

Catalogs are Smarter and Better Looking Than Ever

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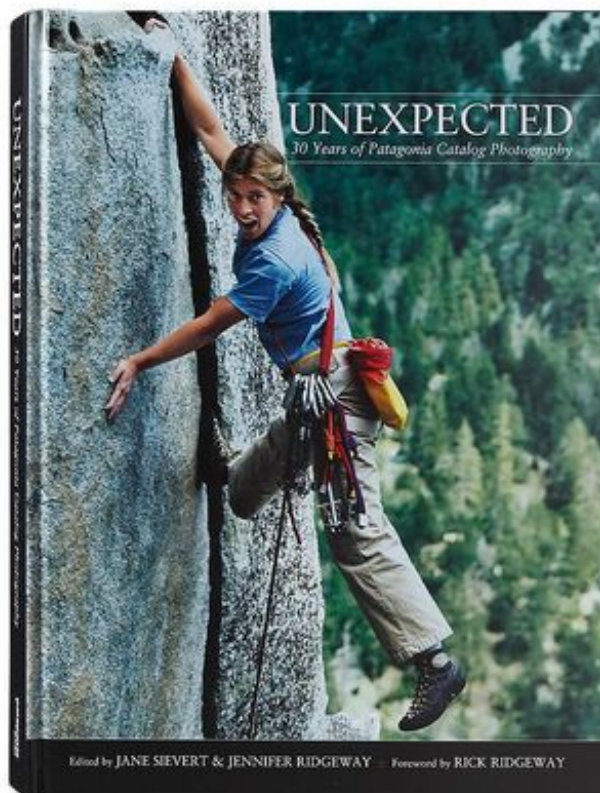
2/23/2017

Traditional direct mail catalogs have a bit of an image problem, according to the USPS.

“Traditional catalogs have a reputation for being time-consuming and costly to create. That’s why retailers and e-tailers are now turning to shorter, lifestyle catalogs,” notes [this article](#) from USPS’s direct mail division.

These new style catalogs are both smarter (driven by consumer data) and more economical (thanks to advances in printing and production capabilities). The result is a new iteration of the old direct mail standby that is innovative, less expensive and highly relevant to the recipient.

While some brands (like, oddly enough, [Victoria’s Secret](#)) have done away with their print titles, others realize that catalogs today are [much more than a sales tool](#). They are a brilliant way to help [share your brand story](#) and develop a strong following.



“Catalogs may seem old school, but their increased capabilities and the brand-building potential suggest they’ll remain a staple in retailers’ toolboxes – and consumers’ mailboxes,” notes Denise Lee Yohn of Harvard Business Review, quoted in the article.

We see it all the time. Well-known companies reinvesting in these [modern catalogs](#), for one simple reason: they work, both to [boost sales](#) and [extend brand reach](#).

So what makes a good catalog these days? Paul Bobnak of Who’s Mailing What has some ideas. Holding up the Patagonia catalog as an example, Bobnak explains that the brand has long matched stunning photography with the outdoor clothing appropriate to the images. It’s this idea of a [catalog as lifestyle publication](#) that is working for so many brands.

Print is the ideal medium for catalogs that [encourage lingering](#) rather than outright shopping, giving readers an actual reason to choose the printed catalog over an online search. It’s this kind of approach to cataloging that is fueling the change in this industry and once again making [catalogs a marketing must-have](#) in an [omnichannel retail strategy](#).