Time is Money: Using agOnline to improve business efficiency

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Technology Makes it Easy

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Time is Money: Using agOnline to Improve Business Efficiency

Getting anything down to a core process makes the task infinitely easier. A mechanic doesn't reinvent the wheel every time he replaces the oil in your car. Instead, he follows the process step-by-step, taking care to check off each step mentally before moving onto the next one. You get an oil change and your mechanic is able to accomplish a routine task quickly and with minimal margin for error.

Running a business smoothly and efficiently is built on a foundation of streamlining processes. You don't have to be a mechanic to reduce routine tasks to process. All you need is the means by which you can lay out all of the steps that culminate in your goal.

This is exactly what agOnline does for businesses of all sizes. This online portal takes ordering everyday branded collateral and simplifies the process, creating operational efficiency for your business.

Introducing agOnline

agOnline is an online print portal that connects your business directly to your local AlphaGraphics franchise. Through agOnline, your business can order marketing collateral, branded documents and other print products on-demand. Portals are completely customized around your business' routine supply demands, so items can be ordered in just a few clicks!

Order

From everyday branded office supplies like letterhead and business cards, to promotional materials you keep stocked, to standard pieces of marketing collateral, agOnline has a record of all your most-used print products. Just log in when your supply gets low and order items as needed. It's the smartest way to track and control your inventory, as well as costs and budgeted items. Plus, with AlphaGraphics' proven quick turnaround times, you'll have your print necessities in just a day or two.

Design

More than just re-ordering staple products, agOnline also opens a direct line of communication between your business and your AlphaGraphics print partner. Upload documents and schedule jobs with ease, planning your next marketing campaign right within the portal. You'll have all of the necessary communication you need to get great printed products, without having to sift through emails or trust a third-party file-sharing system. The centralized nature of the agOnline portal organizes your design concepts so they're always instantly accessible by you and your printer.

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Delegate

Because the agOnline portal is specifically designed and customized for your business, it's possible to set permissions and allocate tasks within the dashboard. Let individual account managers order business cards as needed or centralize supply ordering to your office manager—whatever process fits the hierarchy of your business. AlphaGraphics can even provide purchase histories, inventory reports and cost breakdowns, to help you better track use of the portal by all individual users.

agOnline is more than a portal. It's a process—one that can be instantly integrated into your everyday business operations to create a web-to-print solution that optimizes your business' operations.

Inefficiency Costs Time, Money and More

The biggest benefit of agOnline is the elimination of inefficiencies. Because ordering and communication happens within a controlled environment, many of the inefficiencies that come with the traditional supply ordering process are removed, including:

- **Overstock:** Forgetting about existing inventory and re-ordering unnecessary supplies is the bane of any marketing budget. Through detailed inventory reporting, agOnline can help prevent overstock situations from occurring, saving countless dollars.

- **Miscommunication:** It's easy to get confused via traditional email messaging. With clear-cut ordering criteria that are built into the portal, agOnline eliminates the potential for miscommunication, to ensure you get exactly the materials you need.

- **Double Orders:** What happens when Person A orders materials and forgets to tell Person B? Double orders result in wasted costs and overstock. With permissions and order history available, agOnline makes double orders a thing of the past.

- **Lead Times:** Ordering supplies at the last minute can cause trouble for your business and the printer, due to setup and proofing times. Because agOnline revolves around your stock supplies, time to print is optimized, resulting in quicker turnaround and delivery.

- **Missing Information:** No more forgetting to attach documents or missing assets in design files. With everything pre-loaded to agOnline and ready to order, there's no more back-and-forth necessary to determine missing information.

It may only be a few minutes or a few dollars saved each time you use agOnline, but those savings add up over time. Factor in the time and monetary costs saved by avoiding inefficiencies and the exceptional benefits of an online ordering portal begin to pay for themselves rather quickly.

Pinpoint Your Essentials

What should go into your agOnline portal? Let's reframe the question. What branded items do you utilize on a regular basis? The line items in your office or marketing budget are most generally items that could be managed through agOnline. Core examples for general business operations can include:

- **Letterhead**
- **Envelopes**
- **Folders, binders and folios**
- **Business cards**
- **Brochures**
- **Flyers and leaflets**
- **Catalogs and guides**

As a rule of thumb, any branded office materials that help you sell your business should be easily accessible and ready to order at all times. There's a reason your mechanic always has oil in stock when you go in for service—it's one of the most common procedures people schedule! Being prepared to do business with your own staple supplies is crucial to maintaining operations.

Stock Up on Promotional Items

Many businesses have branded promotional items stocked at all times because the opportunities to utilize these items are plentiful. Having your core promo items registered with agOnline allows you to quickly take a marketing concept to fruition with few barriers and maximum efficiency.

Take something as simple as branded pens and keychains, for example. If your business is tapped for a last-minute marketing opportunity at a local event, it pays to be able to quickly order stock of these items with just the click of the mouse. While you're focused on prepping the logistics of your appearance and formulating a strategy, your marketing collateral will be taken care of.

The same goes for apparel and other popular pieces of tangible marketing. Whether you're low on stock after a recent event or you're looking ahead to plan for an upcoming campaign, using agOnline to manage stock of promotional materials streamlines this task and optimizes efficiency as you focus your efforts on execution.

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Collaborate in Seamless Fashion

When designing marketing collateral, many businesses simply budget for the cost of creation—few also factor in the time spent collaborating on that design. The back-and-forth of reviewing a concept, combined with time spent getting all of the materials together, eventually adds up on top of the paper cost of production.

agOnline works to keep the actual cost of collateral creation as close as possible to the quoted price of design. By collaborating directly with an AlphaGraphics design and print professional through the portal, there's less back and forth required to take projects from concept to fruition. On top of this, it acts as a central hub for all materials and feedback, so there's less time spent searching for information as the design process is underway.

Closed Ordering Environment

Not only does agOnline promote quick and concise collaboration, it also corrals everything within a controlled environment. Instead of having to link things via Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive, businesses can put all of the necessary collateral in agOnline. This reduces confusion and saves time spent hunting down the right materials for a new design project. Everything is right there, exactly where it needs to be.

Beyond just assembling design collateral in one place, the portal also serves to be a recordkeeping process for your marketing creations. Was that banner from last summer especially successful? It's easy to go back and see the creative elements that went into it if it was developed through agOnline! Just have your local AlphaGraphics franchise take that documented concept and collateral and create a similar product for your upcoming campaign, to replicate its success.

Finally, in a world where digital security is more important than ever, agOnline provides your business with a secure environment for all of its ordering needs. The portal is only accessible to you and anyone you give permissions to, as well as your AlphaGraphics representative. This makes for a one-to-one collaboration tool that doesn't involve sending unsecure links or login information that could be compromised.

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Delegate with Transparency

Any good business manager knows that delegation is the key to success. You can't do everything yourself, so it's important to parcel out tasks to others who can accomplish them. If your car needs multiple services, any good mechanic is going to enlist the help of other shop personnel to get more done, quicker.

agOnline gives you the ability to further streamline the ordering process, even within an environment that's already optimized for simplicity. Assign order permissions to one or many entities within your business to ensure everyone has the collateral they need. Some examples of the efficiency power that can come with delegation include:

- **Account Managers:** With each having their own business cards, letterhead and other stock supplies, it can be prudent for individual account managers to do their own ordering as necessary. Providing each with an agOnline login not only allows them to access their specific materials, but also order them on demand.

- **Office Managers:** For a single-point solution to ordering, delegate agOnline management to your office manager. Not only can this person keep your office stocked in an oversight capacity, they can also prevent any miscommunication that can come from shared duties or ordering tasks.

- **Department Heads:** With different departments come different collateral needs. Sales may burn through business cards, while HR may need envelopes quicker than other departments. Giving department heads logins delegates ordering to each department, allowing them the ability to order as-needed in their own capacity.

- **Location Managers:** Have several business locations in the same city, all of which share the same AlphaGraphics franchise partner? Assigning logins to each location can help make sure each is able to manage its own materials, and that there's no confusion between the locations.

Thanks to robust inventory reporting and asset tracking capabilities, no matter what level of delegation you opt for, it's always possible to get the facts and figures that come with stock and budget.

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Automate Your Marketing Success

Automation is the quickest and easiest way to improve efficiency within your business. Developing processes ensures errors are minimized, costs are maximized and operations are streamlined. When it comes to ordering everyday business supplies and marketing collateral, agOnline offers a proven process that can be dropped into your business' operations with ease.

Not only will agOnline save time and money, it'll minimize errors and maximize productivity— all while ensuring your business is stocked with the appropriate supplies and marketing collateral needed to continue your pursuit of success. Let agOnline and your local AlphaGraphics franchise make ordering collateral as easy as getting an oil change. It starts by setting up your portal.

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