

The unexpected edge: Why asset managers need offline strategies in their marketing mix

March 21, 2024



*The stratospheric rise of social media and opportunities for email blasts and digital advertising has led many asset managers to believe traditional, offline marketing to LPs is all but extinct. Not so, says **Philippa Ushio**, managing director at financial comms and marketing firm **Prosek Partners**, who believes savvy GPs have spotted an opportunity for a return to offline in their marketing mix to boost their engagement with LPs.*

In the last five years, social media, digital advertising and AI have exploded, delivering increasingly tailored content to target audiences. However, a surprising micro trend, inspired by the consumer retail sector, is percolating in the niche world of asset management: a return to the surprise and delight of offline marketing.

Over the holidays Amazon delivered their physical catalogue to my house – it showcased in glorious imagery the immersive and magical world of kid’s toys. My 8-year-old was glued – he had never seen anything like it before. This got me thinking that while many of us are trying to limit our professional screen time and engage more in physical meetings or at events, there may be an opportunity for the marketing relics of the past.

I watched this play out in the past week when a client targeting UHNWI produced a glossy old-school brochure discussing their firm and showcasing key talent. Just a week later that brochure now sits in their entry way and has been nothing short of a huge success with clients, talent and prospects alike.

According to industry research firm Ibis World, the U.S. printing industry has reached \$85 billion, reflecting the industry’s significant footprint within the country and has sustained a consistent growth rate of 0.5% over the past year (2023), pointing to its adaptability and resilience.

So while digital marketing remains crucial, asset management businesses have an opportunity to be early ‘re-adopters’ of offline tactics once thought to have gone the way of the dinosaurs. Here’s why and how these “old-school” tactics are coming back into vogue, particularly for those marketers seeking hard to find audiences such as LPs, startup founders or investment talent.

Cutting Through the Digital Clutter

Investors, LPs and founders are all bombarded with online content. Emails pile up, social media feeds overflow, and digital newsletters blend into the background noise. Printed materials offer a break from digital overload, grabbing attention and leaving a lasting impression. Think about the power of high-touch physical experiences such as handwritten LP notes or beautifully illustrated annual reports (recyclable and sustainable sourced) distilled into a few short pages.

Building Trust and Credibility

Holding a well-designed corporate brochure or fact sheet in your hands creates a sense of legitimacy and builds trust in a way that a fleeting LinkedIn ad often can’t. Tangible materials convey a commitment to quality and attention to detail, fostering a more personal connection with the brand. Consider creating these physical materials before an AGM, LP meeting or a conference. Offline marketing also allows for targeted distribution, techniques like customized content for employees, prospects or portfolio companies to further enhance engagement.

Embrace the Power of Multi-Channel Marketing

An effective marketing campaign shouldn’t be “either/or”; it should be “and”. Integrating offline and online marketing strategies creates a unified brand experience that maximizes reach and engagement. A captivating, illustrated business case study can lead to a website visit, while a QR code can connect users to an in-depth content piece online. In short, the more touchpoints, the more chances to reach your target audience.

Given how much easier (versus the time and expense needed 10 years ago) it is to produce offline marketing materials today marketers at asset management firms have an interesting opportunity to cut through the digital noise, build trust, and connect with hard-to-reach audience in a meaningful way.