
FEPE QUARTERLY



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**The renaissance
of printed mail**

The renaissance of printed mail

ARTICLE

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Worried that printed mail has been completely replaced by communication in digital channels? Think again!

Data from recent studies reveal a more nuanced picture. For advertisers, printed mail has advantages that digital communication can't match and vice versa. Used together, these channels offer marketers a variety of complementary tools to reach customers effectively and profitably.

"Direct mail is particularly suitable for reactivating inactive customers and those who are no longer accessible digitally."

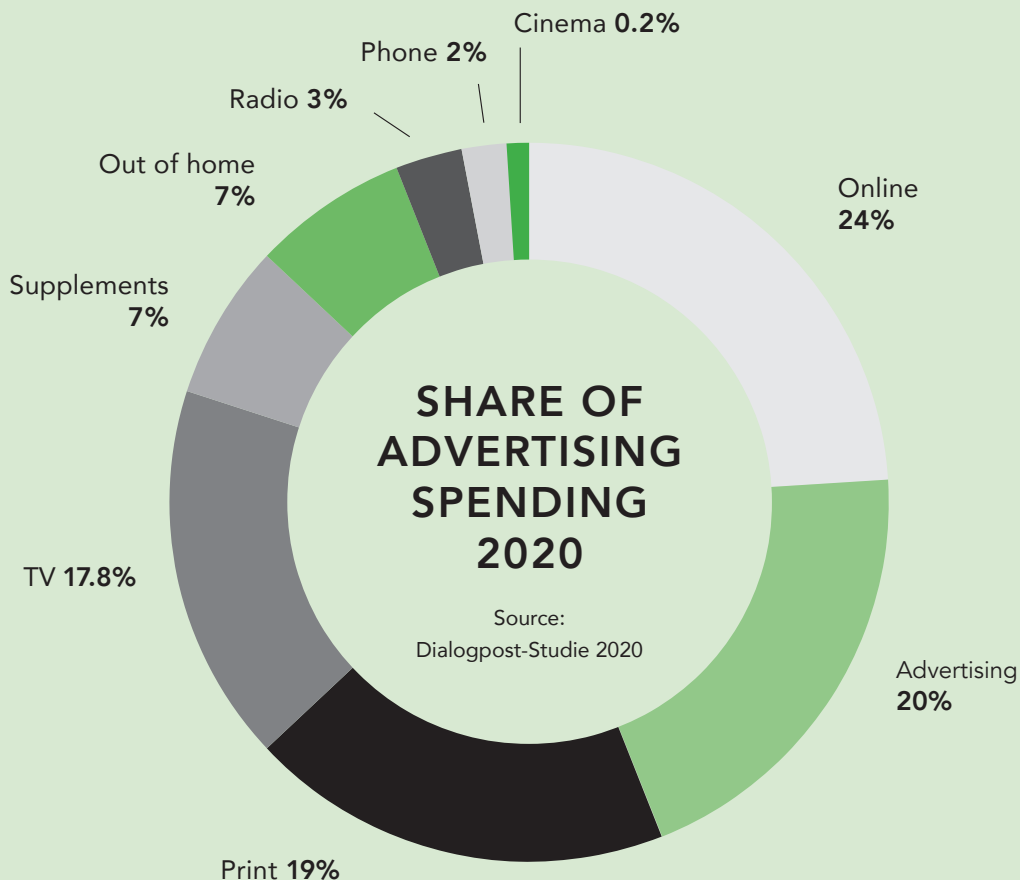
GROWING INVESTMENT IN PRINT ADVERTISING

A 2020 research report by the Collaborative Marketing Club, the CMC Dialogpost-Studie, shows that printed mail continues to hold its own as one of the most popular forms of dialogue marketing despite competition from digital.

In fact, it has even grown again slightly. The CMC report notes that around 19% of all advertising expenditure in 2019 went to printed mail.

Recent years have seen a major shift in advertising spending from printed mail towards email, social media marketing and text messaging. Printed mail has been perceived by advertisers as an outdated – even antiquated – advertising and communications channel. For a while it seemed that digital channels could completely replace traditional mail advertising.

But there's life in the old dog yet! The European Federation of Envelope Manufacturers (FEPE) has analysed several studies on print advertising. This article presents their key findings and insights.



WE'RE OVERWHELMED BY EMAIL

Consumers' digital overload clearly plays a key role in the success of printed mail, according to Philipp Westermeyer, organiser of the Online Marketing Rockstars Festival (OMR), the largest European event for digital marketing and technology, held annually in Hamburg. "Today, it's not our letterboxes that are being showered with irrelevant messages. It's our email inboxes", says Philipp.

*Campaign managers
can optimise their
communication using
a combined print plus
digital advertising strategy.*

PRINTED MAIL CREATES IMPACT

"Postal delivery and classic printed mail are experiencing a renaissance", Philipp continues. "As our email inboxes get swamped and our letterboxes more empty, now printed, personally-addressed mail stands out. There's a renewed opportunity to impress the recipient with well-made printed mail, with an appealing look and feel, through clever use of print finishing, die cutting or the surprise of a special smell."

Such features can spark consumer appreciation and trust. And they are all part of standard production possibilities offered by FEPE envelope manufacturing members, available throughout Europe to attract recipients' attention.

So it's not surprising that several large international companies have rediscovered the benefits of printed mail. Around 23 million advertising letters are sent every day in Germany alone, according to data from Deutsche Post AG.



PRINTED MAIL

Alternate, ebay, H&M, Amazon, Booking.com and other major brands use printed mail in their marketing mix.

Photo by Crista Dodoo on unsplash

PRINTED MAIL AND GDPR COMPLIANCE

“In addition to the low level of competition in the printed mail channel, direct mail is particularly suitable for reactivating inactive customers and those who are no longer accessible digitally”, says Philipp.

Deutsche Post / DHL found that 78% of existing customers can be reached by post, in compliance with data protection regulations and without opt-in, because the rules for printed mail are different to the rules for email. If a customer has ordered from a company in the past, under GDPR this shows a ‘legitimate interest’ in the company, so printed mail can be sent to that customer without recorded consent. In the case of emails, on the other hand, access to existing customers in compliance with GDPR is at best 9%.

PRINTED MAIL IS COST EFFECTIVE

Several recent studies have measured the performance of printed mail in the currently booming ecommerce sector. All show very similar results confirming that printed mail advertising is very cost effective.

The CMC report showed an astonishingly high average conversion rate (CVR) for customers of online stores who were sent printed mail: 4.9% of all sales letters resulted in an order! No other advertising medium comes even close to such success. Other advantages of printed mail included larger customer baskets (+8%), greater customer loyalty and an almost ten-fold return on ad spend (ROAS). Every € 1.00 invested in printed mail generates € 9.90 in additional revenue.

Even if the production costs are higher than for an email campaign, ultimately printed mail is a very profitable solution thanks to the increased average shopping basket value and the high response rate.

A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR PRINTED MAIL PLUS DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Printed mail advertising has well-proven advantages, not least a high level of trust among customers. Digital advertising formats are now also firmly established. They offer fast and inexpensive campaign implementation, thanks to automation and dynamic, data-based customisation.

Today, marketing automation systems (MAS) combine the benefits of both worlds and create digital interfaces to the analogue advertising world. Campaign managers can use MAS tools to optimise their communication using different channels. For example, they could first launch a low-cost email ad. If the email is not opened within a specified period, an additional printed mail is automatically sent, to take advantage of this channel's better response rate and CVR. The system can also be used to trigger printed mail campaigns targeting existing customers, without a need for opt-in.

All of this – **renewed customer interest in printed mail, creative production techniques, print-friendly GDPR and MAS tools** that link printed mail and digital advertising – adds up to new opportunities that will further consolidate the importance of print in dialogue marketing.

GDPR

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