

Does Print Reign SUPREME After All?



Words by Kellie Northwood

Every year, millions of dollars are spent on exhaustive research in the pursuit of the most effective avenues to reaching consumers and building a successful shopper marketing campaign. Despite evidence in its favour print has been discarded too quickly.

“Effectiveness is direct conduit to the bottom line”

Marketing results tracking ROI, audience reach, effectiveness, sales growth by zone, by product, by category, by channel and more build an exhaustive list of reporting to the most finite detail. (And in my mind, as they should be.) The more data we can gather and analyse to provide evidence on the effectiveness of any campaign we, or our clients, invest in is a positive. Data should capture true results ensuring every campaign delivered, achieves greater connectivity with our customers.

Studies internationally and within Australia continue to reinforce the power and effectiveness of printed material as a strong performer across, audience reach, brand equity, engagement, relevance, effectiveness, consumer preferences and trust, to name a few.

Trust is important and the research is in. According to the Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising report, on a global basis trust in printed editorial content in publications can rate as high as 67%. Advertising in newspapers and magazines rate as two of the three most trusted forms of advertising. Although ‘word of mouth’ will always rate the highest in the trust stakes, ignoring a consumer’s

willingness to take action based on trust inherent in print could limit any campaign.

“Ignoring the strong trust factor inherent in print could limit any campaign”

Interestingly, six out of ten respondents who put their trust in print advertising represented a 4% increase over the past six years. As other media have entered the arena and saturated conversations consumers trust levels have waned, print has the potential to be the new black.

Australia Post and ADMA’s recent collaboration researching ‘How Australians want to hear from brands’ found three of the top five most effective advertising channels were printed media and yet these three, catalogues, personalised direct mail and press advertising, have realised a drop in spend over the previous twelve months. Illustrating a disconnect with marketer spend and consumer preferences.

Granted, no one channel works the same across all product categories and often requires a combination of media to maximise sales conversion. Respondents in the fashion and supermarket sectors found catalogues and flyers to be the most effective when it came to acquisitional marketing, those considering new purchases. However, when print media is included as part of the most useful mix when building loyalty or cross-sell opportunities. It was ascertained that a combination of direct mail and digital (www) could work “hand in hand” to influence consumers when making their final purchasing decision.

Clients need to understand print’s place and I often talk to audiences about using print as a foundation for your campaign partnering with shorter engagement media, such as internet advertisements, to push customers to the printed brochure. Retailers know the benefits of multi-channel only too well with a 30 second television commercials famous three word – Catalogue Out Now. Driving consumers to the next step in the communication chain, Retailers know the consumer will read a catalogue, press advertisement or magazine advertorial for much longer than 30 seconds providing a unique opportunity for one on one dialogue to a potential customer.

“Ignoring the printed channel to engage young audiences comes with a big red warning label”

It is understandable for marketers to question the relevance of print to younger audiences, however ignoring the printed channel to engage young audiences comes with a big red warning label. Many assumptions of young consumers being focused entirely on digital and social media will leave sales figures lagging. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and more all have their place however they require significant resource and content investment from companies. Having a site with a couple of conversations is not going to help anyone’s brand or sales growth.

It is true that the young responders rate social media, online advertising and email marketing higher than older demographics, however, the same young group also reported engage more with catalogues, flyers and direct mail. For those completely astride the latest and fastest

of the electronic revolution, it is easy to forget that not everyone is online, comfortable enough with English or visually capable enough to read online or could even be bothered to engage in this fashion at all. Remember that 6million Australians do not access the internet in their homes, the numbers increase when you look at digital consumption on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

It is this group that Marketers are missing out on when they exclude print from their mix. According to the World Health Organisation by 2050 a predicted 2 billion people worldwide will be 60 years and older. It is this consumer group who report a higher preference for print collateral as easy to access and can be referred back to later. Printed material carries more information, are easier to understand and can even be taken to the point of purchase.

When business successes are being measured in such small margins, every opportunity counts and marketers know this. With such a weight of evidentiary research pointing to the effectiveness of print the only barrier I can see is that marketers and media buyers are missing out on the golden chalice and giving too much credence to click rates and data sets than bottom line sales and customer engagement.

Kellie Northwood an advocate for the effectiveness and sustainability of print media as a relevant communication channel to market. Kellie also sits on the Printing Industry Association of Australia Board and holds a senior position with TSA Limited.

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