

# Stopping using print will mean losing revenue

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by Matt Whitby

## Summary

- Interview with Bernd Zipper, CEO of zipcon consulting
- Bernd talks about 'Beyond Print' and how printed advertising will play a reduced but still important role for retail marketing
- Retailers need to use a 'media canon' of several channels both online and offline to reach all shoppers



# What does Beyond Print mean?



Bernd Zipper is a consultant, speaker and founder and CEO of [zipcon consulting](#). He has more than 30 years of experience in the printing industry, focusing on web-to-print and other applications.

In this interview Bernd explains the concept of 'Beyond Print', the challenges facing retailers using printed media and how a "canon" of diverse media channels is the key to reaching more shoppers going forward.

## **Beyond Print**

One of the key concepts developed by Bernd is what he calls [Beyond Print](#). Here Bernd refers to the challenge digital transformation presents to printed media, the risks of overreliance on digital media, and whether there is a middle way.

"There's a lot of information in the world now. Digital channels have created many opportunities, but also created many unintended challenges. Disinformation, special interest bubbles and the way technology radically alters our attention. Media channels should be more responsible to provide people a better way to consume information."

Bernd says the divide between the interests of the print and digital communities need to be bridged to provide a canon of both media to create a better media environment.

**“As a retailer, if you need digital media, use it. If you require printed media, use it. If you require both, and you can connect**

**both together, use it. That is what we mean by beyond print. That there is more than print and more than digital.”**



### **The global paper crisis**

A global paper shortage is causing the price of paper to skyrocket. In 2021 prices of paper in Europe rose by up to **15%**. *Retailers printing leaflets are facing higher costs* at a time when marketing budgets are tight.

Bernd explains, in his more than 30 year career in the printing industry, he's never seen a paper shortage like this before.

“In late 2021 paper prices increased by nearly 50%. This means that printing has also become more expensive, so marketers are thinking twice about printing something. And this is a big thing.”

“I don't expect that the prices are going down in the next 18-24 months. I think in two or three years, maybe the prices will drop again.”

Bernd explains that due to the paper crisis and the latest digital technology, printers are turning to mass customization to offer retailers alternatives to reach shoppers.

**“The internet and mass customization have opened up new opportunities to target shoppers with very specific printed campaigns.”**

“With mass customization, retailers don't print 10,000 copies of their leaflet anymore. Using their CRM technology, retailers can print 1,000 individualized copies of their leaflet, direct them to the right customers at the perfect time, with the perfect pictures inside. This medium is a highly effective channel to make a sale,” says Bernd.

### **The role of the printed leaflet**

Bernd says supermarket retailers Aldi or Lidl still rely on the printed format to reach shoppers, who make the decision on where to do their weekly shopping based on offers in the printed leaflet.

“Retailers in highly competitive industries such as hardware and grocery need to produce a medium where shoppers can immediately compare offers. A difference of a couple of cents on the price of milk can determine where they shop.”

Bernd is skeptical about the calls made by some European retailers and interest groups to ban printed advertising, and points to the risks involved in moving too quickly to digital only channels.

“Of course, many shoppers just throw away the printed leaflets. So I can understand that some people say we don't need printed leaflets anymore. It's okay because these people don't use printed leaflets. But that doesn't mean 70% of shoppers aren't using printed leaflets.”

“Retailers need to understand that many shoppers are not digital natives. They are not using their mobile. They are not using the internet. Not only that, but they are using the cheap newspaper that comes in every week with all the leaflets.”



Bernd underlines that retailers using printed leaflets have a responsibility not to print rubbish.

**“I’m convinced that we have a holistic concept of using the internet, using digital leaflets and using social media, using print, and we bring that together. We can reduce all the print stuff we don’t need. We can reduce that and bring it to the right people. And that makes sense, but just stopping print means stopping making turnover and revenue.”**

### **Bridging the analog and digital divide**

Bernd explains that when helping retailers move to beyond print, there is no system which would work for every retailer.

“For me, it’s critical that everyone who’s doing advertisements with leaflets and so on needs to understand we need a media canon.”

Bernd describes how the German retailer Bauhaus (building market) could combine printed and digital channels to help reach both offline and online shoppers.

“What I would love is if I could use my mobile to scan a product or a QR code in a printed leaflet. Then I would be directed to the digital leaflet where I can click on a product for additional information, not just from any source, but from Bauhaus. I want the information from my trusted dealer.”

“If I was interested in the product, I could choose to go to the shop. Or order online, and it will be delivered tomorrow at four. The same promise that Amazon makes.”

“This would be a perfect example of a printed and digital shopping experience. The leaflet would be a gateway to the digital leaflet, to the website behind that and the shop behind that. That’s the media canon I’m talking about. The combination of all these media.”

**“Retailers need to cover a wide range of digital and analog channels to convince the shopper of the future. There is no digital way only.”**

A big thanks to Bernd for participating in this interview.

Stay tuned to <https://www.ipaper.io/insights> for more insights from retailers going forwards.