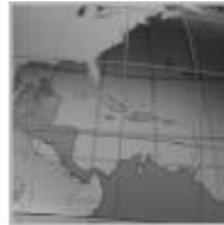


# White Paper



Production Printing & Media



August 2015

## Capitalizing on the Data-Driven Customer Communications Opportunity

Prepared for:

Objectif Lune Inc.

**OL™ Connect**  
Objectif Lune Software

**InfoTrends**  
A Questex Company

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## Executive Summary

The customer communications space is fundamentally changing as the importance of electronic channels grows. Data-driven multi-channel customer communications enable businesses to provide a more personalized and more relevant customer experience and, when done well, to increase the overall lifetime value of customers.

Objectif Lune has introduced a new modular technology platform, OL Connect, to help customers capitalize on their data-driven customer communications. This platform is a single technology platform, developed from scratch, which reuses the strengths and expertise of Objectif Lune's existing technology base.

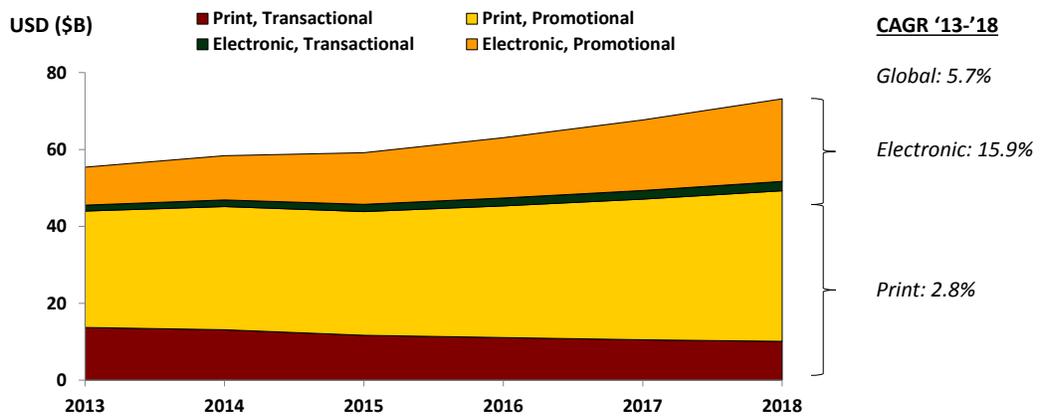
## Key Findings

- Key trends in data-driven communications today are true multi-channel design, the enhancement of digital transactions, the emergence of new engagement capabilities, and the adoption of digital self-service capabilities. OL Connect offers four key components for managing data-driven customer communications: data mapping, multi-channel designer, workflow management, and output creation.
- Objectif Lune has upgraded its core products to the OL Connect platform: PlanetPress Connect, PReS Connect, and PrintShop Mail Connect.
- Businesses can benefit from OL Connect thru:
  - Enhancing their communications using standard web technology
  - Repurposing information in an efficient manner due to a single unified data model
  - Maximizing synergies between existing IT systems and processes by normalizing access to company-wide data
- Objectif Lune is diversifying into new customer segments, targeting resellers and end-users in these segments. OL Connect not only benefits print-oriented businesses but also IT-oriented businesses. These IT-oriented businesses can benefit from OL Connect as a data normalizer, converter, and workflow automation tool.

**Introduction**

The customer communications space is fundamentally changing as electronic communication channels such as web, e-mail, mobile, and social media are added to the communication mix. The importance of electronic channels is growing, and for many organizations, electronic communications is already the leading channel. InfoTrends’ analysis confirms this trend. It estimates that the value of electronic customer communications<sup>1</sup> is expected to grow by 15.9% annually between 2013 and 2018, reaching USD \$23.9B. This compared to a mere 2.8% annual growth in print value over the same period.

**Figure 1: Value of Customer Communications 2013-2018**



Source: *The Value Of Customer Communications 2013-2018*, InfoTrends, 2015

Data-driven, multi-channel customer communications enable businesses to provide a personalized and more relevant customer experience, delivered through the customers’ channel of choice. When done well, this better experience will increase the overall lifetime value of the customer, as it results in higher customer loyalty, lower customer churn, and more up/cross-sell opportunities.

Nevertheless, such data-driven customer communications can be challenging to manage and implement. Businesses typically use a variety of IT systems to manage digital content and delivery channels. In many cases, these IT systems are operated in an isolated way, resulting in patched IT infrastructures in order to tie it all together. This makes it difficult for these businesses to capitalize on the data-driven customer communications opportunity. According to recent InfoTrends<sup>2</sup> research, businesses indicated that managing patched IT infrastructure is a key challenge (among top three) when

<sup>1</sup> Customer communications are defined as messages that organizations send to their customers and prospects to promote or advertise their offerings (promotional messages) or to inform them about business transactions (transactional messages). Those communications are measured in impressions. For print, this is expressed in A4/Letter page equivalents, for electronic this is the number of actual messages that were sent. The value is calculated by using an average retail price that end-users pay to commercial providers for each of the messages produced.

<sup>2</sup> Source: *Customer Engagement Technology State of the Market*, InfoTrends 2015

implementing customer communications. In addition, small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) indicated that data management is a key customer communications area (among top three) that they need help with.

With its new technology platform called OL Connect, Objectif Lune additionally addresses these key challenges. OL Connect is positioned to help customer communications professionals overcome multi-channel document design and delivery challenges with an electronic-first approach, while still being capable of producing personalized, high-volume print output. It also supports customers with data management issues, as well as dealing with patched IT infrastructures. This whitepaper, sponsored by Objectif Lune, discusses mega trends in data-driven customer communications, and highlights how the new OL Connect platform fits in.

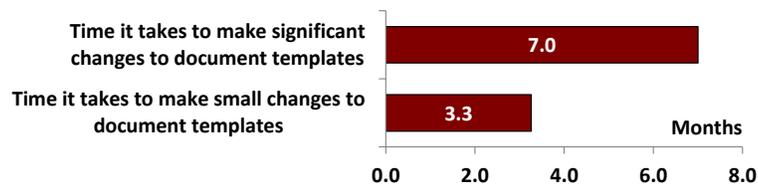
### Trends in Data-driven Customer Communications

Data-driven communications are a core element of a modern customer communications strategy. It is becoming a standard practice for many businesses. InfoTrends identifies the following key trends in data-driven communications that are affecting the market today.

#### True Multi-channel Design

The rise in electronic customer communications has resulted in a need for lean and streamlined communication processes, which means eliminating redundancy in data and content design, adopting process automation, creating process transparency, and ensuring the right process controls are in place. Hence TRUE multi-channel design. There exists huge saving potential for businesses here when considering that, on average; businesses need more than three months for making small document template changes<sup>3</sup>, and twice as long for significant changes<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 2 Time to Make Changes to Document Templates**



N = 800 NA & WE Enterprises

Source: *Customer Engagement Technologies State of Market*, InfoTrends 2015

<sup>3</sup> Small document template changes include, for example, updating a corporate company logo, updating a new signature, or editing small fragments of text and paragraphs.

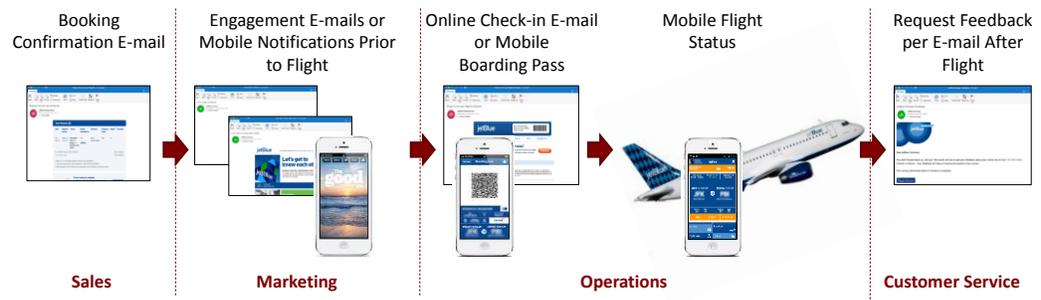
<sup>4</sup> Significant document template changes include, for example, a complete redesign of a document template, including style, messaging and branding, and support for multi-channel delivery or interactive content.

Tools that allow the user to design, compose, and create content independent from the final output channel add real value to customer communications practices. A key aspect here is the ability to reuse pieces of content across communication channels. This saves time, improves channel synchronization (better customer experience), and reduces potential errors. In addition, with electronic customer communications becoming more important, an electronic-first approach to design and compose content makes sense.

### The Need to Enhance Digital Transactions

A majority of data-driven communications involve the facilitation and control of commercial transactions. Examples of such communications are order confirmations, purchase receipts, reminders/call-for-actions, invoices, and account balances. With digital technology now driving many business processes, the amount of digital transactions that are sent to customers has exploded. The example below illustrates the many data-driven customer communications initiated by purchasing a flight online.

**Figure 3: Example of Data-driven Customer Communications Supporting Commercial Transactions**



There is a need to enhance these communications by using cross-departmental customer data, in order to turn digital transactions into more pleasant experiences for the customer and to increase the customer's share of wallet. Businesses benefit from unifying digital data across organizational functions, processes, and involved IT systems. Designing such a data-driven communication process has many similarities with designing print-related customer communications.

### Emergence of new Engagement Capabilities

When the first electronic customer communication channels emerged (web sites and e-mails) many businesses started to create electronic versions—typically a PDF version—of their printed documents. As new types of electronic communications channels emerge, these electronic copies of printed documents prove to be suboptimal for the following reasons. First, the layout of such electronic documents is optimized for a printed page, not for a monitor or the screen of a mobile device. Second, electronic end-devices typically allow interactive communication; users that interact with the provided information through a keyboard or touchscreen in real-time. This is something such electronic document formats are not designed to do.

Customer communications today are optimized for each communication channel and support interactivity. Customers can interact with businesses or business processes through communications that these businesses initiate. Leveraging on these possibilities will improve the customer experience, for example, through interactive elements in e-mails and web sites.

### **Adoption of Digital Self-service Capabilities**

Innovations in mobile technology, along with the growth of the Internet, make consumers more powerful than ever. Product evaluations, price comparisons, and loads of user feedback are just a few clicks away for the consumer who is looking to be engaged with a brand. As a consequence of this change in consumer behavior, businesses are forced to take over a more facilitating role within the customer engagement process. They do this by increasingly moving their customer communications towards digital self-service portals. Such portals are essentially websites where customers can login to access and interact with content. InfoTrends' research<sup>5</sup> shows that close to 80% of enterprises will have digital self-service capabilities for their customers by 2017. Such portals bring great benefits to businesses in their communication efforts with customers. It provides them more control over the communication process, while at the same time offering more opportunity for cross/up selling. This happens because the customer communication is taking place in a controlled environment: the portal. Further to that, it enables businesses to track the customer communication process much easier and in a more centralized way, enabling them to build a better customer understanding.

## **Objectif Lune**

### **About**

Headquartered out of Montreal, Canada, Objectif Lune is serving over 20,000 organizations worldwide; with offices all around the globe. Objectif Lune was founded in 1993 and employs more than 240 employees worldwide today. It holds R&D centers in Australia, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands.

### **Technology Acquisitions**

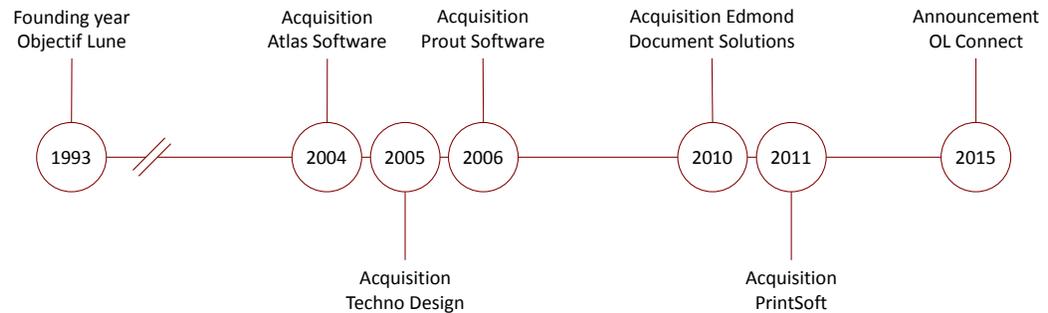
Objectif Lune's technology base has grown throughout the last decade, partly through internal growth and partly through acquisitions. Originally, its PostScript-driven technology targeted high-volume transactional and variable data printing customers. The PrintShop Mail software (a result of the acquisition of Atlas Software in 2004) enabled them to target entry-level customers looking for an easy-to-use variable data printing solution. In 2005, Objectif Lune acquired Techno Design to expand its web technology expertise. One year later, it acquired Prout Software, which enabled the company to add

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<sup>5</sup> Source: *Customer Engagement Technologies State of the Market*, InfoTrends 2015

PCL support to its technology base. In 2010, it acquired Edmond Document Solutions to utilize its high performing document transformation engine. Finally, the latest acquisition in 2011 was Australian-based PrintSoft, which added strong AFP and IPDS capabilities to its technology base.

**Figure 4: Objectif Lune's Technology Acquisitions**



### OL Connect Platform

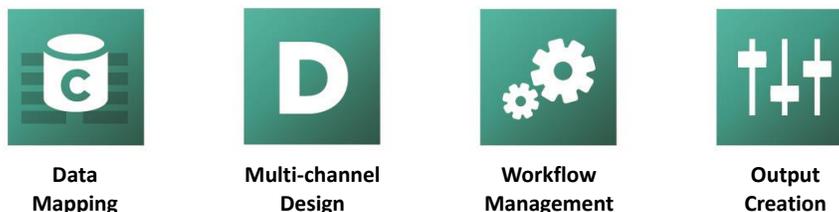
Objectif Lune's technology acquisitions resulted in several overlaps across different areas, such as product-functionalities (i.e., multiple designing tools and workflow engines). Other overlaps included development technologies and programming languages (i.e., Java and C++), development philosophies and methodologies, and different pricing and licensing structures.

When technology overlap reaches a certain size, it becomes a burden for an organization's product management and development practices. Objectif Lune arrived at this point and, to overcome this situation, it decided to overhaul its existing technologies by reusing the strengths and expertise from each individual technology. Objectif Lune used that technology for the development of a new single platform from scratch, utilizing the latest software development technologies and the industry's best practices.

In January 2015, Objectif Lune introduced the OL Connect platform. New products will form the core of it, while existing products will gradually be upgraded to the OL Connect platform. It recently released upgraded versions of its core products: PlanetPress Connect for process and data-driven communication automation, PReS Connect for high-volume customer communications, and PrintShop Mail Connect for variable data printing.

The OL Connect platform offers four key components for managing data-driven customer communications. All components work on the same data model and can also be used independently. This makes OL Connect a modular platform.

**Figure 5: The OL Connect Platform**



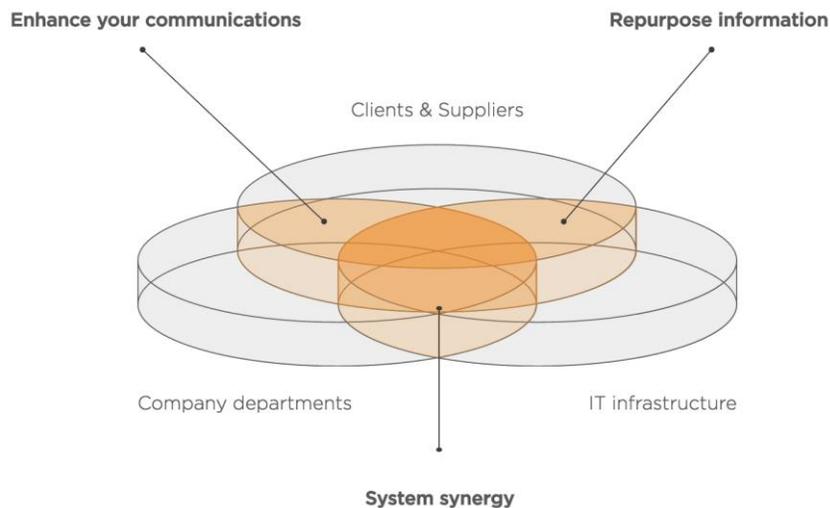
- **Data Mapping** that is designed for data extraction and data conversions. At the core of any customer communication is a data model describing the variable data elements used for personalization. OL Connect’s Data Mapper allows users to create and manage data for use in its various communication templates. Data from a variety of data sources can be taken in and normalized into a single unified data model. Since all other OL Connect platform components work with this unified data model, changes in the data are automatically applied to all other designs using this data model. In addition, data models can be shared among multiple designs. Further to this, as the unified data model is coded in Unicode, OL Connect can automatically handle all font types; including Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese. The data mapping process is done completely using a graphical user interface, which eliminates the need for custom coding.
- **Multi-channel Designing** that is tailored for creating personalized and targeted customer communications in electronic and print. Designing is done by an electronic-first approach, allowing users to work with standard web technology (HTML, CSS, and JavaScript) to create customer communications instead of print-oriented formats like AFP or PDF. The benefits of this approach are that users are no longer bound to the limited capabilities of these print-oriented formats when wanting to include modern engaging and interacting elements into the output. This electronic-first approach is not to the detriment of the print output. In addition, so-called “snippets” of content can be reused across output channels, which increase consistency and productivity throughout the content design phase. This also shortens the time to make changes to document templates, an activity that takes three to seven months on average (as mentioned earlier).
- **Workflow Management** enables the automation of customer communication processes. The workflow module acts as an overarching component in the OL Connect platform, and it orchestrates as well as integrates the individual data models, communication templates, and data processes in order to create a complete data-driven customer communications solution. Although automation is a key aspect of workflow management, the ability to make workflows transparent and manageable through a graphical representation of workflow processes, and the need to clearly define the inputs and outputs for each individual workflow step are other key aspects.
- **Output Creation** is optimized for the fast and efficient electronic publishing and print production of customer communications. OL Connect supports a variety of electronic output formats, such as PDF (including PDF/A for archiving), responsive

HTML (HTML5), and text-based messaging (SMS). It also supports common print output formats, including those for high-speed digital print equipment, such as AFP and IPDS. To optimize the high-speed print output even further, it also supports the commingling and batching of smaller run-lengths.

## Benefits for Businesses

Objectif Lune has a long history in the digital production printing market, serving a wide variety of industries such as manufacturing, wholesale and retail sale, and financial services. OL Connect targets resellers and end-users within these industries. Generally, these businesses can benefit from OL Connect by enhancing their communications using standard web technology, repurposing information in an efficient manner due to a single unified data model, as well as maximizing synergies between existing IT systems and processes with the normalization of company-wide data.

**Figure 6: OL Connect Positioning**



## For Resellers

- **Digital Print Equipment Manufacturers**

The digital print equipment manufacturers' business model heavily depends on the amount of volume produced on their printing equipment. Revenue streams from click-models, maintenance, and spare parts are directly correlated with these print volumes. Personalized print enhances the value of communications, and print equipment manufacturers benefit from OL Connect as an enabling technology to design, generate, and output variable print data in high volumes. Additionally, OL Connect allows digital print equipment manufacturers to leverage growing IT opportunities. This can put print equipment manufacturers in a position to be earlier involved in the sales-cycle, as discussions about the right print application typically happen before discussions about printing equipment.

- **System Integrators**

System integrators act as intermediates between solution vendors and enterprises. They bring together individual (sub) components into a single solution. One key aspect within each integration project is the ability to connect independent IT systems or even streamline truncated IT infrastructures with each other, so that the output of one system becomes the input of another system. There are some challenges involved with this. First, a data format provided by one system does not necessarily comply with a data format required by another system. Second, such implementations need an overarching workflow to steer and manage the data-exchange processes between the systems. OL Connect can act as a normalizer and converter tool for interfacing between individual systems, as well as a workflow management tool that orchestrates data processes and data flows across a complete IT solution.

### For End Users

- **Document Process Outsourcers (DPO)**

DPO is about the outsourcing of an entire document process to an external service provider: the outsourcer. Traditionally, outsourcers add value to the document production chain due to higher productivity levels. Print volumes are scaled with volumes of multiple outsourcing customers, because document workflows can be highly optimized. With volumes increasingly moving towards electronic channels, outsourcers are challenged to provide a total solution across all channels. DPO service providers benefit from OL Connect as data normalization is done based on a visual editor; and content snippets can be reused across output channels. This allows them to leverage on scalability and faster turn-around times.

- **IT Departments**

Internal research by Objectif Lune<sup>6</sup> revealed that the main limitations IT departments face in managing their enterprise software applications today, such as CRM and ERP systems. Problems result from the lack of flexibility to make changes quickly in affected business processes (66%), as well as poor integration capabilities between IT systems (52%). This hinders companies' ability to optimize their customer engagement and communications practices, as almost 40% of respondents indicated. IT departments can benefit from OL Connect as a data normalizer, converter, and workflow automation tool in a way similar to system integrators.

- **Corporate Print Departments (In-plants)**

Finally, OL Connect allows corporate print departments to design documents faster, scale up easier, and have true multi-channel document design and output. These capabilities will reinforce the internal positioning of these departments within their own organization beyond print, as productivity levels can be optimized when additional services to support electronic channels can be offered simultaneously.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: *Enterprise Software Applications (ESA) Research Report*, Objectif Lune 2015.

## InfoTrends' Opinion

Objectif Lune's OL Connect platform has made an important step in shaping the company's portfolio to bring products more effectively and efficiently to market. This step is also remarkable because Objectif Lune decided to implement the best of its existing technology base from scratch, instead of developing around it. Its electronic-first approach ensures the support of increasing amounts of worldwide electronic customer communications, while remaining committed to print.

Content design and delivery processes will benefit from the single unified data model, as well as the possibility to reuse snippets of content in terms of time-to-market and cross-channel consistency. In addition, designing with standard web technology will encourage customers to add more interactive elements into communications, allowing for better customer experiences.

OL Connect also enables Objectif Lune to address a wider range of businesses, as the OL Connect platform not only benefits print-oriented businesses, but also IT-oriented businesses such as IT Integrators and corporate IT departments. This allows them to diversify into new customer segments.

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