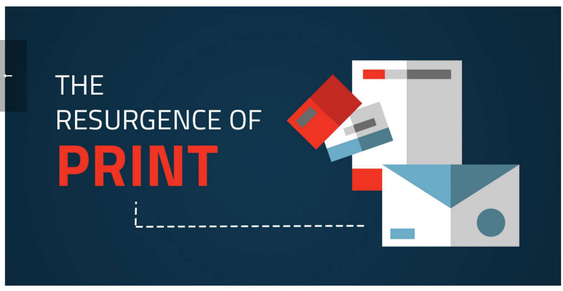
By Kimi Mattig-Louria Posted September 12, 2020 In Advertising, Digital Advertising, Print



THE RESURGENCE OF PRINT:

THE SURPRISINGLY HIGH VALUE OF PRINT IN THE DIGITAL ERA

PRINT'S BACK AND IT'S BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE

About a decade ago, companies across the globe began investing heavily in digital marketing. Social media marketing, content marketing, search engine marketing, and video marketing were all embraced to the point of oversaturation. Fast forward to today and we find ourselves amidst an exceptionally crowded and less effective online marketing arena. None of this is surprising, given that America is the third largest online market worldwide. Companies need to go where their audience is, so digital it is. What is surprising is the recent comeback print media has made. Print ads, billboards, business cards, flyers, posters, and–most notably–direct mail have all enjoyed a recent renaissance. While many in the industry are competing in the jam-packed digital marketing territory, others are taking advantage of print's comeback moment before word gets out. Why the sudden renewed relationship with print? We'll dive in next.

THE UNEXPECTED POWER OF PRINT

Digital has its advantages, but no matter how much it evolves, it hasn't been able to replace print. There's something about engaging the senses that helps commit print messages to memory, which brands love. Hillary Bennett, Account Executive with Print-Tech in Ann Arbor, Michigan, noted: "Touch interaction makes a huge difference in overall recall. People remember what those copies in grammar school used to smell like, or how that velvety wedding invitation felt. The same applies to direct mail pieces they bring in from the mailbox. A simple postcard generates excitement and appreciation for the effort and cost the company put forth to send it to you." Turns out, Hillary is right on cue. Numerous studies show that print media has the ability to reach and connect with people on many levels better than digital. Consider this:

- **Print ads elicit a stronger emotional response than their digital counterparts and, overall, have a longer-lasting impact.**
- **Nearly 70% of Americans prefer to read printed mail over digital.**
- **80% of print mail is opened, while 80% of emails are discarded.**
- **92% of 18 to 23-year-olds find print easier to read than digital content.**
- **Consumers trust print ads 34% more than search engine ads for making purchasing decisions.**

With so much data being thrown at us at a breakneck pace in the digital world, a simple moment spent with a magazine ad in a waiting room, or a clever message read off a billboard, seem able to garnish more weight when it comes to customer loyalty. Moreover, people of all ages appreciate the daily ritual of bringing in the goods from their mailbox. That moment of suspense, followed by physical engagement with a postcard or direct mail piece when the mail is retrieved, can't be replaced. All of that being said, print alone is no longer enough to guarantee conversion. So, why the recent surge in print ads? It's all about print's uncanny ability to leverage digital marketing.

WHERE DIGITAL ALONE MISSED THE MARK

The well-planned strategy to deliver an omnichannel experience took hold with the arrival of digital ads a while ago. The omnichannel experience allows customers to receive a company's messaging through different channels of engagement (digital, email, etc.) or "touchpoints" along their shopping journey. The problem was, as brands worldwide jumped on the digital omnichannel bandwagon, customers were left blindsided by too many companies competing for their attention every time they turned on their smartphones or laptops. When too many online messages hit a consumer, they have an uncanny ability to block them from their minds…and their electronic devices.

Interestingly, what's been discovered, however, is that when these multiple touchpoints combine physical or print messaging *with* digital, we're left with a fully integrated shopping experience that brings the most impressive results. Which is exactly why print messaging is becoming advertising's sweetheart once again.

PRINT AND DIGITAL–TOGETHER FOR THE WIN

Admittedly, the days have passed when thick brochures printed on the finest glossy card stock and countless catalogs with fresh photography arrived in our mailboxes. Mel Bice, owner of Wildesign, Inc., and Senior Art Director at MOVE Communications explains why: "There's just not enough consumer follow-through to validate the cost. If you're going to spend the money it takes to produce a high-quality brochure without a digital accompaniment, you're losing out. It's not that print ever died, it just wasn't relevant to consumer engagement and follow-through. Now, it is."

The opportunity for print is here. It's now. But only in conjunction with digital are we seeing off-the-chart engagement and conversion results. Adding print media to a larger omnichannel experience seems to be today's sweet spot. The combination of print and digital ads makes campaigns 400% more effective! Is there any doubt your company should be following suit?

THE POWER OF PRINT IN ACTION

We've gone over the impact physical interaction has with a marketing message and how several messages (but not too many) need to reach consumers for impact. Let's take a look at a real-life example of how that's done.

Account Executive Hillary Bennett explained how, at Print-Tech, they often implement a wonderfully cost-effective direct mail tool from the United States Postal Service named Every Door Direct Mail® (EDDM®). This tool allows businesses to target specific locations with print marketing mail without a mailing list. "Every door direct mail is great, because it saves thousands on mailing lists. Direct mail is, in our experience, one of the most crucial touchpoints in the shopper's journey. A great direct mail piece, integrated with an USPS® Informed Delivery® email preview and social media touches, promises a far larger return than either digital or print marketing alone."

Art Director, Mel Bice, offered some insight on this golden opportunity in print marketing: "It's a really fun time to be creative with print pieces. People are looking for a fresh, interactive experience. When I design, I try to provide tangible things that are customized and interesting, so they leave a bigger impression. The strategy is to connect with the consumer in a fresh, relevant way, so they recall your brand and are motivated to take the next step."

LONG LIVE PRINT

Just when everyone thought print marketing was a dying breed, it's made a huge comeback. Turns out, purchasers of every age prefer to engage their senses when being pursued by industries. No matter what's for sale, consumers have proven to react positively to tactile ads that show consideration for the buyer. When marketing strategies couple print with digital marketing, it's a seemingly win-win situation for all. If you're interested in joining in on print's comeback with a print media campaign—with or without digital marketing support—contact us.

Let's talk

By Kimi Mattig-Louria

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Print

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December 2014
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