

PRINT BUSINESS OUTLOOK SERIES

Commercial Printing Report
Fall 2024
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Sponsored by Canon U.S.A., Inc. **Canon**

Produced by the PRINTING United Alliance and NAPCO Research for its members.

FALL 2024

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Executive Summary

The PRINTING United Alliance *Commercial Printing Report, Fall 2024*, part of the Print Business Outlook Series, provides insights from 119 commercial printing providers surveyed. Topics include how KPIs are trending, business priorities for 2025, capital investment plans, where commercial printers would most like to improve productivity, and their current use of cloud services and dashboards.

The surveyed companies range in annual sales (all sources) from under \$1 million to over \$400 million. Over 77% have diversified beyond commercial printing, with expansions into graphic and sign production (63.6%), package printing (31.4%), promotional product imprinting (16.1%), and apparel decoration (12.7%). All are based in the U.S. or Canada.

PRINTING United Alliance members can download *Commercial Printing Report, Fall 2024* [here](#).



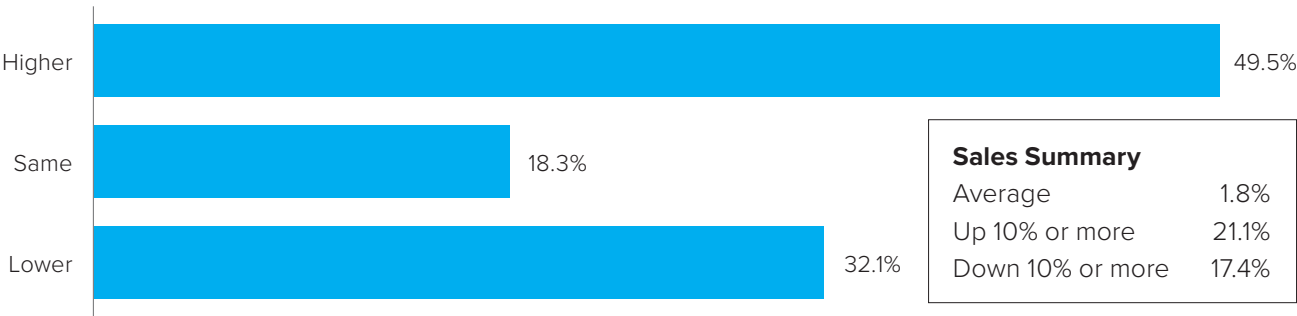
Canon U.S.A., Inc. is a leader in digital imaging and printing solutions with one of the broadest portfolios in the industry, offering solutions such as digital presses, production ink-jet presses, wide-format printers, workflow solutions and professional services. With approximately \$30.6 billion in global revenue, its parent company, Canon Inc. (NYSE:CAJ), as of 2021 has ranked in the top-five overall in U.S. patents granted for 36 consecutive years and was one of Fortune Magazine's World's Most Admired Companies in 2022. Canon U.S.A. is dedicated to its Kyosei philosophy of social and environmental responsibility.

SAMPLE FINDINGS

Sales rose 1.8% on average during the first three quarters of 2024 for commercial print providers surveyed, increasing for half and flat or decreasing for half. Slightly more than one-fifth (21.1%) grew 10% or more (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Sales, First Three Quarters 2024

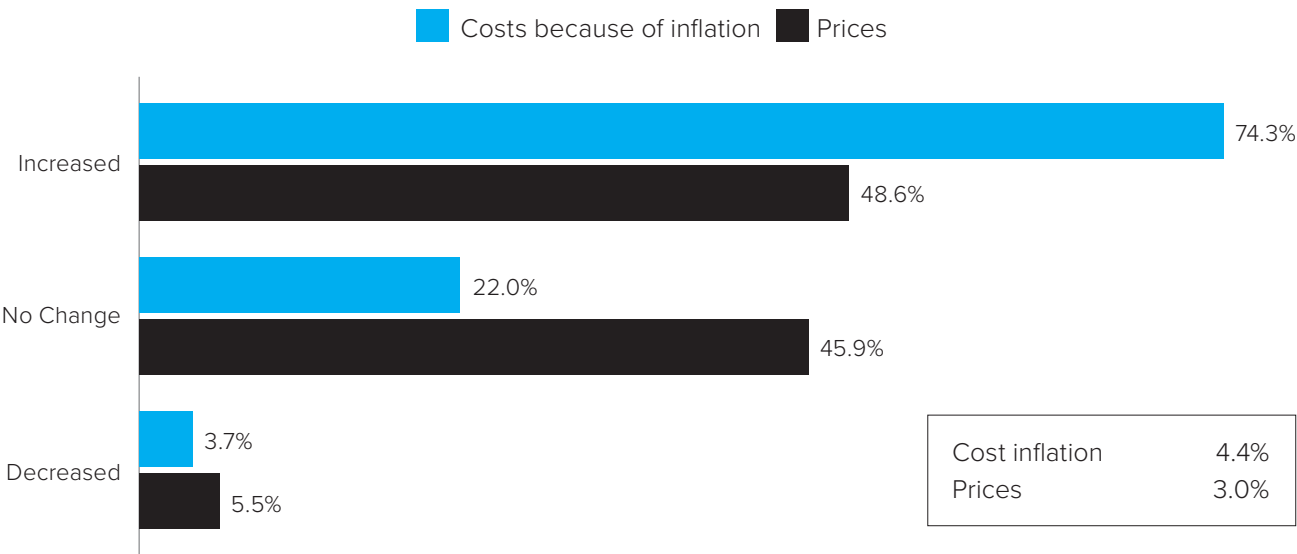
Q: How did your sales (all sources) for the first three calendar quarters of 2024 compare with year-earlier sales?



Operating cost inflation continued to pose challenges, driving up expenses such as wages and insurance premiums. Nearly 75.0% reported higher costs due to inflation, but only 48.6% managed to raise prices amid growing resistance. On average, cost inflation (4.4%) outpaced price increases (3.0%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Operating Cost Inflation and Prices, First Three Quarters 2024

How per-unit operating costs (operating cost inflation) and prices compared with year-earlier levels.



Slow growth, cost inflation, and resistance to price increases have put pressure on profit margins. Pre-tax profitability improved for only 28.7% of commercial printers surveyed, remained unchanged for 35.2%, and decreased for 36.1% (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Pre-Tax Profitability, First Three Quarters 2024

Q: How did your pre-tax profitability (pre-tax profits as a percent of sales) during the first three quarters of 2024 compare with year-earlier profitability?



Positive effects for commercial providers include productivity and automation investments (54.8%), improved sales and marketing efforts (48.1%), market and product diversification (47.1%), capturing work from competitors’ failures (40.8%), and securing higher-profit, value-added clients or projects (40.4%) (Figure 4). These strategies drive growth and resilience in a competitive market.

Figure 4: Factors Having the Biggest Positive Effect on Business

Q: Which factors, positive or negative, have had the biggest effect on your business so far this year?
(Five most frequent positive responses)

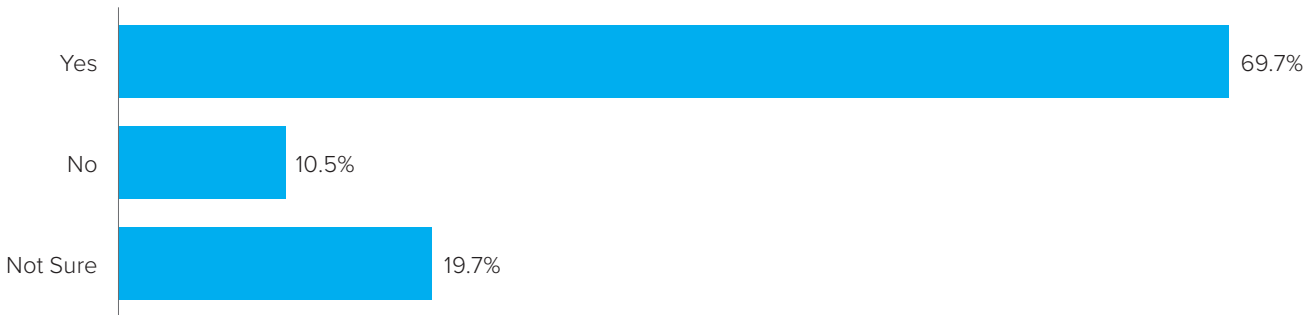
Positive Effect	Citing
Investments made to increase productivity, automation, production speeds, etc.	54.8%
Investments made to increase revenue by selling/marketing more effectively	48.1%
Investments made to expand client base, diversify markets served/products and services offered	47.1%
Ability to capture work from failed competitors/industry shakeout	40.8%
Ability to capture higher-profit, higher-valued added clients/work	40.4%

Capital investment is a cornerstone of the commercial printing research panel’s plans to enhance productivity, automation, and production speeds, with 69.7% planning to invest in 2025 and only 18.4% delaying investments until interest rates decrease (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Capital Investment Plans

How commercial printers surveyed responded to the questions below.

Do you plan to invest in capital equipment, hardware, or software during the next 12 months?



Are you delaying investments until interest rates decline?



The full *Commercial Printing Report, Fall 2024* covers the capital investments commercial printers surveyed would most like to make, where they would most like to improve productivity, how they are using cloud resources and dashboards, why the printing industry can expect a boost from the American economy after midyear 2025, and who will participate in the upturn – because not everyone will.

WHAT CAN PRINTING UNITED ALLIANCE RESEARCH DO FOR YOU?

PRINTING United Alliance research provides first-hand accounts, analysis, and ongoing monitoring of critical industry trends influencing the printing industry, future trends, and the underlying factors influencing change. PRINTING United Alliance Research is now part of an expanded research team that includes NAPCO Research experts, survey and analysis capabilities, and additional audience reach.

■ **PRINTING United Alliance Research LEVERAGES** its extensive member community and staff of industry economic, legislative, marketing, and technical experts to support customers in identifying market opportunities and improving business profitability and operations.

■ We partner with our clients to **IDENTIFY** their unique business challenges and create solutions that **ENABLE** deeply informed decision-making and **DELIVER** results.

■ Gain access to PRINTING United Alliance's & NAPCO Media's engaged audiences of industry executives across key industries.

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WHO WE ARE



PRINTING United Alliance is the new entity born of the merger between Specialty Graphic Imaging Association (SGIA) and Printing Industries of America (PIA). Marking a milestone in the printing industry, SGIA and PIA officially combined in 2020 to create the largest, most comprehensive member-based printing and graphic arts association in the United States.

Members have unparalleled access to preeminent education, training, workshops, events, research, government and legislative representation, safety and environmental sustainability guidance, as well as resources from the leading media company in the industry – NAPCO Media. For PRINTING United Alliance membership inquiries, visit printing.org.

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