

■ Paper as a Permanent Record for Milestones in Life

Paper plays a vital role in documenting our lives, both on an official level and a personal one. Most official documents are paper-based and serve as proof of who we are, what we have achieved and what we own. Examples include birth certificates, identification cards, social security cards, high school and college diplomas, transcripts of courses we have taken, professional licenses, the deeds to our homes, and the titles to our cars. On a personal level, paper captures, documents and preserves the milestones we achieve and the memories that matter to us: a child's baby book; report cards from school; our children's artwork proudly displayed on the fridge; a personal diary; handwritten letters and cards we have received; an album full of photographs of families, friends, holidays and celebrations. With such intimate ties to the things that matter so much in our lives, it's no wonder that we have a strong emotional attachment to paper.

- Traditional certificates are designed to establish and document characteristics belonging to a specific individual, be it an identification number (i.e., social security number, driver's license number), a level of achievement (i.e., college degree, license to practice a profession), or membership status (i.e., company ID, trade union card).
- Official documents, issued by federal, state and local governments are almost entirely in paper. That is because paper is considered to be secure, particularly if it contains watermarks, official seals, or other marks that verify they have not been altered or faked.
- The same is the case with those documents provided by schools and colleges, such as official transcripts.
- In 600 online interviews with US Millennials (aged 16-26) conducted by TRU research, 82.7% of interviewees believe that digital is easier to modify than print and therefore they consider paper more official and more trusted. (TRU, 2011)
 - In 600 online interviews with US Millennials (aged 16-26) conducted by TRU research, data revealed that paper is the preferred format for official documents by a majority of respondents: 83% preferred paper for diplomas; 75% for business cards; 75% for contracts or documents requiring a signature; 71% for confidential documents (TRU, 2011).
 - In a survey of 4,500 European consumers conducted by IPSOS, 63% of 18-24 year olds prefer paper for official documents (RIT, 11/2011)

***Millennials prefer paper over digital for official documents.
Paper is used for official documents.***

Many of life's meaningful personal moments are recorded on paper.

- People tend to save the papers that serve as mementos of their lives.
 - Photographs are particularly tied to personal moments, memories, and emotional connections.
 - Personal communications, such as handwritten letters, postcards, and greeting cards let us know how someone is doing and that they are thinking of us.
 - In a survey conducted for the Greeting Card Association, nearly a third of respondents reported that they keep special cards they receive forever. (PAPERbecause)

- A survey on US consumer attitudes towards envelopes found:
 - Americans believe envelopes are “engines of emotion” that touch us, connect us and move us.
 - 84% believe the “envelope is a trusted way to leave a memorable impression”;
 - 83% believe they “keep friends and family connected wherever they may be”;
 - 82% believe “envelopes touch our lives every day, everywhere”.
 - 62% percent who prefer to send greeting cards in an envelope say the top reason is because they’re “more personal” than electronic and “It’s an expression of how much I care” as the next reason. (EMA, 2006)

People associate paper with achievement.

- In a reader response to an article appearing in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (“For many students, print is still king”), online respondent Professor Keith Williams points out that accumulating a personal library represents intellectual accomplishment for students and professors: “...The truly valuable books are traditionally treasured and displayed on a shelf, where they represent real accomplishment to anyone who sees them in [a] collection. We dust them off every now and then...and we share them many years after they are out of print. At some point in our studies, it starts to make sense to accumulate the really important books and build a library. I like to have an office full of books.” (*online response to Howard, 2013*)
- Our achievements are documented on paper and are such important symbols that we hold on to them for a long time, including report cards, diplomas, certificates of achievement, and letters of commendation.

People have a strong emotional attachment to paper.

- In online interviews with 600 Millennials, interviewees expressed a strong emotional attachment to paper.
 - 92% feel paper is more sentimental than electronic
 - If forced to choose a print versus an electronic version, they prefer print:
 - 55% prefer a handwritten letter over an email;
 - 57% prefer a mailed invitation over an evite;
 - 78% prefer a handwritten love note over a text message;
 - 87% prefer a birthday card received through the mail over an email. (TRU, 2011)
- In a study of college students at Oxford, a great love of books on paper was reported by respondents. “Childhood memories and family traditions led to a *desire to read and own printed books and build collections*. Bookshelves were an important part of people’s lives, to the point of becoming part of their identity.” (Keller, 2012, p. 9)

- In a survey of 4,500 European consumers conducted by IPSOS,
 - 80% of respondents find “reading from paper is nicer than reading off a screen.” Among 18-24 year olds, the rate rises to 83%.
- 74% find paper is more pleasant to handle and touch than other media (78% of 18-24 year olds). (RIT, 11/2011)
- Research shows our mood can increase by up to 29% when touching something tactilely pleasant like paper, and by up to 46% when viewing something visually pleasing, such as a photograph. (Mail Media Center, 2008)
- Julie K. Bartley, chair of the geology department at Gustavus Adolphus College, notes: "Our students don't really want to have e-books. What I hear from them a lot of times is that they feel some sort of comfort in being able to hold the thing in their hands." (Howard, 2013).

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