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Print vs Digital: 5 Reasons Why Print Advertising Still Works

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Digital marketing (/services/dms) is everywhere these days: you can't avoid it on your phone (/blog/dominate-mobile-marketing-tips-to-drive-leads-and-sales), the websites (/services/web-design-agency) you visit, and even on digital billboards (/blog/the-definitive-guide-to-out-of-home-ooh-advertising-success) on your subway ride to work



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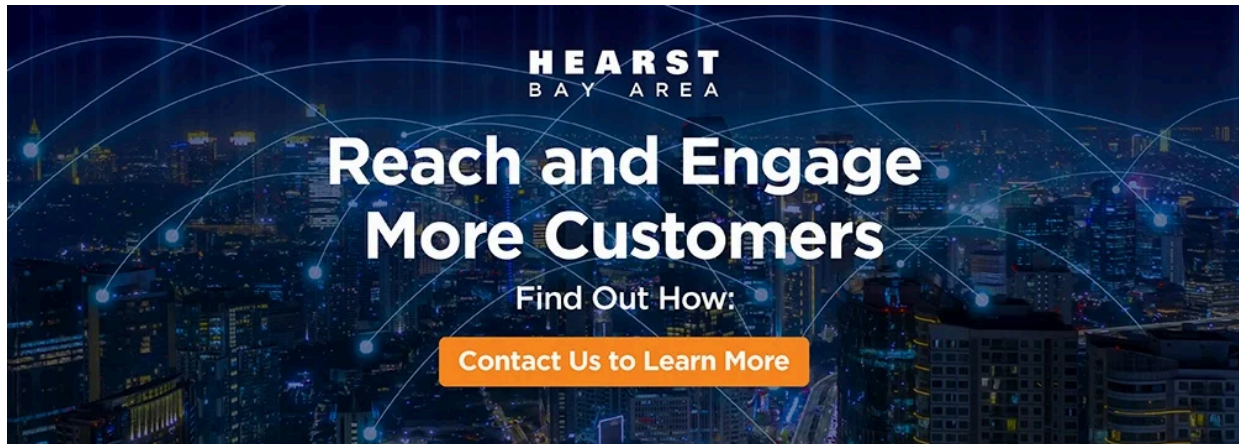
(<https://marketing.sfgate.com>)

prove-the-medium-isnt-dead) dead?

The answer might surprise most digital marketers because, no, print is definitely not dead (</blog/why-you-should-never-underestimate-the-power-of-print-advertising>).

Advertising investments (</blog/learn-how-to-calculate-roas>) have gone digital mainly because the Internet provides businesses an affordable way to promote products and services. However, online marketing needs the complementary power of print advertising (</services/print-advertising>) to seal the advertising deal.

In fact, print ads (</blog/effective-print-ad-examples>) have several distinct advantages over digital ads (</blog/tips-for-building-a-successful-digital-advertising-campaign>), making them a can't-miss addition to your omnichannel marketing (</blog/tips-for-creating-an-effective-omnichannel-strategy>) strategy. Here's what you need to know about this classic advertising medium and why it still matters today.



(https://marketing.sfgate.com/cs/c/?cta_guid=64499b5f-9109-4987-9a1a-d07839629f6c&signature=AAH58kFiS0aN7E9YXEnaPzy8eOl0Akb2RA&portal_id=655969&pagelId=4858253615&placement_guid=f3bec7b5-e549-4830-8e01-ce8cff341ba&click=088e2c6e-5543-4290-ac11-55c44d68c8b5&redirect_url=APEfjpFmelvcj7cnhnSxUanNzjPcDkpoBbplaeL5QtsCIEf4x7Fq9cPJTV7XISAixgMyWO6ET76xEnVAc7HeggaCLEI7Yex8CGSiXj8LMruN7xKXeUkOwnm17Gp8FqCHQzPZlbcu-6Zs&hsutk=d969a05b9352e0c0ab2090f9f319c2f9&canon=https%3A%2F%2Fmarketing.sfgate.com%2Fblog%2Freasons-why-print-advertising-still-works&ts=1751382128872&__hstc=133078865.d969a05b9352e0c0ab2090f9f319c2f9.1751382130673.1751382130673.16__hssc=133078865.1.1751382130673&__hsfp=3690629108&contentType=blog-post)

Print vs. Digital Advertising: Why You Should Use Print Advertising

1. Print Ads Convert More Customers

Believe it or not, print advertisements (/blog/why-print-advertising-should-be-part-of-your-marketing-strategy) significantly impact converting prospects to customers. Nearly 80% of consumers (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-reasons-print-advertising-works-sabline-carbaugh>) act on directly printed mail advertisements (/blog/direct-mail-marketing-strategies-for-small-businesses) compared to 45% of consumers who act on electronic advertisements. Neuroscience shows (<https://geomares-marketing.com/en/blog/5-reasons-why-print-advertising-works>) that recall of reading printed materials is higher than digital ones, and part of that is due to the multi-sensory experience of holding a paper in your hands and turning the pages. It's powerful stuff.

Plus, the popularity of online and digital ads has led to overload for many viewers. Digital ads are now so ubiquitous that consumers have learned to tune them out much of the time. A HubSpot survey (<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/why-people-block-ads-and-what-it-means-for-marketers-and-advertisers>) found that 57% of respondents disliked advertisements that played before a video (/services/video-advertising), and 43% didn't even watch them. However, the ads that play during the Super Bowl are still a memorable experience, one that's discussed well after the game ends.

So, if you're wondering whether print is right for your business (/blog/will-print-advertising-help-me-grow-my-business), printed ads (<https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/newspaper-advertising-types-tips-and-examples>) influence our buying decisions more than electronic advertisements. And for maximum results, combine both digital and print ads to boost your response rates by 20% (<https://blog.btohoio.com/why-print-advertising-is-more-important-than-ever-a-data-driven-perspective>).

You can even mix both mediums (/blog/media-mix-in-advertising) in one ad, like adding a QR code to a direct mail ad to offer readers more information about your products (and your marketing team more insight into the success of your mailers).

2. Print Offers Strong Audience Demographic Targeting

Successful small businesses (/blog/small-business-success-top-strategies-for-maximizing-your-marketing-budget) segment their loyal customer base by demographics. After learning their customers' primary demographics (/blog/meeting-customers-needs-effective-marketing-strategies), business operators target this

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to your target audience).

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(<https://marketing.sfgate.com>)

For example, dog lovers who want to purchase healthy food for their canine friends are more likely to find the right brand via a publication such as Dog Fancy than by receiving an email blast (/services/email-marketing) from an online marketing agency. Local businesses (/resources/local-marketing-retail-sales-growth-guide), like restaurants (/blog/creative-advertising-and-marketing-strategies-for-restaurants), will reach the customers in their area and boost their brand awareness effectively (/blog/print-advertising-to-boost-brand-visibility) by advertising in a local newspaper (/resources/newspaper-advertising-types-tips-and-examples).

People subscribe to magazines and read physical content in order to learn new skills or indulge in a personal passion. The advertising is all part of the experience.

When used in conjunction with highly-targeted digital campaigns (and we'll get to this in just a minute), you can increase the number of potential touches and touchpoints your customers (/blog/how-your-customers-can-be-your-greatest-marketing-asset) have with your brand, thus increasing their likelihood to purchase.

3. Print Advertising Is The Best Way To Build Trust

Most consumers understand the Internet is rife with fake advertising at best and grossly misleading marketing campaigns at worst. Because of the dubious reputation of online ads, print advertisements remain the most trusted source (/blog/6-reasons-why-print-advertisements-are-considered-trustworthy) of marketing information.

(<https://marketing.sfgate.com>)

Traditional media	
Local broadcast TV news	72%
Public TV news	22%
Broadcast network news	67%
Cable news	63%
Local newspapers	61%
National newspapers	60%
Radio news	60%
National/local magazines	51%
Ads in the mail	39%
Digital media	
Streaming news	65%
Web/apps of local broadcast TV news	61%
Web/apps of national/local newspapers	59%
Web/apps of broadcast network news	58%
Web/apps of public TV news	58%
Web/apps of cable news	55%
Web/apps of national/local magazines	53%
Radio web and apps/internet radio	52%
Streaming radio	49%
All other internet news	48%
Podcasts	47%
Social media	41%
Email	39%
Note: n=9,097 ages 18+ Source: Television Bureau of Advertising (TVB), "2024 Voter Funnel Study" conducted by Dynata, Jan 22, 2025	
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Source: eMarketer (<https://pro-na1.emarketer.com/>)

Print advertisements (/blog/newspaper-advertising-strategies-for-local-businesses) never include pop-up screens that promote unseemly products and services, and they're much less likely to be scams than online ads. We can all recall something we've bought online, probably from a tempting ad that was not what we expected, but this experience is less common with print ads.

The straightforward printed method for promoting your products and services builds credibility (/blog/8-tips-to-establishing-a-credible-brand-for-your-business), which is the first step towards establishing the trust required for customers to take action. Plus, by advertising in trusted publications like newspapers (/resources/newspaper-advertising-types-tips-and-examples)and magazines, your company and products are associated with those established platforms, burnishing your reputation (/blog/strategies-brands-can-use-to-fix-their-reputation).



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(<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0092243714167428>), print ads activate different parts of the brain than digital ads (abstract.similar-articles.8), (<https://marketing.sfgate.com>) and viewing them leads to more encoding, engagement, and memory of print ads.

Table 2: Outcomes by Media Type Summary

Attribute	Definition	Physical	Digital
Attention	A customer's focused attention for a sustained period of time on key components of the ad		X
Review Time	The amount of time a customer spends with an ad	X	
Engagement	The amount of information the customer processes or absorbs from an ad	X	X
Stimulation	An emotional reaction to an ad	X	
Memory Retrieval Accuracy	Accurately remembering the advertising source and content	X	X
Memory Speed & Confidence	Quickly and confidently remember advertising source and content	X	
Purchase & Willingness to Pay	Whether and how much the customer is willing to pay for a product	X	X
Desirability	A subconscious desire for the product or service	X	
Valuation	The subconscious value a participant places on the product or service	X	

Source: OIG analysis of study results.

(<https://www.neurosciencemarketing.com/blog/articles/print-vs-digital.htm>)
(<https://www.neurosciencemarketing.com/blog/articles/print-vs-digital.htm>)

Source: Neuromarketing (<https://www.neurosciencemarketing.com/blog/articles/print-vs-digital.htm>)

Put simply?

People have an easier time recalling ads experienced in the print format. On top of that, the study uncovered that people place a higher subconscious value on products and services that they've seen advertised in print.

Plus, print offers more opportunities for brand storytelling (/blog/why-is-brand-storytelling-important) since it's provided as part of an overall experience. Put deep thought into how you approach your print ads to get the maximum impact, which can be emotional and business-oriented.



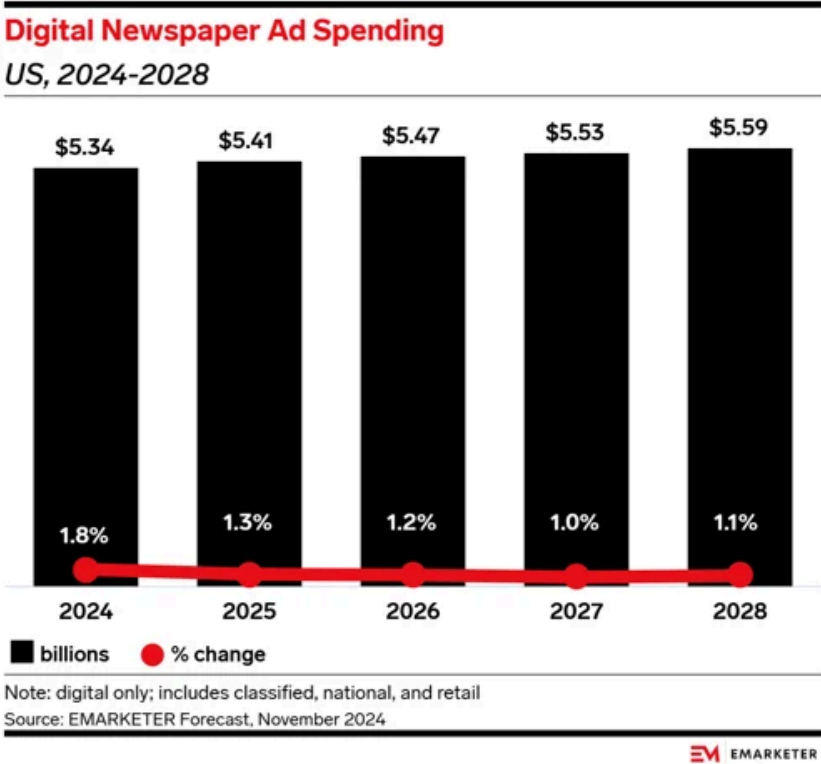
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(<https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/what-marketers-need-to-know-about-references-to-third-party-data-and-privacy>)
accessing it, publishers and tech companies are taking note
(<https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/why-print-advertising-still-works>)

Google has said that its Chrome browser will phase out third-party tracking cookies that enable some kinds of ad targeting, although the date for that phase-out has moved to at least 2025. Apple also has introduced multiple tools that make it harder for digital advertisers to track online user behavior.

Print advertising, conversely, makes targeting your ideal audience ([/blog/10-questions-for-target-audience-marketing](https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/10-questions-for-target-audience-marketing)) as effective as ever since it's not subject to digital privacy laws and tech access. It provides a strong complement to digital ads to ensure your ideal customers see your marketing wherever they spend their time.

Print Bolsters Digital Advertising



Source: eMarketer (<https://pro-na1.emarketer.com/>)

We don't recommend choosing one advertising medium over another. It's not an either/or proposition but rather a both/and one. After all, digital advertising is also an effective medium for reaching your target customers—they both have benefits and downsides.

An ideal marketing mix ([/blog/media-mix-in-advertising](https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/media-mix-in-advertising)) means including both forms. In fact, print advertising makes digital advertising much more effective ([/blog/7-ways-to-complement-your-digital-marketing-strategy-with-print](https://marketing.sfgate.com/blog/7-ways-to-complement-your-digital-marketing-strategy-with-print)). This is the idea behind



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omnichannel strategy, you can ensure you reach every potential customer.

Although online marketing costs less than getting the word out about your brand in print, digital marketing should represent one piece of your advertising puzzle. Online marketing often sets the table for print advertising to close the deal.

Savvy business owners know that implementing both digital and print advertising campaigns produces higher customer conversion rates (/blog/newspaper-advertising-why-print-and-digital-complement-each-other).

Print Advertising: Key Takeaways

Print advertising may be hundreds of years old, but it's still a powerful way to reach your ideal customers, increase brand awareness, and gain consumer trust. Don't forget to:

- Mix your marketing channels effectively, meaning don't go entirely digital or entirely print. A mix of both mediums will get you the best overall results.
- Target publications that speak to your ideal customer, whether local newspaper readers, direct mail recipients, or niche magazine subscribers.
- Take the opportunity to tell compelling stories with your print ads. Since viewers spend more time with them and trust them more, you can make more of an impact that way.

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OUR PORTFOLIO OF WEBSITES RECEIVE
BILLIONS OF PAGE VIEWS EACH YEAR.

VIEW OUR ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES CALENDAR!

View Upcoming Advertising Opportunities

(https://marketing.sfgate.com/cs/c/?cta_guid=b1877350-64da-4248-b428-11fcc3b4d389&signature=AAH58kFtAfT1awEWOHEFFxNu28eu05lRjw&portal_id=655969&pagelId=4858253615&placement_guid=5af0bc40-5e1c-4766-a8fa-9588890bfd03&click=f54dd3da-562e-4dbd-a198-1c1646216ce8&redirect_url=APefjpEH7-aH8G5bbEKLz1DF0BmhJMS0eYNedo3dl6YHpOq4wzZDxiBKY7Eyu7jRfO7BLoudgJm6sibe)