

Using digital to get ahead of your print limitations

 By [JG Bezuidenhout](#)

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Traditional print advertising is great, and it's been the cornerstone of retail advertising since the invention of the press. However, the sad fact of the matter is that every day brings new challenges to advertisers as they face severe limitations around their print campaigns. They're currently hard-pressed to find ways to maximise their reach by printing less and, even before the Covid-19 pandemic, they've actively been looking for other ways to reach their audiences.



Source: www.unsplash.com

In 2006, the Association of National Advertisers reported that 40% of marketers increased spending on digital media and 38% decreased print by 20%.

The print industry has been impacted by a variety of new challenges that impair its ability to reach demand, such as the scarcity of papers and the high cost of imports due to the global shortage in shipping containers.



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These limitations have encouraged many advertisers to increase their budgets for digital advertising instead, which provides more measurable metrics and allows them to better monitor insights such as:

Reach vs distribution

Whilst advertisers are limited to the number of printed issues distributed, with digital it is possible to see how many unique people are reached at an impression level. Additionally, these new metrics may provide better insights and offer more accurate reporting than just "number of printed issues distributed."

Personalisation that scales

Digital advertising provides the ability to target a specific audience better and scale up quickly where necessary, allowing

full control over what content goes where without concerns about having enough inventory for print campaigns. This allows advertisers to reach different audiences with tailored messaging.

Rapid testing of new messaging and ideas

Digital allows advertisers to explore what content resonates with people more than other forms of media, which should ultimately lead them to a better understanding of how best to communicate about their products or services. This means they'll be able to reduce the time spent on finding the perfect creative message for each campaign since digital is so easily measurable by conversion rates, click-through rates, etc.

Digital also allows advertisers to quickly tweak out messages that seem less effective in driving conversions or engagement between audience groups – meaning it doesn't take long before you know which message or offer has proven most successful at generating results.

User share content on social media

Many people are looking to social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, for their news, which means that they are captive audiences ready to soak up information that is relevant to themselves. Added to this, digital content is extremely easy to share across these networks, without having to print out a physical copy of a brochure or catalog.

This has become increasingly prevalent as more and more people look to the convenience of simply going online to get the specific information they require. The ability to share information is a bonus for users - they can instantly recommend products or services across a broad network of acquaintances, something which is not easily achievable with print broadsheets or catalogues.

Cross-sell and upsell

Digital marketing has the ability to cross-sell or upsell products to users who have bought specific items in the past. Marketers find that this is a great way of keeping these customers engaged with their company; it can also be made into an automated process which means that when customers come back, they are more likely to buy again, as well as recommend the product or service to others.



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One is not advocating that marketers should not be using print but there is a strong case for using digital to supplement and amplify print campaigns. There is no arguing the fact that digital advertising has the ability to achieve more personalised content, is highly measurable, and ultimately can provide precise metrics such as Return on Ad Spend (RoAS).

When faced with the question of what budget should be allocated for specific campaigns, advertisers should use digital to complement their print to drive deeper insights that are not available through print alone. This will help marketers extend their advertising reach with relatively precise knowledge of the efficacy of their campaigns.

ABOUT JG BEZUIDENHOUT

JG Bezuidenhout is a founding partner of the South African subsidiary of Offernet.net, the data technology company housed in London, United Kingdom. Although based in Cape Town, JG is the global head of Offernet's advisory and innovation hub and, as such, is responsible for the monitoring and implementation of cutting-edge solutions, particularly within the digital marketing environment.

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