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CATALOG TRENDS 2021

Despite the fervor around email and social media marketing, there lingers a reliable staple that marketers are rediscovering – catalogs. The modern idea of a catalog has been around since 1872 with Montgomery Ward's **first mass printing** of its mail-order catalog. Since this marketing channel has evolved considerably in the past 148 years, let's look at a few of today's trends in catalogs as we approach 2021.

CREATE AN EXPERIENCE

One of the biggest selling points of catalogs is that they provide a tactile experience for consumers. Unlike the frenetic click-click-click of online shopping, catalog readers tend to slow down and savor the moment. The time spent viewing a catalog is around **15.5 minutes**, and they have a shelf life of several weeks. On the other hand, an email is only scanned for about an average of **13.4 seconds before** it's forgotten in the recesses of our inboxes or sent to the trash bins forever. Catalogs have been continuously rising in popularity since 2015, with **consumers response increasing 170%** between 2014 and 2018, and **retailers** are noticing.

DEVELOP A THEME

Creating a narrative or theme gives the consumer an immersive feeling. This effect can be achieved more dramatically through words and images or simply with font and color use. A great example of this concept is the Keds' reintroduction of the **Handbook for Women** print catalog. The brand plans to produce the printed piece bi-annually with a new theme for each issue.

EMBRACE A HYBRID MODEL

Magazine-catalog hybrids or magalogs have proven to be boons for brands like Costco. Their **Costco Connection** publication aimed at Executive level members holds down double duty. It provides content with recipes, information, and articles relating back to Costco products and services but also gives the company a valuable selling tool to a warmly invested audience.



Catalogs are a great medium for telling the story of your brand by engaging your customer and sharing your personality - making you more than just a company.



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REALNESS SELLS

Consumers desire authenticity. Realness rings true, particularly for [younger generations](#). Brands like [Target](#), [Aerie](#), [Dove](#), and Olay discovered that putting real people of all shapes, sizes, colors, and abilities in [real situations shows relatability](#). People want to see a reflection of themselves in advertising.

LET YOUR CREATIVITY FLY

Don't be afraid to experiment with color. Use pops of bright colors to create eye-catching layouts and unique color combinations. Mix illustrations with photography to give a fantastical effect. Use a brushstroke font or hand-lettering to deliver an intimate touch to the text.

SET THE STAGE

Gone are the days of a basic grid with product description layouts. Consumers like to see products in action. Create vignettes, flat or dimensional, that combine complementary products. A clear but creative arrangement allows for more products to be displayed in one impactful image.

TELL YOUR STORY

Catalogs are a great medium for telling the story of your brand, founder, or a specific product. Is there a unique origin story about your first product design? It doesn't have to start with "Once upon a time..." but you can begin on the first page and tease it throughout the pages of the catalog. Storytelling [engages](#) the customer and shares your brand's [personality](#), making it more than just a company.

TIE IN DIGITAL

Build onto your digital marketing efforts by including [QR codes and augmented reality](#) (AR) elements into your catalog. Drive customers to special landing pages and promotions with QR codes or create your own interactive content with [augmented reality](#). From fashion to beauty to home improvement and furnishings, there are dozens of creative ways that retailers are [incorporating AR](#) into their marketing.

While there are plenty of trends to explore in 2021 for catalogs, there is one thing for certain. The enjoyment of a catalog's tactile experience is here to stay. Port Hawkesbury Paper is proud to produce 20% of North America's supercalender paper for retail inserts and catalogs. Download [our fact sheet](#) for more information about our company and products.