



The last decade has been filled with accelerated consolidation across a wide variety of industries. And the printing industry is no exception. Mergers and acquisitions large and small are *everywhere*, chiefly due to the prevalence of small and medium-sized businesses within the industry.

[Over the past 5 years, 47,153 PSPs have closed or been acquired.](#) Some see this as an opportunity, but, for many print service providers, this rampant consolidation is causing concern. Independent and family-owned businesses are wondering how long *remaining* independent will be practical.

Small to medium-sized providers have one key advantage over larger businesses: flexibility. As an independent business owner, you're empowered to innovate and experiment in ways that many larger organizations are not. Here are some steps small to medium-sized providers can take that will have them going toe-to-toe with even the largest competitors.

Go Green

Consumer preferences are trending toward sustainability, and that means PSPs must work to overcome the assumption that an industry founded on *paper* is inherently unsustainable. Thankfully, the printing industry was one of the first to begin implementing sustainable practices. [The North American paper industry already plants more trees than it cuts, and 39% of papermaking fiber comes from recycled paper.](#)

PSPs have a variety of options if they wish to go green, including using responsibly sourced paper, switching to soy or vegetable-based inks, and reducing waste by adopting technologies like [print-on-demand](#).

Invest in Automation

Investing in automation allows you to remain competitive without spending a fortune on new equipment or employees. Consider incorporating a web-to-print system into your business model. This will allow your clients to design, submit, and pay for orders on your website. Not only does this offer additional convenience to your customers, it frees up your staff to work on more advanced and lucrative projects.

Web-to-print was once the sole territory of multi-million-dollar organizations, but recent advancements have made the technology available to independent PSPs. An added bonus of investing in a web-to-print solution is that payment is collected when the order is placed instead of when it's completed, boosting cash flow.

Reduce Your Rates

The number one thing small to medium-sized PSPs can do to stay competitive is keep costs down, while still offering the personal attention that large organizations can't. But, in order to keep pricing competitive for clients, businesses must confirm they're not overpaying *their own* vendors.

Take credit card processing. This service has many benefits to print companies, but because of the unique way PSPs handle cards, it's common for them to be overcharged. Most PSPs see a mix of business coming from consumers, other businesses, and the government.

What many *don't* know is that rates on business and purchasing cards are generally more expensive if certain additional data is not submitted with a transaction. Utilizing a processing method that allows you to qualify for the lowest rates, whether you're swiping or manually entering card information, can save thousands of dollars a year. Click [here](#) to learn more about how to qualify for lower rates.

Final Thoughts

Small businesses are vital to the American economy. They drive innovation, supply large companies, and [account for 49.2% of private sector employment](#). And consumers know this. [7 out of 10 consumers consider it important to shop local](#). That gives small to medium-sized PSPs an advantage over larger companies that can only be squandered if other customer preferences aren't considered, or pricing isn't competitive. It's vital that print businesses start thinking about how to retain loyal customers sooner rather than later.

BASYS has been family-owned since our founding in 2002, so we understand the effort it takes to remain competitive in the age of consolidation. We work with print companies and associations around the country to help businesses like yours reduce their processing expenses and keep up with the competition. If you're ready to start saving, we'd love to hear from you.