

Print - The Essential Brand Storytelling Tool

Ashley Maydak | Domtar | Brand Marketing Manager

When thinking of brand storytelling mediums, it's certainly expected to get excited over all the latest digital advances.

With daily buzz-worthy updates, such as [LinkedIn Instant Articles](#) or [Facebook Live](#), it's easy to believe that the future is shifting to digital marketing. Yet, despite the advances of other communication vehicles, print remains a vital, trusted and appreciated part of the media mix.

Here are four important reasons print is still the essential brand storytelling tool:

People Trust Print

In an October 2016 survey, [MarketingSherpa](#) asked 2,400 consumers "In general, which type of advertising channels do you trust more when you want to make a purchase decision?" A whopping 82% cited print ads in newspapers and magazines, followed closely by 76% trusting direct mail (ad/catalogues I receive in the mail). By contrast, only 25% found online pop-up ads trustworthy, making them the least trusted option in the survey.

Why the overwhelming trust in print ads? MarketingSherpa's opinion is that "...print's scarcity and standards make it more credible. There's very high value online-even most print publishers publish online as well-but that real value is drowning in a sea of mediocrity.." My opinion is that it goes back to a sensory input. As outlined in this article from the PrintWeek website, there's something about [the tactile experience of print](#) that humans are hardwired to love.

Print is a Memorable Brand Messaging Medium

Readers comprehend and retain more information reading printed news than they do digitally, because the experience is different. As outlined in a recent [Washington Post](#) article, online reading is "usually spent scanning and skimming, with few places (or little time) for mental markers." In fact, only 16% of online readers read word-by-word.

Why is this? Blame neuroscience. A [recent study](#) sponsored by [Canada Post](#) and conducted by [TrueImpact](#) found that "direct mail requires 21% less cognitive effort to ingest than digital means, suggesting that it's both easier to understand and more memorable." The study also cited a 70% higher brand recall rate among participants exposed to a direct mail piece vs. a digital ad.

People of All Ages Enjoy Receiving Print

While online ads can feel intrusive and unwanted, print remains a welcome surprise. According to DMA research, [56% of Americans say receiving mail is a real pleasure](#). And that doesn't just go for baby boomers. Although often labeled as technology-obsessed, [another study](#) found that Direct mail (92%) and newspapers (91%) are the media most Millennials say affect their store choices.

Print Prompts People to Take Action

A recent study by USPS found that [23% of direct mail recipients visited the sender's store location](#). According to a [separate study conducted by USPS](#) regarding the 2016 election cycle, Millennials are more likely to read, discuss and use political mail. The same study found that, after receiving political mail, 66% of millennials are likely to research the featured candidate, with 54% visiting the candidate's website.

So, next time you're planning your omnichannel campaign, make print a part of the strategy. While it's perfectly acceptable to experiment with email, social media and digital advertising, don't forget what the stats prove time and time again: print is an essential storytelling component of any media mix.

Ashley is the Brand Marketing Manager at Domtar and den mother of Domtar's Blueline blog. She's a lover of fresh air, dogs, books, art, travel, all things design and all things vintage.