Analysis

Marketing to Millennials: Will Printed Direct Mail and Catalogs Work?

InfoTrends
A Questex Company

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Key Highlights

- 63% of Millennials report that they regularly or almost always read the printed catalogs that they receive.

- Over 65% of Millennials had made a purchase in the past three months that had been influenced by a catalog.

- Nearly 29% of Millennials said that a tactile piece of direct mail was more effective at getting them to take action, versus under 24% who believed that e-mail was more effective.

Introduction

Millennial consumers (sometimes referred to as Generation Y) are the largest and most diverse generation that the world has ever seen. Born between the early 1980s through about 2000 (in the early years of the "The Information Technology Revolution"), Millennials are a highly connected, "always on" audience. These individuals don't know a world without personal computers and mobile devices. According to a Millennial Marketing Infographic powered by Futurecast, here are some key aspects of Millennials:

- They account for 25% of the U.S. population.

- They make 21% of consumer discretionary purchases. This is estimated to be over a trillion dollars in direct buying power, and it has a significant influence on the older generations.

- 1 in 4 Millennials are parents today.

- They are social—40% of Millennials have 200+ friends on Facebook compared to 19% of non-Millennials.

- Millennials are 2.5 times more likely to be early adopters of technology than other generations.

- 80% of Millennials want brands to entertain them.

Direct Mail and Catalogs Work!

Today's marketers must find a way to identify the most effective media types to effectively communicate with Millennials. Although some might think that direct mail is only for Baby Boomers, InfoTrends' recent multi-client study entitled *Direct Marketing Production Printing & Value-Added Services* indicated that Millennials are also responsive to direct mail marketing. In conducting its research, InfoTrends surveyed more than 900 U.S. consumers to analyze their level of engagement with catalogs and direct mail. The objective of this study was to obtain a greater perspective on the value of print and the effectiveness of digital channels in relation to print.

Just like Baby Boomers, Millennials peruse printed catalogs and rely on them during the purchasing process. In fact, 63% of the Millennials surveyed report that they regularly or almost always read the printed catalogs that they receive.
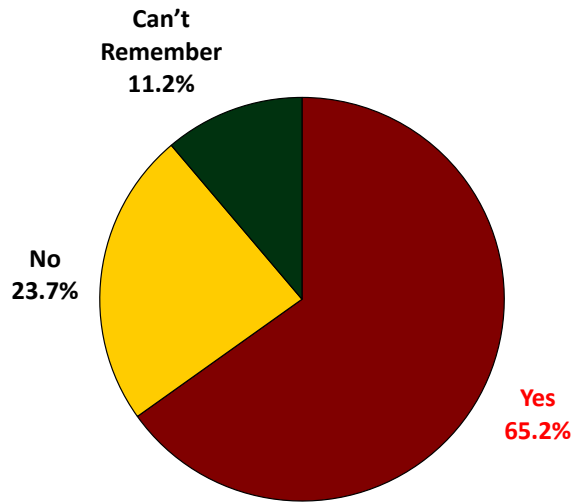
Figure 1: How frequently do you look at or read the catalogs that you receive?
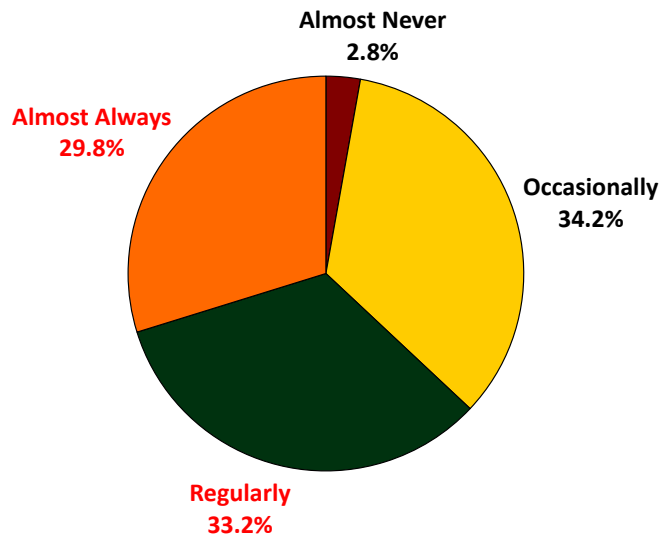
N = 328 U.S. Consumers between the ages of 18 and 34 who receive catalogs in the mail
Source: *Direct Marketing Production Printing & Value-Added Services*, InfoTrends 2015

The key to success is ensuring that the content in the catalog is relevant to Millennial recipients. According to InfoTrends' research, nearly 75% of Millennials consider catalogs to be useful. These respondents review over 71% of the catalogs they receive, and 30% report that high-quality print and paper will get their attention. Perhaps the most important statistic of all is a catalog's ability to drive a consumer to take action. Over 65% of Millennials had made a purchase in the past three months that had been influenced by a catalog. Even more interesting was the fact that over 47% of Millennials were driven to a retail store to make their ultimate purchase. This compares to under 27% of those aged 35+.

Figure 2: In the past 3 months, have you made any purchases that were influenced by a printed catalog?

N = 328 U.S. Consumers between the ages of 18 and 34 who receive catalogs in the mail
Source: *Direct Marketing Production Printing & Value-Added Services*, InfoTrends 2015

Millennials are equally responsive to direct mail. Millennials reported reviewing about 67% of their direct mail pieces, and this is consistent with the open rates for older generations. If the direct mail piece had a QR code, over 45% of Millennials scanned it with a mobile device versus about 20% of those aged 50+. When asked about preferences for direct mail versus e-mail, nearly 29% of Millennials said that a tactile piece of direct mail was more effective at getting them to take action. Meanwhile, under 24% reported that e-mail was more effective.

Figure 3: Which do you think is more effective at getting you to take an action, e-mail or direct mail?
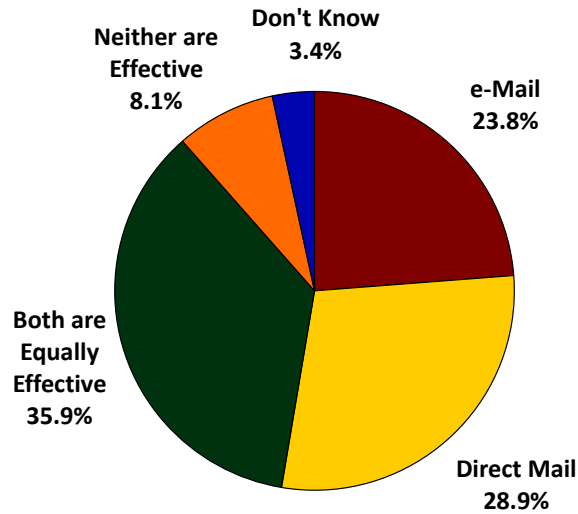
N = 351 U.S. Consumers between the ages of 18 and 34
Source: *Direct Marketing Production Printing & Value-Added Services*, InfoTrends 2015

How Can You Help Marketers Reach Generation Y?

In a world that is oversaturated with e-mail and social media, printed direct mail remains effective among Millennials. As you work with your clients, there are a number of techniques that can make their direct mail stand out:

- **Make it simple:** In today's "always on" world, Millennials want answers immediately. They need to be informed right away about what a product is and how it's going to benefit them. Information has always been just a click away to these consumers, so marketers risk losing Millennials if they force them to watch a video, create an account, and/or wait for an e-mail confirmation.

- **Make it personal:** Millennials are hardened by a lifetime of managing spam e-mails. To be effective, direct mail must be relevant to the individual. Relevance instantly adds a degree of appeal and believability to a direct mail piece.

- **Make it interactive:** For young adults who have been inundated by online requests and marketing initiatives, direct mail has a certain credibility. It can also be a tremendously effective technique for leading Millennials to online resources. When it comes to marketing success, the right blend of print versus digital is of paramount importance.

- **Make it omni-channel:** Brands must ensure that their product information is available in all forms—mobile, in-store, online—so Millennials can access it anytime and anywhere at a moment's notice. Marketers also need to make sure that Millennials will receive a consistent message as they navigate across various channels.

InfoTrends' Opinion

Marketing to Millennials isn't optional for marketers; these consumers possess a huge amount of purchasing power. In an environment where all channels are on, direct mail and printed catalogs continue to cut through the clutter. Service providers must work with marketers to develop fully integrated marketing plans that comprise newer mediums like social, while still understanding the importance of more traditional printed assets.

For more information about InfoTrends' 2015 study entitled "Direct Marketing Production Printing & Value-Added Services," contact Scott Phinney at (781)616-2115 or scott.phinney@infotrends.com.

About the Author

Barb Pellow

Group Director

barb_pellow@infotrends.com

+1 781-616-2161

A digital printing and publishing pioneer as well as a marketing expert, Barbara Pellow helps companies develop multi-media strategies. She assists companies in creating strategies to launch new products, building strategic marketing plans, and educating their sales force on delivering value.

Comments or Questions?