

Print It!

Marketers Continue to Leverage the Power of Direct Mail



“Catalogs still sell” was the headline in a recent issue of *Crain’s New York Business* discussing the undeniable power of paper in an e-commerce world. According to the article, retailers — and their customers — continue to embrace print for a number of reasons:

- Ability to showcase products in broader settings
- Standing out from online-only marketplaces like Amazon
- Using print to drive traffic to online and physical stores

In fact, a survey by global management consulting firm Kurt Salmon found that 58% of online shoppers also browse catalogs.

Large mailers like L Brands (parent company of Victoria’s Secret and Bath & Body Works) and Williams Sonoma have increased their catalog spend in the last several years, according to *Crain’s*. Others, like Lands End, cut down on catalog mailings to disastrous sales results.

Catalogs aren’t the only mail pieces experiencing a resurgence. According to the DMA’s *Statistical Fact Book 2013*, overall direct mail expenditures in the U.S. are forecast to grow to \$196 billion by 2016.

Data from the Winterberry Group supports those expectations, predicting that spending on direct mail will increase 1.1% this year, while channels like email and insert media remain flat.

Mobile barcodes remain a powerful tool for connecting print and digital efforts in a multichannel campaign. According to ScanLife, scanning of mobile barcodes in 2013 achieved 22% growth over 2012.

To paraphrase Mark Twain, the demise of direct mail has been greatly exaggerated. Smart marketers recognize that less competition in the mailbox can translate to enhanced visibility and higher open rates. In fact, a recent Direct Mail Information Service report found that more than 75% of direct mail is opened by the recipient.

The tactile nature of direct mail can be especially powerful in today’s digital world. From unique folds and sizes to rich paper stocks and vibrant ink coatings, the right mail design can enhance your brand promise — and pay dividends right to your bottom line.

Need advice on how to create an attention-getting and efficient mailpiece? Give Prompt Direct a call — we’re always here to help.

Tech Tip:

Make Sure Your Landing Page is Browser Compatible

An effective, attention-getting landing page is the gateway to a successful cross-media campaign. That's why it's vital to conduct cross-browser testing — most commonly Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, Chrome and Opera — to ensure compatibility before launching your campaign.

Why do web pages look different on various browsers? For starters, every web browser is unique. Most major browsers use a different rendering engine — software that

interprets the HTML, CSS and JavaScript, and displays it as a web page. Each rendering web engine is coded by a different team, which can result in visual discrepancies.

The age of the viewer's web browser also compounds difference in appearance. For example, a prospect using Internet Explorer 6 (nine years old) versus Safari 6 (nine months old) will display the same landing page differently. The browser

that is nine months old can support enhancements that were impossible nine years ago.

Remember — your landing page doesn't have to look identical in every browser. It just has to look correct, so be sure to test all functionality across multiple browsers sooner rather than later. Embrace the differences and you'll be on your way to a campaign that is sure to drive results.

Agency Spotlight: Vanguard Direct

What's been the biggest industry game changer in the last decade? According to Donald O'Connell, Executive VP at Vanguard Direct, without a doubt it's been technology.

"Direct response has become much more dynamic thanks to technology," O'Connell explains, "and multimedia platforms allow mailers to integrate digital components to drive results."

In addition to a full range of print services, Vanguard Direct lends its expertise in mobile marketing and application development to the creation of effective multi-channel campaigns. Critical to that effectiveness is an increased emphasis on accurate demographics and messaging, according to O'Connell. "Consumers have high expectations when it comes to relevance and personalization, so the right data and messaging are more important than ever."

Technology has also meant increased accountability for agencies like Vanguard, which provides a full slate of marketing

and technology services to clients in a variety of industries, including financial services, government and education. O'Connell says, "Marketers are now looking for supporting metrics beyond simply response rates. Technology allows us to go deeper into the data."

O'Connell sees a continuing challenge in turning data into useful business intelligence. "It's important to have an efficient way to distribute information, and an equally efficient way to collect and analyze the results."

It's also important to choose the right strategic partners, according to O'Connell. Vanguard has been working with Prompt for nearly a decade, and each company considers the other a trusted partner. Says O'Connell, "Both companies are like-minded in the high level of service we deliver to our customers. Trust is everything, and we have that with Prompt."



Vanguard Direct

SMARTER SOLUTIONS. BETTER RESULTS.

Prompt Expands Sales Department

Prompt Direct is pleased to announce the addition of industry veteran Carmen Napolitano to our sales department.

Napolitano joined the Prompt family in January, bringing her 25+ years of direct mail experience to her new role as a sales executive. She began her career at American Express, and gained increasing responsibility as a customer service representative and account executive during her employment with OMNI Mail and UNIMAC.

Napolitano looks forward to introducing new direct marketers to the unique advantages offered by Prompt, including its highly successful co-palletization program and the synchronization of direct mail with online channels. Says Napolitano, "Prompt's on-site programs give our clients three huge benefits — reduced postage costs, faster delivery times and campaign transparency. And with co-palletization, everything is handled automatically — our customers don't have to do anything differently to see the savings."

The next time you're at Prompt Direct, be sure to stop by Carmen's office to say hello!

Introducing Generation Binge

By Jake Masucci, Student Contributor

When Millennials lock themselves in their rooms for hours on end, it is unlikely that they are working on homework assignments. In reality, they are probably curled up in their beds immersed in the fourth straight episode of the hit show *Breaking Bad*.

For better or for worse, instant video streaming sites like Netflix and Hulu have facilitated the “binge watching” trend that most Millennials have embraced. I don’t even need to lift a finger to play the next episode on Netflix as it simply starts automatically. As a college student, the instant gratification of Netflix is extremely valuable to my lifestyle.

Taking advantage of the trend it started, Netflix began creating original content with the release of the highly acclaimed political drama *House of Cards*. Unlike shows on traditional TV, the entire first season of *House of Cards* was released all at once. Millennial binge watchers like myself rejoiced as the days of waiting a week to watch the next episode took another tremendous hit. While I was home during winter break, I watched thirteen hours of *House of Cards*’ first season in about three days.

So how does this binge watching trend affect marketers and cable providers? It has become extremely difficult to reach this segment, as Millennials frequently bypass watching a show until entire seasons become available for online streaming.

However, one cable network is looking to bring Millennials back to the couch. How? Well, if you can’t beat them, join them. TNT has emulated Netflix by responding with its own twist on binge watching. In December, the LA mobster drama *Mob City* premiered on TNT. Unlike other cable shows, the entire season aired in a short three-week span (two episodes a night for three nights a week).

Cable binge watching is only the first step towards appealing to Millennials. We won’t even consider

watching a show unless our friends hype it up. In order to actually get us to watch, networks must be able to create a social media buzz as well. TNT took advantage of this by releasing the entire script of the first episode of *Mob City* in a stream of tweets the network calls an “adaptweetion”. With this and other social media tactics, TNT attempted to entice younger viewers to tune into the premiere and binge watch the rest of the first season.

In an age of instant gratification, waiting even a week to watch the next episode seems unreasonable for myself and many other younger viewers. In this respect, Netflix and similar online streaming services seem to be the way of the future. However, the trend opens up an opportunity for marketers and cable providers to adapt. With TNT launching its own version of binge watching, it is clear that some have not given up on connecting with Millennial consumers through traditional media channels.

As I look for my next show to binge watch, I could be convinced to make the switch back to traditional TV. However, it has to be on my terms. It’s a big step for networks to start airing episodes back to back, but the issue of commercial breaks still remains. As the most impatient generation to ever exist, we become frustrated and confused when we are not able to fast-forward through commercials. Factors like these drive the growth of online streaming and undermine TV ratings.

Unfortunately for marketers and cable providers, our generation feels entitled to uninterrupted and unlimited viewing.

Jake Masucci is a senior majoring in marketing at Boston University’s School of Management. He is spending his last semester interning at Fluent, a Boston marketing agency that specializes in translating brands for the college world. This post originally appeared on the Fluent blog.



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Prompt in the Community: Supporting Student Entrepreneurs

New York is home to some of the most successful entrepreneurs in the world — and nearly 85% of all new jobs in the U.S. are the result of entrepreneurial ventures, according to the Ewing Marion Kaufman Foundation.

In 2013, St. Francis College in Brooklyn launched its Center for Entrepreneurship to help the area’s existing and emergent entrepreneurs bring new businesses — and jobs — to Brooklyn. That’s when Mary Gelormino, the center’s executive-in-residence, called on St. Francis alumnus Dennis Lacognata for help.

“Having a successful business owner share his or her journey is invaluable,” says Gelormino. “We’re giving students the skill set to create a job for themselves, and bringing entrepreneurs into the classroom is a key part of our program. Students see how you can bring a new idea to life and make a difference in the world with your business.”

Lacognata served as a keynote speaker last fall, in a well-attended event that was open to the St. Francis community as well as local businesses and residents. According to Gelormino, the feedback on his presentation was tremendous. “Dennis shared firsthand how to build an entrepreneurial firm like Prompt — his purpose and passion, and what it takes to be a success in the real world. He also demonstrated the importance of giving back to the community that supported you as a student.”

Gelormino is also grateful to Prompt for the internship opportunities it offers St. Francis students. “Internships let students see the whole operation, and take a hands-on role in contributing to the success of the company. They learn to challenge assumptions, be creative and take risks — and that the answers aren’t always in the textbook.”

Interested in providing an internship opportunity to a St. Francis College student? Contact Naomi Kinley at (718) 489-5261 or nkinley@sfc.edu.

Prompt**MISSION**Statement

Prompt Direct is passionate about our commitment to provide our clients with quality, care and exceptional results. Our staff is driven by dedication and commitment to provide you with the best service. Our company believes that in order to be competitive we must provide outstanding services to each project including quality, service, convenience and above all, value.

DirectMail Tips

New Continuous Feed Printers Deliver Improved Speed and Image Quality

Prompt recently acquired two new Canon Océ VarioStream 7650 printers, replacing an older PageStream model. The 7650 operates at a speed range of 372 to 636 pages per minute on two up 8.5 x 11, as opposed to the older model, which maxed out at 372 pages per minute. Both machines are also set up with roll-to-roll or box-to-box configurations.

According to Thomas Masucci, the new equipment gives Prompt added flexibility and productivity

in meeting demanding schedules. Says Masucci, "Having two machines allows us to prepare signoffs and run production at the same time, which is a huge benefit."

In addition to higher volumes, the new printers offer Enhanced Print Quality (EPQ) using a transfer roller instead of an electronic charge generated by corona wires. This ensures superb digital quality and total image quality consistency. The machine automatically adjusts

to input resolutions between jobs, within the same document and even on the same page, to produce consistently crisp and sharp images.

How can you put this new equipment to work on your next campaign? Call Prompt today at (718) 447-6206 for details.



The Latest Industry News from the USPS

2014 Promotions

For 2014, the USPS is bringing back several popular 2013 promotions to help mailers plan more strategically and qualify for discounted rates.

Premium Advertising

Through June 30

Upfront 15% discount on first class mail pieces composed entirely of marketing or advertising content. Direct mailers who dropped \$6 million or more in standard mailings from October 1, 2012, through September 30, 2013, are eligible.

Earned Value Reply Mail

Through June 30

Mailers that include first class business reply mail and courtesy reply mail enclosures will earn a two-cent credit on each piece returned during the promotion period. If replies increase in 2014, participants in last year's reply mail promotion will receive three cents off.

Digital Personalization

Through June 30

Personalization within the mail piece or as a response mechanism that takes the recipient to a personalized URL (PURL), qualifies the mailer for a 2% postage discount. Unique barcodes are required to link customers with PURLS, which can be continually accessed for customized content.

Emerging Technology

August 1–September 30

A 2% discount (at the time of mailing) will be given to mail pieces embedded with near field communication chips or other technologies allowing for integrating mail with digital technologies.

Color Print in First Class

August 1–December 31

A 2% discount (at the time of mailing) will be given to first class transactional pieces that include the use of four-color printing on bills and statements. Color inserts and pre-printed paper stock do not count toward the promotion.

Mail Drives Mobile Commerce

November 1–December 31

Upfront 2% discount on mail pieces that include a mobile barcode or similar technology that can be read or scanned by a mobile device to lead the recipient to a shopping site. Customers will qualify for an additional 1% off if they meet a certain priority mail threshold, as a result of increased merchandise shipping.

Need more information to take advantage of one or more of these offers? Call your Prompt rep for details today.

Load Leveling Can Impact Mail Plans

In an attempt to “level the load” handled by its carriers during the week, the Postal Service has revised the service standards for standard mail that is eligible for Destination Sectional Center Facility (DSCF) rates from three- to four-day delivery.

Previously, mailers that qualified for a Destination Sectional Center Facility (DSCF) discounted rate could anticipate Monday delivery of mail accepted by facilities on Thursday or Friday. Under the new load-leveling plan, standard mail accepted on Friday will not be delivered until Tuesday, and mail accepted on Saturday will have a promised delivery day of Wednesday.

Pieces entering the SCF in San Juan, PR on Friday or Saturday and destined for the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as all DSCF entry pieces destined for American Samoa, now have a delivery expectation of five days rather than four.

The change does not affect first-class mail or periodicals.

If you're concerned about the impact of the revised standards on your in-home dates, give us a call at (718) 447-6206. We're happy to help you maximize the value of your mailing investment.



Keeping
You
Posted

Prompt Personnel

Please join us in welcoming our newest employees to the Prompt Direct family:

Michelle Pellot — reception

Congratulations to Lisa Peralta, who was promoted into a new role overseeing postage audit and control.