

Print Service
Provider
Edition



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Input: The Most Efficient Route

The Most Efficient Route

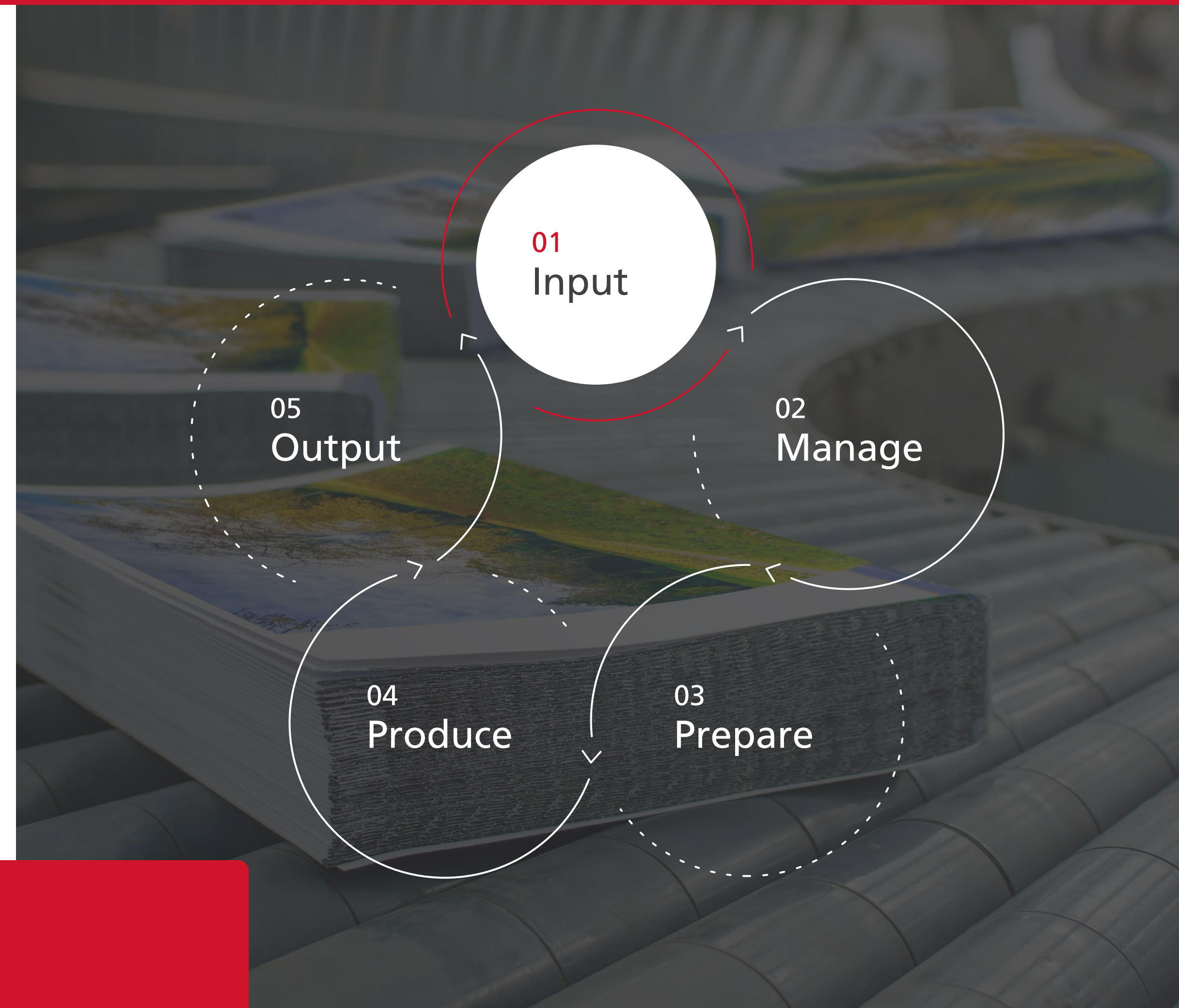
Imagine boarding the plane and waiting for other passengers to jockey past each other, finding their seats and trying to stow their luggage. You finally settle into your seat, buckle your seat belt, and stare ahead at the in-flight entertainment options. To kill time or maybe just curious about how you're getting to where you're going, you flip to the interactive map showing the route to your destination. Have you ever wondered why it is never a straight line? Pilots fly in a 3-dimensional space, not a 2-dimensional map, so an arc connecting your starting point and destination is the most efficient route. When represented on your 2-dimensional map, the straight line looks shorter but is longer than the geodesic arc when you consider the Earth is sphere-shaped.


Put into the most basic terms: it's distorted reality.

The same reality distortion applies to job onboarding for your print business. One of the most common ways customers and the sales team send orders is by email. It might seem like the best route into production, but it has limitations. Email must be opened, and information extracted into specifications and job tickets. It takes the same amount of handling for phone, fax, and walk-up orders. Those processes are inefficient, in the same way a straight line flight path would be. They waste time and money. To gain efficiency, the goal is to find the most efficient route to reduce the manual touchpoints required to capture the order details while minimizing the time and avoiding manual data entry mistakes. The best path to efficiency is to automate the interaction between the requesting customer and the print business, identifying common processing tasks vs those which are unique, and specifying each type of application needed to complete the job. Web-to-Print (W2P) or integrations with the customers' business systems are a place to start in addition to walking your customers' workflow to understand:

- **How many steps are there?**
- **Are the steps linear or customized to each job?**
- **How many steps are automated vs manual touch points?**
- **Is there data or software that must be integrated before steps can be automated?**

Input is more than job submission. It's a complex process of capturing the data and details to ensure a smooth, profitable output and is rarely a straight line of information and processes.





Input
ALWAYS
Equals
Output

The Common Onboarding Problem

Every job has a few elements in common with every other job that comes into the print facility.

- **Who is ordering the job?**
- **What is the work to be printed?**
- **When is it due?**
- **How will it be charged?**

Each question appears easy, but even these basic enquiries can set off a chain reaction of emails, phone calls, and conversations that consume limited time and resources. The problem compounds for Print Service Providers (PSPs) who work for a diverse set of customers, sell an array of products, and offer many ways to submit orders and files.

Orders can arrive via email, Web-to-Print, and requests for quotes (RFQ) submitted by the sales team. Solutions that guide customers or internal staff to enter critical information like due dates, format size, quantity, product type, and other specifications in a consistent manner are ideal. The key is to standardize the minimum information required to quote and produce the order based on the unique characteristics of the product type. For example, a business card or flyer has fewer specifications than a book or a magazine with foldout inserts.

After the order is converted into a production job, the content and data files must be retrieved and inserted into the workflow. Files may be attached to the order, submitted using secure FTP, an online file transfer program like WeTransfer, or provided as a reference to a file location on a customer server or a collaborative site like Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, or Dropbox.

Establishing procedures to attach the correct content and data files to the right production job is crucial to avoid costly mistakes, like printing on the wrong substrate or specifying the wrong finishing. Managing customer files using a print or production workflow management system allows automation to be applied to downstream file preparation.

With so many variables involved in every job, what could go wrong is limitless.

Beyond Traditional Onboarding: Make It Personal

Offering marketing and campaign management solutions levers not only your data and content but offers new revenue streams to your print buyers.

High performance, personalized document creation provides effective, often critical, brand aware communications. Graphic designers and print business owners require the toolkit to manage variable data jobs with consistency, regardless of job volume, with speed and ease.

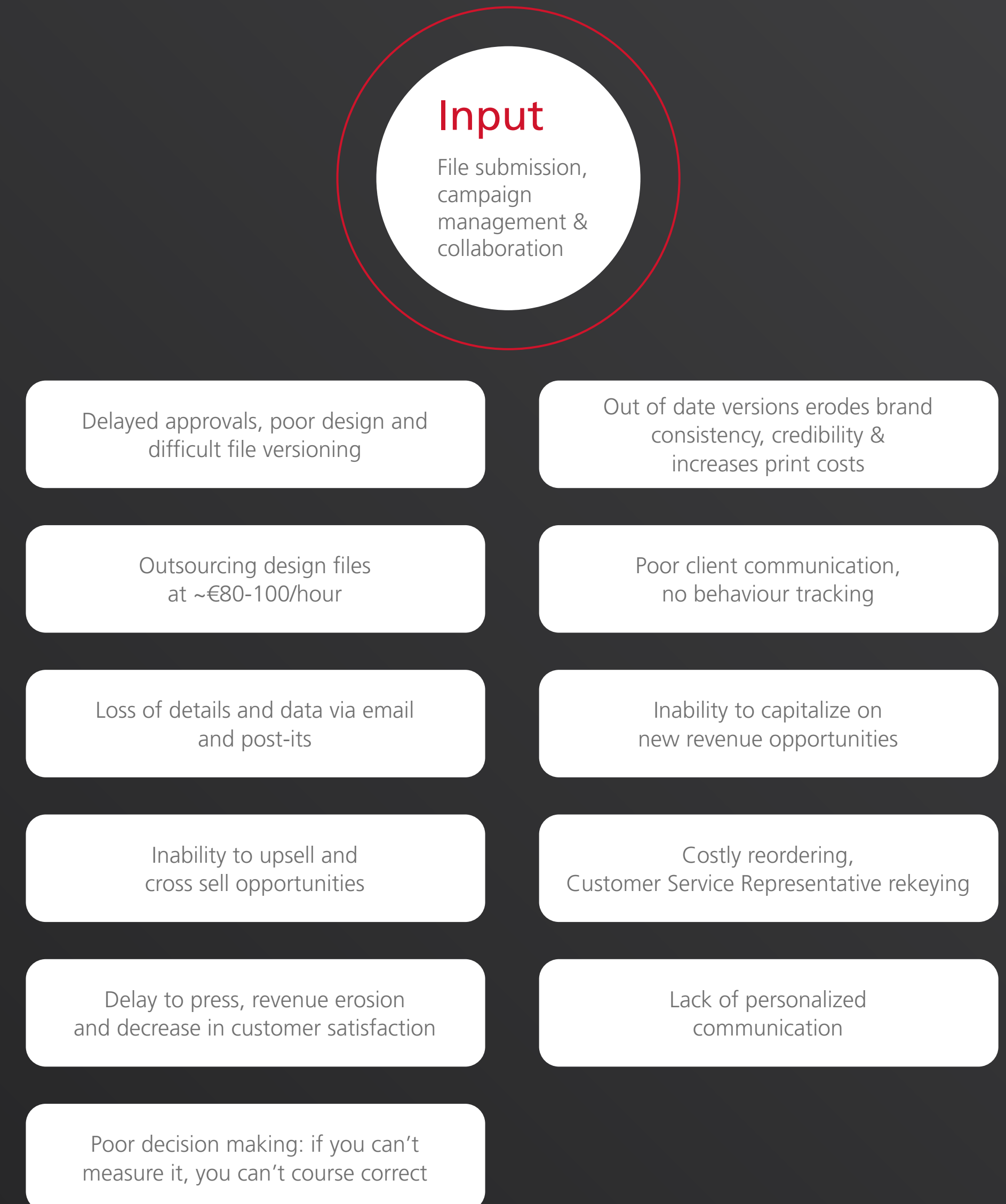
Desktop design and layout tools are often too complex for the average print business, resulting in expensive outsourcing and potentially a lack of versioning and asset control.

Bringing file creation and composition in-house ensures that all content, data, and assets are all within your visibility and control.

Benefits of expanding your marketing toolkit:

- **Pre-set templates for easy creation of impactful communications**
- **Variable data management with intelligent templates**
- **Centralized asset management and versioning control**
- **e-Delivery of press-ready files into production**
- **Creation and delivery of cross-media, traceable campaigns**

The Cost of a Poor Input Workflow:



Eliminate The Hops

When passengers want to save time and increase the ease of travel, they book direct flights instead of multiple connections through several airports. Order entry and job onboarding are similar. In a commercial print business, the fewer hops, or additional processes, that bloat and slow down order intake, job ticketing, and onboarding, the more efficient and cost-effective it can be.

35%
of all printers use email for job submission

Begin with job order entry, which captures the information needed to execute the job. People capturing job specifications creates risk because it's easy to develop a personal shorthand for everything from paper sizes to due dates—the more people taking orders, the greater the variability, delays, and potential for errors. Then, to verify or clarify, there is the usual series of email, chat, and phone conversations to ensure that the details are accurate. Those conversations may happen several times during production as each new touchpoint needs assurances about the intent of the job. Nothing in that process is efficient.

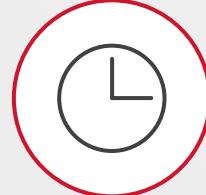
There are several approaches to normalising getting a job onboard, putting the process on autopilot.

Software solutions often have a web-based client portal for users to request reorders and customize RFQs. These portals are directly linked to the estimating and costing processes, guiding users to provide the job specifications needed to enter the job. Many print portals also allow users to upload their artwork and data files for submission into the workflow once converted to a production job. This collaboration eliminates rekeying, using catalogs and pre-set templates to ensure a smooth file upload with limited errors and manual touchpoints.

In an automated print production workflow, applications can allow clients to select common products from a catalog of options. Internal customer service reps (CSRs) can use these same storefronts as a proxy for handling their customers. And internal salespeople can place RFQs or reorders on behalf of their clients instead of sending emails to the CSR that often lack crucial information for quoting and ticketing.

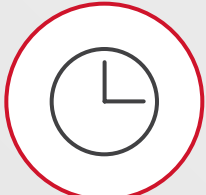
Without INPUT Systems (using email)

- Print buyer emails printer for request for quote with artwork file
- Request sent to manager for approval from CSR
- Quote prepared and sent to estimating
- Manager approval sent back to CSR
- Printer responds to customer for clarifications (loop)
- Clarifications sent to manager for review and quote tweaks
- Order quoted
- Customer is notified and accepts or requests changes (loop)
- Artwork creation and revisions to meet cost requirements
- Artwork approval cycle (loop)
- Final print ready file sent via FTP, email, sFTP, transfer service
- Notification sent to pick up file
- Final review
- Job sign off
- Final files sent to pre-press

 **3-4 days**
reliant on staff being available for email communications and approval cycles

With INPUT Simple Workflow Systems (using eCommerce storefront, pre-set templates, catalog ordering)

- Log into online portal
- Select template
- Collaborate, customize artwork
- Check out, create artwork
- Print job

 **10 minutes – couple of hours**
depending on reorder, existing template, catalog ordering or net new job



The Bottom Line

Think of your print production workflow like the route maps of airlines, with the most efficient path from onboarding to delivery being the one with the fewest stops. It is the same for your job onboarding process. If there are too many methods to request a print, it takes longer to do the work. If the job and file information is not standardized, it makes for an awkward and slow exchange into your workflow processes, leaving your job wide open for errors and reducing your already tight margins.

Benefits for automating your Input workflow:

- **Secured communications protects customer data and your business reputation**
- **Directly connects to customers to speed collaboration and communication**
- **Streamlines order capture requests into a single source versus multiple emails and fractured communications**
- **Eliminates manual intervention and missed details and job data**
- **Artwork creation (no outsourcing)**
- **Job status notifications**
- **Eliminates rekeying reorders**
- **Consistent versioning and personalized communications**
- **Reduces administration costs and frees up staff for revenue-generating activity**
- **Time savings allow more jobs on press**

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Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 80 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2019, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,013 billion yen (approx. 18.1 billion USD).

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