



## The Role of Print in Social Media Marketing

*“Don’t overlook the important role print can play in the marketing mix.”*

Dominic Shaw

Business Development Manager at Creative Direction

Use of social media sites has exploded in the last several years. In February 2005, the Pew Research Center conducted the first of six surveys as part of the *Internet & American Life Project*. In 2005, only 2% of adults who used the Internet were using a social media site. That number has increased to over 75% in 2016.

Along with this growth, social media sites have evolved from purely personal to commercial use – a way for people to connect to a business and its fans. Businesses find they can use social media sites for marketing purposes, such as engaging in a dialogue with customers, building brand awareness, making offers, providing coupons or samples, and alerting customers to upcoming promotions or product launches (sneak previews).

Social media offers an entirely new way for businesses and organizations to form a relationship with customers and to leverage customer loyalty to attract prospects. As explained by author Robert Cialdini in his book *Influence: Psychology of Persuasion*, the idea of tapping into the wisdom of the crowd is based on a principle of social influence. Instead of making a decision (such as what brand to purchase or where to eat dinner) based on the rational measures of traditional economics, we instead turn to outside influences. Cialdini calls this *social proof*, defined as “a means we use to determine which is correct by finding out what other people think is correct.”

### Print is Still Relevant

Does the popularity of social networking sites mean that businesses and organizations can drop print and direct mail as marketing tools? Research suggests not. ExactTarget, a global interactive marketing provider, surveyed 1,481 American online consumers regarding their communications preferences and how they prefer to receive marketing messages. They asked how acceptable it



is for companies to send unsolicited marketing messages through various channels (e-mail, direct mail, text messaging delivered via Facebook). Direct mail was the only channel where an unsolicited message was not viewed as inappropriate.

ExactTarget also found that 65% purchased a product or service after receiving direct mail while only 20% made a purchase after receiving a message delivered via Facebook, and only 16% made a purchase prompted by a mobile marketing message.

The Internet Advertising Bureau commissioned a study to examine how consumers interact with various marketing channels. The survey consisted of 1,851 respondents aged 18 and older. Results showed that 75% of consumers discover new products from off-line sources like word-of-mouth, direct mail, catalogs, and television. After the initial purchase, by a slight margin, consumers preferred to be sent catalogs and direct mail as a way for companies to keep them informed.

The basis of social media is fostering a sense of community where fans can build relationships and share with others. This is very different from traditional marketing which emphasizes products and services. At a social media site, too much emphasis on selling rather than providing

something of value risks alienating fans and provoking negative posts.

Social media sites also require consistent effort to demonstrate to customers that there is something valuable to be gained by connecting to your business. How much effort? Idealware, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Portland, Maine that provides information to help nonprofits make informed software decisions, estimates that it takes at least two hours per week per social media tool to see significant marketing results.

### Combining Print and Social Media Marketing

If you can only afford to use one marketing channel, we believe it should be direct mail. Here's why:

- *The marketing message gets to the customer or prospect.* You are reaching out, not waiting for someone to find you.
- *You control the message.* At a social media site, anyone can say anything, even if it isn't true.
- *You are competing with fewer messages.* These days there is relatively little competition for your customer's or prospect's attention in a mail box.
- *Mail is a physical media.* The brain responds differently to physical and digital media. According to a study by Millward Brown research company, physical media like a direct mail piece leaves a "deeper footprint" in the brain, involves more emotional processing, and produces more brain responses connected with internal feelings.
- *Longevity.* Investing in print and/or direct mail can provide you with a marketing piece that your customer will keep for years.
- *Trust.* Marketing is all about perception and conveying trust. According to a DMA (Direct Marketing Association) study, 56% of consumers found print marketing to be the most trustworthy of media channels. In fact, the study showed that you're 10% more likely to get a response from mail rather than email.
- *Inspires Action.* According to the same DMA study, after receiving direct mail, 44% of consumers will visit a brand's website and 34% will search online for more information about the product or service.

Here are a few tips for making social media and direct mail work together.

- Create a Facebook page for your company, for a product or service, or an event. Mail a post card with the address to the Facebook page.
- Create a forum on Facebook, and encourage participation via direct mail.

- Start an interest group on LinkedIn, and advertise it via direct mail.
- Monitor Twitter conversations on your product or services. Use the topics in a direct mail piece.
- Post videos on YouTube demonstrating your product or providing an explanation or instruction.
- Make your direct mail piece interactive by adding a QR code. The code can lead to a mobile web site, a YouTube video, or a short survey form that offers a reward for completion.
- Include social media icons such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn logos on your direct mail piece. This gives your target audience more options for learning about your company, especially if they are interested in customer reviews.
- Post links to a general, non-personalized landing page containing something desirable (information, an offer) on social media sites. Measure how respondents are getting to the landing page to determine the most valuable source.
- Since people like to share valuable information with others, make it easy for visitors to do so. Provide a "like" button for Facebook or a "mention" button for Twitter.

According to Stephen Brown, Chief Innovation Officer at Cookerly Public Relations, "A great printed piece is one you want to spend time with. It has more value and permanence. When it is passed on to others, it is a sure sign that the content is quality." Brown goes on to say that postcards are one of the staples of Cookerly's public relations strategies. For events, they are still a great way to cut through the clutter and are very helpful when timeliness is a factor.

Successful businesses are embracing a multi-channel approach to marketing, using both print and digital.

### We're Direct Mail Experts

Call on us to help you integrate social media marketing with print and direct mail. We have been providing print services to our customers since **<here insert a date or the number of years you've been offering direct mail services>**, and we are good at what we do. For more information or to set an appointment, call **<here insert the name and contact information for your CSR/sales rep>**.

# worlds

a vocabulary of the graphic arts

**Blog:** a contraction of *weblog*. A web site on which an individual or group of users regularly record opinions or other information.

**Facebook:** a social networking website started in 2004. Originally designed for college students, it is now open to anyone 13 years of age or older.

**Google:** brand name of a leading Internet search engine.

**LinkedIn:** a business-oriented social networking site launched in May 2003.

**QR code:** an acronym for Quick Response Code. A two-dimensional barcode that can store text and image information.

**Social bookmarking site:** a web site based on the interaction of “tagging” web sites and searching through web sites bookmarked by others.

**Social media site:** a website that both provides information and an opportunity for interaction. Example: Delicious (formerly del.icio.us).

**Social networking site:** a web site based on interaction by connecting with friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and participating in discussions. Example: Facebook.

**Social news site:** a web site based on interaction by voting for articles and commenting on them. Examples: Digg, Reddit.

**Social photo and video site:** a web site based on interaction by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions. Example: YouTube, Pinterest.

**Social proof:** a method for making a decision based on non-rational factors; determining what is correct by finding out what other people think is correct.

**Twitter:** an instant messaging system for sending brief text messages to a list of followers.

**YouTube:** a video-sharing website for users to upload, share, and view videos; founded in 2005.

**Wiki:** a web site based on interaction by adding articles and editing existing articles. Example: Wikipedia.

## THE IDEA

### *Tips on Using Direct Mail and Social Media Together*

If you own a business that draws its customers from a neighborhood or other defined geographic area, you can combine direct mail and social media and get people sharing with each other. Here's how:

- Be sure your Facebook page has good customer reviews for new visitors to read.
- Make an offer that you know has appeal – perhaps a “buy one/get one” offer, a discount with purchase, or a free gift.
- Develop a mail piece (post card, flyer, brochure) that describes the offer.
- On the mail piece, direct recipients to your Facebook page and instruct them to write a specific phrase on the page (such as “Got a gift for reading my mail”) to be eligible for the offer.

- On your Facebook page, refer to the direct mail piece (“Our neighbors are getting free gifts just for opening their mail”).

This will start people talking. Regular visitors to your Facebook page will ask how they can get in on the offer (which is asking to be added to your mailing list), and direct mail recipients will be exposed to the good customer reviews on your Facebook page.

CONCRETE

## Offline Social Media is an Under-Used Strategy

When social media is mentioned, we immediately think of all the online platforms. However, taking social media offline presents many new opportunities. By not using offline strategies, companies are missing out on the chance to form excellent relationships with a much broader range of prospects.

If most of your clients are involved in offline activity, you won't get results from online social media... no matter how good your online campaign is. Even if you have many prospects online, you should consider how many prospects you may be missing by ignoring offline possibilities. You need to consider all channels.

Here are some examples of offline social media:

- Exhibitions
- Conferences
- Magazines
- Networking meetings
- Awards events

All of these are excellent opportunities to make contact with potential clients.



## Are QR codes still relevant?



According to information published by Scanbuy, a provider of mobile barcodes and data analytics based on its *Scanlife Mobile Barcode Trend Report*, the number of unique QR code users continues to increase.

Other findings from the report:

- The most popular QR code marketing campaigns are connecting to video, app downloads, and product details.
- QR codes from quick-service restaurants were among the top five industries that use QR codes. Restaurants used QR codes to offer customer promotions, deals, and other offers.
- iPhone OS and Android OS account for 93% of the total QR barcode traffic, split about evenly.
- More men use QR codes than women (68% vs. 32%), though the female audience is increasing.

Users aged 25-34 account for 35% of total users, followed by ages 35-44 (20%); 18-24 (16%); 45-54 (12%); 55+ (9%); and under age 18 (8%).

Some other common uses of QR codes are:

- To send information to a mobile phone. Parking lots use this to send customers a text to let them know where their car is parked.
- To initiate an email that is prepopulated with text.
- To initiate a browser session that links to a specific page within a website.
- To download an audio or video file that contains valuable information such as assembly instructions.