

HOW TO MAKE MONEY IN THE PRINTING BUSINESS

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How to make money in the printing business by Paul Nathan

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PAUL NATHAN

**HOW TO MAKE
MONEY IN THE
PRINTING BUSINESS**

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HOW TO MAKE MONEY IN THE PRINTING BUSINESS.

A BOOK FOR MASTER PRINTERS
WHO REALIZE THAT THERE IS A PRACTICAL SIDE OF THE
ART, AND WHO DESIRE TO KNOW THE SUREST
METHODS OF MAKING PROFITS.

BY

PAUL NATHAN

“ ”

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MANY OF THE LEADING PRINTERS
OF THE UNITED STATES

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE

There are in existence about two thousand different books pertaining to printing and typography, and perhaps as many more that are partly devoted to these subjects. Of this large number, only a bare half dozen treat of the business management of a printing office, and its successful operation for the purpose of yielding that profit for which men do business. In the half dozen there is not a total of a hundred pages directed toward the theme of the present work. It seems to me that this is sufficient excuse for bringing this book before the printing trade. For years the cry has gone up from the followers of Gutenberg that there is no money in the printing business, that competition takes all the margin out of the work, and that the cost for renewal of plants has eaten up the profits.

Personally, I have found that the printing business yielded satisfactory profits, as much as one could expect in a strictly competitive business, and in every city there are men who have made money in this trade; yet the diversity of opinion as to profitable methods, and the confusion of ideas as to the cost of producing printing, has led me to the conclusion that there is imperative need of an exchange of views for the better education of the trade. There are plenty of books on the history of the art, and a large number exhibiting ornamental printing and the methods of its production, but the practical financial side has been very much neglected. In

PREFACE.

this book, I have gathered together the impressions of some of the leading minds in the trade as to the requisites to the profitable management of the printery. With the benefit of such competent advice, I feel that it is not presumptuous to undertake to lay down the business rules on which a printing office must be managed in order to make money for its proprietors.

In that excellent work, Theodore L. De Vinne's "Printers' Price List," I took my first lessons in conducting a printery for profit. Owing to the fact that conditions and machinery have changed very largely, the figures in that book are no longer applicable, and it has long been out of print. Other works relating to the cost of printing have been laid aside for similar reasons. It has been deemed best to include in this book very few figures, and to avoid the quotation of prices, but to endeavor to lay down the foundation principles on which prices should be based. In this way the book may serve as a guide for many years, as the essentials to making a profit do not change as quickly as do the prices.

Where so little has been written upon a subject it is impossible for an author to borrow much from the experience of those who have gone before. I have been obliged to lay out this work on original lines, and have combined with my own experience the wisdom of representative men in the trade. In the hope that these pages will be read with both mental and financial profit by master printers, and that the thoughts herein spread forth may live to add to the general prosperity of the craft, I subscribe myself,

Yours sincerely,

PAUL NATHAN.

TO
Theodore Low De Vinne,
THE DEAN OF AMERICAN PRINTERS,

WHO GAVE ME MY FIRST LESSONS
IN THE MAKING OF PRICES,

THIS BOOK IS APPRECIATIVELY DEDICATED.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PRINTER AS A BUSINESS MAN.

THE printer who embarks in business is supposed to have learned his trade thoroughly, and as a rule he is a superior workman, who by industry and economy has been able to save enough to become an employer. He is seldom a business man, because his training has been in an entirely different direction. The young printer who thinks that he can run a printing office of his own successfully because he knows how to do good printing has a great deal to learn, and quite as much to unlearn. The education of the composing room and of the pressroom is not the sort of education that fits a man for dealing with customers, making prices, buying stock and machinery, contesting with shrewd people and schemers, and looking after the scores of things that are as important as the actual printing that is done. On the contrary, such education as the printer receives in the printery often largely unfits him for taking charge of the business end, and this is a prominent reason why so many master printers fail to make money and simply worry along, living from hand to mouth, scrambling to meet notes, never attaining a competency, and perhaps eventually going back to the case or to the press.

A false notion as to prices and profits usually rests in the mind of the printer who is thinking of starting in business. He has time and again seen the prices given