

Quality can be a SNAP

By Frank Bourlon

The Newspaper Association of America's Specifications for Newsprint Advertising Production (SNAP) certification program has been on my mind recently after several newspapers contacted me about the process.

Some newspapers are investigating the program because they feel the need to improve their print quality; others are doing it to please their advertising customers. But although newspapers reasons to learn more about SNAP might vary, the end results will be the same: better print quality. The ad customer can be assured its ads are consistent and will reflect the highest print quality, day in and day out.

But, as advertisers like to say, there is more. SNAP certification not only improves print quality, it also educates all those involved in the process.

The prepress staff will better understand their equipment, software and its operation more thoroughly.

Press operators, meantime, will gain an understanding of the benefits of a clean and well-maintained machine and will become more familiar with how a press functions mechanically.

Teamwork

Throughout the production floor, staff members learn about the importance of communications and teamwork and understand how each department can affect the overall product.

Another benefit: SNAP certification can eliminate the need for expensive press audits since many print problems are found while preparing for the certification process.

Do you want to print excellent quality and maintain the print quality constantly? Become SNAP certified. SNAP will help you find the color profile that matches your prepress to your press. SNAP certification will show you how much better you can print on a regular basis. Customer satisfaction should always be the number one goal. SNAP certification will demonstrate to your advertising customers how committed you are to improving the print quality of their ads.

Finally, SNAP certification is absolutely one of the best ways to tune up the production of all your printed products.

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Calibration of the prepress system is essential in performing the SNAP certification exercise, which means cameras, scanners, imaging software, proofing devices, image-setters and computer-to-press devices will be at their peak operating condition.

Quality driver

The wonderful thing about the SNAP certification process is that it is one of the best ways that I know of to improve your ability and to truly understand and control the print quality of your newspaper.

Take pride in the product that you produce. Make it the best product in the nation and know that when you become SNAP certified you are part of an elite group striving to produce newspapers that are the best the nation has to offer.

How much will the SNAP certification cost? The fee to become SNAP certified is only \$95; however, the real cost is how much you will have to spend preparing for the test and how much will be spent running the test. The question should be, however, how much will it cost not to be SNAP certified?

Have I convinced you to become SNAP certified? Then snap to it and raise the bar at your print site.

Frank Bourlon has more than 30 years' experience in the newspaper industry. He is the executive and training director for the Newspaper Production & Research Center.