



ARE PRINT NEWSPAPERS STILL RELEVANT?

With so many “doom and gloom” stories about the future of print newspapers, we thought we’d take a look at some of the reasons why print newspapers are still relevant for both readers and advertisers. Here is some food for thought:

1. **Print ads spur action** – A recent study conducted by Frank N. Magid Associates for the Newspaper Association of America found that 40% of U.S. adults have taken an action online as a result of reading or seeing an ad in a print newspaper in the past 30 days. In addition, 78% of adults have taken some action in the past 30 days as a result of an ad in a circular that was included in the newspaper package.¹
2. **Print readers recall more than online readers** – Another study, conducted by a researcher at the University of Houston, found that people who read printed news publications remember more news than people who read news online. A number of possible explanations for this are offered. For example, because story placement in online news outlets is constantly changing, readers are less likely to realize which stories are the most important ones of the day. In addition, knowing that anything they find online can be easily retrieved, readers of online news stories may simply pay less attention as they read.²
3. **Print is more trustworthy** – When Nielsen asked people whether they thought different media are “trustworthy,” printed national newspapers outranked all other options, with 58% of respondents appreciating newspapers’ trustworthiness.³ Perhaps this is because, as a recent editorial in the Orange County Register pointed out, “Print outlets are uniquely able to take a longer view than other media. They can vet the facts more thoroughly, attempt to fit them into a broader context, and – most importantly – take the time to actually engage in a little reflection.”⁴
4. **Print is preferred by many** – Given all of these facts, perhaps it should come as no surprise that a 2014 Scarborough newspaper readership survey found that 51% of U.S. newspaper readers choose to consume their local paper in print only.⁵ Not coincidentally, when the Dallas Morning News surveyed 2,000 of their print subscribers to see if they would be willing to switch to an all-digital platform, very few said yes. Even if the digital product was priced at just one-tenth of the print subscription, only 5% of respondents said they’d be interested. Why weren’t readers interested in switching? As Jim Moroney, the newspaper’s Publisher & CEO explained, “Butter is not a substitute for a car. They’re different things.”⁶

These are just a few of the reasons to Choose Print!

1 Frank N. Magid Associates, How America Shops and Spends 2014.

2 Arthur D. Santana, Randall M. Livingstone, and Yoon Y. Choo, Print Readers Recall More Than Do Online Readers. Newspaper Research Journal, Vol. 34, No. 2 – Spring 2013.

3 Nielsen, 2013 National Cross-Media Engagement Study.

4 Orange County Register, Editorial: Why Print Still Matters, September 24, 2014.

5 Pew Research Center, Newspapers: Fact Sheet, June 2016

6 Erik Wemple, Dallas Morning News publisher: Print and digital are like butter and a car, The Washington Post, October 17, 2014.