Case study: EFI and PICASSO JASPER

Picasso Jasper is a subscription box company that pairs tees and tanks with sage and stones to create gorgeous, purposeful boxes for the mystically minded. The business launched in 2015 with a goal to inspire people across the globe on their spiritual journeys. In 2020, Picasso Jasper saw strong growth driven partly by the same factors that drove growth for other subscription boxes, including increased online shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2023, Picasso Jasper now faces new challenges. Consumers are no longer content staying at home so many are focusing on travel or treating themselves to experiences. The change in consumer behavior means that subscription box services must find new ways to drive organic traffic and engage subscribers to stay relevant and profitable.

One way Picasso Jasper looked to do this was by elevating its unboxing experience. The solution was to partner with Complete Design & Packaging in Concord, North Carolina, which uses EFI Nozomi print technology to provide innovative digital corrugated printing solutions.

Background

Subscription box services remain popular today after a strong surge during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, households turned to online shopping options to increase safety during the pandemic, with beauty and household goods subscription boxes amid the most popular.

In 2021, almost 80% of customers said they were interested in auto-renewing subscriptions of some sort, and the market for subscription boxes is expected to grow to $73.6 billion by 2028. That's up from $28.1 billion in 2022 attribution.

As the market increases — and becomes more competitive — and the drivers from 2020 and 2021 decrease, subscription box services must find new ways to drive organic traffic and build subscriber bases. Packaging plays a critical role in creating brand identity, building positive customer experiences, and driving the kind of organic traffic that supports growth.

User engagement and organic social shares, for example, are critical marketing components for many subscription boxes. Unboxing videos, reviews, and other social shares drive audience interest in a brand. Package graphics that increase visual appeal on social media increase the likelihood that influencers will engage in this important behavior.

Picasso Jasper's Goals and Challenges

Melissa Lent, Picasso Jasper's founder, notes that 2020 was a different time for the brand. "People were home, they were gifting themselves, and it allowed us to grow so quickly," she says. "They had a little bit more of a discretionary income."

She compares that environment with the market Picasso Jasper faces in 2023. "Now, things are different. Lives are busy. Vacations are happening; things are changing."

Picasso Jasper needed fresh traffic, but Lent notes that driving cold traffic with paid advertising is expensive. The business needed to maximize organic traffic, including unboxing videos and social shares.

Lent and her team began to look for solutions that would:

- Build new traffic gains, as organic traffic hit a plateau as the pandemic ended
- Support retention of existing subscribers by reducing churn
- Drive user engagement overall and especially on social channels
- Grow the subscriber base in cost-effective ways

The Picasso Jasper team knew one thing: Driving traffic and engagement while building trust in a box when people couldn't see the products before they purchased was a key challenge. Lent knew they had to maximize the effects of organic and other traffic to achieve that goal.

EFI and Digital Corrugated Printing Technology

Electronics for Imaging (EFI)'s expertise in digital printing solutions for corrugated helped solve Picasso Jasper's challenge. Digital printing solutions offer a number of benefits compared to traditional printing methods, and while working with Complete Design & Packaging, Picasso Jasper leveraged those benefits for the purposes of brand awareness and subscription box growth.

TRADITIONAL PRINTING METHODS	DIGITAL CORRUGATED PRINTING TECHNOLOGY
Requires plates and limits colors	No plates and unlimited colors
More time needed for set up	Less set up for faster turnaround
No variation in graphics	Unlimited graphics variation
Minimum Order Quantities (MOQs)	No Minimum Order Quantities (MOQs)

In short, digital corrugated printing allows for more flexibility and dynamic graphics and packaging.

Case Study Design and Methodology

Picasso Jasper and EFI partnered for a 3-month study. Each month, subscribers would receive a box with different graphics, a call to action, and personalization. One of the main goals was to drive user-generated content for greater organic reach.

Lent and her team were excited by the partnership. "I think it's going to be a game changer," said Lent. "The surprise and the delight — the start of that by seeing that box, by getting that box."

The exterior of the boxes were designed to be engaging and beautiful, but it was the inside of the boxes that really drove excitement for Lent. "I'm so excited by the opportunity to do versioning and to offer really cool experiences," she said.

Discussing one of the boxes, she said, "So, with this box, we wanted to go super plain on the outside, although still gorgeous, and then the surprise is on the inside, where it's this vibrant bouquet. And not everyone is getting the same bouquet, and I think that is going to be spectacular."

> **"I think it's going to be a game changer"**

Results, Value and Impact

The results, in fact, were pretty spectacular.
By leveraging digital corrugated printing technology, Picasso Jasper was able to drive cost-effectiveness while also engaging more users.

Reduced Cost

Digital printing on corrugated can be overall less expensive than traditional printing when you include all cost factors. ″The cost of digital printing is associated with the amount of ink being used, not the number of colors being used,″ says Kerry Sanders, Vice President of Market Development at EFI. ″With traditional printing, it's all about the number of colors being used because there are plates involved. If you do a good job of design — with an eye on how much ink that design might take — you can substantially reduce costs.″

Kerry goes on to explain that in the context of digital, other cost factors vs analog printing need to be considered like make ready labor, warehousing of long runs, and waste related to design changes. The favorable cost delta between digital vs analog gets even more pronounced when you add variation into your design.

Increased Engagement and Subscriber Base

Instagrammable content — or products that look good on YouTube, TikTok and other influencer channels — is valuable to users. So, a subscription box that's pleasing and exciting to look at — and share with followers — drives organic traffic on such channels.

Picasso Jasper found this to be true when they implemented digital printing. The figures speak for themselves. After the 3-month case study, Picasso Jasper experienced the following:

6.11%
INCREASE IN INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

2.88%
INCREASE IN FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

8-14%
INCREASE
in monthly shares and likes

Success went beyond organic shares, though. Picasso Jasper improved monthly subscription growth rates by 2 percentage points for a cumulative growth improvement of 6 percentage points.

Results Of Pilot On Social Followers

Before the Pilot		After the Pilot	
Instagram followers	9,260	Instagram followers	9,826 +6.11%
Facebook followers	37,256	Facebook followers	38,329 +2.88%

Faster Turnaround Times

"What's really good about digital printing is...no plates are involved for the process," notes Sanders. "Each month [Picasso Jasper] can use a different design guideline...as well as a different graphics per box. And it's very easy for digital to accommodate those changes."

This is a game-changer for subscription box models. With traditional printing, these types of design changes could take weeks to enable. But with digital, Picasso Jasper can make changes to accommodate its box contents and subscriber needs quickly and effectively every single month.

Design Flexibility

The ability to create unique content for each month's box supported a level of engagement that wasn't possible with traditional printing. For example, Lent and her team involved their audience in designs for one month by asking people to send in pictures of their favorite sunsets.

Lent notes that they received hundreds of responses. The Picasso Jasper team selected images submitted by subscribers and included them in the box's design.

"They absolutely loved it," said Lent, referring to the subscriber response. "They loved seeing our pictures, they loved seeing their friends' pictures, and they were from all over the United States and maybe a couple other countries. So, yeah, it was definitely a big buzz."

More Variation and Personalization

EFI's technology allows for more than design flexibility for each monthly box. With shorter runs more economical, Lent and her team can personalize boxes so that each one or group of boxes is unique. One way they use this option is with QR codes.

"We included a QR code, so we can measure the amount of activity that is happening through this QR code," said Lent. "But we can also change this out, so you might get a playlist or you might win a gift. There's endless possibilities tied to this."

All of this attention to design and engagement had an impact. Monthly reviews were up 4% to 7% during the study, and many included mentions of the box itself. One 5-star review said:

> Just got my second one, and I have to say, I'm totally digging them. The T-shirts are super soft ❤ and the diffuser oil that they sent with my latest box, I'm absolutely in love with! **I even love the boxes they come in too.** If you haven't tried them yet, you should. You won't be disappointed.

Sustainability

Digital printing in general produces less waste plus it uses less energy and water, but Lent's team also designed their boxes with sustainability in mind. They were designed to be used again for storage.

Lent is excited about the opportunity for the subscription boxes to be more than just one-and-done marketing gimmicks. "These boxes were designed so that they could be repurposed for storage," she notes. "A lot of people are using them for their art supplies, for their crystals, or whatever. So, the QR codes are going to continue to get scanned. The box is going to continue to get eyeballs."

"We're seeing that they're not just keeping one box every 6 months," Lent says. "They want to keep every single box because they look different. They're pretty. They're inside printed. They're different sizes."

Takeaway Insights

By leveraging EFI's state-of-the-art digital corrugated printing tech, Picasso Jasper was able to boost organic traffic and subscriptions by customizing subscription boxes in an efficient and eco-friendly way. Advanced printing technology has benefits for all types of markets, from subscription boxes to retail to manufacturing and wholesale.

Connect with EFI to explore the opportunities that digital corrugated printing might hold for your business.