

Why you need both print and electronic tax guides

Like other tax advisors, you may be wondering whether to get a print tax planning guide, an electronic one, or both to use as a marketing and client communication tool. In making your decision, be sure to consider the pros and cons of electronic and print formats — and know what you'll lose if you don't use both.

Advantages of print

- **Greater impact.** The three-dimensionality and tangibility of a printed piece make a stronger, more lasting impression on the recipient. Also, sending or handing out a quality, well-designed printed guide tells recipients that you value them and your relationship — they're worth the cost of the piece.
- **Longer shelf life.** If recipients don't have time to look at the guide when they receive it, they can put it aside or in their briefcases to read later. Once they look it over, many save it as a handy reference, so they'll see your logo and contact information again and again.
- **Greater portability.** You can easily take printed guides to hand out at meetings, conferences and other events, and recipients can carry them with to read whenever and wherever convenient. Also, you can display the guides in your office and include them in proposals and sales packets.
- **Superior readability.** The spread format and design flexibility of print allows the use of sidebars, charts and narrow-width columns that facilitate scanning, finding and reading information. Also, a well-designed print guide can be visually engaging and enhance your brand image.

Disadvantages of print

- **Higher production and distribution costs.** A print tax guide costs more to produce and distribute than an online or email version.
- **Difficult and costly to update.** The only way to update a print guide when tax laws change is to reprint it or to send out a supplement with updated information.

Advantages of electronic guides

- **Greater reach.** Posting an online (*WebTaxGuide*) version of the tax guide on your Web site enables you to reach people not on your mailing list. It can be viewed on an iPhone, iPad or other mobile device, and pushed out via our *Flex-E-TaxGuide* email program. Also, it provides technical content that positions you as a thought leader, draws visitors, and serves as a reference for clients and contacts.
- **Less cost.** You'll save on print production costs with an online or email guide, and electronic guides cost little to post or distribute. Our online *WebTaxGuide* is a great value, and our electronic *Flex-E-TaxGuide* includes an email distribution system that enables you to economically send out the guide.
- **Tracking capability.** Our email *Flex-E-TaxGuide* features sophisticated tracking technology that enables you to see which emails were opened and who clicked on what, so you can gauge reader interests. Also, by using programs like Google Analytics, you can see who clicked on your online guide, how they came to your site and what they looked at.
- **Continually updated.** An online guide is easy and inexpensive to change. In fact, we automatically update our *WebTaxGuide* when tax law changes affect it. So recipients of our email *Flex-E-TaxGuide* or visitors to your Web site who click on the *WebTaxGuide* link will always see the latest tax information.

Disadvantages of electronic guides

- **Low email open rate.** Research shows that you probably won't achieve a very high open rate on the emails you send out — perhaps not even for those sent to clients. You therefore could fail to reach a large number of your intended readers and miss out on potential tax business.
- **Email lists are difficult to build and maintain.** Email addresses change more frequently than postal addresses, and emailing to prospects without permission violates the CAN-SPAM Act.
- **Less readability.** It's difficult to read a large amount of text online. So an electronic guide may not be as good as a print one for educating readers about complex tax and financial planning subjects.
- **Easier to ignore.** If people don't go to your website and click to open your online guide, they will never see it. This can make an e-guide less effective than print for prospecting and showing tax expertise.

For more on the pros and cons of print and electronic media, see our white paper, "[Integrating print and electronic marketing communications](#)."