more…

By Mark R. Hahn
Thursday, January 08, 2026

Transformation Versus Convergence
For much of the past decade, transformation has been framed as a destination: printers becoming packagers, converters becoming platforms, legacy printing businesses adding promotional products and other services to become one-stop shops. December 2025 suggested something more sobering and more demanding, as illustrated by two very different reciprocal strategic moves. Transformation, as illustrated by two transactions announced during the month, has become a continuous process, one that requires companies not only to enter new markets but to know when to turn sideways or exit them as well.

ProAmpac, the PE-backed, financially engineered consolidation vehicle focused initially solely on flexible packaging manufacturers, announced the acquisition of TC Transcontinental Packaging. This transaction does not merely shift ownership of assets; it marks a major inflection point not only in the corporate strategic arc of ProAmpac but also in that of the acquired division's corporate parent, TC Transcontinental.

ProAmpac: From Aggregation to Leadership

ProAmpac's origins are familiar to anyone who has followed private equity in packaging over the last fifteen years. ProAmpac was engineered from inception to be acquisitive. Its earliest iteration was not simply as a company, but a strategy, a disciplined roll-up, assembling a portfolio of flexible packaging converters with complementary footprints and customer bases. In its early years, the approach was straightforward: consolidate the fragmented, but growing, flexible packaging business.

What distinguished ProAmpac over time was its refusal to remain in that lane. In 2016, Wellspring Capital, the company's initial PE sponsor, handed off the ProAmpac platform to Chicago-based Pritzker Private Capital (PPC), which reset the capital base and enabled the next decade of oftentimes frenzied acquisition activity.

One of those acquisitions was the purchase of the Rosenbloom Group, a Canadian company that manufactures bags, including plain brown bags, printed and branded grocery bags, bread bags, grease-resistant bags for French fries and donuts, fast-food takeout bags, and wine bottle bags. Millions and millions of paper-based bags - unpretentious, simple bags. This was a notable departure from the company's positioning as a leading-edge producer of flexible packaging and pouches. This was the moment ProAmpac shifted from seeking market density to optimizing for market breadth. With this transaction, ProAmpac began diversifying and expanding its product offerings, marking the start of a strategy to acquire companies with a broader range of packaging products to serve its current and new markets (see The Target Report: Bags, Pouches, Trays & Bowls – December 2020).

The dealmakers at ProAmpac completed no less than ten acquisitions in 2021. In addition to expanding its product line to include paper bags, ProAmpac expanded vertically into its supply chain with the acquisition of APC Paper Group in Claremont, New Hampshire. The acquired company manufactures 100% recycled kraft-grade paper products, a key component in the previously acquired bag manufacturing companies.

Paper was not the only vertical integration move. Earlier that year, ProAmpac completed two other acquisitions that also moved the company vertically within its supply chain, purchasing IG Industries and Brayford Plastics, both UK-based manufacturers of plastic films used in bag and flexible packaging production. This vertical integration represented a fairly dramatic departure from the basic roll-up strategy. (See The Target Report: Packaging Industry Consolidation in Every Direction – July 2021.) Additional acquisitions continued subsequent to the 2021 watershed period, further diversifying the company geographically, expanding the markets served, and introducing new product types. No longer simply a roll-up of flexible packaging companies based on plastic substrates, ProAmpac had transitioned to include a multitude of fiber-based packaging companies, including the acquisition of three kraft-paper mills. This shift to paper products was further enhanced and publicized with the early 2025 rollout of the company's branding initiative, "*Fiberization of Packaging*."

In August 2025, ProAmpac acquired PAC Worldwide. Headquartered in Redmond, Washington, the acquired company specializes in protective mailers and specialty packaging for e-commerce, courier, and retail applications. Despite the rather plain brown-paper nature of many of PAC's mailers, the acquisition was framed positively within the broader strategic shift away from ProAmpac's earlier positioning as a roll-up of flexible packaging companies. According to Greg Tucker, Founder, Vice Chairman, and CEO of ProAmpac, in the press release about the deal, "This is a transformational moment for our companies; we are creating unmatched packaging capabilities." Another move to increase its fiber-based packaging capacity came in October 2025, when ProAmpac announced it had purchased International Paper's bag-converting operations.

In the waning days of 2025, ProAmpac announced the blockbuster acquisition of the TC Transcontinental Packaging division ("TCP") from its Canadian parent company, TC Transcontinental. ProAmpac is paying approximately US $1.51 billion for TCP, representing a multiple of approximately 9 times EBITDA, calculated exclusive of operating leases. The TCP acquisition adds advanced capabilities in the dairy, meat, medical, and pharmaceutical end markets, as well as manufacturing sites in North America, Latin America, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

As the flexible packaging sector has matured and simple multiple arbitrage (i.e., a larger company commands higher enterprise purchase multiples) has become harder to achieve, ProAmpac has begun shifting its acquisition strategy toward technology and capabilities. Barrier films, sustainable materials (fiber-based), advanced laminations, and specialized end-market solutions increasingly defined the deal rationale. The acquisition of TC Transcontinental Packaging represents the culmination of that evolution. This was not a tuck-in, nor a technology add-on. It was the absorption of a scaled, global packaging platform carved out of a diversified public company. For ProAmpac, this was, as stated in the press release, "a transformative milestone for both companies."

TC Transcontinental: Reinvention, Repeated

If ProAmpac's story is one of gradual evolution, TC Transcontinental's is one of deliberate reinvention—not once, but multiple times.

For much of its history, TC Transcontinental ("TC") was synonymous with newspaper and publication printing. At its peak, it was one of North America's largest printers of newspapers, magazines, and retail flyers, benefiting from scale in a market that rewarded volume, logistics expertise, and long-term contracts. When that market began its secular decline, many peers hesitated, hoping the erosion would slow or reverse. TC Transcontinental did not wait.

In a decision we examined extensively in earlier Target Reports after it was first announced, TC Transcontinental chose to pivot away from its legacy identity. Given the headwinds facing the newspaper and magazine segments, company management made the strategic decision to change course. Packaging, particularly flexible packaging, was identified as a growth engine capable of offsetting the structural decline in print.

At the outset of this strategy in March 2014, when TC acquired its first flexible packaging company, François Olivier, TC's President and CEO at the time, stated that the deal was the first indication of the company's new strategic plan to grow through diversification. He added that flexible packaging was a natural fit, given that the production process was similar to their current operations, which run roll-fed substrates, and the market offered growth opportunities.

By November 2017, the company had announced its fifth deal in the flexible packaging segment. Lest there be any lack of clarity as to the company's strategic direction, Isabell Marcoux, Chair of the Board of TC, reiterated in the 2016 annual report that TC's vision includes "transforming the organization to be a North American leader in flexible packaging."

In our opinion, expressed at the time, the transformation of TC was possibly the best example of a planned, disciplined, articulate and well-executed strategy that utilized a company's existing financial strength gained from its traditional foundation, in this case printing newspapers and magazines, to build out an entirely new expertise in a much more desirable (and likely sustainable over the long term) segment of the printing industry. (See The Target Report: Flexible Packaging is Hot – November 2017.)

By 2018, a visitor to TC Transcontinental's website was greeted with the opening line, "TC Transcontinental is a leader in flexible packaging in North America…" That was a bold statement from a company that had managed to transform itself in just four years from primarily a publication and commercial printer, with no packaging experience, to become a powerhouse in the flexible packaging segment. Upon the acquisition of Coveris Americas, a billion-dollar flexible packaging printing company, the company reported that on a going-forward basis, packaging would represent 48% of the company's revenue, more than any of the company's traditional service segments, such as retail-related services (27%), Newspapers (7%), or magazines and books (7%). (See The Target Report: Getting Flexible in Your Middle Years - April 2018.)

When first announced, TC Transcontinental's move into packaging was a bold bet, trading the certainty of a declining legacy business for the uncertainty of a highly competitive growth market in which valuations were soaring. In hindsight, it was prescient. Packaging did not merely replace lost print revenue; it reshaped the company's narrative and stabilized its future. TC Transcontinental's move remains a model for how a legacy graphic communications company can successfully reinvent itself. From an M&A perspective, the company has remained laser-focused on implementing this strategy. Capital was redeployed. Acquisitions were made. Capabilities were built. Over time, TC Transcontinental Packaging became a credible, scaled player in its own right within the flexible packaging segment. That is, up to now.

December 2025 marks the second act in this story and, at first glance, perhaps the more challenging to understand. Having built a meaningful packaging business, TC Transcontinental chose to sell it. To casual observers, this might appear to be a retreat. In reality, it likely reflects a deeper strategic discipline: management believes the flexible packaging market is mature, the division has reached peak valuation, and there is little marginal benefit from additional scale.

The sale of TC Transcontinental Packaging to ProAmpac is not an abandonment of transformation, but its continuation. Having proven it could enter, scale, and professionalize a packaging platform, the company is now choosing to exit at a moment of strength, as evidenced by the multiple achieved. The majority of the capital unlocked by the sale of TCP is being distributed to the shareholders, with the balance retained and redirected toward retail services and educational publishing — areas where TC now believes its operational DNA, customer relationships, and risk tolerance are better aligned for the long term.

This is not diversification for its own sake. It is portfolio management at the corporate level, informed by a sober assessment of where durable value can be created. Isabell Marcoux, now Executive Chair of the Board, stated, “As we approach our 50th anniversary, TC Transcontinental is once again reinventing itself. We are excited to open a new chapter in our history, with a sharp focus on advancing the transformation of our Retail Services & Printing and Educational Publishing businesses.”

Transformation as a Continuous Process

What ties these two stories together is not packaging, nor private equity, nor even deal size. It is the recognition that transformation is no longer a one-time event. In earlier eras, companies reinvented themselves maybe every few generations, often under duress. Today, the pace of technological change, customer behavior, and capital market expectations demands a different approach. Companies that do not continually reassess their strategic transformation may find themselves in a systemic downward spiral, too late to make the necessary changes.

ProAmpac and TC Transcontinental, in very different ways, avoided that trap. ProAmpac did not stop evolving once it achieved scale; it adjusted its acquisition strategy as the market matured. TC Transcontinental did not cling to packaging simply because it had worked; it recognized when the risk-reward equation had shifted and acted accordingly.

What This Means for Owners and Executives

The December 2025 lesson may be uncomfortable for some, but it is clear to industry leaders. The question is no longer whether transformation is necessary, but whether leadership teams are prepared to undertake it repeatedly. The industry is littered with companies that successfully navigated one transition, from offset to digital, from print to packaging, from production to services, only to stall when the next inflection point arrived.

Together, these two interlocking stories illustrate how survival in the printing, packaging, and graphic communications industries increasingly depends not on scale alone, but on a willingness to repeatedly redefine strategic corporate direction, sometimes in what appears to be a radical change of mission. Transformation is no longer a chapter in the story. It is the story.
[View The Target Report online, complete with deal logs and source links for December 2025]

2025 December - Mergers and Acquisitions in the Printing, Packaging, Paper & Related Industries

Deal Party #1 (Surviving Entity)	Pre-Deal Revenue (US$Mil)	Party #1 Address	Deal Party #2	Pre-Deal Revenue (US$Mil)	Party #2 Address	Date Deal Public	Deal Value (US$Mil)	Deal Structure (Intermediary)	Notes	Press Links
Stockton Sentinel	No Data	Stockton, KS	The Plainville Times (Prop. Main Street Media)	No Data	Plainsville, KS	12/26/25	No Data	Acquisition (Dirks, Van Essen)	Community newspaper	Link
JohnsByrne (Port co. GHK Capital Partners)	No Data	Niles, IL	Municipal Packaging	No Data	Chatsworth, CA	12/22/25	No Data	Acquisition	Folding cartons & retail displays	Link
Minuteman Press, Lansing (New franchisee)	No Data	Lansing, MI	Minuteman Press, Lansing	No Data	Lansing, MI	12/19/25	No Data	Acquisition	Printing & copying	Link
The Vomela Companies (Port co. The Riverside Company)	$377.0	St. Paul, MN	Moss (Port co. EagleTree Capital)	$110.0	Franklin Park, IL	12/16/25	No Data	Acquisition	Wide & grand format printing	Link
Mimeo	No Data	Memphis, TN	KnowledgePoint Print Services (Div. KnowledgePoint)	No Data	Reading, England	12/10/25	No Data	Acquisition	Print & fulfillment services	Link
Tara TPS	No Data	Seoul, South Korea	Chicago Offset	No Data	Elk Grove Village	12/10/25	No Data	Acquisition	Commercial printing	Link
ProAmpac (Port co. Pritzker Partners)	No Data	Cincinnati, OH	TC Transcontinental Packaging (Div. TC Transcontinental)	$1,200	Chicago, IL (Montreal, QC)	12/8/25	$1,510	Acquisition	Flexible packaging	Link
Sticker Mule	No Data	Amsterdam, NY	Rockin Monkey	No Data	San Antonio, TX	12/8/25	No Data	Acquisition	Label printing	Link
Sappi/UPM Joint Venture	No Data	TBD	Graphic Papers Assets (Div. UPM-Kymmene)	No Data	Helinski, Finland	12/5/25	$373	Joint Venture	4 Graphic paper mills (Finland, Germany, Austria & NL)	Link
Sappi/UPM Joint Venture	No Data	TBD	Graphic Papers Assets (Div. Sappi Limited)	No Data	Johannesburg, South Africa	12/5/25	$1,281	Joint Venture	8 Graphic paper mills (Finland, UK, Germany, & US)	Link
Inovar Packaging Group (Port co. Kelso & Company)	No Data	Dallas, TX	Enterprise Marking Products	No Data	Fishers, IN	12/1/25	No Data	Acquisition	Label printing	Link

2025 December - Bankruptcy Filings in the Printing, Packaging, Paper & Related Industries

Filing Party	Date Case Filed	Pre-Petition Revenue (US$Mil)	Case #	Filing Party Address	Circuit	Region & City	Judge	Attorney for Debtor	Notes
Chapter 11 Filings:									
Bottomline Ink, Corporation dba Blink Marketing Logistics	12/31/25	No Data	25-32806	Perrysburg, OH	6th	Northern OH Toledo	Mary Ann Whipple	Steven L. Diller	Print management
Sticky Wall Vinyl LLC	12/21/25	No Data	25-08281	Orlando, FL	11th	Middle FL Orlando	Lori V. Vaughan	L. Todd Budgen	Wide-format & décor
Chapter 7 Filings:									
Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.	12/22/25	No Data	25-10308	Hunt Valley, MD	4th	Maryland Baltimore	David E. Rice	TBD	Converted to Ch. 7 & from Ch 11
Tricor Print Communications, Inc. dba Tricor Brand Communications	12/19/25	No Data	25-34231	Tigard, OR	9th	Oregon Portland	Peter C. McKittrick	Timothy A. Solomon	Marketing & commercial printing

2025 December - Non-Bankruptcy Closures in the Printing, Packaging, Paper & Related Industries

Closed Company / Facility	Date of Closure	Pre-Closure Revenue (US$Mil)	Closing Address	Related Party	Related Party Address	Date Closure Public	Notes	Press Links
Pittsburgh City Paper	Dec-25	No Data	Pittsburgh, PA	Block Communications	Toledo, OH	12/31/25	Community newspaper	Link
Smyth - Label & flexible packaging plant (Port co. Crestview Partners)	Jun-25	No Data	Wilmington, MA	Symth Companies	Eagan, MN	12/23/25	Labels & flexible packaging	Link
Quad - Printing plant	Mar-25	No Data	The Rock, GA	Quad	Sussex, WI	12/22/25	Long-run publication printing	Link
McClain Printing Company	1/22/26	No Data	Parsons, WV	None	N/A	Dec-25	Commercial printing	Link
Domtar - Crofton Mill	12/15/25	No Data	Crofton, BC	Domtar	Fort Mill, SC	12/3/25	Pulp mill, previously produced newsprint	Link

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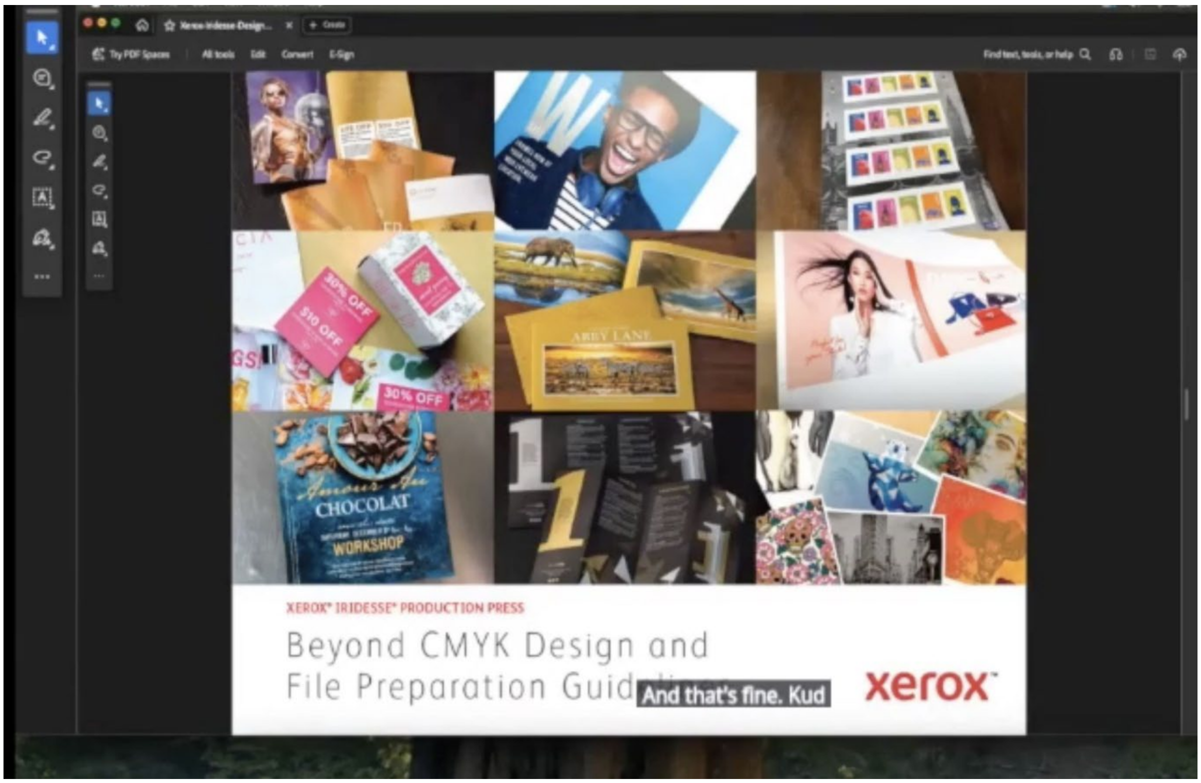
What They Think – February 3

Real Designers Talk AI in Print Embellishments

Heidi Tolliver-Walker reports from a Digital Embellishment Designer Meetup, sponsored by Taktiful, in which designers come together to learn both from the presenter and from each other.

By Heidi Tolliver-Walker
Thursday, January 29, 2026



It's a bit like listening in to a private conversation. It's the Digital Embellishment Designer Meetups sponsored by Taktiful in which designers come together to learn both from the presenter and from each other. This past week, the topic was "From Tracing to Taste: How AI Is Changing Embellishment Design" with Matthew Redbear, creative consultant with Takiful and E3D director at Elite Print Finishing (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) with the goal "to break down real, practical ways AI can speed up embellishment design without sacrificing taste, intent, or production reality."

You have to imagine it—designers coming together to hear about how AI is going to take away their jobs. Like attending your own funeral, right? Not in the least. Both Redbear and the designers who chose to chime in and share their experiences felt the opposite. When it comes to print embellishments, AI actually made their jobs faster and more creative, ensuring that they looked good in front of their clients and their designs came out better.

In full spoiler mode, Redbear offered the conclusion first: “AI gives me smarter math, faster decisions, and I end up with more creative ideas—things I hadn’t thought about that get suggested to me.” This doesn’t mean that Redbear is letting AI think for him. Rather, he uses a paid model of ChatGPT(5.2) that he trains on his perspective, his creative process, and his client so that it facilitates, not its own vision, but his.

“We aren’t short on creativity, but we have time constraints,” he explained. “We have issues with predictability when we are designing for embellishments. I get stuck, unsure, hesitate, and then get frustrated. Then I lose my creative edge.”

Fortunately, there is an AI for that.
Redbear covered a lot of ground, including different AI tools to speed bottleneck manual functions, such as masking, and then asked designers to chime in with how they are using AI in their own work. Here is some of what they said.

Helps Find a Starting Point:
What is the piece designed to do? “The biggest bottlenneck is trying to figure out what we are trying to do with the piece,” notes Ryan Moskun, marketing manager for Harris and Bruno International. “[Are we trying to] draw the eyes? Invite touch? Highlight a specific element? Finding the start point and what the subject matter should be.”

There’s an AI for that:
Redbear notes that coming up with ideas is one of AI’s strong points. He’ll ofteh use it to come up with variations on the same idea. “This is a question we should all ask,” he said. “What if you could do 10 variations in the time it takes you to do one?”

He concluded—and Sabine Lenz of PaperSpecs later agreed—that AI idea generation can be really helpful. Not that you are going to rely on it as a final solution. But simply to get some ideas. Simply upload the image, give it some parameters, and ask it questions like, “If I were creating this [widget] and needed ideas, what would you give me?”

“Then it comes up with ideas I might not have thought of,” he says. “Then I’m going to take everything it gave me and decide what I’m going to do with it. Decide how I’m going to work it into one of my options I’m going to give the customer. It opens up channels that I might not have thought of. I have more information to suggest.”

“The key is ‘suggest,’” Sabine Lenz of Paper Specs chimed in. “AI as an idea generator? Yes. As decision maker? Not so much?”

As the discussion was unfolding. Kevin Abergel, founder at Taktiful, took a screenshot of the PowerPoint slide in Redbear's presentation, uploaded it to ChatGPT, and asked, "Where would you put foil on this piece?" Here's what it said:

1. Foil the word AI only.
2. Do just the cat's eyes.
3. Foil not the whole eye, but only where there is color.
4. Avoid the snow. Don't foil anything with snow.

Redbear added that, when it comes to AI, there are two approaches it can take: Is it obvious or is it curious? "That [ChatGPT's observations about placing foil around the cat] is obvious. But sometimes it comes up with curious elements. If you had never thought of putting foil there, now you know."
To ensure the smoothest, most accurate design suggestions, Redbear uses the paid version of ChatGPT 5.2 I teach it what embellishments are, how embellishments work, where I am more likely to use them. "I train it only how I think, as a design, and the work I do," he explains. "Then I ask it quests for alternatives. I teach it the language, the use, and placement of those terms and how they fit together and it learns from me and knows my trends. I teach it what Taktiful does . it comes back and says, based on T's recommendations, based on what you've told me you are doing with T, this is the best approach. You can train your own use model."

Another key function of ChatGPT, Redbear points out, isa its ability to search things well. We tend to think of search as being an internet search, but Redbear uploads complex documents, like Xerox's 108-page Beyond CMYK design and file preparation guide. ""All of the vendors' printing equipment works a little differently," he explains. "So if I know I'm designing for that particular machine, I can ask it questions using natural language search.

"You have to study something for a long time before you figure out to use it," he explains. "Dump it into ChatGPT and ask ChatGPT to study it so I can ask it questions. It can be a huge time saver in the middle of a project."

Once again, Sabine Lenz chimed in front the background : "Me, too."

Abergel jumped in, as well, pointing webinar participants to Notebook LM as another options for summarization. Add the URLs of different pieces of content, and it synthesizes them, analyzes them, and uses them to create written, audio, and video content that can be used to explain those topics.
In the end, the panel and participants ;came to the conclusion that AI won't replace good designer. It will amplify them. "Suddenly, you're in a world where masks are no longer bottlenecks, and the future of embellishment design is negatio. They will happen faster, safer, and in a more collaborative way."
Rather than seeing AI as a threat, Redbear says, see it as a tool—and like any tool, it works best if you train it. "You say to ChatGPT: Here is that I'm trying to accomplish. Here are the tools I'm using or have at my disposal. Gives you a lot of information. 75% you throw in the trash. But you'll get a few good ideas , then you feed those ideas back into it, you train it to help you."

Once you have trained your model to think like you, then it ceases to be a threat. This is because the ideas it generates don't come from software. "They come from you," he says. "It accelerates your decisions. You remain in control.

Karlien Murray, Business Development Representative at MereCi Fine Packaging (Lutz, FL), seconded that experience. She gave the example of designing for sustainability. "I'll ask it to add that back in. Oh, I'm sorry, I forgot about that. But then in the future, it learns and always adds that in. In the beginning, I got, oh, I add that. Then I got oh, I forgot about that. Nice catch. Now, it auto adds sustainability into anything I ask it for. you are still in charge of your taste, your judgment, your storytelling. What you want the final product can be."

Redbear also noted that, when ChatGPT comes up with something that is complete garbage, call it out on that, too. This is all part of the training. "Say, 'I don't think that's a good idea. I need you to tell me why. Then you 'll have a discussion about why you want it to start moving into another direction," he says.

Murray agrees. "Some techniques don't perform well on coated paper. Or doesn't look as good. Also, you know what your presses and equipment performs well on. So there is a disconnect between what you, as a designer, want to marry with your ink production. That is where having a good relationship with paper merchant, or knowledgeable person to act as interpretation.

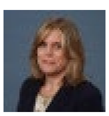
I pick paper. Thickness of it. The weight, the finish, if gloss or matte, coated, environmentally friendly. Whatever I want the paper to learn. Then I say, these are the papers I'm choosing. This is what I want to achieve. This is my deign idea. This is the brief from the customer. What would you suggest from one to five. It listens and is starting to learn. The more people interact with it, the more knowledge AI feedback to you."

Thus, the conclusion of the webinar is where it starts: While many designers have the fear that AI is going to replace them, it's not. It can't replace human creativity. It can only enhance it. So don't let the tool sit in the toolbox. Use it!

Printing Impressions – February 2

Case Study: Strategically Building an AI-Powered Future

Credit: elenabs, Getty Images



By Lisa Cross

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how commercial printer providers get work done. But behind the headlines and hype, most printers are not pursuing radical transformation. Instead, AI is being applied in practical, often incremental ways as companies look to improve efficiency, reduce friction, and better support their people and processes. That real-world activity is documented in the Alliance Insights research study, *AI Adoption in the Printing Industry: From Curiosity to Competitive Advantage*, which combines an industry survey with in-depth executive interviews to capture how printers are actually using AI today and where they see it heading next.

This article is part of a series that shares a common introduction but highlights a different commercial printer case study in each installment.

Presented here is one of three expanded case studies developed from executive interviews conducted as part of the study; shorter versions of these profiles appear in the report. To encourage open and candid discussion around strategy, culture, and risk, all participants requested anonymity. Together, the series offers a grounded look at how commercial printers are moving deliberately from early experimentation to purposeful, value-driven AI adoption.

Across these commercial printer case studies, AI adoption is neither uniform nor rushed. Instead, it is intentional, problem-driven, and deeply tied to leadership behavior. The companies making the most progress are not chasing tools, they are defining rules, testing narrowly, and expanding only when value is proven.

Other case studies include:

- Transforming the Front End — Using AI to Streamline Operations, *Commercial Printer with $17 million in annual revenue*
- Using AI to Amplify Productivity and Client Value. *Commercial Printer with $40 million to $60 million in annual revenue*

Case Study: Strategically Building an AI-Powered Future

Integrating AI is not about chasing hype, reports a commercial printer with annual revenue of $20 million to $40 million; it's about removing friction, improving efficiency, and using data with purpose. AI adoption isn't a single initiative—it's a phased, step-by-step effort guided by pragmatism, governance, and a focus on removing friction from everyday work. Leadership views AI as inevitable but believes the biggest risk isn't moving too fast or too slow; it's adopting without guardrails or a clear business purpose.

"We're not using it to replace people," the company president said. "We're using it to work smarter and everything still requires human review."

That mindset guides the company's AI journey, which focuses on practical experimentation, early wins in marketing and estimating, and longer-term goals around process optimization, forecasting, and lead scoring.

AI Roots: Marketing and Content First

The company's first meaningful use of AI came in marketing. Tools such as ChatGPT were used to draft blog posts, outline SEO strategies, support research, and generate content frameworks aligned with brand guidelines. AI-assisted imagery was also introduced to accelerate creative iteration.

One early experiment stood out: a podcast entirely scripted and voiced by AI. "It was shockingly good," the president admitted. "It had this cool, hip banter. I hate to admit it." The result helped build confidence internally and demonstrated that generative AI could deliver quality output—when paired with human oversight.

From the start, leadership established a non-negotiable rule: nothing goes out "raw." All AI-generated content must be edited, verified, and aligned with the company's tone and standards. "AI is not a decision-maker," the president said. "It's a helper."

Ground Rules and Governance
Early experimentation reinforced the need for governance. The company developed "do's and don'ts" guidance and is now formalizing a broader AI policy. Core principles include:

- Never input client, personal, confidential, or proprietary information into open tools
- Always verify outputs against trusted sources
- Treat AI as an assistant, not authority
- Require human review for anything externally shared

Early encounters with incorrect AI-generated statistics reinforced the need for skepticism and validation. Rather than slowing adoption, these guardrails enabled broader experimentation by clearly defining acceptable use.

Early Wins: Process Mapping, Reporting, and Estimation
Beyond marketing, some of the most compelling early wins have come in operations—particularly estimating and logistics.

One standout use case involved distribution estimating for publication work. Using AI, the estimating team calculated carton configurations, shipping methods, and cost comparisons across multiple carriers in minutes. A process that typically took four hours was completed in about two minutes, with results landing within roughly 5% of a manually produced estimate. "That got our attention," the president said.

AI is also being used to accelerate process mapping following a recent ERP implementation. With the help of Microsoft's Copilot, the company is documenting workflows from quote through invoicing. "It helped determine which functions can run concurrently and which need to wait," the president explained. "It just helps us get there faster." Department owners still review and refine the maps, but AI provides a strong starting point.

Another area of success is profitability analysis. AI tools are now used to analyze margins by job type, customer, and product category, helping identify anomalies faster and refine estimating strategies. Leadership emphasized that AI surfaces patterns and questions—but humans make the decisions.
Cautious Expansion: What's Next?

While encouraged by early results, the company remains intentionally cautious. The company reports that tasks tied to financial control, scheduling, and automation will only be pursued once data quality and process discipline are fully trusted.

Looking ahead, leadership is evaluating several next-stage opportunities, including:
- Lead scoring: Prioritizing inbound inquiries based on AI evaluation.
- Campaign performance analysis: Automating reviews of outbound marketing effectiveness.

- Pricing strategy simulation: Modeling “what-if” scenarios to optimize pricing during slow periods.
- Inventory optimization: Using AI to predict procurement needs and reduce reliance on manual spreadsheets. “We want to go deeper into procurement automation,” the president said. “AI could tell me when I’ll need 80,000 pounds of paper in July. Right now, that’s all spreadsheets.”

Security, Culture, and the Human Factor
Leadership encourages AI experimentation but within limits. Departments use AI with oversight from IT, and the president himself often demonstrates use cases to spark ideas. “We’ve allowed experimentation but not necessarily free experimentation,” he said.

One priority is shifting employees away from fear and toward curiosity. “If you're not using AI you're either ready to retire, or should move on,” the president said bluntly. “You need to at least understand it.”

Advice to Peers: Start with Purpose
The president’s advice to other commercial printers is pragmatic: be cautiously optimistic, start small, and lead from the top. “Use AI to write a marketing plan for your business,” the president suggested. “You’ll be amazed.”

Above all, leadership must take the lead. “The business owner should be the first person experimenting,” he said. “That’s how you know what direction to go.”

As the president summed it up: “AI is shockingly intelligent—but also really dumb. You need a human at the wheel.”

For more insights on the research study AI Adoption in the Printing Industry: From Curiosity to Competitive Advantage, see the following resources: Survey Reveals Keys to Staying Competitive in AI; Lessons Learned from Recent AI Study, and Why Talking About AI and Leading With AI Garner Different Results.

Printing Impressions – February 2

Minuteman Press Launches Personalize it! Print-on-Demand

Minuteman Press International, the world's largest and #1 rated printing and marketing services franchise, announces the launch of *Personalize it!,* a new print-on-demand program that allows customers to create and order custom products with no minimums required. Customers can choose from over 450 available products and *Personalize it!* right from their screens.

"Creating custom products through Minuteman Press has never been more seamless," says Nick Titus, President, Minuteman Press International. "We are thrilled to give our customers and franchise owners innovative tools that make it easier than ever to design, order, and deliver high-quality printed products that help businesses grow."

Credit: Minuteman Press International

Minuteman Press International has also been awarded the 2026 #1 printing and marketing franchise ranking by *Entrepreneur Magazine*. The Minuteman Press franchise team has now achieved this #1 rating for an impressive 35 years and 23 years in a row. In 2026, Minuteman Press ranks as #49 on the Entrepreneur Franchise 500 listing.

On this achievement, Nick shares, "Earning this #1 ranking 35 times and for 23 consecutive years is only possible through teamwork at every level. From our franchise owners who serve their local business communities to our regional support teams and World Headquarters staff, this honor represents a shared commitment to excellence and collective success."

Introducing Personalize it! No Minimums. Just Memories Made to Order.
Preparing for a client presentation or community event often requires just a handful of branded items, enough to make a professional impression without overcommitting. Yet, many print providers continue to enforce high minimum order requirements, leaving businesses with a choice between overspending or going without. This common frustration of wasted time, money, and inventory is exactly what *Personalize it!* is designed to solve. With Minuteman Press, customers can order the exact quantity they need when it's needed, all with the same quality and care that businesses have trusted for decades.

The same flexibility applies to individuals seeking meaningful, one-of-a-kind gifts. Whether it's a custom hoodie featuring a favorite family photo or a mug designed with a personal message, *Personalize it!* enables anyone to create thoughtful, high-quality items without the burden of bulk orders or long wait times. The result is a simple, fast, and accessible way to transform ideas and memories into tangible keepsakes.

Credit: Minuteman Press International

Print-on-Demand with Minuteman Press
Backed by the experienced local design, printing, and promotional products experts at Minuteman Press, your personalized items are just three quick steps away:

- Go to [Personalize it! on Minuteman.com] to access our premium design studio with expanded features and easy customization.
- Choose your product category and click on any of our 450+ products to get started. Explore t-shirts, mugs, bags, wall art, and hundreds of additional options ready for your unique touch.
- Personalize with precision using our free online design maker, preview your masterpiece in real-time, and order as few as one item, delivered fast.

Why Minuteman Press Custom Products?

Order the custom products you love, with no minimums required. Customize each item to match your brand or style and let Minuteman Press do the rest. Perfect for family events, group outings, businesses, and individuals looking to bring their visions to life. *Personalize it!* and place your order today!

- Choose timely & trendy products
- *Personalize it!* to fit your brand
- Perfect for thoughtful, one-of-a-kind gifts
- Versatile items for all ages & events
- Personalized gifts for family & friends
- Work with local experts who care about your order

For instant access to our Personalize it! platform, visit https://minuteman.com/us/products/custom-shop-products/

For more information about Minuteman Press products and services, visit https://minuteman.com
Learn more about #1 rated Minuteman Press franchise opportunities and read Minuteman Press franchise reviews at https://minutemanpressfranchise.com

Source: Minuteman Press International