



# Why Print is Vital in the Modern Marketing Mix

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Today's marketers operate in a unique climate. They must simultaneously vie for engagement in a crowded digital world, whilst also trading cautiously around GDPR. In this context, advancements in technology, legislative changes and shifting media habits have led to a resurgence in print.

We explore below five key reasons why print is a vital format for today's marketers:

## 1. AFFORDABILITY & VERSATILITY

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Technological innovations have made print more affordable. As a result, the format is now viable for a much wider range of campaigns and budgets.

In the past, offset presses were the industry standard. Setting up these traditional machines up for a job was time-consuming and costly. In addition, the workflow times were longer. As a result, to achieve economies of scale, print was often reserved for high volume orders of the same printed product.

However, new possibilities have emerged due to advancements in commercial inkjet printers. Today's inkjet machines are faster and more reliable. Indeed, many machines can render up to **4,000** words of text per minute. Meanwhile, the time and cost to set up a job is minimal. As a result, organisations can now run cost-effective print campaigns of any size, making print more versatile and accessible than ever before.

## 2. PERSONALISATION

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The affordability of short-run, digital print has allowed marketers to move away from bulk-buying print stock. Instead, they can place smaller orders for more tailored items – allowing campaigns to become increasingly targeted.

The affordability of short print runs coincides with the increasingly sophisticated means by which businesses can capture, track and report on client data (facilitated via CRM). Through this pairing, marketers are increasingly able to personalise printed materials, making them more engaging and relevant to their audience – often enhancing the return on investment. Indeed, the Digital Marketing Association identifies a **25%** boost in ROI for campaigns that incorporate personalised direct mail alongside digital content.

Today, the possibilities for personalisation go far beyond just including the recipient's name. Today, marketers are using data to personalise elements of design – such as images or colour-schemes – to a particular audience segment. Meanwhile purchase history can be used to identify appropriate content and promotions – enhancing the likelihood of conversion.

## 3. CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES

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In a climate where consumers are becoming adept at blocking-out advertising, creative print can engage them in surprising ways that break through their subconscious filters.

Personalisation isn't the only way to maximise the engagement of printed communications. Once again, advances in technology – along with new materials and techniques – give marketers more options to create attention-grabbing promotional collateral.

Compared with traditional offset printers, today's inkjets can print on a much wider range of materials – including vinyl – and achieve much more complex finishes. For instance, multiple finishing techniques can be incorporated in the same project. This has revolutionised the way printed communications can be executed, offering marketers a wider arsenal of textures and appearances to attract audiences with. This spans intricate cutting techniques and spot foil treatments, through to premium options such as electroluminescent ink and thermo colours, which mimic digital effects in a physical setting.

Furthermore, incorporating interactive features such as QR codes allows brands to create rich multimedia brand experiences that seamlessly blend physical and digital assets.

## 4. CHANGING MEDIA HABITS

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In today's connected world, people no longer rely on a single channel for their media consumption. Instead, we flit between digital and physical media. In any given moment, we may be scanning our social feed, reading an advert on the side of a bus, pausing in front of a point-of-sale display or tuning into a radio station.

To achieve maximum engagement, brands need to inhabit the same digital and physical spaces as their audiences. Successful multi-channel campaigns must pair engaging digital assets with offline collateral that faithfully translates their brand to the physical world. In support, commercial print companies offer print solutions which can adapt to the scopes, sizes and settings to match this variety of audience touch-points.

## 5. GDPR

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How could any list of industry trends be complete without mentioning the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?

GDPR has made great strides in curtailing unsolicited digital communications. However, as a side-effect, this has heralded a renewed interest in print – particularly direct mail. Why? Because the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has confirmed that marketers do not need explicit permission to communicate with individuals by post – within certain limits. This was clarified in a statement within the FAQ section of the ICO's website (in response to pressure from charities):

'You won't need consent for postal marketing...you can rely on legitimate interests for marketing activities if you can show how you use people's data is proportionate, has a minimal privacy impact, and people would not be surprised or likely to object.'

As a result, print now has become an attractive channel for marketers seeking a legitimate way to reach audiences now inaccessible online.

### IN SUMMARY

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Advancements in technology have opened up new possibilities in print production, whilst simultaneously shifting media habits and necessitating new privacy laws. These currents have come together to welcome a new era for printed communications.

Print's affordability, legitimacy and ability to engage have made it not only relevant, but vital, within the modern marketing mix.

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