

Print Marketing in a Digital World

Why Print is still a Powerful Marketing Medium

A white paper by:

HUDSON VALLEY
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Print is not Dead

The integration of marketing methods can provide a significant increase to a campaign's effectiveness. The goal is to give your audience the choice to view your material on the platform they desire.

Digital marketing has become the modern way of communicating and delivering information. So much so, that many people have forgotten about print and think of it as an antiquated method.

But print is not dead!

Digital has clear advantages over print, including speed, cost and accessibility. The problem is, it doesn't extract the same emotions from your audience that print does. Just imagine receiving a college diploma or even a written birthday card. Would it be as meaningful to you if you received it via email?

Studies have shown that print is still a strong influence on consumers. With careful targeting and limited abuse, the potential ROI is a great reason to start using print again.

The Rise of Digital

Technological advancements have stunted the growth of many products throughout history. The internet has developed a reputation for being the downfall of many essential services. Music, movies and books have all experienced significant changes in their methods of distribution.

Print Marketing in a Digital World

Print is Not Dead
Page 2

The Rise of Digital
page 2-3

The Power of Print
page 4-5

Using Print and Digital
page 6-7

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Digital alternatives in each industry have forced companies to change their entire playbook. New companies are gobbling up market share as they thrive in the digital atmosphere. While older companies resistant to changes have suffered with bankruptcy and have gone under.

Marketing is an industry that has seen changes due to digital as well. Digital methods of marketing have almost completely eclipsed that of print marketing. Several marketing services have seen sharp decline since digital. Catalogs, print news, paper surveys and print promotions now all have digital alternatives.

News outlets have all come up with web and mobile counterparts to their publications. The digital publications are necessary to keep up with the evolution of industry standards.

All for good reason, since digital provides many benefits that print will never be able to. Speed, accountability, metrics, and cost-effectiveness are aspects that have influenced marketers to transition.

But print continues to hang on to an important aspect that digital can't take away from it. Despite the financial and environmental reasons that make digital an excellent option, it will never be able to create the emotional effect of a print campaign. Print stimulates the senses much more than digital. So before you completely throw away your print marketing plan, consider its strengths.

Print Marketing in a Digital World

Print is Not Dead
Page 2

The Rise of Digital
page 2-3

The Power of Print
page 4-5

Using Print and Digital
page 6-7

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The Power of Print

Print is personal. Although digital is here to stay, there are still advantages to print marketing.

The most powerful aspect of print marketing is its tangibility. The ability to physically hold, touch, see, hear or smell the object in ways digital can never mimic.

Concrete objects held in one's hand engage the senses and make it more memorable. In service-based industries this can be extremely important since a tangible product isn't sold. It is a strong way of letting the customer know that you appreciate their business and have them in mind. The key is to incorporate print into your product or service in a way that motivates the consumer.

Print marketing is important for brand recognition and customer loyalty. It is important that your print material be of high quality. The material must also speak to your client's needs, desires and lifestyle.

Several studies have observed the differences between print and digital to measure their effectiveness.

A study sponsored by *Canada post* and performed by Canadian neuromarketing firm *Trulmpact* compared digital (email) to print (direct mail). They studied consumer actions through eye-tracking and EEG brain wave measurements while measuring three main metrics:

1. Cognitive load (ease of understanding)
2. Motivation (Persuasiveness)
3. Attention (How long consumers looked at the content)

Print Marketing in a Digital World

Print is Not Dead
Page 2

The Rise of Digital
page 2-3

The Power of Print
page 4-5

Using Print and Digital
page 6-7

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Print's direct mail method proved easier to process mentally. It also proved to test better when it came to brand recall.

When the sample group was asked to recall the advertisement they just saw, recall was 70% higher among participants who looked at the print piece (75%) vs the digital method (44%).

Motivational-to-cognitive load was also measured where any results over a 1.0 is good. Direct mail scored over a 1.0 while digital scored less than 1.0.

A *Temple* study conducted fMRIs to study the brain's reaction to print methods vs digital. This type of study is a far better indicator when compared to self-reporting by sample subjects. The study discovered that print activated the ventral striatum, the indicator of desire and valuation in the brain.

Similar to *Temple*, *Bangor University* also conducted fMRI tests along with branding agency *Millward Brown*. Their results showed that physical material is more "real" to the brain. It has meaning and connects to memory better by engaging with spatial memory networks.

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Print Marketing in a Digital World

Print is Not Dead

Page 2

The Rise of Digital

page 2-3

The Power of Print

page 4-5

Using Print and Digital

page 6-7

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Using Print to Compliment Digital

Why should you have to choose? Rather than all-digital or all-print, a company should consider an integrated marketing approach that leverages the unique benefits of print with the convenience and accessibility of digital.

In the contemporary marketing industry one simply cannot exclude digital tactics in any campaign. The digital landscape is far too valuable.

What is possible is an implementation of print based on the findings of the studies above. Since print is more memorable and leads to better brand recall, a combination of the two can help give your prospects what they need to make a purchasing decision.

Here are a few examples of the combination of print and digital campaigns:

- **Customized splash pages.** Print has a reputation for being difficult when it comes to measuring results. One way around this is to include links (that could be in the form of QR codes) to send people to a specific page on your website. This page on your website will allow you to track specific data about your campaign (gender, age, etc.) and then track their behavior on your site (pages visited, how long spent on pages, etc.).

Print Marketing in a Digital World

Print is Not Dead
Page 2

The Rise of Digital
page 2-3

The Power of Print
page 4-5

Using Print and Digital
page 6-7

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- **Use social media to launch direct mail campaigns.** Social media accounts have handy features that let you know a lot about who visits your sites. These analytics pages can be used to create a very specific target audience that you can use to launch a direct mail campaign. Based on the research above, coming up with print material that meet the consumer's needs and strikes emotion with the audience can be much more effective at creating leads than a paid social media post.
- **Retain you Customers.** Considering the emotional aspect of Print material, sending out a card or a customized letter to thank your customers can leave a lasting impression in their minds. Even if someone sees it who is not yet a customer, they may be moved themselves by the action and it gives your company a good reputation.

Marketing is an industry that is always evolving and although some practices that were popular may be replaced by what used to be new and unfamiliar, you shouldn't discount what is in the past. That past practice may be the new edge your company needs, especially with all the clutter of the digital world.

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Print Marketing in a Digital World

Print is Not Dead

Page 2

The Rise of Digital

page 2-3

The Power of Print

page 4-5

Using Print and Digital

page 6-7

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Hudson Valley Public Relations specializes in content marketing.

Words, images and campaigns must be carefully crafted to break through and reach people. The future is now; mobile technology now delivers relevant content on demand. Our growth team focuses on hyper-local marketing and personalization. We identify thought leaders, monitoring what's important and what's being said about your brand. We develop innovative strategies combining technology and creativity to achieve real growth. We target the right person, with the right message, at the right time, on the right device. Good reputation management controls the conversation, never let the crowd mash your message. Never react to a crisis, respond.

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Acknowledgement

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