



PRINT vs DIGITAL?

WHY THAT IS THE WRONG QUESTION

BY JOHN WAECHTER

As an independent media consultant, I hear from all kinds of people regarding their approach to marketing campaigns in this new digital world. The style of comment that startles me the most is one that digital is the future, the only place to be, and print has gone by the way of the dinosaur and will be extinct before you know it. I can easily understand why that conclusion may exist in people's minds, but nothing could be further from the truth. No marketing campaign should be completely dependent on one medium or the other. Rather, research shows that a combination of both print and digital will provide a marketer the most effective return on investment available.

DIGITAL ATTRIBUTES

Among the top reasons why digital is so popular is cost considerations. Budgets can be smaller with digital, and the testing can be more targeted, more informative and timelier.

With the advent of the "cost per click" business model, for example, a

marketer only pays when someone clicks on the ad.

If the clicks are not coming your way, you will know that quickly and be able to make swift adjustments to the campaign. If managed properly, this will lower your overall costs and increase your effectiveness.

There are additional attributes such as the storytelling capabilities of video and the potential for global reach, among many others.

PRINT ATTRIBUTES

Generally, response rates are significantly higher with print mediums than with digital. This includes all print – newspapers, magazines, direct mail, flyers et al. A key influencer of this condition is trust. Surveys have consistently indicated that readers trust their print sources of information significantly more than they trust digital content. Interestingly, the trust factor spans the various generations and does not seem to gravitate to a specific age group.

Surveys also indicate that the cognitive load factor is much less in print. Simply put, our brains process print messaging much more easily than digital. Additionally, print is more experiential and private than digital, which can include countless distractions when attempting to focus on digital content.

PRINT AND DIGITAL IS THE RIGHT ANSWER

Print and digital should be viewed as complementary media, not as adversaries. It should not be considered one or the other.

They each have positive attributes that need to be incorporated into comprehensive long-term marketing plans. Digital has a multitude of tools that when combined appropriately can quickly expand reach, lower costs and accurately target your audience in a timely way, complete with measurable results.

Print media brings to the readers a sense of trust and privacy that results in higher response rates than digital. Consequently, the most effective marketing campaigns will include both digital and print, and I believe it will remain that way for a long time to come.

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