

6 Tips to Turn Your Catalog into a Marketing Powerhouse



People engage through stories and respond when inspired.

Catalogs, when created well, can act as the perfect medium for sharing both a brand's story and product suite, through words and imagery, influencing a buyer's journey and ultimately their purchasing decisions. While all facets of marketing matter, presenting products and services, in one "go-to" format helps connect buyers to your brand for a multitude of reasons.

Catalogs not only provide the tangibility and power of direct mail, but they also have become an integral part of online marketing efforts that drive customers to complementary digital experiences.

These stylized product directories are showing up in varying electronic formats and viewed on mobile devices by way of a company's social media platforms and website. This is in addition to catalogs' more traditional routes as direct mail, trade show booth handouts, leave-behind collateral, and as a sales tool.

Print Catalogs Are The Comeback Kid

Print marketing and online or e-commerce marketing are not mutually exclusive experiences hence print catalogs have not gone extinct. Rather their production has actually increased over the past several years despite our ever-growing and seemingly all-consuming digital world. This [Wall Street Journal article](#) discusses how catalogs have survived and actually thrived in recent times.

In fact, catalog print production has surged post-COVID pandemic and found new appreciation. Why? As humans, we crave physical touch and in the vast virtual world we now all live in, that lack of touch has created more of a desire for it.

We also are attracted to catalogs as we are innately drawn in by appealing imagery and aesthetics. With something in hand, we are more likely to spend more time engaged with it than our skim and scan affliction with anything on the web.

Simply put, print catalogs are the **proverbial comeback kid** with their electronic counterparts finding their own unique role in the marketing mix.

Why Catalogs Work

With more of an eye toward consumer psychology, old-school print catalogs offer a respite from our increasingly cluttered digital inboxes and social media feeds. They physically linger on a desk or countertop which increases top-of-mind awareness among consumers.

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Just like the evolution of the digital landscape, catalogs have also evolved. Product catalogs are no longer the heavy tomes they once used to be with pages jammed packed with stock images and uninspiring text.

Catalogs of today are purposefully designed as a creative presentation of products, that stimulate multiple senses simultaneously, with the hope to evoke a purchase.

Catalogs Influence Purchasing Decisions

The purchase path regardless of industry or niche has become a primary focus for marketers. Moving people beyond simply making a transaction to building a relationship or connection with a business/brand has become a desired objective.

Print catalogs are one of only a few tactile experiences that connects them to the brand. The touchpoint that catalogs can offer can be an experience itself and that is a big deal.

Research shows that catalogs that include content that expresses a brand's personality have the potential to drive increased sales. The results reveal that product viewing has the potential for triggering activity in the brain that is responsible for evaluating value which can in turn signal greater intent to purchase.



The Pieces and Parts of a Well-Designed Catalog

A well-designed catalog helps you spotlight your products and should be a source of fully complete and comprehensive information.

Be sure to consider what your reader demographic's expectations of the catalog are. What information do they require? Everything should be crafted with their perspective and needs in mind.

The framework for a catalog is all about making it effortless for the reader. If it's too difficult to follow or to find information, no one will read it, let alone purchase from it.

Here are some thoughts on what should be integral to a catalog's creation:

1. **Build Credibility and Trust**

If you are considering catalogs as part of your marketing arsenal, they should be architected to capture differentiation and brand representation while tending to the more overt existence of showcasing products/services. Building credibility and trust are foundational to getting someone to take action and make a buying decision.

2. **Structure for Ease-of-Use**

The layout, navigation, flow, and order of a catalog are all necessary elements that need to be choreographed in a way that makes the user experience easy yet memorable. If the format is clunky, shoddy, confusing, or plain overwhelming, the consumer interaction and potential for a sale are most likely squandered.

3. **Appeal to the Senses**

Catalogs can and should be designed to offer effective sensory experiences that hit all the right notes for a brand's customer personas and target audiences. Colors, typography, design components, headers/subheaders, and descriptive text need to be thoughtfully chosen and made consistent to match a brand's identity and story.

4. **Address Your Buyer's Pain Points and Curiosities**

A catalog experience today should feel like a robust curated collection of products/services that addresses the audience's curiosities or pain points by using components that enhance a customer's ability to imagine using that product/service. Instead of just listing products and specifications, write and design to what your buyers actually care about. Showcase your solutions to their concerns and interests.

5. **Show Proof**

Incorporating short case studies, statistics, tips, testimonials or infographics is a great way to support and highlight items using real-time facts and data. For electronic versions, audio, video, and other interactive features can be branded and customized to share cross-capabilities, user guides, and demonstrations that further the catalog experience.

6. **Lead with a Strong Call-To-Action**

CTAs are the opportunity to motivate your audience to take real steps toward becoming a customer. Most people don't think to include CTAs in a catalog aside from listing contact, website, and social media information. Remove any possible friction for a consumer and be clear and concise on next steps. It can be the determining factor between a lead and a conversion.



Catalogs Nurture Rapport and Foster Brand Affinity

Catalogs are vital marketing resources and more effective now than they have ever been. Their inherent value lies in creating strong content that resonates with recipients, embodies a brand's uniqueness, and goes far beyond a printed product directory or index.

Businesses should see catalogs as the chance to nurture rapport with buyers and engage in fostering brand affinity.

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Aviate Creative can help you get your company's catalog designed, written, and executed well.

We aspire to take brands to new heights through remarkable identity work, graphic and web design, and copywriting.

Contact Aviate

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