

## **You Have Options!**

### **White Space Management on Transpromotional Documents**

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From the recent articles on transpromotional documents, most people grasp the concepts of transpromotional documents. There have been enough case studies to prove that well-crafted transpromotional documents generate positive results. However, there has not been enough written about the various ways that document designers can implement white space management from a mechanical perspective.

This article seeks to explore the various white space management options that are available in the creation of multiple page documents where each document may contain a variable number of pages. By understanding these options, document designers can work with marketing and production to increase the value of the documents that arrive in their customers' hands.

Today, many RFPs for document composition systems indicate that white space management is a requirement. Without knowledge of the various types of white space management, the feature may not serve the goals that the buyer had intended when including the requirement for white space management.

Transpromotional documents offer more than simply renting empty space on a statements or invoices to the marketing department. That has been around for many years, albeit without the "transpromotional document" label. There are several types of white space management available, and there are trade-offs involved in selecting the correct method for your transactional or transpromotional documents.

Many of today's leading VDP vendors promote their abilities to perform white space management to expand the potential of transpromotional documents. In reality, white space management is more than a bullet point on a product brochure. It's about rearranging the components of the document to maximize the document's value while minimizing the associated production costs.

#### **5 Types of White Space Management:**

The types of white space management range in both complexity and effectiveness. There are five basic types of white space management; Simple, Reverse, Fixed Frame, Contextual and Cost Leveraging. Some of these methods can be achieved in the most basic transaction capable VDP document composition software. Other methods require more advanced VDP document composition software that has a degree of self-awareness at the document level. Each method has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages.

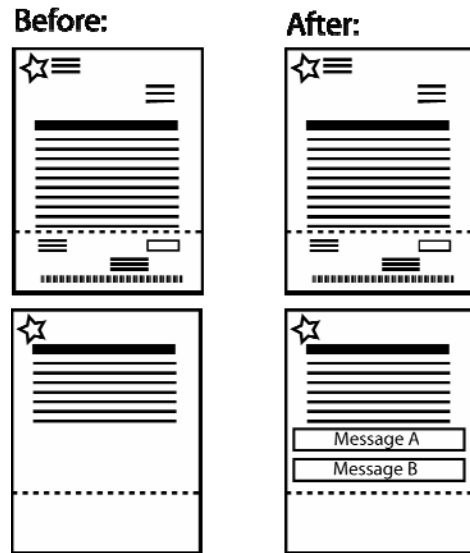
**Simple White Space Management:**

The transactional document is composed normally, and any remaining space at the end of the last page is filled with promotional messages. There may be some simple conditional logic that attempts to use the most relevant messages.

Generally, the available messages are in a queue and the messages are evaluated in a very linear global priority order. In this implementation the design of the document does more to drive the message choice than the data. This method works well if recipients are required to view the last page of the statement.

Many basic document composition systems support this type of white space management. A key disadvantage is that the messages are placed in an area of the document that does not guarantee that the message will be read.

**Simple White Space Management**

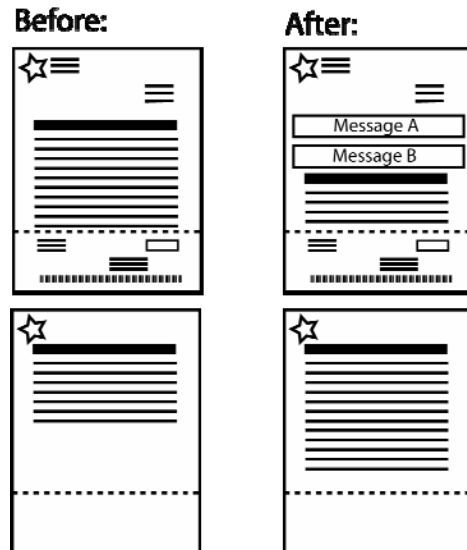


**Reverse White Space Management:**

In this implementation, the document is composed virtually to determine the amount of available white space. The document is then recomposed, moving the white space to the front page of the document. This space is then filled on the front page, maximizing the visibility of the message.

This method works best when the amount due is either low or constant, as the recipient may not need to examine all of the pages in detail. A key disadvantage is that many document composition systems cannot rearrange content based on the amount of transactions in the document, preventing this approach to white space management. Some document composition packages are more fluid and allow for the document to be evaluated and measured before it is committed to the page.

**Reverse White Space Management**



**Fixed Frame White Space Management:**

Fixed Frame white space management is an easy way to insert promotional messages into a transactional document, but this approach is more akin to reserving space for messages than managing the white space. It is a great option to offer the superficial benefits of transpromotional documents without absorbing the full complexity of white space management.

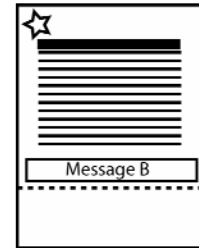
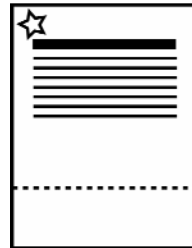
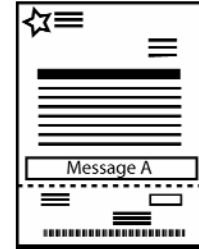
In this method, static frames are placed in the document as placeholders for messages. The frame drives the messages, rather than the space in the document. This approach is often combined with simple white space management to achieve the effects of white space management without actually driving promotional messages by the available white space. This method is commonly available in high-end document composition software packages, which use frame-based GUI environments.

**Fixed Frame White Space Management**

**Before:**



**After:**



**Contextual White Space Management:**

The transactional document is composed virtually to determine the amount of available white space. Instead of placing all of the messages together at the beginning or the end of the document, the white space is analyzed after the transactions are counted. Once the white space is understood, messages are placed near relevant transactions. This increases the relevance of the message by placing it near a similar transaction, while breaking up the messages.

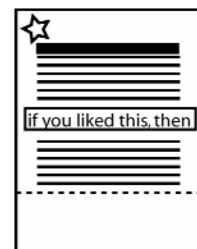
Outside of the document design world, contextual messaging has long been a generally accepted principle. It's the same model that drives advertising prices in newspapers, telephone books, and most notably Google searches. Placing advertisements next to similar information increases the likelihood of the advertisement producing a result.

**Contextual White Space Management**

**Before:**



**After:**



For example, a cable bill using contextual white space management would place internet promotions near internet details, cable promotions would appear near the cable details, and pay-per-view promotions could be placed at the front of the document if the subscriber did not purchase pay-per-view services during the billing period.

A major advantage of contextual white space management is its ability to capitalize on the location of the message in relation to the content of the statement. The major disadvantage is that

this is a complex task for most document composition software packages. Some Fixed Frame packages can accomplish similar results by always placing conditional messages near the relevant content, but the white space is essentially unmanaged. Script-based packages can accomplish this, but an increased level of difficulty is required to gain the full benefits of contextual white space management.

### Cost Leveraged White Space Management

Cost Leveraged White Space Management takes Contextual WSM a step further by considering the production costs of the document as an investment. Once a transactional document crosses a postal rate threshold, there is an opportunity to increase the message space at a small incremental cost. Since the production cost increased because of the weight, there is an opportunity to add more pages to the document while only incurring the smaller cost for producing a page.

This method requires a highly interactive document composition platform that can recalculate the weight of the piece, recheck the placement of pieces in the mailing trays, and generate new postal paperwork to reflect any changes.

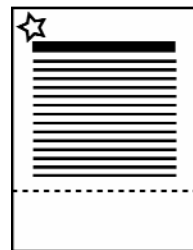
The customers with these multi-page statements are valuable customers, as the volume of their transactions indicates a high transaction frequency. A traditional page or space limited concept of white space management may actually be structured to prevent the most valuable customers from receiving promotional messages.

### Cost Leveraged White Space Management

Before:



After:



**Conclusion:**

It is important to consider the options available for white space management when turning your existing statements into transpromotional documents. Some of the options may be dictated by the current hardware and software environment, but it is important to understand the benefits of each of the options.

Many of the decisions are driven by external variables, such as; communication between document design and marketing departments, confidence in the print provider, skill level of the design team, and other strategic business decisions. Different companies will follow different document strategies, and the method of white space management can improve or detract from the final results.

**If your goal is:**

- Add some messages to a statement
- To add maximum visibility to your messages
- Quickly place messages in several locations
- Increase relevance of messages to content
- Leverage the marketing potential of production costs

**Then implement:**

- Basic WSM
- Reverse WSM
- Fixed Frame WSM
- Contextual WSM
- Cost Leveraged WSM

**People can not read what they do not see.**

Many people do not examine their entire statement, especially when the amount due is either steady or low.

The front page is the most viewed page

The front side of the back page is often viewed

Fronts of pages are viewed more often than the backs

The key is accessibility to the reader. Message placement is crucial.