



J.C. PENNEY JOINS THE GROWING ROSTER OF RETAILERS WHO CHOOSE PRINT

Remember the J.C. Penney catalog? Five years ago J.C. Penney ditched the huge catalog that they had been publishing for over four-and-a-half decades in order to focus on their online presence instead. One year later they also phased out distribution of their 70 smaller catalogs.

You might wonder how this strategy worked out for them. The answer is: not well.

Today J.C. Penney is once again choosing print, with a new 120-page home goods catalog that will be shipped to a selected group of their existing customers this month (March 2015).

Why is J.C. Penney returning to print? Because they realized that print had been driving their online sales! In fact, the company's data indicated that a significant portion of their online sales had come from people who saw items they wanted to purchase in the catalog and then went online to place their order. "We lost a lot of customers," said J.C. Penney CEO Myron Ullman.

Of course, J.C. Penney is not the only retailer to discover the power of print. While some retailers are still publishing traditional catalogs, others are putting out publications that resemble lifestyle magazines, featuring products that are available on the company's website. For many brands, catalogs are the single most effective driver of both online and in-store sales. And some stores, such as Anthropologie, rely so heavily on catalogs that catalogs have become their main form of advertising.

The fact is, even in our online world, printed catalogs are clearly still popular with consumers. Perhaps this is because print is the only medium that lets companies give them something they can touch, feel and hold in their hands. It's a tactile experience that people enjoy, which, in turn, delivers results.