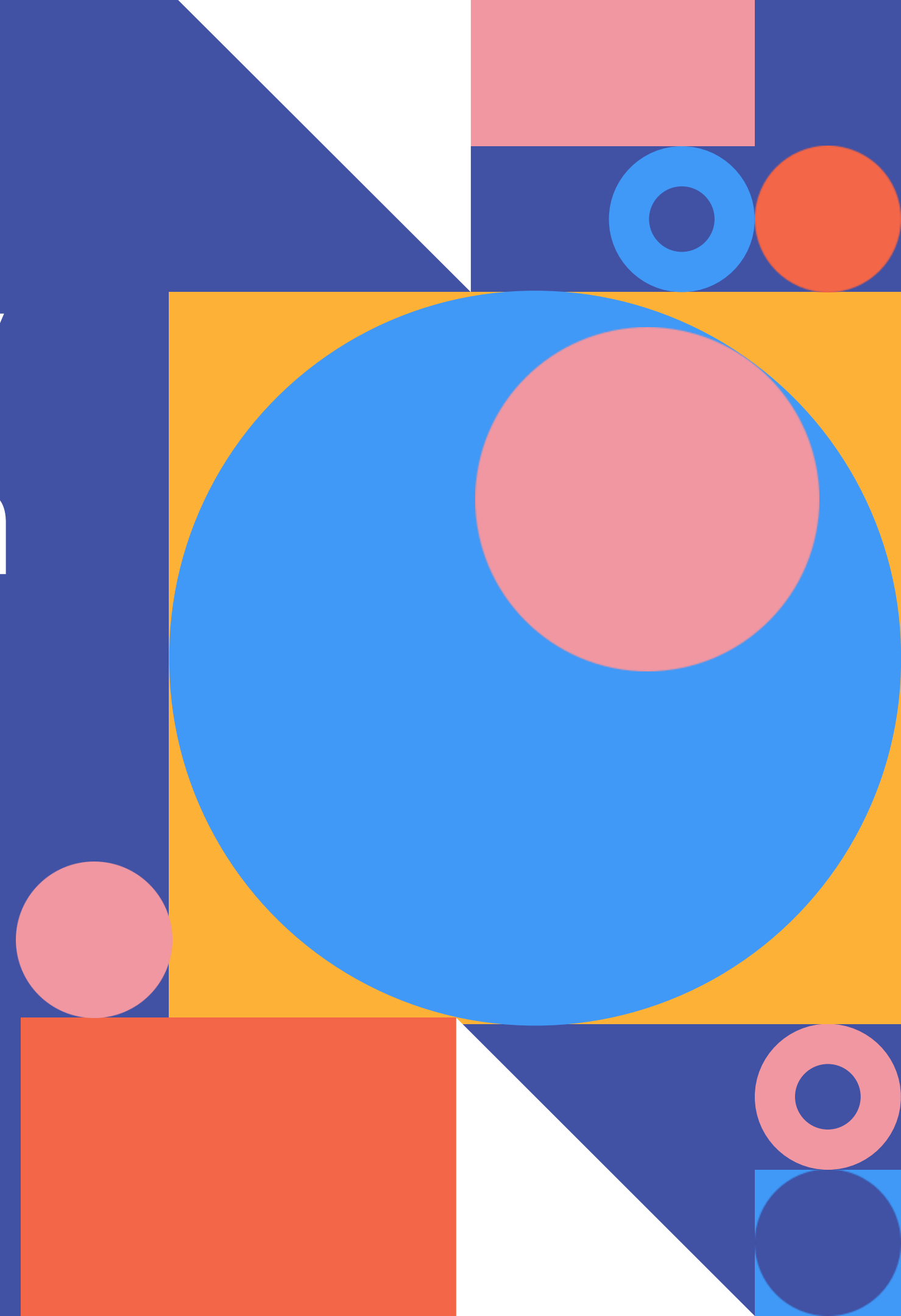

Creative Strategy & Implementation

How to Create Killer Mailings
Without Killing Yourself in the Process

Wednesday, October 7
1:15 - 2:45 PM EDT

DMAW
Direct Marketing Association of Washington



10 *Horribly Disastrous* Production Mistakes.
And most importantly - How to Avoid Them



GIGANTIC Mistake #1, 2, 3 and 4

“Let’s wait until we are completely done with strategy, art and data before we hand this over for production -- we don’t need to get them involved yet”

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe.”

-Abraham Lincoln.

Allow your production partner to help you create a winning game-plan!

Share this info with your production partner **EARLY** during the strategy/creative stage:

- ✓ Strategy
- ✓ Mail date or targeted in-home date
- ✓ Complete Print Specs
 - ✓ Paper
 - ✓ Size
 - ✓ # of pages
 - ✓ Colors
 - ✓ Bleeds
 - ✓ Finishing Details
 - ✓ Quantities
- ✓ Preliminary Artwork sha
- ✓ Preliminary mailplan



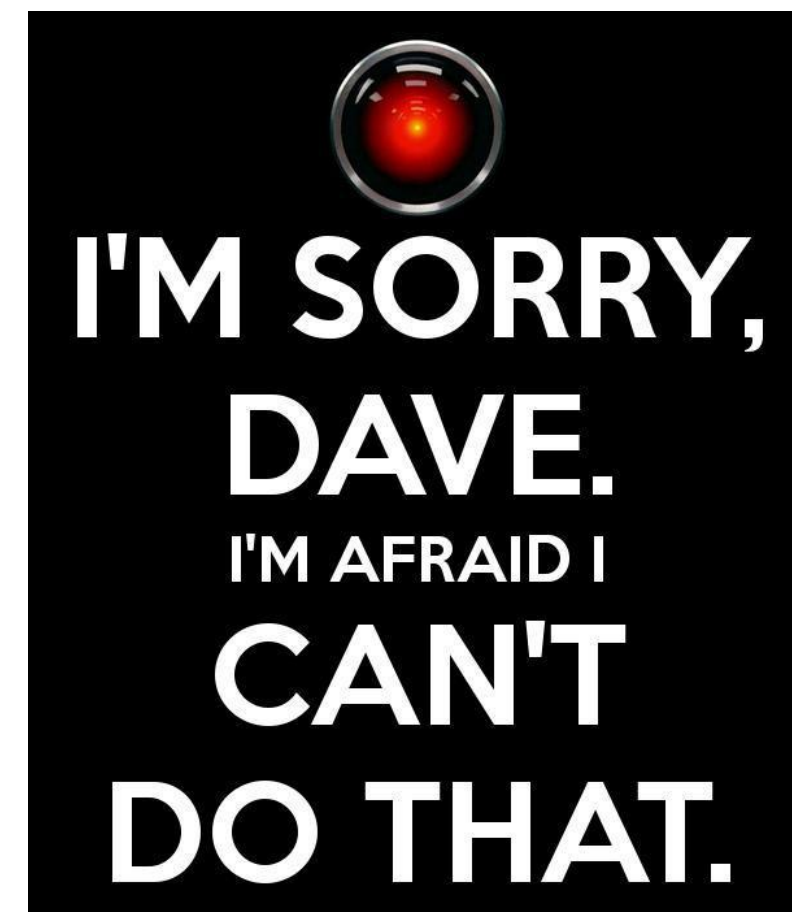
Why Plan Ahead? To Avoid Problem #1

“What do you mean you can’t do what we want?”

Not all printers and mailshops are created equal. Campaign requirements need to be evaluated and matched with manufacturing partners and production methods that are going to work best for the project.

Considerations such as:

- What kind of presses/equipment should be used?
- What kind of print quality needs to be achieved?
- What kind of paper is needed?
- What kind of programming is needed?
- Is this a recurring/perpetual program?
- Inventory needs?



Why Plan Ahead? *To Avoid Problem #2*

“My mailing is not going to get in-home until when???”

Direct mail production takes time, make sure you understand what kind of production timelines your mailing will require and build out your schedules EARLY.

Considerations such as:

- Locking into manufacturing schedules (print and mailshop)
- Special Order Papers
- Premiums and/or items that require special lead times.
- Quality Control and Approval steps
- Time in the mailstream

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE	
Budget Due:	2/26
Art Due:	3/4
Data Due:	3/4
Proofs to Client for Approval:	3/6
Proofs Approved:	3/10
Counts & Dumps to Client for Approval:	3/12
Counts & Dumps Approved:	3/13
Printed materials to mailshop:	3/13
Set-ups to Client for Approval:	3/16
Postage Due to PS:	3/17
Insertion to Client for Approval:	3/18
Lives to Client for Approval:	3/24
Mail Date:	3/25

Start very early and give yourself a BUFFER....every step of the process will take more time than you think it will.

Why Plan Ahead? To Avoid Problem #3

“My mailing is going to cost what???”

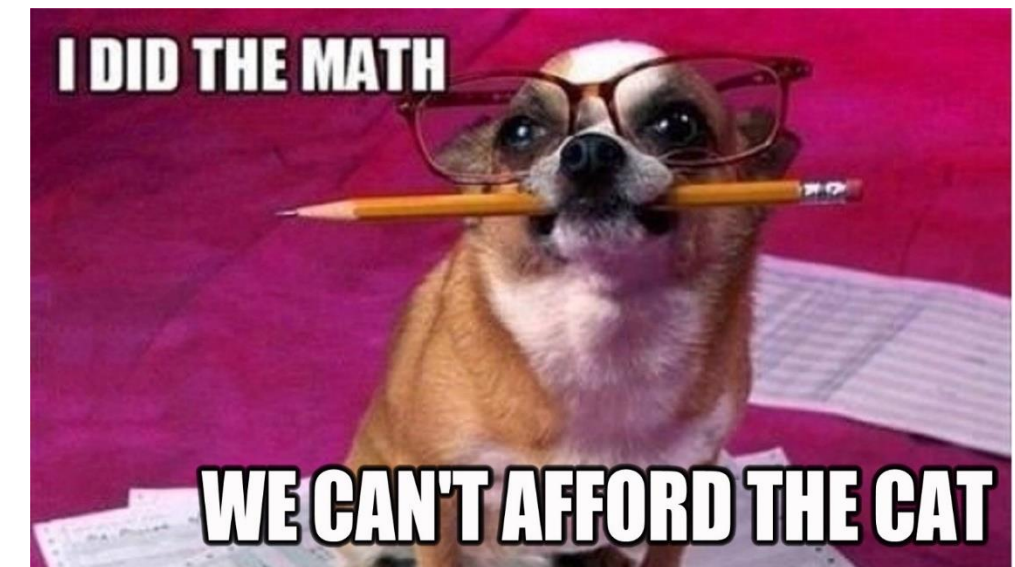
Finding out late in the game that your project is over budget is a major buzz kill resulting in last minute cost-cutting measure that may destroy your vision and strategy.

Planning allows for:

- Competitive bidding.
- Matching quality expectations with your budget (you get what you pay for).
- Finding the appropriate production methods to get the best pricing.
- A feedback cycle on possible adjustments that could be made to save costs.
- Analyze Postal Logistics

WAIT.....Don't forget about these things:

- Spoilage
- Special Proofing Needs
- Versioning
- Freight
- Special considerations (Environmental? Union?)



Why Plan Ahead? To Avoid Problem #4

“What do you mean my package doesn’t meet postal requirements???”

The Domestic Mail Manual (DMM) is the bible of what you can and cannot do in the USPS. It is only 1,800+ pages....

**Vet mail packages ahead of time to uncover potential USPS issues:
Trained eyes know what to look for and give you feedback early if there are problems!**

- ✓ Addressing Requirements
- ✓ Unacceptable markings
- ✓ Aspect Ratios
- ✓ Size/Weight
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Complicated Self-mailer Rules
- ✓ Postage Treatments



Production Mistake #5

“Oh...we didn’t think to make a mock-up”

Do NOT mock the mock-up, it can be a life-saver!

- ✓ Do you have the clearances necessary to machine insert?
- ✓ Does your reply device fit into the reply envelope?
- ✓ Do folds work as expected?
- ✓ Does your window placements work as expected?
 - Float
 - Contamination
- ✓ Postal Weights/Thicknesses and Postal Regs



Production Mistake #6

“Here is the art for our newsletter”

(I receive a Word document)

Hire a designer that knows what they are doing!

(Shameless plug for Steve!)

✓ Print production requires quality input materials

- Types of Files
- Image Resolution
- Bleeds
- Color Management



- ✓ If your production partner needs to fix your art and layouts this can cost significant time and money.

Production Mistake #7

“Why does the color not look like what we expected?”

Color expectations need to be communicated and managed.

Color is subjective and can be influenced by:

- ✓ Types of presses
- ✓ Paper Types
- ✓ Ink Types (CMYK vs. PMS)

Choose appropriate proofing methods

- ✓ PDF
- ✓ Contract Color Proofs
- ✓ PMS draw-downs
- ✓ Press Checks



Production Mistake #8

“What do you mean we didn’t print enough?”

When you are approving counts for press. STOP and think....

Are you printing enough?

- ✓ Spoilage and mailshop waste factor
- ✓ Data counts and where you are in the data cycle/process



It will almost always cost less to print a few extras than to not print enough and have to go back to press.

Production Mistake #9

“What are all these AA charges on my invoice?”

A.A.s (Author's Alteration's) are text and design changes that you make to your original supplied materials.

Printer's and/or mailshops may charge fees for making AA's because they cost them time and materials in their processes.

- ✓ Editing should be prior to releasing materials for production
- ✓ Build time into your schedules to ensure proper time for making edits



Production Mistake #10

“Has our mail delivered, we are not seeing any returns?”

This may be the worse sinking feeling of them all!

Make sure you have systems in place to track you mail and know where it is!

- ✓ Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMb) tracking
- ✓ Seeds
- ✓ Return mail tracking

