

Print Buying Education Web Sites

Help Meet Today's Communications Challenges

By Bob Wagner

Earlier this year, the organizers of the Eighth Annual 2008 Adobe Design Achievement Awards (www.ADAEntry.com) challenged themselves to produce and distribute their call-for-entry posters in an environmentally friendly manner.

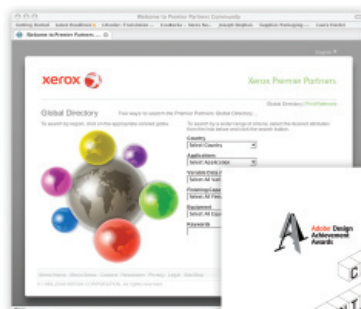
The award program, widely viewed as the industry's most prestigious global student design competition, solicits entries, in part, by distributing about 200,000 posters to 3,000 design schools in 36 countries. In past years, print volume was determined by estimating need, and shipments were made from a single location.

To make that process greener, the organizers turned to the Xerox Graphic Arts Premier Partners, a global network of more than 700 leading digital print providers (www.xerox.com/xpp/pmb1). This year, 14 Xerox Premier Partners in 12 countries served as a distribute-and-print network. To reduce waste, posters were printed on demand as schools ordered them. To reduce distribution energy, shipping was from the network facility closest to the point of need.

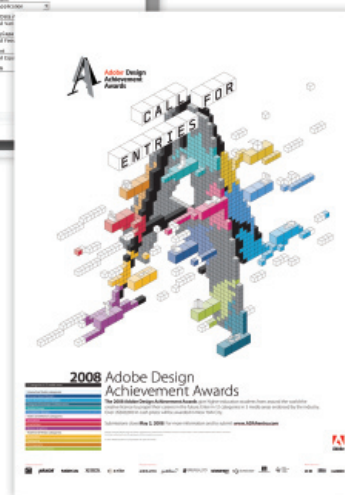
The Adobe team was thrilled. "Social responsibility in design is percolating in a lot of people's minds, not only for using recycled materials, but in thinking of the impact a design will have on the environment," said Claire Erwin, senior marketing manager for programs, Worldwide Education Marketing, Adobe Systems Incorporated, who oversees the competition. "By meeting our need for an environmentally sensitive way to distribute and print our call-for-entry posters, the Premier Partners community enabled us to better connect with our community of student designers."

This creative solution helps to illustrate why digital printing continues to gain favor — and why print buyer sites like www.xerox.com/xpp/pmb1 have currency in today's print buying world.

While most of the print market is growing at low single-digits at best, digital color will nearly double from 2006 to 2011, from \$35.9 billion in retail value of print to \$69.6 billion, a 14% compound annual growth rate, according to the InfoTrends 2006-2011 U.S. Print On Demand Market Forecast. It's no surprise, then, that more print buyers are working with digital printing than ever before. *Graphic Design USA's* annual print survey, released in June, reports that 88% of the magazine's readers buy printing as part of their work, and 77% of them buy, specify or recommend digital printing.



The Xerox Premier Partners Web site provides capabilities-based searches of more than 700 leading print providers with digital expertise from 46 countries on six continents.



The Eighth Annual 2008 Adobe Design Achievement Awards call-for-entry posters were produced with environmentally friendly digital printing processes.

A key reason for the growth is that digital is helping companies meet their communications objectives. Consider:

- As interest in environmental sustainability grows, the innate green qualities of digital printing are being rediscovered. Digital presses use fewer solvents than most offset presses. Digital processes promote conservation, reducing landfill waste and energy required for warehousing and distribution. And personalized printing cuts page volumes by targeting information more precisely, to print only what is needed.
- As marketers seek greater accountability for their campaigns, digital is delivering. Personalization can make pieces relevant to each recipient, boosting response rates and return on investment. Powerful integration with the Web contributes to greater automation that can reduce costs, and to cross-media communications programs that enable precise tracking and often boost results.

The Web's best print buying educational sites can help print buyers tap this value, providing fast and easy access to a world of digital printing solutions. For example, the recently re-launched Xerox Premier Partners Global Directory (www.xerox.com/xpp/pmb1) enables criteria-based searches of 725 leading print providers from 46 countries. It also provides a wealth of resources to help buyers get the most out of their digital printing programs, including case histories, tips, tutorials and links to other useful sites.

A number of other sites also provide useful information for print buyers. Among them are robust offerings from two independent print buying educational organizations: Print Buyers International (www.bostonprintbuyers.com) and Print Buyers Online (www.printbuyersonline.com).

It all adds up to a vital new set of resources for solving this era's most daunting communications challenges. ■

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