



6 Ways Print Media Buying Beats Digital Advertising

Though magazines and newspapers are printed, it's digital that's getting most of the ink. News coverage of emerging online advertising platforms and changing consumer demands influence the investment that companies make in [print media buying](#).

Between 2012 and 2013 in digital, [Kantar Media](#) found that U.S. ad spend on display ads alone increased 15.7%. By comparison, print media buys grew a tepid 1.8% for print magazines and decreased by 3.7% for print newspapers.

On the surface, the story is grim for print. The change in focus is one of the reasons that businesses turn to Capitol Media Solutions for expertise in [digital media buying](#). However, we also help our clients see that there is still significant value in ink-and-paper advertising depending on the goals they are trying to accomplish.

Print Media Buys Can Connect with the Right Audience

When we work with clients, we make recommendations based on demographic, behavioral, psychographic, and seasonal factors, among other concerns. If you're marketing a consumer product to the masses, your approach will be different than if you are a B2B advertiser and you are trying to reach C-level executives.

To demonstrate the point, [a study by the Shullman Research Center](#) showed that print magazines actually have greater potential reach and effectiveness than websites and radio among affluent adults. Think that magazines were the only printed pages to capture attention of these buyers? Not so. In the same study, individuals with \$500,000+ in income ranked newspapers as the most effective advertising platform (for more information about affluent buyers, read our whitepaper on [media buying for luxury brands](#).)

These findings would seem to contrast with the decrease in print ad spend the market experienced last year. **One explanation:** the newness and shininess of digital ad buying is pulling marketers away from where real value still exists.

Digital does offer significant advantages:

- Ad buying can occur in shorter time.
- Ad implementation happens faster as well.
- Digital provides more exact measurements of impressions and clicks.
- Digital ads can connect with behavioral data from across the Web.
- They can create a richer interactive experience.

With all of these benefits, why do some audiences still prefer print? Here are some potential reasons.

1. Experience

Specific demographics of readers still value the experience that print offers. This might be paging through a magazine on the couch or enjoying a leisurely morning at the Sunday breakfast table.

These types of moments connect to years of similar experiences and of watching parents and grandparents do the same thing at their own breakfast table. The physical and somewhat unwieldy nature of print also forces the reader to slow down, and at certain times, that's preferable to the digital efficiency of a tablet or mobile phone. It's during these moments of relaxation and focus that advertisers can make a big impact.

2. Presence

Imagine a business owner who belongs to a professional association that puts out a yearly buyer's guide. If it's digital and he bookmarks its location on his computer, he'll have it virtually forever.

If the same business owner gets that buyer's guide in print, chances are that it will fray and fold over time. The information will also be less searchable and flexible to use. However, having the media in his physical possession means that it is less likely to be lost in the digital detritus.

He may be more likely to keep it on his office shelf. Or, he may put the guidebook in a conference room or waiting area where even more eyeballs can see it (and its advertisements.) The physical nature of the print version means that it's less likely to be ignored or forgotten.

3. Occasion

Publications often promote print media buys for special editions of magazines or newspapers. For example, when our [media buying company](#) was selected as an *Inc 500 honoree* (twice), the magazine published an issue announcing the businesses that were chosen.

These milestone publications can capture the attention of audiences, even if there are also digital editions. The print version may offer a better reading experience since it allows flipping between pages, browsing, and easy comparisons, while readers may not prefer to view content on a smart phone or may not yet have access to a tablet.

4. Convenience

Digital devices cost significantly more than print media to buy. When you spill a mug of coffee on your newspaper, you're going to be less upset if it's the paper version. In addition, digital displays are still trying to find that sweet spot between portability and easy readability. Magazines and newspapers have had decades to achieve this goal.

Both of these factors matter for readers depending on where they are consuming content and seeing your advertisements. Think about places that readers don't want to use expensive devices or prefer a more portable, readable medium, whether it's the subway commuter or the vacationer on the beach. It's one of the reasons that *USA TODAY* has [print distribution programs](#) with hotels, airlines and other travel companies. Travelers enjoy having the content in an easy-to-carry but disposable medium.

5. Legitimacy

The tenure of print media such as *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Fortune*, and *Forbes* gives added credibility to these publications. Digital editions may carry the same content, but they don't have the same history.

As a result, readers may recognize that ads in print editions are more legitimate. This idea is supported by the fact that a print media buy is "permanent": the ink on the paper won't change from day to day, while digital content may display different advertisements based on the ad model. Digital content, social media ads, and [non-traditional advertising](#) all have value, but print ads are a tacit commitment between an advertiser and a publisher.

6. Availability

Though innumerable publications offer websites and digital editions—and others have transitioned completely to digital only—there are still many publications that remain print only.

This is especially important if you are trying to reach a niche audience. Associations, trade groups, and other organizations often have strong connections to the audiences that advertisers want, and if their publications aren't available in digital, it makes a clear case for buying print media.

If your company is planning a buy and wants to identify the best media, platforms, and channels to target, [contact Capitol Media Solutions](#).

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