

Influence of Duplicating Machine

How the Duplicating Machine Influenced Business, and Revolutionized the Circular Letter. What May be Done in the Future. From Office Appliances, July, 1908.

The present day business man has come strictly to the four walls of his office. His business is done now under the supervision of his eye; not a part here and a part there, all of which means an indirect supervision, but all right where he can get to it, see to it and know all about it. There are many reasons for this, chief of which is to meet the forces of competition.

One of the greatest influences in bringing about such a condition is the duplicating machine. It has opened up an avenue between the house and the buyer greater than ever was thought possible to bring about. It has drawn buyer closer to the house in a way that never was dreamed. Thus, does the business man develop an organization that is compact and effective. He is not compelled to look elsewhere for an agency that may or may not do his work.

This is, of course, a part of the advertising propaganda. But there are many forms of advertising; so many, in fact, that some business men are free to declare that all business is advertising. Be that as it may, the duplicating machine has restored a form of advertising that was in some respects fast passing out of existence; because business men said it was not successful. That form of advertising is the circular letter, the agency that has brought the business man and his prospective customer close together; the thing which has made business organizations more compact—the very thing, indeed, that is responsible for many businesses.

INFLUENCING THE MARKET.

A wrong impression should not be had of the term, "circular letter." There used to be a lot of riff-raff publishing houses up in Maine and thereabouts that sent out fifteen and twenty years ago a circular letter that would be a stench in the nostrils of the modern business man. And there are some concerns doing business to-day that use the circular letter who would not be admitted to an ordinary business conference. So in whatever way the circular letter is looked upon, pray, do not confuse it with the ones above mentioned.

The duplicating machine is the power behind the circular letter. But this same machine has drawn another distinction that must not be overlooked, and that is, that the circular letter is coming to be called the "typewritten letter." Right there the success of the duplicating machine rests. It really has no connection with the old circular letters. But it is responsible for the typewritten letters; has made it a success and revolutionized that means of communication between house and buyer.

So marked has been the development of this specialty field in the past three years, yes, in the past twelve months, that a large number of large business houses have established what they call the "Duplicating Department," another evidence of the directness of business organizations. These departments are equipped with the latest duplicating machines, operated by employees who give their entire time to the work and a

correspondent who is skilful in getting up form letters. There are several houses in the central west who have installed such a department in the past sixty days. The necessity for such is apparent.

There have been several in operation in the East for several months and the results have been more than satisfactory. As an illustration of how important the duplicating machine has become the following case is interesting.

The representative of one of the largest duplicating machine companies in the country was visiting Milwaukee several months ago. The firm on which he called had been spending several hundred dollars each year on its card and circular work, by the old process. The representative took his machine to the offices of the company, demonstrated it and asked to see some of the forms of cards and other matter the company was using. After noting these carefully, he got estimates from a paper company on some paper stock, estimates from the engraver on plates and then sat down to figure with one of the officers of the company. The exact cost per thousand to the company for the work they had been having done outside was \$2. The salesman after allowing liberally for all estimates added another 10 per cent. to make sure of any extra expense, and showed the gentleman that he could do the work on his machine at a total cost of fifty cents per thousand. The figures were so plain and the evidences of the work of the machine so clear that the company ordered three machines and soon afterwards established a "duplicating department."

ADVANCED STEPS REACHED.

This is one of the remarkable things that have come to this specialty field in the past two years. It has proven beyond all doubt that the duplicating machine has been substituted for every possible form of circular work. Then again. It has shown conclusively that the old circular letter, that obnoxious and nauseating affair that has ordained more waste baskets than it has office desks, is entirely a thing of the past.

Thus, there is reached the vital and important step in developing the market of this specialty; namely, the step firmly marked by the typewritten letter. In this way the circular letter has been made to exist in name only. To-day there is scarcely a firm in the entire country that dares to send out its circular matter by the old process. The duplicating machine has made the circular letter so nearly like the ordinary typewritten letter that it is pretty nearly impossible to tell the difference.

Another step reached by the duplicating machine is the one that has convinced most business men that the value of the duplicated letter is not so much in the process as in the way the letter is got out. The text and style are infinitely better than the old way. This perhaps counts for more than any one thing. The business man realizes that when his letter reaches its objective point

much depends on how it looks whether it gets to the firm or individual.

There is a standing rule among most houses that the office boy or mail clerk shall destroy all circular matter or anything that looks like circular matter. If the letter is sent on the duplicating machine it is a safe bet that it will be read by some one of the firm.

But a live point to remember is that while the typewritten letter has proven its worth, the letter itself should always be sent out under a two-cent cover. A gentleman representing another specialty machine in the central west spent several hundred dollars not long ago in arranging a circular letter. The work was splendid. But he sent the letters out under a one-cent cover to save a hundred dollars. The replies were not satisfactory.

WHAT MAY TAKE PLACE.

This survey of the field of the duplicating specialty leads to another and more vital issue: What will evolve from so pronounced a success? If you will inquire among the men who are pushing the sales of these machines, the most of them will tell you that the result is plain. There is one result that cannot be ignored. The duplicating machine will, they say, in a short time be purchased more for its printing feature than for its duplicating feature. As the case now stands the duplicating feature is only about fifteen per cent. of the whole, while the printing feature is the remainder.

The reason is obvious. The large business house particularly is desirous of securing the greatest possible saving in time and the largest degree of efficiency. Clearly, the only way to reach this result is to enlarge the machine in its printing capacity. This is a condition similar to that which preceded the installation of the linotype.

But the duplicating feature will needs remain the pivotal one, after all. With the perfection of them both, the specialty may be said to have reached a point in the office device field far in advance of anything anticipated for it.

POOR RICHARD JUNIOR'S PHILOSOPHY.

Gold comes in quartz and goes in magnams. The woman who "can't bear Society" is never in it.

The lie that goes farthest is the lie that has a little truth in it.

If you would learn to blow your own horn, begin by keeping a stiff upper lip.

There's small choice: if you don't let her make a fool of you, she'll make a fool of herself.

The Bull of yesterday is the Bear of tomorrow, but the Lamb is a lamb until he is fleeced and afterward—sometimes.—Saturday Evening Post.

Once Sir Henry Irving, while playing "Macbeth" in London, was somewhat disconcerted by one of the "gallery gods." He had reached the point where Macbeth orders Banquo's ghost to leave the banquet board. "Hence, horrible shadow, unreal mockery, hence!" exclaimed Irving in his most tragic tones, and with a convulsive shudder sank to the ground, drawing his robe about his face. Just as Banquo withdrew, an agitated cockney voice from high up in the gallery piped out as if to reassure Irving: "It's all right now, 'Enery; 'e's gone!"