

EFFECTIVENESS OF CATALOG PRINTING ON ONLINE CONSUMERS

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The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how catalog printing could still have a significant impact on the behavior of online shoppers. It is a common trend in companies to use print catalog as more of a branding vehicle than a selling tool. Often, print catalogs are an essential tool in reinforcing a company's brand image. Using catalog printing could potentially enhance company brand image and extend services and products being offered to consumers and prospective clients.

This study investigated the significant impact of catalog print on the behavior of online shoppers. The study began with a market survey that was formulated and administered via the Internet to department and organizational heads on the campus, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

The results of this study show that there is decreasing demand for print catalogs of consumers in the Cal Poly campus. Despite this finding, there are still online consumers out there who in some cases received the catalog and purchases the featured items. They know what they are looking for, and they use the catalog as a guide to what the company is selling. People who show up through search engines or a corporate high-traffic site have much more difficulty navigating the website because they really don't know what the key items are.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Aaron Montgomery Ward, an American businessman who was momentous for the invention of mail order, sent his first mail order catalog in 1872. His Montgomery Ward mail order business was established at Clark and Kinzie Streets in Chicago (Bellis). The first eight by twelve inch catalog consisted of a single sheet of paper with a price list, showing the merchandise for sale with ordering instructions. Through the years, Ward gradually expanded his catalog. The single-page list of products grew into a 540-page illustrated book selling over 20,000 items and was often referred to as a “dream book.” The first Sears catalog was published in 1888 and grew to 322 pages by 1894. The Central Scientific Company also known as CENCO subjugated the field of selling educational equipment for science through their mail order catalog (Wikipedia). With the rise of disruptive technologies, such as the Internet, today’s printing industry is starting to decline. Today’s average consumer is starting to use the Internet as a viable means of shopping, while turning away from traditional print catalogs and brochures. (Bernard)

It is no surprise that magazines, catalogs, and newspapers are struggling to survive. With daily newspapers reducing the overall amount of print-space available to report the news within the market, the newspapers have shrunk their page size by an average of 10 percent. As for magazines and catalogs, the paper caliper is getting thinner and thinner. The long predicted “end of print” seems to have finally materialized. The recession, the high price of fuel, and the popularity of the Internet have all radically changed the balance sheet for traditional print media. (Stepp)

As for catalogs, many companies have took advantage of the fact that catalog printing could reinforce and boost online sales while reducing other costs across the company. Catalog printing

puts the company's products and services in front of the customers while the Internet provides ease of access for ordering and further research. This combination of catalog printing, while also making the catalog available online, had been generating increased online sales for companies who use both catalog formats.

As "baby boomers" slowly gave way to the Internet generation, surely it is only a matter of time before print fades away with them. As Generation Y continues to utilize the internet, they read newspapers and magazines via web. They exchange text messages and e-mail, not postal letters, and the direct mail they get, they "trash" without opening. The purpose of this study was that online consumers who receive a printed catalog from a retailer were twice as likely to buy online from that retailer as do consumers who do not receive the catalog. This study has proven that print catalogs and the direct mail industry generate the second and third highest response rates, respectively, after telemarketing. Being a form of media expression used between dealers and consumers, printed catalogs serve as a way for dealers to communicate with prospective clients and consumers regarding the newest offers and promotions. It is also a way to present any new important updates or concepts offered by the company

The purpose of this study was to show how catalog printing could still have a significant impact on the behavior of online shoppers. This study is to show how catalog printing is being used to extend services and products being offered to consumers and prospective clients. People who do not have enough time to visit a store but would still like to have an idea about the services and products being offered through printing catalog would also benefit.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Impressive advances in e-commerce websites and consumer web proficiency had changed the business of online shopping. But while retailers may have started to downplay the importance of catalogs, there are still plenty of insights to be gained from those print products. According to Coy Clement, who runs catalog and multichannel direct marketing consultancy clementDirect, online shoppers who read retail catalogs are often better at using websites than those that get there through search engines. Clement's clients include Procter & Gamble, Hewlett-Packard and J. Crew – the latter of which continues to distribute what is arguably one of the most compelling fashion retail catalogs out there (Vazquez).

Clement had insightful observations of people who received the catalog tend to use the website differently from people that had not received a catalog. Consumers know what they are looking for, and they used the catalog as a guide to what the company is selling. Consumers used organic search or a corporate high-traffic site had much more difficulty navigating the website because they really do not know what the key items are (Fredricksen). Clement had helped retailers change the catalog design based on how people shop on their websites. He design three or four different methods of accessing the website, for instance shopping by intended gift recipient, by occasion, by a category or by price point. In one company, it was found that the price point shopping tool being much more heavily used than any other approach. It caused the store to add some items into the catalog, some blocks of copy, that did price point-oriented comparisons. "If you're looking to spend under \$25, here's a list of items with their page numbers that you could consider. If you're looking to shop between \$30 and \$50, then here are those things." (Fredricksen) Another thing he had done with retailers is look at search terms and

learn about the customers' terminology. Is she looking for blouses or tops? Merchants might be talking terms like tops, but maybe the customer is not ever using that word for search. "Search terms can give you an insight into the actual way customers are thinking about your products." (Fredricksen)

In this digital era, consumers still prefer glossy printed catalogs. In 2010, never was the elusiveness of a paperless world more evident than the 21st century, when mailboxes overflow with catalogs. More than 17 billion catalogs were mailed in the U.S. last year -- about 56 for every American. The quantity of paper consumed by catalogs is daunting. In the U.S., catalogs account for three percent of the roughly 80 million tons of paper products used annually, according to RISI Inc., a forest-products consultant based in Bedford, Mass. (Bell) That are more than either magazines or books. While a three percent share of the paper market might not sound like a lot, much of that paper traffic is unsolicited, and little of it, less than two percent by one estimate prompts a sale. But catalogs pay. As was the case with many environmental initiatives, from solar energy to hybrid cars, reducing the impact of catalogs runs into economic realities that favor the old way of doing things. Much of what used to be done through the mail, including bill payments and personal correspondence, is now handled electronically. However, catalogs still helped Richard Sears launch his Sears retail empire more than a century ago, continue to thrive in the electronic age. Because glossy catalog pages still entice buyers in a way that computer images does not. Catalogs, marketers say, drive sales at websites, making them more important than ever. Among retailers who rely mainly on direct sales, 62% say their biggest revenue generator is a paper catalog, according to the latest survey by the Direct Marketing Association of its members. Only a fifth of those retailers said they draw their biggest sales from their websites. (Bell)

As for the prepress side of printing catalogs, Quad/Graphics had earned an expanded multi-year contract extension from apparel cataloger J. Crew Group, Inc. – an agreement that

calls for the printer to prep and print 40 million catalogs annually and adds the production of J. Crew's successful standalone title for its crewcuts line of children's apparel. "Over the past few years Quad/Graphics has proven their ability to consistently deliver what we need," said Mike Braaten, Vice President of Print Production for J. Crew. (Quad Graphics). Braaten continued, "The partnership we've formed with Quad/Graphics is important to us because print is a vital component of our marketing mix – it gets our image out there and adds to the success of our brand." J. Crew is one of America's best-known catalog brands, sees printing's continued value as a sales and brand-building tool. "The company's trust in us as a partner in building its business is also gratifying. Our approach has been to continually invest in our manufacturing platform and our capabilities so we're able to help clients like J. Crew grow their top line sales and their businesses," states Joel Quadracci, Quad/Graphics Chairman, President & CEO. (Quad/Graphic)

Consumers are using channels to research, shop, and purchase. Nearly one-third of consumers said they rely on three or more different channels (online, in-store, print catalogs, mobile devices, customer service reps) from the time they started researching product and services to when they complete their purchase; eight out of 10 (78 percent) report used at least two or more channels to perform purchasing research. Catalogs are a strong traffic driver to the web. The 78 percent of consumers said they use catalogs to browse and discover new products and services. On trends affecting cross-channel shopping, retailers are becoming more sensitive to the fact that just because they wanted 20 percent more business on the web does not necessarily mean that that is what customers want. Some of this is happening naturally because for some retailers who sells to 20 something-year-olds. For those people, the online experience and social media experience already are the predominant way of communicating with them. But when talking to 40 and 50-year-olds who have different media patterns, tried to make them behave as though they are 25 is a losing proposition. (Fredricksen)

CHAPTER III

Research Methods & Procedures

The web experience is in this sense a new, additional input in the traditional buying behavior frameworks found in marketing textbooks (Kotler, 2003). According to the Dieringer Research Group half of all adult internet users who have abandoned online orders seem to have changed their opinion about brands due to negative online experience, while 60 per cent of those online adults whose opinions changed, switched brands at purchase, whether they bought via the net or at a brick-and-mortar store (Nua Internet Surveys, 2002). Research also underlines the synergic effects of the positive Web experience on customers making use of a company's website next to its traditional channels. Based on the collection of online and catalog of US retailers in 2002 NielsenNet Ratings (2003) found that compared to average internet users, customers visiting well designed website like J. Crew's and others are ten times more likely to visit the brick-and-mortar stores.

In spite of having a passion for the digital space and optimized online experiences, sometimes a printed catalog you can flip through on the train or at home, enjoy the photography and gather inspiration from is a more enjoyable precursor to visiting a website and shopping for specific items. A catalog like J. Crew's, often times better inspire a purchase based on an inspired or retailer-persuaded "look" than sifting through product pages on the website, or a harried visit to the store in Saturday pedestrian traffic. Lets hope some of these more compelling and free catalogs stick around.

The purpose of this study was to show how catalog print could still have a significant impact on the behavior of online shoppers. This had shown the way catalog printing has been used to extend services and products being offered to their consumers and prospective clients. To proven this a combination of a research methods has been used. The research method for this study included descriptive research and content analysis.

A descriptive research study was designed to determine the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study. The aim was to describe, “what exists” with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Leverson, Pp. 24). In this study, using the literature review has present the historical background, which has lead up to concern of the effectiveness of print catalogs to online consumers. A survey was gather relatively limited data from a relatively large number of cases. Typically, they attempt to measure what exists without questioning the reasons for existence. A survey that covers the entire population is known as a sample survey. To satisfy this research, a survey has been electronically distributed to a sample audience primarily consisting of college undergraduates who range from ages 18-25 of both the Graphic Communication and Business majors. The respondents recorded their opinion under each of the questions asked above. The questionnaire survey was a set of questions for obtaining statistically useful or personal information from individuals. The survey has reveal the effectiveness of printing catalogs from consumer. Questions have also help to reveal audiences’ level of attraction to printed catalogs and the importance for retailers that still use catalogs. Possible survey questions included the following:

- Do you shop online?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- How often do you shop online?
 - a. Always

- b. Often
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Rarely
 - e. Never
- How often do you shop via print catalog?
 - a. Always
 - b. Often
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Rarely
 - e. Never
 - How frequently do you browse/research products or services by looking at catalogs?
 - a. Always
 - b. Often
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Rarely
 - e. Never
 - Do you arrive at a retailer's website from its catalog exhibit or via a search engine?
 - a. Via catalog
 - b. Via search engine
 - c. Both
 - If you are still using catalogs to shop, why so?
(Fill in)
 - If you only use the web to shop, why?
(Fill in)

Content analysis is one of the most popular methods used in communications research. It is a method for quantifying qualitative information gathered from Elite and Specialized interviewing, historical research, and descriptive research. Content analysis is often used in combination with other research methods in developing results and drawing conclusions (Leverson 27). The results of the survey had illustrated the complexities catalog marketers face in their effort to optimize the consumers' web experience; created a successful online presence means developing a comprehensive and customer-oriented virtual proposition addressing a wide variety of issues and delivering the maximum possible effect, the utmost catalog experience. The questions along with their related answers has been divided into categories concerned with the consumer behaviors. Each response has been attributed with result relative to the study's hypothesis.

CHAPTER IV

Results & Discussions

A survey was created in order to collect information on the situation as present. It was distributed to a range of individuals, with responses coming primarily from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo undergraduates. Those addressed represent regular consumers who have received some sort of print catalogs. The questions along with the consumer responses are listed below.

1. In what range does your age fall		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
17 and under		0.0%	0
18 to 20		45.0%	45
21 to 23		49.0%	49
24 to 26		6.0%	6

In the filtered response, the survey had showed that none of the students was 17 and over. Of those who responded, 45 percent were found to be students that fell in the age of 18–20. Within the 45 percent, 54.3 percent were females and 34.4 percent were males. Within the 49 percent of students that fell in the age range of 21–23, 50 percent were females and 41.5 percent were males. The last range of ages 24–26 were only six percent with 4.3 percent being females and 15.6 percent being males.

2. What is your sex?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Female		66.0%	66
Male		34.0%	34

3. Have you ever received any form of print catalogs? (Ex. J. Crew Catalog)		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		92.0%	92
No		8.0%	8

You could examine above that the student distribution for students who have and have not received any form of print catalogs. In the filtered response, the age group of 18-20 dominated with 89 percent having received print catalogs and 11 percent who have not. Within this age group of 18-20 year olds who received the catalog, 69.9 percent were females and 30.1 percent were males. Within the age group of 21-23, 86.5 percent of students received print catalogs, whereas 13.5 percent of whom did not receive any print catalogs. Within the age group of 21-23, 53.9 percent received print catalogs and 45.1 percent did not received any print catalogs. Lastly, 28.6 percent of the age group 24-26 received print catalogs and 71.4 percent did not. Within this last age group, 28.6 percent of which were females and 71.4 percent were males.

4. If yes, do you shop with in the catalog?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		20.6%	20
No		79.4%	77

As you could see on the result of this question, students commonly do not shop within the catalog. Studies have shown that an estimated 78 percent of females aged 18–20 have said that they do not shop within the catalogs and 22 percent of whom have said that they have shopped within the catalogs. When calculated, 76.3 percent of females aged 21-23 do not shop within catalogs, whereas 23.7 percent have shopped within the catalogs. As for the remainder of females aged 24–26, 77.9 percent of them do not shop within and 22.1 percent have shopped within the catalogs.

As for the result of the males in the age range of 18–20, 85.7 percent said they do not shop within the catalogs and 14.3 percent have shopped within the catalogs. When calculated, a full 80 percent of male aged 21–23 said that they have not shopped within catalogs, whereas 20 percent have said that they have. And for the remainder of males of the age 24–26, 88.9 percent of them do not shop within while 11.1 percent have shopped within the catalogs.

5. Do you shop online?		Create Chart	Download
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		83.8%	83
No		16.2%	16

The majority of female ages 18–20, had some sort of online retailing, specifically 76.5 percent, while the remaining 23.5 percent of those females do not shop online. Studies show that of the male respondents in the same age range, 86.4 percent do shop online and 13.6 percent do not shop online. When measured the females of the age range 21–23, 84.6 percent have shopped online and another 15.4 percent have not shopped online. Now for the males of the same age range, 96.8 percent of these males have shopped on and only 3.2 percent have not shopped online. Of the percentage of the female respondents of the age group 24–26, an even 50 percent have shopped online while the other half have not. Interestingly, within the males of the same age range, 100 percent of them have experienced online shopping.

6. How often do you use these following resources for shopping?							Create Chart	Download
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Rating Average	Response Count		
Print catalogs	43.9% (43)	44.9% (44)	10.2% (10)	1.0% (1)	1.68	98		
Internet	1.0% (1)	19.0% (19)	45.0% (45)	35.0% (35)	3.14	100		
Phone	81.6% (80)	11.2% (11)	4.1% (4)	3.1% (3)	1.29	98		
In-store	0.0% (0)	1.0% (1)	20.2% (20)	78.8% (78)	3.78	99		
				Other (please specify)		0		

7. How frequently do you browse/research products or services by looking at catalogs?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Often		10.0%	10
Sometimes		48.0%	48
Rarely		26.0%	26
Never		16.0%	16

As shown on the table above, majority of the respondents rather shop in-stores and of the 78.8 percent respondents, the age range of 18–20 females were 92 percent, the age range of 21–23 females were 92.3 percent, and the age range 24–26 females were 75 percent that preferred shopping in the stores. When filtering the respondents, who have never shopped on the phone, the age 18–20 females were 84.3 percent, the age of 21–23 were 86.8 percent, and 100 percent of females age 24–26 had never used a phone to shop. The next catalogue would be the internet as a resource of shopping with 45 percent of the majority responded sometimes. Within the 45 percent of respondents, 43.1 percent of the females age 18–20, 46.2 percent of the ages 21–23, and 100 percent of the age group 24–26 had sometimes used the internet as a resource of shopping. Lastly for the respondents, who have never shopped in print catalogs, the age 18–20 females were 24 percent, the age of 21–23 were 35.9 percent, and 50 percent of females age 24–26 had never used print catalogs to shop.

As for the result of the 78.8 percent of males, the age group of 18–20 were 72.7 percent, the age range of 21–23 were 43.8 percent, and the age group of 24–26 were 50 percent that had rather shopped in stores. When filtering the respondents, who have never shopped on the phone, the age 18–20 males were 85.7 percent, the age of 21–23 were 75 percent, and 80 percent of males age 24–26 had never used a phone to shop. The next catalogue would be the internet as a resource of shopping with 45 percent of the majority responded sometimes. Within the 45 percent of respondents, males of the age 18–20 were 31.8 percent, the ages 21–23 were 53.1

percent, and 20 percent of the age group 24–26 had sometimes used the internet as a resource of shopping. Lastly for the respondents, who have never shopped in print catalogs, the age 18–20 males were 54.4 percent, the age of 21–23 were 53.1 percent, and 40 percent of males age 24–26 had never used print catalogs to shop.

7. How frequently do you browse/research products or services by looking at catalogs?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Often		10.0%	10
Sometimes		48.0%	48
Rarely		26.0%	26
Never		16.0%	16

This table has shown that 48 percent of the majority respondents have sometimes browsed or researched products and or services by looking at catalogs. Within the age range of 18–20 females were 54.9 percent and of the males were 40.9 percent. Of the age group 21–23, females were 43.6 percent and the males were 34.4 percent. Respondents of the age range 24–26 of females were 75 percent and 30 percent were males.

8. Do you arrive at a retailer's website from its catalog exhibit or via a search engine?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Via catalog		5.0%	5
Via search engine		67.0%	67
Both		28.0%	28

This table has shown that 67 percent of the majority respondents have only arrived at a retailer's website via search engine. Within the age range of 18–20 females, 62.7 percent of them arrived via search engine, 2 percent of the females searched via catalog, and 35.5 percent resorted to both search engine and catalog. Of the males in this age range, 77.3 percent arrived

via search engine, none of the male only used any sort of catalog, and 22.7 percent resorted to both resources. Of the age group 21–23 females, 71.8 percent of them arrived via search engine, 2.6 percent of the females searched via catalog, and 25.6 percent resorted to both search engine and catalog. Of the males in this age range, 75 percent arrived via search engine, 9.4 percent of the male only used any sort of catalog, and 15.6 percent resorted to both resources. Within the age range of 24–26 females, 50 percent of them arrived via search engine, none of the females arrived only via catalog, and 50 percent resorted to both search engine and catalog. Of the males in this age range, 50 percent arrived via search engine, 10 percent of the male only used any sort of catalog, and 40 percent resorted to both resources.

The next question, consumers were asked, “If you are still using catalogs to shop, why so?” The majority of those surveyed replied that the tangible printed images of the products and the interesting spread designs grabbed more of their attention. If the design is well done, the consumers are more inclined to buy the product. Also some consumers addressed that by browsing through the printed catalogs, they could get ideas about what merchandise they feel more appealing to them and go together.

When asked, “If you only use the web to shop, why?” consumers overwhelmingly replied that the main reason they shop on the web is because the ease of uses and how it is very convenient. Another advantage the consumers replied on shopping online is being able to quickly seek out deals for items or services with many different vendors. They thought with the search engines, online price comparison services and discovery shopping engines it is efficient to look up sellers of a particular product or service to find deals.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study was to reveal the potential that catalog prints could have on attracting online consumers. It asked the question: Can retailers still use print catalogs to ultimately attract online customers?

When constructing a marketing strategy, retailers must give careful deliberation to gain a strong competitive advantage. For brands like Sephora, Audra Gullo states catalogs are more of a branding vehicle than a selling tool. It is an essential tool in reinforcing their brand image. The reason why they put so many new items in our catalogs is that their customers look to the catalog for the current trends. It is because of this that they get so many requests for their catalogs. Over the past few years they have added more online callouts, facebook, twitter etc to the catalog in support of the online business.

However, research showed that consumers of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo that the majority of respondents replied with the tangible printed images of the products and the interesting spread designs had grabbed most consumers attraction. They also stated that catalogs are easier to flip through the pages and mark items they are most interested in. With passion for the digital space and optimized online experiences, sometimes a printed catalog you can flip through on the train or at home, enjoy the photography and gather inspiration from is a more enjoyable without the annoyance of wait for pages to load on the internet. Although the advance of the web is that it will give you more information and product views. With the respondents of students who only use web to shop, they stated that it is easier

to find things on the internet using filter systems and there are more things on the website sometimes than in-store. However, if they could, they would print it out and buy it at the store.

Print catalogs are becoming increasingly more effective but it is not a necessity as of yet as you can see in this research. However Fredricksen noted, consumers are using channels to research, shop, and purchase. Catalogs are a strong traffic driver to the web. Of those consumers, they use catalogs to browse and discover new products and services. And with this research, it has shown that as long as catalogs are being sent to online consumers, print catalogs will not die

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