

PressLines

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Why “Taking It All Digital” May Not Be Such a Great Idea

The temptations of taking your catalog purely digital are great. There is the obvious elimination of print and postage costs, as well as speed to market. Add in the connectivity of newer generations and evolving cultural changes and it seems like a no-brainer. In fact, just four years ago as the nation emerged from economic recession, the Direct Marketing Association reported that the number of print-only catalogs was down by 50 percent.

But then something happened. In that same year, JC Penney, which had discontinued its print catalog in 2009, discovered its customers were missing something. According to the 2014 JC Penney Annual Report, “Overwhelming research confirmed that customers prefer to browse a traditional printed piece before going online or to the store to make a purchase.” That statement reflects research findings from a variety of sources. For its part, JC Penney reintroduced a new, 120-page print catalog after the company’s five-year hiatus.

Print vs. Digital: It’s Not “Which” — It’s “How Much”

Taking advantage of time, distance and perspective from the original rush to digital, the marketplace began to re-define the role of print catalogs. In its white paper, “Catalogs

– The Secret Weapon in a Digital Marketing Mix,” omni-channel agency Kreber states, “The powerful print catalog of 2016 looks like something we’re all familiar with, but upon closer inspection, we see it’s stronger, smarter and more strategic than its old-school counterpart. And it’s helping to make products fly out the door for retailers (and, interestingly, a good number of pure play e-tailers), both big and small.”

The most successful direct marketers now leverage the investment they make in developing a curated product assortment, and then bring it to life through an optimized, multichannel approach that addresses consumers where they are – print, mobile, social, landing pages and a variety of other channels.



Taking it Digital *continued from page 1*

Catalogs are a lot like life. Sometimes you don't know how much you miss something until you come back and give it another try. As evidence, Kreber points to these statistics from companies that went to pure digital and then rediscovered print catalogs:

- Bonobos, an e-commerce-driven apparel company that designs and sells a full line of men's clothing, attributed 20% of new sales to catalog customers and found that those customers spent 1.5x more than non-catalog customers.
- British clothing retailer Boden found that catalog customers spend 20 minutes with a print catalog versus 5 minutes on an app or 8 seconds with an email.
- *The Wall Street Journal* reported that, on average, catalogs yield \$4 in sales while costing less than \$1 to produce.

Not Everyone Gets the Message

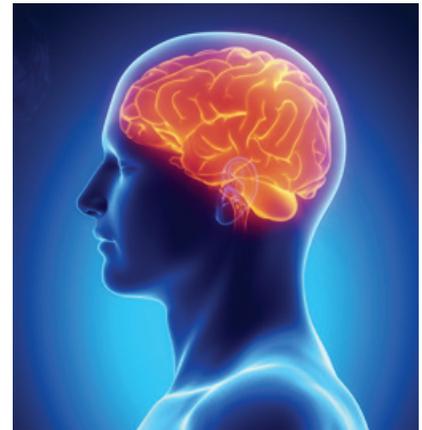
Khadeeja Safdarv reports in a *Wall Street Journal* article ("Victoria's Secret Turns Its Back on the Catalog," April 8, 2016), that despite strong sales in a tough retail environment, Victoria's Secret will stop mailing its famous catalog. Yet not everyone is buying into the new program. In a research paper entitled, "Every Guy's Worst Nightmare," Citi retail analysts estimated discontinuing the print catalog would save about \$100 million annually, but voiced concerns the move would negatively impact sales "as the brand may be less top-of-mind with male and female customers long-term."

Safdarv went on to say that even in the face of increased online shopping, many retailers have doubled down on direct mail. She pointed to high-end furniture retailer Restoration Hardware Holdings Inc., which has gained a reputation by mailing phonebook-thick "source books" showcasing its merchandise.

Statistics from the Direct Marketing Association support the notion of print being an important part of a comprehensive direct marketing program. The association says 53% of consumers purchase from a catalog at least once a year, with 17% purchasing monthly or more often. After experiencing declines, catalog mailings rose in 2013 for the first time in six years and continue in an upward direction.

Real Science Favors Print

Several academic studies point to the reason why print actually performs better than digital. Temple University researchers published a study last year using fMRI brain scans to compare digital and paper. According to Roger Dooley in his *Forbes* article ("Paper Beats Digital in Many Ways, According to Neuroscience," September 16, 2016), the fMRI approach used by the Temple scientists is the technique most widely used by academic researchers. While costly, fMRI studies can produce 3D images of brain activity. The time resolution is lower than EEG, but their ability to show activity in specific brain structures is valued by researchers.



One key finding of the study was that paper advertising activated the ventral striatum area of the brain to a higher degree than digital media. Activity in this small brain structure had the highest

correlation with advertising effectiveness. The study showed that ventral striatum activity was a better predictor than self-reporting by the subjects. A previous study of successful ad campaigns found that the ventral striatum was an indicator of desire and valuation.

Print as an Ensemble Player

While print may not be the lead dog it once was, it's still playing a major role in an omni-channel

marketing orchestration. As part of a finely tuned mix, even those marketers that are digital first find that print catalogs continue to demonstrate their ability to enhance direct marketing programs. So you may want to think twice before buying into a pure-digital strategy.

When you're ready to get started, consider Ripon Printers. We specialize in producing and

distributing catalogs, direct mail and digital communications for a wide range of customers. You'll enjoy flexible scheduling that meets today's fast-paced environment, exceptional customer training programs that improve your productivity and equipment diversity for handling virtually any need. Contact your representative or send an email inquiry to sales@riponprinters.com. **RIPON**

One thing I'm proud about our employees is their level of service to our community. Whether it's providing labor and funding for United Way, helping out in city or county government, or raising money for the local high school, they always step up and help where needed. This past year Ripon Printers volunteered to help with Mobile Meals, which we now do one week every month. For those of you who don't know, Mobile Meals is a service by our local hospital to provide lunch for local residents who are generally home bound. It's a way to ensure those people have at least one hot and nutritious meal a day.

Recently I worked the route with Jamie Krueger, one of our top estimators (and all around good person). Jamie has been an EMT for over 20 years and has gone on to get extensive training on her own time to be better able to help those in need when she is



Andy Lyke

sent out in the ambulance as a paramedic.

My point is not to extol the virtues of Jamie and other Ripon Printer employees. (I don't have enough column space to express how much I admire our team!) Rather, driving with Jamie that day was truly a highlight of the week for me because of our teamwork. When we arrived at the hospital to start our shift, we knew what we needed to do. We worked together wordlessly knowing

what each of us needed to do and what the other was going to do. There were no wasted moments and no need for a discussion on what to do next. I absolutely love that type of teamwork and it is truly a joy when it happens. I see that every day in our pressroom where our crews know what each other needs to do to get the next job ready on the press – it's almost like a choreographed dance.

Helping others is always a wonderful thing to do. To be able to do it with a trusted friend as a team makes it all the more rewarding.

As we create your feast, you can help us by returning your proofs to us as soon as possible, confirming your desired quantity, sending us your postage check, etc. We hope when we are done with our cooking, you will enjoy the meal! **RIPON**



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Ripon Printers Wins a Benny Award and Three Awards of Recognition from Printing Industries of America

Earlier in the year, Ripon Printers and its customers received 17 total awards in the 2016 Graphics Excellence Awards. Those garnering the highest honors then went on to the Benny's to be considered for the top quality award given by Printing Industries of America (PIA). The Benny has become a universally recognized symbol for excellence in the printing industry over the past 60 years.

"Do You Dream in Kohler," printed for the Kohler Company, was awarded the coveted Benny in the Web Press Printing, Uncoated Paper (4 or more colors) category. Receiving Awards of Recognition were "Custom Project One," printed for Trek and competing in Product/Service Catalogs (cover, sheetfed and interior, web), "2016 Ready to Run," printed for Lionel and competing in Product Catalogs (4 or more colors, printers with more than 250 employees) and a second Kohler marketing piece, "Trends 1," competing in Digital Printing, Brochures and Booklets (4 or more colors).

Conratulations to the Benny completion winners and thanks to all of you who entrust us to produce your best work. **RIPON**

