



P.o.P (POWER OF PRINT) SUMMIT '24
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CLASS NOTES

Print Media



Print Media

Print that Speaks



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Rebekah has 23 years experience as a qualitative researcher in NZ, the UK and Australia. She's worked with Sainsbury's, Unilever, and Boots in the UK; and the VIC Govt, Bunnings, Big W and Woolworths in Australia.

The Source is a market research agency comprised of Matt Swinson and Rebekah Yock. Started in London in 2010, and expanded to Australia in 2016, The Source uncover human insight that demands action. Rebekah and Matt lead the agency.



“33% of print comes from the retail sector.”

Understanding what the retail consumers view and think through and their thoughts about print media and our channels is important for us to know when we're communicating with our customers. It's important for us to know how we sell print as it is a media channel.

When we talk about media, print and signage are media channels. When you consider how our customers procure print, it's under a media and marketing budget. The language being used around media does represent everything. By looking at what research has said about how print inspires and remains one of the most trusted and effective communication channels helps us better understand and sell print media.

PRINT MEDIA - AN ANTIDOTE TO DIGITAL FATIGUE

Many are tired of relying on their phones – it's exhausting being 'always on' and many don't even know what apps they've got. We're getting too many emails from business' we don't have the time or energy to read. As a result, many people are looking for reasons not to use their phones.

There is a lot of fatigue, and we're seeing people wanting to do digital detoxes. They're wanting to cut back and looking for reasons not to use their phone. People don't want to be picking up their phones all the time. We are already actively reducing the number of apps that we have to control this fatigue.

We know that vinyl has made a massive comeback compared to digital. Digitals are still the biggest, but the sales of vinyl in 2023 grew 14% to \$42 million in Australia. This doesn't include the sale of second hand records, of which there's a huge industry for second hand buyers and collectors. That's coming from trends where younger people are buying Taylor Swift on vinyl and other big artists on vinyl. If you look at a store like JBHIFI, they've now got quite an impressive vinyl collection due to such a demand.

Increasingly, as there's more and more media about the negative effects of digital, the negative effects of screens, not only on our eyesight, but on our concentration and creating anxiety, then I think it's an interesting place for print to be.

Print is not a screen. It gives our eyes and brains the break they need.

PRINT IS FRICTIONLESS

People want to know when they want to know.

There's an element where there's this frictionless nature to having something in your hand or picking something up. Whereas sometimes with digital, there can be the barrier of remembering a password. You've logged into something and then you go back to the site, and you don't remember your password. After this they've got to send you an email and you' got to reset your password. And suddenly before you've sorted it, the moments passed, and often people drop out at that point. For a lot of people, having something in their hand is very tangible, getting what they want right now and not having to go away and remember a password or take a photo of a QR code. Thinking about this emphasises how print can be so frictionless and easy for people.

PRINT MEDIA - SOCIAL CONSIDERATION

The cost of living crisis at the moment is a hot topic. People are generally tired because every element of their life now is spent trying to work out how to be more mindful and to make their money go further. For certain people in our society, they've not had to think about that before. In general, people are exhausted and are looking towards things that come to them easily. Again, print can do that in such a frictionless way that digital can't.

“Many are tired of relying on their phones – it's exhausting being 'always on'... many people are looking for reasons not to use their phones.”

Rebekah Yock, The Source

PRINT SPEAKS TO PEOPLE

Print is inclusive

People can feel forced into a digital solution when they don't want to be. Print can be so inclusive because it speaks to everybody, no matter who you are, no matter how much money you have, no matter what your age.



Print builds community

There was a conversation about McDonald's coffee cards, where somebody who had saved them all up, couldn't use them in the same way now that everything had moved to an app. Comments were from people talking about printed coffee cards and how they would give them to homeless people. This encompasses the sense of community and togetherness that came from having something tangible in your hand that you could give to somebody else who needed it.



Print is tangible

At Christmas time, grandparents love to have tangible catalogues that they can share with their grandkids - it's a tradition that they like to do together. They'll give the catalogue to their grandchildren to circle what they want. These are moments of heartwarming, tangible connection between generations with print.



People connect through print

A lot of people love a printed catalogue for connection - they can sit there, and they can enjoy it, or they can pass it around to different family members and drop over old magazines to their neighbour - this is the lovely inclusiveness that print carries.



PRINT IS MORE ASSOCIATED WITH PLEASURE

Print is often more associated with pleasure. We know that people like to rely on their phone, and they like to scroll or sit on the couch with their laptop but there is something about printed catalogues versus digital catalogues that is more relaxing. This is particularly true for people who work in offices, who work on a computer all day. A lot of time is spent looking at emails on your phone and computer screen so for a lot of people, the mental space of a screen is associated with work. When it comes to things they want to do for their pleasure they then see print as being associated with rest and relaxation. Sometimes it's a magazine on holiday. It's that luxury of reading a book curled up in a chair. It's got a very warm emotional energy and feeling.

There is something about the pleasurable act of indulging in print media and reading a magazine and flicking through the catalogue that people really like. There's also an element where printed catalogues can be a real treat. People aren't necessarily subscribing and buying as many magazines due to the cost of living crisis so it can be really indulgent for a lot of people to actually be buying printed media. To be getting a really visual, lovely catalogue in the letterbox or to be getting that free magazine at the supermarket is an amazing gift.

It's a treat when you're given this catalogue with all the lovely pictures and all the things that you can indulge in, you can just sit back and really window shop.

An interesting question, is that are we then more receptive to being really inspired by things, really open to decisions or changing things when we're feeling in that state of being really relaxed?

PRINT MEDIA - OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Online shopping sort of knows what we like and it knows what's on our list and it's very convenient. We get suggestions on what to buy, whether that be Facebook ads or whether that be on Instagram as it's all based on what we've bought in the past. Algorithms are very sophisticated. We follow people on TikTok and Instagram based on what we like, and then we get more suggestions based on what we like. We all know that feeling that we're all in an echo chamber with media and we're getting our beliefs reflected back to us again. On one hand, personalisation is great and people like personalisation, but it also feels, does it feel too personalised? And is it the sense that there's no element of surprise in that? Where is the impulse? What's interesting about catalogues and printed catalogues is that you're flicking through and you see something you didn't know that you wanted. That's quite exciting and can really break us out of an inertia and really surprise and delight.

When talking to someone about catalogues, and they were flicking through a supermarket catalogue, and they saw this beautiful visual of cheese and crackers and a little charcuterie board. This was the sort of a gentleman who was fairly stoic and, and he lived on his own and he was pretty frugal and he bought similar things every week. He saw a food that he hadn't had for a long time, but that picture made it look so delicious. He took himself out of his comfort zone and he went out and purchased the product, he lived alone, and he sat there and he had his cheese and crackers and what a treat, what a bit of fun. It's that element of something I didn't know I wanted until I had it. It's those moments of joy and surprise we get from printed media that are so valuable.



Q: Do you think there's a sensory nature that people are engaging with the tactility of print?

A: Yes, absolutely. I find it really engaging visually. I enjoy looking through supermarket catalogues with their beautiful pictures. It's fascinating to compare Coles, Woolworths, and ALDI; they all have impressive food photography, especially ALDI with their special buys displayed attractively. This visual aspect can be quite inspiring, sparking ideas to try new things. There's a strong emotional connection when you see these products visually presented.

On the topic of books, I read about Kindles and ebooks, but there's something special about holding a physical book. You have a sense of where you are in the story, which is harder with digital books. You miss that feeling of accomplishment, knowing how much you've read. The tactile experience of turning pages and the sound of paper is quite satisfying. When I talked to people about this during catalogue research, they had a lot to say. They were particular about paper quality, thickness, and even the smell of paper, which can evoke memories from childhood. It's something unique to print media, engaging our senses in ways digital media can't.

Q: Everyone can get access to printed products compared to digital ones. Factors like regional accessibility, cost of living, reading on phones versus internet connectivity, and societal balance play a role. Could you elaborate more on that?

A: We work with people in remote areas, and you're absolutely right about the connectivity issues there. Recently, we did some work on providing emergency information to those in fire-risk areas. We looked into printed sheets that people could hold onto, detailing what to do in emergencies like fires or floods. Printing is crucial because during emergencies, internet access and phone charging may not be possible. Printed materials, especially for government or health messages, offer a tangible assurance that the information reaches the intended audience.

Additionally, many in remote areas lack good Wi-Fi or a reliable laptop. It's easy to assume everyone has these, but that's not the case. Older people, in particular, fear scams and are wary of online interactions. Having printed materials provides a sense of security.

Translated materials are also important for government communications. Distributing flyers or clear information through churches or community groups ensures that the right people get the information. It's more trustworthy than relying solely on websites, as there's no guarantee people will access online resources.

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Q: Could you speak a little on digital ability vs digital literacy?

A: The Australian Digital Inclusion Index highlights an important distinction between digital literacy and digital ability. Digital ability refers to the basic skills like turning on a device, using some apps, and turning it off. On the other hand, digital literacy involves more complex tasks like downloading multiple apps or managing finances on a device.

For example, my 92-year-old grandfather took a library course on how to use an iPad. While he can handle basic tasks, he would struggle with more complex actions. This distinction is crucial when discussing the role of print in societal balance, especially in transactional spaces like bills, statements, and government communications.

Print plays a significant role in ensuring accessibility and understanding across society, particularly for those who may have digital ability but lack digital literacy for complex tasks. It's important for businesses and organisations, especially those involved in transactional print or data-driven communications, to recognize and address this difference.

NOTES

Additional Resources

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