



## BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE TANGIBLE AND DIGITAL WORLDS

While online and mobile use continues to grow, marketers still vote with their dollars that print media is a vital component of the marketing mix. From print to inbound telephony, or online to direct mail, print helps bridge the gap between the tangible and digital worlds.

Studies show that print advertising drives consumers to online shopping. For example, Exact Target found that 76% of internet users surveyed were directly influenced to purchase a product or service thanks to a direct mail piece.<sup>1</sup> And a United States Postal Service study found a \$21 million boost in sales, per million of online shoppers, between those who received a catalog and those who didn't. In the end, households that receive print shop online more often, spend more time at retail websites, and are twice as likely to make an on-line purchase.<sup>2</sup>

Google describes a new mental model of marketing, called the "zero moment of truth," which uncovers how the internet is changing consumer buying patterns. The model shows that

today's consumer engages in a "zero moment of truth," the online research of a product or service, prior to an actual instore or online purchase. Before the online research, however, comes the stimulus, the trigger, to research a product or service. Of the eleven media that are the key stimuli to online research, seven are print-related—and five (magazine ads and articles, newspaper ads and articles, and manufacturer direct mail) are ranked higher than online ads and email and just lower than television ads, the strongest stimulus.<sup>3</sup>

Print is a traditional marketing media for brick and mortar businesses. Likewise, internet-based search engines integrate non-electronic (print) with electronic advertising to reach their targeted audience. Google, for example, sends millions of direct mail pieces throughout the year to communicate with business decision makers about the value of the Adwords program.

Moreover, a recent study for The Interactive Advertising Bureau validates Google's "zero moment of truth" marketing model. To measure how multi-screening (i.e., watching television and being on-line at the same time) affects shopping, the study shows that even among the most connected consumers, the discovery of new products largely happens offline via sources like word-of-mouth, direct mail, catalogs, and television. Only afterwards, does research on a new product and service takes place online.<sup>4</sup>

Print is an integral vehicle in cross media market, employing innovative technologies, include PURLS, QR codes, augmented reality, and Intelligent Print Imaging, to drive consumers to online websites. But nothing rivals the tactile dimension of print: it's warm, portable, inviting, highly personalizable, and technologically savvy. Try it; it works.

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**NOTES** <sup>1</sup> Exact Target, Channel Preference Study, 2009 <sup>2</sup> comScore Case Study: The U.S. Postal Service (USPS), 2009 <sup>3</sup> Google, "Winning the Zero Moment of Truth," [www.thinkwithgoogle.com/insights/library/studies/the-zero-moment-of-truth-macro-study/](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/insights/library/studies/the-zero-moment-of-truth-macro-study/) <sup>4</sup> Econsultancy, The Multi-Screen Marketer, May 2012.