



PRESENTATION IS EVERYTHING

BY JANE SMITH

Proliferation of more user-friendly desktop applications and affordable home and office printing bring with them higher expectations in terms of the presentation of documents, which makes it big business – If it's big business then how do you make sure your customer chooses the right product and then ensure you win the repeat consumables business?



Emma Crellin, UK marketing manager, Fellowes says, "Both binding and laminating markets are expanding – binding is growing as more information is sent electronically and then printed and professionally bound within the office by individual users. The increasing market for lamination has stemmed from increasing awareness of the benefits that lamination can bring – preserving and enhancing photos, drawings and personal and business documents. Fellowes' new range of machines make it simple for users to select a stylish, easy to use machine that will meet all their requirements."

Esselte concur with this view and added the view that the proliferation of more user-friendly desktop applications and affordable home and

office printing bring with them higher expectations in terms of the presentation of documents. They see two new groups of consumers – mobile corporate users who are looking for innovation. People prepared to pay for branded products with the design and flair. The other is the home and student user. The days of putting a staple in the corner of a document and giving it to the teacher or local community association are fast disappearing. Image, lifestyle and professionalism are increasingly important and this is reflected in the way that documents are produced on the computer and presented.

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business? We also spoke to other main brands. Esselte, Rexel and GBC who like Fellowes have also developed easy to understand, stylish product ranges and guides to help you and your customer choose the right product.

LAMINATION

It's a fact! More people are laminating than ever before.

Jill Organ, senior category manager, business machines at Rexel made this observation, "I am constantly amazed at the inventive ways people use laminating machines. Laminators are commonly used for notices, certificates, menus and frequently handled documents like telephone lists. Our research shows new uses including laminating

children's artwork to create posters or placemats for the home, laminating knitting patterns and even for creating see-through birthday cards."

On a more serious note what is making the market grow? High quality colour printers and DTP software are now more affordable so professional looking documents are easier to produce. In addition consumers are now more aware of the benefits – to protect and preserve documents against dust and dirt, fingerprints, rips, spills and general deterioration. Wipe clean and tamper-proof, lamination also enhances colour so is particularly effective on photographs and drawings.

In order to decide the best product to go for first of all decide how often you are likely to use the laminator. Remember to build in some scope

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for increased usage as, quite often, once you begin to see the benefits of lamination, so you will probably laminate more. Also consider the maximum size of the document you wish to laminate, from A6 to A1. You can choose from a pouch laminator or a roll laminator. Most personal and office machines are of the pouch variety but a roll laminator means you can cut to size according to the document to be laminated which gives greater flexibility in document sizes. This is generally a better option for a high volume need such as a central department. Whilst first time users tend to buy out of interest due to affordability, second/third time buyers already know what they want from a machine; faster results, multifunctional, and easy to use. Currently machines with hot/cold/photo settings all in one with carrier/carrier free option are the most sought after.

From a sales perspective remember that the right machine for your customer is one thing but the consumables business for you is going to be where the sales value and margin lies. The list of different products is quite extensive with a number of different qualities. In fact own brand is quite prevalent too, so you should be competitive enough to win the business. Some machines are supplied with a starter pack of pouches but perhaps you could bundle more consumables in with the machine with a quotation and a re-order form to make sure you get the business?

BINDING MACHINES

This is a smaller market size than laminating, with fewer products being sold into the retail channel.

How a document looks says a lot about the person who produced it – people do judge a book by its cover.



However it is still a growth area, mainly in small format, portable machines and electric binders. Comb binding still dominates accounting for approx 65% of all machine sales, with other methods such as wire, coil, perfect binding and thermal binding following behind.

It is interesting to note that actually there are some important considerations in choosing the best method of binding depending on what you are trying to achieve with the document. GBC's selection guide proved useful to us in understanding the benefits of different methods. For example if you are producing a working document that needs to be frequently amended then it is better to use say a comb, coil or strip binding method. If you want the document to open 360 degrees then wire binding is best, as a comb bind will only allow the document to lie flat.

As far as the right machine is concerned then the principles that apply are similar to those for laminating. It's about frequency of use, size of document and whether you want electronic punching or not. "Consumers want better-looking, easier to use machines – so there are opportunities to sell up," comments Organ from Rexel. She also went on to explain that consumers want more modern/stylish cover options, which means growth and margin opportunities.

So, apart from the traditional black, blue, red and white, binding combs, wires and covers, a new generation of products are being launched in funky new duotones and metallics. Like laminators, binding machines use lots of consumables. Free starter kits do come with some machines, but why not offer a few samples to get the next consumables order. Get hold of the latest new cover options and demonstrate them to your customer. How a document looks says a lot about the person who produced it – people do judge a book by its cover. ■