

The Appearance of

“Jobbers”, here, are the intermediary companies between the customers and the match manufacturers. The customer orders his matchbooks through ‘E-Z Printing Co.’; E-Z Printing Co. passes the order on

Year	% of jobber mm's		Year	% of jobber mm's
1932	0.0%	to, say, Universal; and when the covers get printed, E-Z Printing has its own name as the manumark, rather than Universal. Well, when did <i>that</i> start? When did it become common? And, when did it become the norm?	1972	6.6%
1933	0.0%	I looked through my Dated collection, only 20s, but that's 10,000+covers. Good enough for a representative sample. Here's what I found: <i>[Note: sets were counted as one issue]</i>	1973	8.9%
1934	0.0%		1974	8.3%
1935	0.0%		1975	4.7%
1936	0.0%		1976	20.9%
1937	0.0%	I start off with 1932 here because I don't have any earlier dated covers, and I only have a very few after 2007. Hence the 'N/A's' for 2008 and beyond.	1977	5.2%
1938	7.9%		1978	7.4%
1939	2.1%		1979	6.9%
1940	1.2%		1980	15.5%
1941	3.5%	The raw number of covers per year changes constantly as I come upon new covers, so those numbers, as well as the resulting percentages are certainly no set in stone....but the trends, here, are crystal clear.	1981	22.3%
1942	2.3%		1982	21.6%
1943	5.8%		1983	28.0%
1944	8.3%		1984	30.0%
1945	0.0%		1985	28.2%
1946	0.0%	How far do jobber mms go back? Well, I don't have any dated prior to 1938, but there were certainly earlier issues. One well-known jobber, Kaeser & Blair, which is still with us today, goes all the back to 1894! And, during the 1920s, they sold millions of Pull Quicklys <i>with their manumark</i> . Even earlier, the company printed covers and then sent them off to the Loveland Match Co., Loveland, OH, where the matches were inserted...but I've never seen one, so I don't know what the manumark was. In 1989, I corresponded with R.E. Kaeser, Chairman of Kaeser & Blair, and in a resulting letter, he stated, "...we authentically believe we were the first firm in the country to offer a book match, an advertising book match." But I seriously doubt those covers predated Binghamton's Piso cover.	1986	61.4%
1947	0.0%		1987	57.1%
1948	1.5%		1988	52.4%
1949	3.2%		1989	64.4%
1950	1.1%		1990	50.0%
1951	1.3%		1991	52.2%
1952	2.9%		1992	45.6%
1953	3.2%		1993	73.0%
1954	2.8%		1994	73.3%
1955	4.4%		1995	64.2%
1956	3.7%		1996	85.7%
1957	4.0%		1997	72.2%
1958	1.7%		1998	90.4%
1959	8.1%	In any event, the very early jobber mms would have been quite rare amidst the manufacturers' mms of the day. In fact, they're relatively rare all the way up to the end of the 1970s, although there's a noticeable, and steady, increase starting in 1959.	1999	85.7%
1960	3.8%		2000	100%
1961	5.5%		2001	100%
1962	5.8%		2002	100%
1963	2.7%		2003	89.6%
1964	4.7%	Why were they so rare? Was it that the manufacturers just traditionally demanded that their own names be run in the manumarks? Well, if that's so, such a 'tradition' wasn't ironclad, since there were <i>some</i> jobber mms being produced. I would hazard a guess that the reason was more commercial. For example, all the manufacturers had their own fleets of salesmen who canvassed their respective geographical areas, with the result being that the vast majority of customers were brought in by the manufacturers,	2004	92.4%
1965	3.3%		2005	100%
1966	7.3%		2006	100%
1967	6.1%		2007	100%
1968	7.1%		2008	N/A
1969	7.6%		2009	N/A
1970	8.0%		2010	N/A
1971	2.9%			

‘Jobber’ Manumarks

themselves, rather than the jobbers. The odd printing company and advertising company couldn’t hope to compete with such an organized blanket sales effort. If that was the case, then perhaps the increase starting in 1959 might have been due to a combination of a reduced sales force (due to rising labor costs) and the simultaneous growth in the sheer numbers of jobbers.

Notice the very significant spike in 1976. What was going on there?...The Bicentennial! Again, an educated guess on my part—there were a lot of one-time customers who wanted to give out their own Bicentennial matches, both individuals and small businesses. That enthusiasm disappeared with the end of the Bicentennial, and for the next few years things went back to ‘normal’.

The *real* change starts in 1980! Starting then, the jobber mms are in ever-increasing double digits from then on, from the teens and twenties until they eventually hover around 100%...permanently! What a turn around! What happened?

Again, this is only a supposition on my part, but it seems pretty obvious...What *else* was going on around 1980?—The beginning of the collapse of the domestic match industry. Just look at the manufacturers that folded here:

American	1975	And before the actual closing dates, you know those companies were scrambling to downsize and streamline as much as possible in an effort to avoid disappearing all together. Well, what went?...The sales force! Those sales representatives with their telltale salesman’s sample books began to disappear, as the manufacturers relied more and more on orders from jobbers and on taking direct orders, themselves, with the advent of the internet and web sites. For example, when I designed the Millennium box that RMS issued in 2000, I handled the entire ordering process with Diamond’s sales <u>office</u> via e-mail.
Atlantis	c. 1985	
Columbia	1985	
Ohio	1987	
Universal	1987	
California	1987	
Superior	1990	
Lion	1993	

Since I also track manumarks, I can also attest to the fact that jobber manumarks can be a complicated, and sometimes, confusing nightmare. You’d think that, for example, covers from Joseph J. Streff & Son, Inc. would all carry the same manumark: “Joseph J. Streff & Son, Inc.” Nope! Just look at the variations below.

Joseph J. Streff & Son, Inc.	Milwaukee	WI	c. 1960s-c.1990s
Streff Adv.			same co. as above
Streff Adv. Spec.			same co. as above
Streff Inc.			same co. as above
Streff Inc. Adv.			same co. as above
Streff Specialty Advertising			same co. as above
Streff Specialty Advertising, Inc.			same co. as above
Streff, Inc., Adv.			same co. as above

They’re all the same company!

In any event, the domestic match industry has certainly gone through a number of significant changes over the years, and its relationship with jobbers has definitely been one such change.