



Print Service
Provider Edition

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Ricoh Software & Services | Ecosystem eBook Series

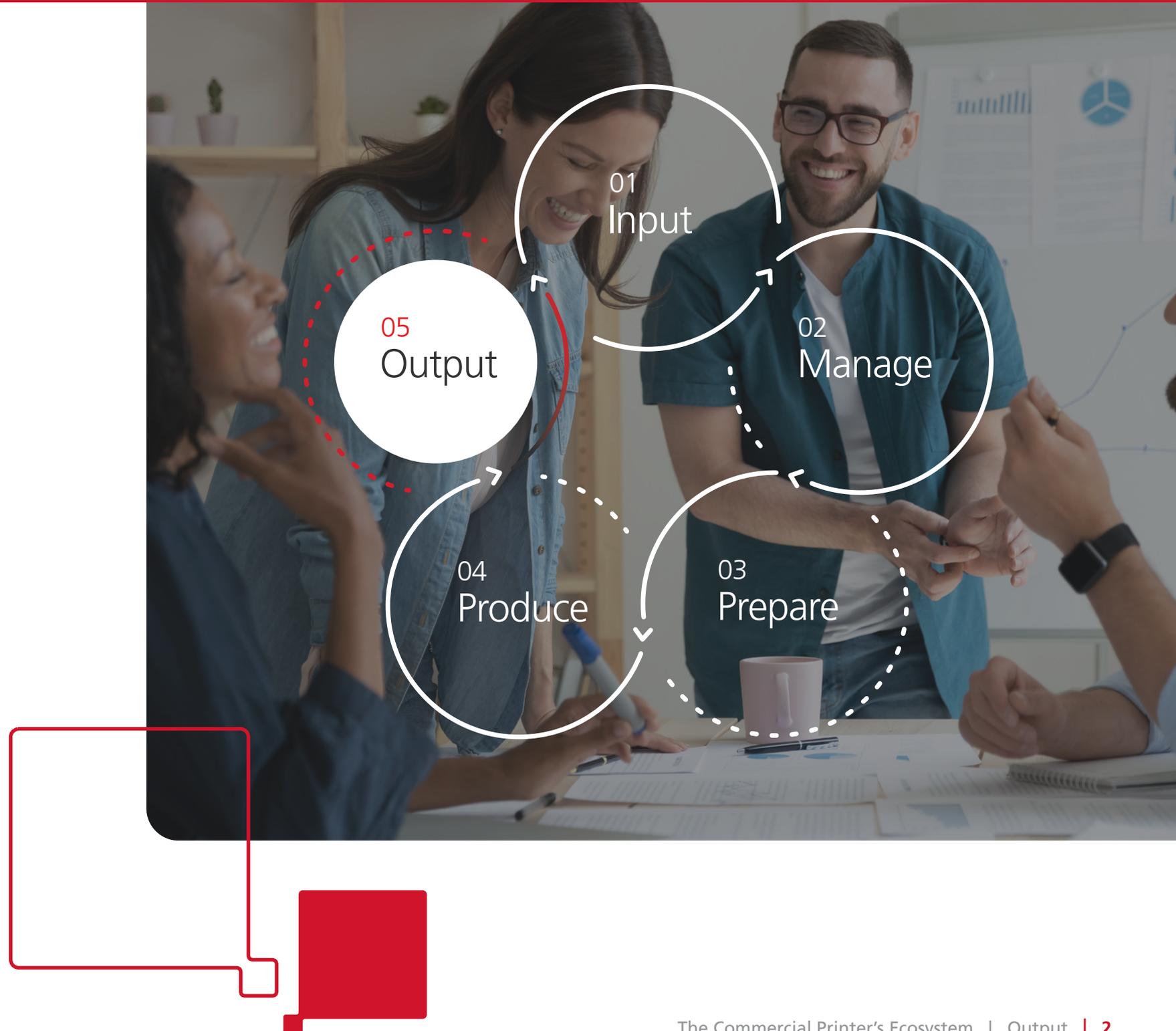
Output: Ensuring a Smooth Landing for a Quick Turnaround

Ensuring a Smooth Landing for a Quick Turnaround

You can imagine the scenario: the drinks and peanuts have been served. The passengers are just waiting for the plane to come to a full and complete stop before deplaning at their destination. While the passengers are weaving their way to baggage claim or ground transportation, the pilots are going through their post-flight checklist to prepare the plane for the next crew and share any potential maintenance issues that occurred during the flight. The checklist and processes ensure the plane is ready for a quick turn at the gate after addressing any potential safety issues.

Like most print operations, commercial printers move onto the next job in the queue, and sometimes in different shifts, as quickly as possible without giving much thought to the ones just completed. What's done is done, and you are on to the next job. As a result, continuous improvement becomes aspirational without any follow-through. Once the job is finished and delivered, critical next steps for success are easy to overlook or pass over if thorough processes, accountability, and oversight are not in place.

Pro tip: As a best practice, implement a quick, straightforward 5-step checklist after completing every print job.



The 5-Step Checklist for Completed Jobs

Step 1: Estimate versus actual costs.

Controlling production costs is critical to maintaining profitability. The quote generated for the customer must be accurate, and it must be adjusted if costs are consistently overrunning the original estimate.

A consistent check of the estimate versus actual cost report is a quick way to spot outlier and determine if they are one-off issues or part of a more significant trend where your workflow's cost centers and structures need to be adjusted.

Be sure to include change order requests and charges for the added costs for optimum accuracy.

Step 2: On-time performance.

Meeting or exceeding delivery dates is one of the most critical production metrics.

Delivering work at or ahead of schedule ensures high customer satisfaction and avoids any contractual penalties that might be part of failing part of a service level agreement (SLA). On-time performance can be tracked per job but is also a helpful metric when measured daily, weekly, and monthly for all work completed. An average-to-high on-time delivery ratio means print production is humming along, but a lower percentage signifies production issues related to staffing, capacity, equipment uptime, or similar disruption points.

Pro tip: Find and correct the issue causing delays before they compound and cause scheduling and capacity chaos.

Step 3: Find systemic operational bottlenecks.

Many discrete processes and cost centers are required for any print job, from prepress to finishing. One botched process can be the difference between timely and late delivery, not to mention potential cost overruns. Review the shop floor data, ideally collected using a print management information system (MIS), to identify departments or specific processes that took longer than expected.

Questions to ask?

- How did this job delay compare to past job production averages?
- Was the delay a one-time event, or is there a systemic pattern?
- Do you see a systemic problem to locate and correct the root cause, or do you need more information?

Pro tip: Spot the time outliers using an estimate versus actual report from the print MIS, specific queries, or business intelligence dashboards fed by shop floor data. It will save you time and money.

Step 4: Utilization benchmarks.

Maximizing resources and optimizing investments is critical to managing the potential volatility in orders, the fluctuation in print volumes, and changes in staffing requirements. In addition, because order and print volumes are impacted by external forces and by partnerships with technology-focused companies offering printed products, from ink to substrates, the cost of materials will fluctuate, meaning other variable costs must be minimized.

Optimizing labor and improving equipment uptime and effectiveness are two paths to improving operational performance.

So how can we address this?

Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) is an established metric to measure the health of the print operation. OEE compares the printed products' actual time, speed, and quality versus the theoretical maximum available based on the production conditions. In this case, the quality measurement refers to the defect rate instead of print image quality. Research in the manufacturing industries shows that improving any of these production elements results in more efficiency. An OEE score of 100% indicates that the shop floor produces defect-free print as fast as possible and that your systems have 100% uptime.

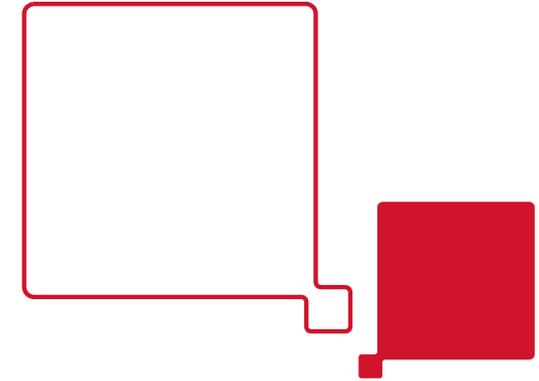
Pro tip: Capturing the data required for these metrics is best done using a print MIS solution or a data analytics tool with customizable, visual dashboards.

Step 5: Accounting reconciliation.

After identifying any cost adjustments, it is vital to close the loop on invoice creation and how to bill the customer effectively. Any alterations charged to the customer should happen immediately so an invoice can be created once the job is completed.

Accounts receivable should be reviewed regularly, ideally monthly, to ensure all jobs have been billed and payment received.

In all workflow assessments, the time to generate invoices and bill customers is a common issue that can easily be corrected using checklists and automated software to speed up the processes after the job is completed.



The Bottom Line

When the print job is complete and delivered, there are a few critical last steps to check off to ensure customer satisfaction and correct any issues.

Please verify that the job was delivered on time, ran efficiently through the shop floor without bottlenecks or delay, and that it is accounted for financially. If you consider these five steps as the mandatory checklist, other following jobs can quickly and more efficiently add to your bottom line.

If you're ready to optimize your production output, [contact us](#) for more information and how a workflow assessment may help determine your workflow needs.



About Ricoh

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 80 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2019, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,013 billion yen (approx. 18.1 billion USD).

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