

Case Study: University of Leeds

The Current Service

The University has a copyshop service. In addition there is a central print buying service run by the print manager and two assistant print buyers. Within the same section there is a graphics manager and three designers. The University has a framework agreement with six printers (initially there were eight printers) who get the opportunity to tender for all jobs (unless they are a reprint). The printers are a mix of local and more distant suppliers.

There is no mandatory use of the service, though it is estimated that approximately 80% of work goes through Media Services. This includes approximately £950K of litho printing. This has increased following the introduction of a new corporate identity as the printers on the framework agreement are the only ones fully briefed regarding the brand.

The cost of the administration of print buying is met by the University with actual print costs being passed on to internal customers.

Departments lease their own copiers through purchasing agreements but there is no central coordination.

The Journey to the Current Service

The current service resulted from a major review of services at the University. A large print unit was located off campus providing printing services. There had been little investment for 7-8 years. A copyshop was located on the campus which was used by both students and staff. The review resulted in the closure of the print unit, the development of the copyshop facility and the creation of a formal print buying service staffed at levels to meet the University's requirements.

Staff reductions were largely achieved through people moving on and through voluntary arrangements.

The tender list was implemented in 2004 and the University will go out for tender again in 2007.

Positive Messages from this Case Study

The University is accessing more up-to-date equipment, services and expertise by using external printers. Good prices are assured through the mechanisms in place for mini-tenders for jobs.

All work is quality checked in-house. The central service checks all jobs prior to releasing them for delivery to departments. A warehouse facility is used for storage. Maintaining quality is critical to service acceptance and success.

The design studio is now more effective with creative designers able to work to their capability rather than limiting the work to the capability of in-house machines.

From the customers view the change in service from in-house print to outsourced print was seamless. Prices are now more competitive.

The savings as a result of outsourcing all litho print are estimated to be approximately £2 million over a 10 year planning period.

Some Issues

It would have been good to have a better mix of printers from small to large. The current mix is two small format suppliers (B3), one at B2 and three at B1. All with comprehensive in-house finishing. The original intended selection of eight printers worked fine, but having lost two it has obviously limited tender options on occasions.

The University has retained a marketing consultant who was involved in the development of a new corporate identity. The consultants vet all materials for compliance and are paid a retainer. This may need to come in-house in the future.

Acknowledgement

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