

# Preface

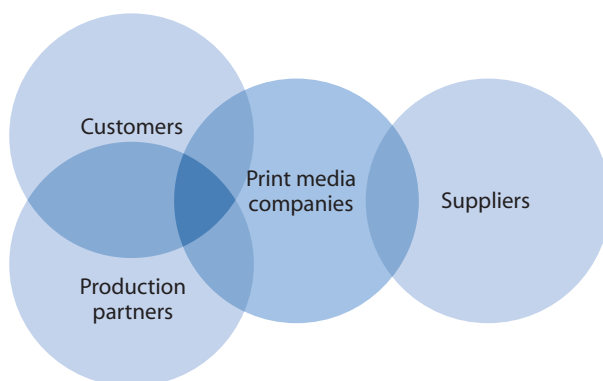
*The ship shears on through billowing seas  
Carried on tempest's wings with ease  
A cry of joy goes up from fore and aft:  
"Our destination is within our grasp!"  
But the helmsman's words are lost in the throng:  
"We've been sailing in circles all along."  
Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach*

This book has been written as an aid to anyone in the print media industry, be they managers or customers, who is looking to steer their business into calmer waters in what are stormy times. New technologies offer tremendous opportunities for innovation and process improvement – but only if we understand the fundamental principles behind them. This is the goal of this book.

To this end, we will be looking at how best to network the print media industry with its customers, production partners and suppliers.

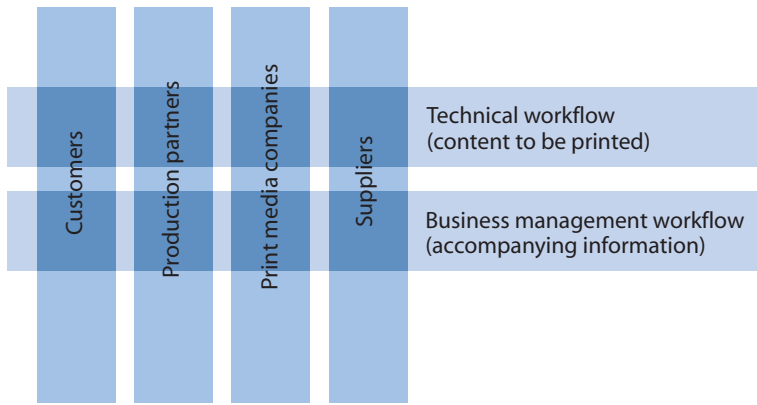
This networking process covers the production data that can be transferred entirely digitally as far as the press stage, i. e. the digital page to be printed (referred to below as the “technical workflow”), but also the information, communication and interaction processes which take place before, during and after production, e.g. details of the print run or the planned delivery date (referred to below as the “business management workflow”).

Inter-company networking of the various market players using Internet technology is known as “e-business” in commercial and management circles.



*Figure 1  
Persons involved in  
a production process*

Figure 2  
Inter-company  
networking



There are three ways of looking at e-business in the print media industry:

- From the perspective of the print media company which supplies both paper-based and Internet-based media products – and thereby generates additional sales through e-business (new products and services);
- From the perspective of customers of print media companies who are interested in enhancing cooperation with their service providers (process innovation for cutting customer costs) and
- From the perspective of the print media company which uses e-business to improve its own marketing, sales, production and purchasing operations (process innovation to cut costs in print media businesses).

This book provides an overview of all three of these perspectives. Following an introduction covering the basic concepts of e-business, Chapter 1 will look at *new products and services* that print media businesses can offer their customers for their e-business operations. This chapter provides decision makers in printing businesses with an overview of possible product innovations. Customers of print media businesses will also find it useful, since it sets out the services that they can expect from the print media industry in addition to pure and simple printing – often enabling them to reap considerable synergies to paper-based production.

Chapter 2 – *Enhancing process efficiency by integrating customers in production* – focuses on the benefits of close cooperation with the customer. It puts forward solutions for how e-business can help customers and print media companies to cut process costs and work together more effectively.

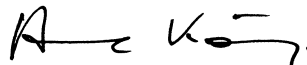
Chapter 3 – *E-business for buyers* – looks at applications that help buyers to work more efficiently with multiple print media companies.

Chapter 4 – *E-business for printshops* – is targeted primarily at managers in print media businesses. It offers solutions for cutting process costs in marketing, sales and purchasing (procurement).

My aim in writing this book is to provide the reader with a comprehensive account of the solutions currently available. Where technologies are available on the market that help illustrate the fundamental concept being discussed, the supplier in question will be named, though no attempt will be made to evaluate the supplier. The question of which products or process innovations covered in this book should be used in a particular business depends very heavily on the company's job and customer structure. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to provide answers that apply to all cases. To illustrate this point, the very thought of using order tracking to enable customers to monitor the progress of his print job may sound absurd to some printers, particularly if they have less than six hours anyway to process a job. Another printer who is happy to give customers the means to make changes while print production is in progress can strengthen his market position considerably by using such technology. Once again, some print companies may consider the move to becoming a "cross-media company" a key strategic element, while others may take quite the opposite view.

I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the students of the Printing and Media Technology program at the University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany, for their assistance in researching this book. Details of this program can be found online at [www.tfh-berlin.de/~dmt](http://www.tfh-berlin.de/~dmt).

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