



# 6 Questions To Ask Your Print Management Partner

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Great print management efficiently delivers high-quality work at the best possible price while easing the complexities of project management, brand consistency, production specifications, manufacturing and consolidated distribution.

It's also not easy to find. So here are six questions to ask print management providers that will help retailers get what they want.





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## DOES YOUR PRINT MANAGEMENT PROVIDER HAVE REAL PURCHASING POWER?

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**Print Management bolstered by purchasing power means** better pricing. It also means there's a track record for potential clients to review.

Does your potential print management provider own a geographically diverse, extensive and trusted network of partners with a range of specializations who can handle all aspects of a large order? And will it allow the client to see all bids and decide which ones to accept?

It's important to quickly ascertain if your potential print management partner is experienced and effective at scale. If so, you can be more confident that it will receive preferred pricing from its print network. That mutually beneficial relationship ensures no price gouging.

As for purchasing power, Miller Zell is the print procurement agency of record for the world's largest retailer, one known for driving price efficiencies. We get preferred pricing with our network because our partners know us and our clients.



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## DOES YOUR PRINT MANAGEMENT PROVIDER OFFER A DETAILED QUALITY CONTROL POLICY FOR PRESS CHECKS OF OUTSIDE PRINT VENDORS?

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A print management partner must be an expert on visual identity. That's the only way to maintain a client's brand standards. But don't just assume a Quality Control Procedure is in place, one that includes a clear process for press checks of outside print vendors.

A print management provider will reduce defects, damages, re-work, go-backs and costs in all areas. It must apply knowledge and lessons learned to improve and enhance products and services. Without a clearly stated **Quality Management System (QMS)** – one that a client can review—nothing is certain.

For example, if there are multiple print vendors, a proof or press form from the lead printer should be sent to the other printer(s) for color matching. If there are multiple print methods (digital, offset, screen), forms from each different machine should be matched as close as possible and compared before each form is completed.

Miller Zell's QMS includes specific policies for all 4cp jobs, spot jobs, cutting/finishing and packout/fulfillment, as well as a 15-point checklist for kit packing.



## IS YOUR PRINT MANAGEMENT PROVIDER JUST A PRINTER OR DOES IT OFFER PRINT SOLUTIONS?

**Good print management is not just the production** of a print product. It's about transparent management of the full life cycle of the print job, from art files, pre-production, proofs, production, shipping and installation. For a print management partnership to work at a high level, you need:

- A dedicated team of experts who streamline print procurement, ensure brand compliance and add value at every opportunity.
- Customized, intuitive platforms that manage the bidding process and project management.
- Comprehensive savings that go beyond low-bid print by managing the entire enterprise's supply chain, resources and worker hours.
- Fundamental cost transparency with service level agreements (SLAs), internal integration protocols and data security disciplines.

Your print management partner also should become a trusted extension of your marketing and project management teams, which will reduce pressure on your associates.

Finally, your print management partner should audit your current print needs to identify opportunities for print on demand, which provides flexibility, savings in inventory and is easier for individual stores.



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## IS YOUR PRINT MANAGEMENT PROVIDER'S PRICING CLEAR?

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If a print management provider's offer seems too good to be true... it probably is. The guaranteed savings, or "gain share," approach typically touts a no-risk, no-obligation proposition. This model, however, is full of potential pitfalls, such as out-of-scope work, exit & low volume penalties, rush job charges and bulk material buys.

Numbers are simple to manipulate. How does your potential print management provider define print costs, raw costs, logistics and inventory management? And what do they consider "print"? Do they exclude, say, metal, buttons or inflatable décor? And what about "print on demand" items?

With "guaranteed saving models," clients should confirm that agreed-upon Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are measurable and can be independently verified through an internal audit process since performance-based financial savings are anchored in the SLA.





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**IS YOUR PRINT MANAGEMENT PROVIDER A  
RETAIL EXPERT WITH A STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE  
OF THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?**

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**It's one thing to ask a printer to execute and ship** signage and circulars. It's another to partner with a print management team that understands the customer experience in a holistic way, one that knows strategy, design, prototyping, analytics, digital and installation.

For one, logistics expertise is critical with big projects. That means you should ask your partner if it offers a "Ship to 100%" guarantee, which includes managing, tracking and analyzing every package/sign until each is delivered and installed. You can't forget inventory management, fulfillment and replenishment either.

And what happens when the initial print project is complete? Is your print management provider able to strategically analyze the resulting customer interaction and then help with subtle but valuable improvements?

It's not just about delivering print products. It's about delivering complete satisfaction with the in-store experience.



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## WHAT SORT OF PLATFORM DOES YOUR PRINT MANAGEMENT PROVIDER USE AND HOW FLEXIBLE AND TRANSPARENT IS IT?

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It's critical to see and understand the platforms your potential print management partner uses to manage its bidding process with vendors as well as its project management software. Is it intuitive and customizable to your needs? Does it hold specs/artwork? Is it transparent, allowing you to analyze and forecast spending as well isolate it by number of projects, shipping method, etc.? Can it be used as a project management platform for other, unrelated initiatives?

Miller Zell integrates the Noosh platform to manage the bidding process with our proprietary software REACH™ so you can answer “yes” to all of these questions.



## Having the right print management partner can help

you create both store-level impact and financial savings with improved speed to market, tighter quality control and operational efficiencies.

Miller Zell is a fully integrated retail solution company with over 55 years creating optimized customer experiences. While our capabilities are diverse, our roots are in print and print management, so we understand how it and client needs are evolving.

We know properly executed print management enables both retailers and CPGs to increase revenue and operational efficiency in a rapidly changing marketplace. And we know that “Too-Good-To-be-True” print management sales pitches often hide costs and deliver dubious, inconsistent quality.

We root our relationships with clients in honesty and transparency and believe that the more retailers know about print management, the more likely they are to partner with us. Our best sales pitch is information and our track record.





## Believes Passionately in Innovation

Miller Zell is a retail experience solutions company. It partners with retailers to create the ideal customer experience in their stores, offering design, implementation, strategy and support that fosters sales growth amid a complex and changing marketplace. It deploys these solutions at scale, thereby minimizing client risk, cost and operational complexity.

### MILLER ZELL

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