

# ‘Crackalogues’

– *why brands need them now more than ever*

What is it about catalogues? Retailers love them, so what can other sectors learn from their success with this marketing channel?  
 Australasian Catalogue Association CEO  
 Kellie Northwood explains...



When Todd Sampson labelled catalogues “crackalogues”, he was right. Retailers cannot live without them, and the ones that try regret it as it pinches the bottom line in ways no retailer online or storefront can afford to miss in today’s environment.

There are international examples published for marketers to theorise and critique – JC Penny and the like – who have spoken openly about the devastating effect on sales dropping catalogues has seen.

While Australian retailers won’t go public, some major brands who have experimented with removing the catalogue realised significant sales losses within weeks. Ouch.

So why are catalogues so powerful? Essentially because they have credentials no other channel can compete with – they go into the home and they are a disrupter without being a noticeable one.

While we complain about adverts on TV and banner ads on screen, once the catalogue is in, it’s read.

Stats are phenomenal – catalogues sit in the home on average for four weeks getting read and re-read. And not only are they read, but they create action, with 58 per cent of Australians making a purchase after reading a catalogue.

It’s a mass media with an unmatched audience reach (20.1 million Australians every week), that can be targeted – something the other mass media channels struggle with against digital algorithms.

So, how does this traditional media channel work so hard?

Customisation and versioning are gaining popularity as brands create targeted catalogues through pagination versions distributed by area, image personalisation by audience group and more.

This specified approach helps build brand awareness, as well as increasing sales and customer engagement.



Magalogues (catalogue-magazine hybrids) have also seen an increased investment, building content-rich dialogue in a useful way to engage the customer and build loyalty.

Supermarket magalogues realise 11.1 million readers every week who, from reading, spend between 6 to 8 per cent more each week over non-readers.

These are big numbers, and with advertising funding the production, how marketers can build this into their mix needs consideration.

We are also seeing a rise in content quality. Sussan's latest catalogue included commentary from renowned fashion blogger Tash Sefton, who discussed what the clothes 'felt' like.

Building the conversation within the catalogue as an opportunity to bring credibility and quality from a brand ambassador has been a key success point for MYER and David Jones, and to see Sussan step into this space is clever retailing.

Retailers are implementing strategies within catalogue marketing to increase sales, engagement and loyalty.

With a circulation figure of 7.4 billion, catalogues demonstrate their relevance as they integrate with other channels – 576,000 Aussies go online from reading a catalogue every week, and TVCs push 'catalogue out now'.

Retailers know the strength of the channel, but how are different sectors using this media channel differently?



## Department stores: it's a chain reaction

Department stores have strong catalogue readership. With around three million readers, David Jones, MYER, Harris Scarfe, Target, Big W and others know the importance of distinguishing themselves.

MYER developed a campaign to spread Christmas cheer and customise catalogues for their MYER One members. It personalised the Myer Giftorium Christmas catalogue with the names of their MYER One members throughout the magazine.

This connection with customers saw a 3.4 per cent growth in sales for MYER, crediting the individualised experience via catalogues.

MYER is positioning itself firmly as an approachable friend. Customers can flick through the pages with confidence, as the retailer has all their shopping problems solved.

David Jones is challenging the traditional catalogue format and introducing a seasonal publication with a lux look and feel.

Its brand books provide consumers with new accessible high-street fashion and accessories, reinstating David Jones as a luxury brand through their artistic photography and minimalistic layout.

The reinforcement of the David Jones brand saturates every page, leaving the customer drunk on the retailers' quality and exclusivity positioning. It's bold and strong.



## Liquor: catalogues are quenching their thirst

The competitive liquor sector uses catalogue marketing to increase sales and market share. Brand is relevant, but is a secondary message to the value and range.

Dan Murphy's was the first brand to use versioned covers and built three editions of its *Buyer's Guide*, with each cover featuring a different kind of beverage based on customer preference.

On average, 5.3 million people read a liquor catalogue every month, and the *Buyer's Guide* wanted to tap into that readership with personalisation.

Vintage Cellars provided liquor lovers with an informative catalogue sharing the best picks among Aussie men, while detailing stories behind different beverages. Best of 2017 was highly successful for Vintage Cellars, with the company experiencing growth in overall liquor sales and a 15 per cent rise in loyalty members.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Catalogues have an audience reach of: 20.1 million
- 58% of Aussies make a purchase from reading a catalogue
- Catalogues have a circulation of 7.4 billion
- 576,000 Aussies searched for a website from reading a catalogue in the last seven days

## Supermarkets: recipe for success

Supermarkets are creating magalogues to inform and educate customers, and it's working.

Woolworths' *Fresh* provides customers a best value journey with ways to use its products, spicing up everyday tasks like cooking.

With a circulation of 1.5 million per month, this strategy is proving more than effective for Woolies – it's almost record-breaking, as 91 per cent of readers make a purchase after reading the magalogue.

Coles provides an informative approach to showcase its hero products through its detailed magalogue. Readers of *Coles* currently spend on average 8 per cent more each week than people who don't read the title.

Due to popular demand, the publication has increased distribution to 1.6 million, becoming the highest circulated publication within its sector. Impressive.

So, "crackalogues" they are, with strong sales and brand equity uplift. Retailers may well be owning the strongest marketing channel in the country – why aren't the rest of us tapping in?

With the flexibility to adapt and evolve – from customisation to versioning, content to format – retail brands are leveraging from the strengths of the catalogue channel with success.

Those marketers and advertising minds who can take the learnings and apply this channel's strengths will be the ones to watch out for, as this channel ain't going anywhere.