

The case to keep print in your marketing mix

Print is your brand that can help you engage your audience, drive traffic to your Web site and produce leads

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Considering that my company publishes a national magazine for college-bound teenagers, you might think the title of this article paints me as self-serving.

Maybe you think I am trying to preserve print because it's our company's core product. I actually consider it our brand. But even though our printed magazine brings in the lion's share of our revenue, it's not why I'm trying to convince you that print is still tremendously relevant.

Actually, our company is much more than print. We are a brand that has a Web site, an online community, an e-mail marketer, an online newsletter, a social media presence, we instant message with our readers, and oh, we print a magazine, too.

We use print as a branding tool all the time. The fact that we have a print magazine at the core of our media properties adds an air of credibility to our brand. It's almost like when one has published a book, they have suddenly become an expert. Having a print magazine adds a hidden layer of trust in the minds of your readers.

The trust our print inspires allows our brand (therefore people) to be able to be keynote speakers at industry conferences, write opinions about our subject matter that sway thoughts and set industry standards.

Because of having a print magazine as a backdrop to set the tone for our trusted brand, we have been able to become a thought leader in our industry; not only with our readers but with our advertisers too.

In a nutshell, our print magazine resides at the core of our brand from which everything else ripples. Why do you think many celebrities like Oprah, Martha Stewart and Rachael Ray have created magazines? It's because they realize print power as a tool for brand credibility.

But wait, there's more

Besides delivering great branding opportunities, content to our readers, and leads for our advertisers, our print magazine is also an amazing online traffic generator. In fact, **our magazine is the number-one driver of traffic to our Web site.** It's like buying keywords, only better!

The magazine also drives traffic for our advertisers. Third-party research shows that *60 percent* of our readers visit an advertiser's Web site after viewing their ad in Next Step!

I am going to pitch this list to David Letterman for his show. But just in case he doesn't pick it up, I'll share with you my Top 10 Reasons Print Should Remain a Vital Part of Your Marketing Mix.

10. Print provides differentiation. How many of the millions of Web sites out there have a print magazine to drive traffic to it? The vast minority, I assure you. Print vehicles provide a unique strategy to drive traffic to your online marketing.

9. Print offers incredible branding. Nothing makes your brand more recognized than a beautiful ad in a glossy magazine. A well-designed ad is an engaging experience for readers. And by the way, according to a recent third party driven Next Step poll, 55 percent of teens say they pay a lot of attention to print ads.

8. Print makes introductions. Print is a great party host because of the talent it has introducing readers to your brand. An effective print ad stands in the crossroads between readers and

advertisers. And your keyword purchases become more effective if customers have already been introduced to your brand.

7. **Print readers are focused.** It's hard to engage in other media when you're reading a magazine. In this world of multitasking where people are texting, e-mailing and listening to their iPod while watching TV, it's hard for advertisers to get noticed. But it's hard to do anything else when you're reading a magazine! In fact, according to a survey done by Ball State University, magazines are the *exclusive or primary medium* 85 percent of the time they are used by consumers.

6. **Print travels.** A magazine is your companion wherever you go: your favorite chair, your bed, an airplane—even your bathroom. A laptop on the porcelain throne just does not offer the same experience.

5. **Print sways trendsetters.** Those who sway other consumers (Influencers) are themselves influenced by print. Check out this influence ranking, from a third party driven Next Step poll.

1. **Magazines: 61%**
2. In-store: 58%
3. TV: 55%
4. Newspaper: 53%
5. Radio: 44%
6. Free samples: 39%
7. E-mail: 26%

4. **Print drives users to other platforms.** According to the Retail Advertising and Marketing Association, 47.2 percent of shoppers are most likely to start an online search after viewing a magazine ad. Our own research shows that more than 75 percent of nextSTEPmag.com users type in the URL directly—which they likely got from reading the magazine.

3. **Readers are receptive to print.** Fact: People remember effective print ads. In fact, magazine ads have the second highest receptivity of any media, second only to TV. But try to "TiVo" a magazine ad!

2. **You can pass along print, and it has longevity.** Magazines get shared and passed on in households and among friends. And they stick around. Check out your own coffee table. Any magazines there that have been hanging around a few years? Have you ever tried to share a Web site in a dentist office?

And the number reason why print should remain in your mix is...

1. **Print is a lead-generation tool!** Used correctly, print drives leads to your prospect funnel. Good print vehicles have a mechanism to deliver targeted leads to their advertisers. (Yep, we have one.) So at the very least, consider print a unique and effective lead-generation tool!

So there you have it, the top 10 reasons why print should remain in your media mix! The world is changing fast, and you have to keep up. Your ability to combine the new with the proven will determine your success.