



## Why print beats digital when it comes to staff training

As we're tired of hearing, some keep proclaiming the death of print while hailing the rise of the Digital Age. But take a look around and you'll see that print is still everywhere — and for good reason. Sure, digital technology has its place. However, many people appreciate engaging with printed materials they can hold and flip through, more so if it's something important they might want to study, mark up or scribble notes on. In our changing work environment, where more employees are remote, there's still an opportunity to connect with them through print.

Beyond mere preference, print has a clear advantage over digital. It's easier for people to understand information when they read it in

print rather than through a digital format, according to a report from the American Educational Research Association. Print is alive and well, especially when it comes to staff training.

For any nationwide brand, training is vital to success and to delivering a consistent customer experience. Everyone will need to go through training in one form or another throughout their employment. And while offering relevant training materials in a digital format might seem like the more efficient, cost-conscious approach, it's not necessarily the case. In fact, such efforts could be counterproductive.

### Understanding when print outperforms digital

In 2017, the American Educational Research Association published research on the impact that reading content in print has on retention versus reading through a digital format (Singer, Lauren and Patricia Alexander. July 21, 2017 “Reading on Paper and Digitally: What the Past Decades of Empirical Research Reveal.”). What they found is fascinating: Once a piece of text exceeds a single page in length, people’s comprehension goes way down if they’re reading it digitally. The reason, researchers conclude, is due to scrolling. While a seemingly simple task, the act of scrolling your way to the next bit of text is not only disruptive, but also adds to the cognitive demands being put on the reader. That, in turn, means at least some of the brain’s attention is being diverted away from comprehension. The study indicates digital reading comprehension drops at around the first time you have to scroll, but it does not drop to the same degree with the first page turn.

Therefore, if you want someone to truly understand a piece of text, whether it’s a new policy or your business’s employee handbook, it’s usually best to put it in print.

Many organizations still rely on print for their training materials because they understand the benefits of easily flipping through a manual. They know if their employees have had the chance to highlight it, write notes in the margin or dog-ear important pages, they will have personalized the material in a way that makes them much more likely to refer back to it. Most importantly, they will have also better understood what they read.

### Helping you keep the training wheels on

Having a well-trained workforce is not only critical to delivering better customer experiences, but also to saving time and money. Any delay can have a negative impact, such as uninformed employees who stumble in their interactions with customers. New employees will say they “get it,” but once they’re in front of the customer, there’s no going back.

Whether it’s details about your mission and values, a guide to using your two-way radios or details on working from home, when you deliver these materials, you’re trusting that the employees will absorb the information. Give them the best chance at success with high-quality printed materials.



At FedEx Office, we have closed-door production facilities across the country ready to produce and deliver training materials, instructional signage and printed materials to keep your business running. We effectively manage every step — consultation, file upload, color matching, proofs, printing, quality control, binding, shipping and delivery.

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