IBM

Communications Data Services Subscribes to IBM.

When magazine publishers and direct mail houses look for resources to print their invoices and subscription fulfillment and renewal forms, they look for a source that's timely, accurate and, above all, cost-effective. That's why more and more customers are looking to Communications Data Services.

Founded in 1972, Communications Data Services (CDS) is a world leader in providing subscription fulfillment, serving a range of publishing, product and direct marketing customers with a wide range of services. Headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa with several remote sites nationwide, CDS provides service for more than 370 publications, representing 95 million subscribers.

Fulfilling Customers' Fulfillment Needs

For years, CDS utilized cold and hot laser technology, in combination with impact printers, to output the millions of direct mail pieces generated each week.

However, as business increased, CDS needed a solution that could accommodate their customers' fulfillment needs while maintaining a competitive edge. The answer was a high-quality printing solution that offered direct mail features, coupled with deadline-driven maintenance and support.

IBM Offers Subscription for Success

After evaluating a number of different solutions, CDS partnered with IBM® in 1995. Based on CDS' need for a printer capable of handling 400-plus jobs a day, IBM turned to its 3900 digital printer - the predecessor to the InfoPrint 4000. By harnessing the power of four IBM 3900 printers, with two offering direct mail features, CDS is now prepared to handle and manage a wider range of forms and paper stocks, in addition to heat-sensitive forms.

With over 4,000 different forms — from thick paper stock to glossy postcards

Application	Subscription fulfillment, distribution, printing and mailing
Software	Advanced Function Presentation™ (AFP™)
Hardware	IBM 3900 digital printer and IBM Network Printer
Services	Maintenance and Technical Support

"Responsive maintenance engineers are key to success at shops like ours. IBM works hard to ensure positive results in each critical situation."

Carolyn Williams, Lettershop Support Director, CDS

and sticky labels — CDS works in partnership with IBM to continually improve their paper handling capabilities and provide high-quality, reliable, cost-saving solutions to meet customer demand. "Our IBM 3900 digital printers have been up and running for two years, printing nearly 3 million feet per month. And they continue to deliver the same reliability and integrity day after day," said Carolyn Williams, Lettershop Support Director, CDS.

IBM's high-speed 3900 digital printer is a pro when it comes to handling diverse information, data streams and graphics. That and the fact that the same data stream or print file can be sent to multiple printers without modification were key factors in CDS' decision to choose IBM

CDS accomodates customers' fulfillment needs and maintains a competitive edge with the high-speed IBM 3900 printer.

technology. In fact, CDS recently purchased an IBM Network Printer to manage random samplings and short run jobs of 50 or less. From mailings by the million to mailings by the hundred or less, CDS now manages them all.

IBM Input Helps Manage Output

To take further advantage of all IBM had to offer, CDS tapped into the exclusive features of Advanced Function Presentation, IBM's architecture for the distribution and presentation of information in multiple forms, across multiple platforms and devices. AFP's open architecture allows the distribution of customized information to customers who need it — when, where and how they need it — enabling CDS to meet and control specific output requirements from specific customers. CDS also controls costs in the process. By using AFP's "Page Positioning" function to print two documents per page instead of just one, CDS prints more information per foot, lowering the cost per page and ultimately adding profit to their bottom line.

Maintenance and Support

With such a short print window and constant pressure to meet deadlines, CDS demanded responsive, on-site maintenance and on-going operating support. And IBM delivered, solving

concerns faster to reduce risk and expense, while offering the day-to-day operating support needed to avoid problems down the road. "Responsive maintenance engineers are key to success at shops like ours. IBM works hard to ensure positive results in each critical situation," said Carolyn Williams, Lettershop Support Director, CDS.
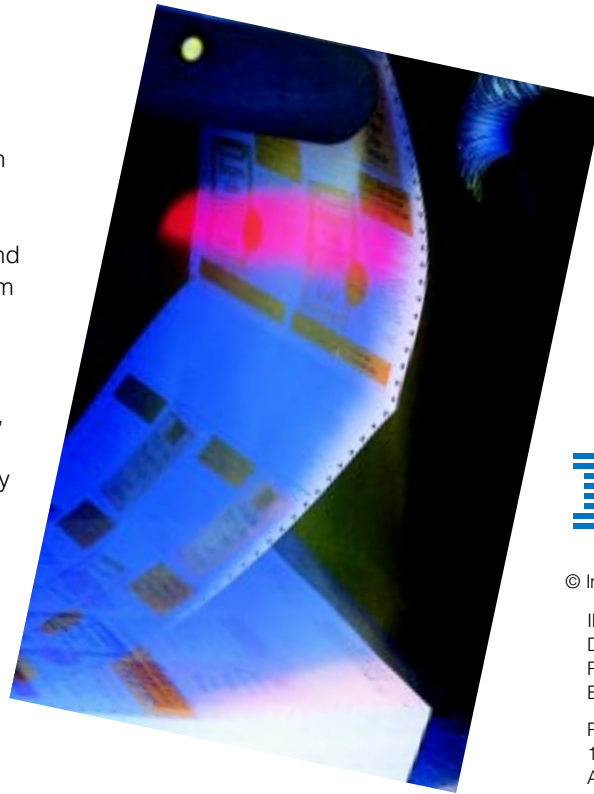
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Expanding to Meet Business Growth

As CDS continues to grow, IBM makes it easy for their print technology to keep pace. The IBM 3900 digital printer is fully scalable, offering the opportunity to add more complex applications. What's more, the IBM 3900 can be upgraded to take advantage of the advanced features and functions of IBM's InfoPrint 4000 Series. And that gives CDS the competitive advantage needed to maintain leadership in the world of subscription fulfillment.