



THE AESTHETIC ADVANTAGE

How print delivers positive experiences

A NEW NARRATIVE FOR PRINT



Print creates presence – slowing attention and anchoring messages in human experience

In a world overloaded with noise, speed, and fractured attention, the simplest messages often leave the deepest mark.

While complexity surrounds us, what truly stays with us is communication that cuts through with clarity, emotional resonance, and a sense of presence. That presence – the context in which a message lands – is where print excels.

As creative director and advertising effectiveness specialist Dave Trott¹ famously wrote: *“The most important piece of real estate in which to stake a claim is the human mind. How you stake a claim in the mind is by creating a perception. And how you create that perception is by controlling the context. Control the context and you control the mind. Control the mind and you control reality.”*

Print’s value thus lives in that idea. It does not just carry a message; it shapes the environment in which that message is experienced.

Recent research by Madano, conducted on behalf of the IPIA for its ‘A New Narrative for Print’ campaign, provides clear evidence to this effect. It analysed a year’s worth of market conversations and found something remarkable: print’s aesthetic appeal – and the experience of engaging with it – generated a 96.8 percent² positive sentiment.

In a climate where digital dominates budgets and bandwidth, such overwhelming positivity reveals a powerful human craving for touch, texture, and sensory depth.

The power of print’s sensory impact

Print exerts its influence not only through what it says, but through the emotional cues embedded in every tactile detail. When someone picks up a beautifully crafted printed piece, they do not just read a message; they feel it.



Chosen, trusted, and kept – high-quality print gives brands a sensory foothold in a world built to distract



Touch, texture, and visual depth transform communication experiences – building trust digital alone cannot deliver

The weight of a page, the quiet resistance of an embossed finish, the richness of pigment saturating premium stock – these physical qualities demand attention. They slow the moment, guiding the reader into a more focused and receptive state.

Consumers consistently associate printed materials with intention, care, and authenticity³. These are powerful psychological triggers that help build long-term trust. A well-crafted piece signals that the sender values the relationship enough to invest in a tangible experience.

Whether it is a brochure, catalogue, or direct mail piece, high-quality print elevates brand credibility. Its aesthetic depth communicates professionalism, confidence, and permanence.

Digital media primarily engages sight and sound. Print reaches further: the texture of paper under fingertips, the visual depth of artwork, even the subtle scent of ink. These sensory layers become memory cues, embedding messages more deeply in the mind.

Print lingers. It sits on desks, coffee tables, and noticeboards, remaining visible long after a digital impression has been scrolled past or swiped away.



Aesthetic quality drives memory – sensory print is noticed, retained, and remembered

Together, these qualities mean that print creates not just communication, but a moment – one that helps brands move from being noticed to being remembered.

Compelling data

Diving deeper into this area of consideration, Madano's data analysts considered a specific question posed by the IPIA: What is the perception of using print within a multi-channel marketing strategy?

The answer was clear and powerful – from the more than 12,000 data points gathered, 75 percent showed a positive perception sentiment, with Madano highlighting the key factors driving this figure:

- **Improved effectiveness:** The integration of print and digital marketing strategies is consistently perceived to improve campaign engagement levels, with strong evidence of higher response rates
- **Reaching niches:** Print advertising remains relevant and effective, particularly for niche products and local audiences, making it a crucial component of a multichannel marketing strategy
- **Targeted outreach:** By enabling targeted outreach through specific publications, print marketing increases the effectiveness of campaigns and enhances consumer engagement
- **Memorable Messaging:** Print marketing complements digital efforts by providing a less cluttered environment, allowing messages to receive more focused attention from readers and increasing brand recall

What the data really shows

Print's influence is not limited to marketing collateral. The preference for physical reading materials continues to rise, even among digital-native generations.

- A YouGov poll found that 61 percent⁴ of UK readers choose printed books as their primary format
- A pan-European Two Sides survey recorded a rise in preference to 65 percent selecting physical books, up from 53 percent⁵
- The University of Valencia's recent meta-analysis of 25 studies published between 2000 and 2022, which assessed nearly 469,654 participants, revealed significant differences in comprehension between print and digital reading. In every case, print's aesthetic and experiential qualities contributed directly to improved cognition and understanding. Among the studies conclusions was the clear finding that the tactile experience of utilising print is not just pleasant; it is neurologically advantageous⁶

As Cristina Vargas and Ladislao Salmerón, Professors in the Department of Evolutionary and Educational Psychology at the University of Valencia highlight: *"From what we know from other studies, the relationship between the frequency of reading printed texts and text comprehension is much higher (between 0.30 and 0.40) than what we found for leisure digital reading habits (0.05).*

"This means, for example, that if a student spends 10 hours reading books on paper, their comprehension will probably be 6 to 8 times greater than if they read on digital devices for the same amount of time."



When print and digital work together, engagement rises, response strengthens, and brands are remembered



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Tactility builds trust – texture, weight, and craft trigger deeper emotional connection

Print in the experience economy

In today's experience economy, consumers expect more than information. They seek moments that feel crafted, personalised, and memorable. Print is uniquely positioned to deliver exactly that.

A premium catalogue on uncoated stock that whispers sophistication; a personalised mailer that arrives with weight and intention; the visual drama of a perfectly executed magazine spread – these create experiences that digital channels simply cannot replicate. But the experience does not end on paper.

Print thrives alongside digital, forming a bridge between physical interaction and online engagement. QR codes, augmented reality, and personalised URLs extend the lifespan and reach of a printed moment, creating a hybrid journey that feels seamless rather than siloed.

This synergy delivers a strategic advantage. Brands benefit from the trust inherent in print and the scale of digital, creating a more immersive system of touchpoints that moves consumers through awareness, consideration, and action.

Print is no longer just a medium; it is a curated moment – a sensory experience that holds attention and builds emotional connection

End Notes/Citations

¹ Dave Trott is one of Britain's most influential creative directors and thinkers on advertising effectiveness. He founded the award-winning agency Gold G

² After searching and filtering millions of online conversations, posts and articles over the course of 12 months – Madano's search algorithms identified more than 12,000+ data points that fitted the IPIA's research criteria below.

With these data points curated and contextualised by Madano's data analysts, the research focused on the perception of print's effectiveness, aesthetic appeal, measurability, sustainability, trust and efficacy among consumers, marketing and business professionals.

Madano then investigated 1,296 of these data points in greater detail, which specifically discussed the aesthetic appeal and experience of engaging with or using print. In doing so, its analysts identified that 1,254 (96.8%) of these data points were highly supportive of print in this regard and identified as having 'positive sentiment'.

³ bit.ly/authenticitymatters

⁴ bit.ly/yougovbooks

⁵ twosides.info/trend-tracker-2023

⁶ bit.ly/valenciaresearch and bit.ly/summaryvalencia

For more information and to access the New Narrative for Print whitepaper, visit ipia.org.uk/nn or contact info@ipia.org.uk



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KONICA MINOLTA

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New Narrative for Print Campaign
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