



26.05.2020 / Ronald Reddmann

„Print products and our senses“ series: The eyes plays a part

„A feast for the eyes“, as a saying goes. What we know from the first sight of a dish also applies to print products. The first visual impression has an enormous impact on our perception and our motivation to take a closer look at a product. There are a number of techniques for making printed matter visually appealing and turning it into an experience for all the senses. We are creating a blog series on this subject with design possibilities for the sense of vision.

Finishes, colors, fold types and more: The graphic arts industry knows many tricks to turn the raw material of paper into an eye-catcher. However, before we turn to the individual techniques, first a few basic considerations about optical perception.

We perceive the world through our five senses. The sense of vision provides us with around 80 percent of all information from our environment. This information is processed in the brain. We receive a large part of the information via various media: newspapers, books, brochures, posters, television, films, smartphones, websites. In an increasingly digitalized world, the question inevitably arises as to whether our brain is better at processing information from printed or electronic media.

Norwegian reading experiment

Well-known researchers and scientists have been working on this topic for many years. Reliable findings are particularly important in knowledge transfer because they influence learning behavior. A few years ago, a Norwegian high school conducted an experiment on 72 students

in which one group of tenth graders read two texts of 1,400 and 2,000 words in print and another group read them on a computer screen as a PDF. The results showed that the group that had read the texts in print understood them considerably better.

The result of this experiment hardly surprised anyone. Dr. Hans-Georg Häusel, the well-known psychologist and pioneer of neuromarketing, also knows why: “As soon as you see a smart-phone or an iPad your brain switches into reward mode. It gets restless. The big problem is that the brain seeks a quick reward and its attention flags. There are studies showing that people who use digital media highly intensively – of course, young people especially fall into that category – develop symptoms resembling those of attention deficit disorders. In other words, when using such devices, their level of attention drastically decreases because they are always craving the next reward. But you need to pay attention in order to learn because you have to concentrate. The second point is that print media are better for the eyes. You have a clearer overview than with, say, a smartphone. You can read better with print.

Print is more reader-friendly than digital

The most important finding is therefore that we perceive information in a more concentrated form on a printed medium than on a screen. It is therefore important to carefully weigh up which medium should be used for which communication measure. Electronic media also have their benefits and their justification. Think of 3D visualizations in architecture, for example. They can be displayed far better digitally than with print. On the other hand, the increasing digital information overload is wearing us down and increasing the importance of print products.

This may also be the reason why the Harvard Business School in its report entitled „Why the print catalog is back in style“ noted as early as in 2015 that retailers (including online retailers) are increasingly turning to hard-copy catalogs as a more effective tool. That is why most marketing and communications professionals now rely on a well thought-out combination of print and digital media.

The tried-and-tested print products are thus steadfastly defending their justification for good reasons. In addition, the printing market is also evolving, opening up an ever wider range of possibilities to please the eye with printed products. Because the raw material of paper can be spiced up in various ways to attract additional attention.

The following tips are designed to provide inspiration and suggestions for achieving amazing visual effects with your next print product.

Colors

In terms of color perception, print products have a clear advantage over electronic media. Because the printing process really brings out the colors.

- The CMYK color model enables the natural reproduction of colors.
- Special colors such as gold, silver or neon achieve maximum attention.
- Innovative techniques such as FM screening create excellent detail rendition and an extremely high level of detail.

Finishes

Print finishes ensure optical wow effects.

- Gloss or matt effects make a print product appear more interesting and of a higher quality.
- A coating protects printed copy from external influences.
- With special spot varnishes, great effects can be achieved in specific areas of the printing image.

- Film lamination enables high gloss values and, at the same time, the highest possible mechanical protection.
- Hot foil stamping creates a three-dimensional effect that is not only visible but that can also be sensed.
- Flocking or laser punching not only primarily improve the haptics but also add value for the eye.
- Punched corners, the use of rubber bands to hold pins in place or to keep the product closed, or the pressure on the cut edges at the head, front and foot are just some of the other finishing options.



Fold types

Various fold types are often an underestimated means of making printed products particularly exciting.

- The wrapping fold or window fold arouse curiosity and awaken the anticipation of being able to open the two wings.
- The wrapping fold enables a lot of information to be stored in a handy format.
- The leporello or zigzag fold is a playful way of folding in which the paper can be unfolded like a hand accordion.

Binding techniques

The binding serves the purpose of holding loose sheets together. But the type of binding can also be used to place great emphases.

- The tried-and-tested wire stitching is actually always suitable when several pages are to be combined into a brochure.
- Spiral binding gives brochures the character of a book, and the pages can be pleasantly turned over.
- Perfect binding, especially in combination with thread sewing, enables immediate high-quality print products even for thicker blocks.
- Special brochures such as Swiss brochure or Otabind are given an even more elegant appearance by the liner stripe on the spine.

As you can see, you can do a lot with paper. All it takes is a good idea and a printing and finishing partner with passion, commitment and the right machines.

Your

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