

# Creating a lasting legacy

Multimedia may be a fact of life - but the book has a better chance of telling your story long after you're gone

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The printed word still carries considerable cachet in an increasingly digital world as individuals, families and companies seek to immortalize personal and corporate milestones.

Vancouver's **Echo Memoirs Ltd.** produces hardcover coffee-table books for corporate and personal clients, and business has been brisk, said company president **Samantha Reynolds.**

"There is something much more aligned with leaving a legacy in a format that feels permanent and is beautiful and elegant."

Sales have at least doubled annually over the past four years, she said. Since the company was founded in 2001, it has grown to 12 employees.

About 75% of her clients are corporate. Families and individuals make up the rest.

The reasons for choosing to do a hardcover book chronicling a life lived or a company's achievements - as opposed to creating a website or a digital presentation on a CD/DVD - vary



"There is something about a book where you sit down, go away from your computer and enjoy it"  
- Echo Memoirs Ltd. president Samantha Reynolds

from client to client, but tend to centre on creating something significant and tactile.

For companies where employees are not regularly accessing computers, it makes more sense from a corporate culture standpoint to give out books, said Reynolds. Books feel more significant and permanent.

"It is undoubtedly more romantic to see your company's story in print and more of an honour to be celebrated in a hardcover book than on a website."

According to Reynolds, books can generate a real return on investment in the form of improved employee retention and recruitment, client loyalty and closer relations with suppliers and partners.

Personal clients tend to be more sentimental, gathering life stories and historical photos illustrating wisdom gathered over a lifetime, and gifting that history to future generations.

Fundamentally, humans are sensuous beings who like to touch and hold objects and feel connected, according to **Ralph Stanton**, head of rare books and special collections at the **University of British Columbia** library.

"The book has powerful attachments that are deeply embedded in our culture and arise from religion, scholarship, the law and

broader intellectual and leisure activities," he said.

Commemoration by definition includes aspects of permanence.

"The digital world is ephemeral and subject to endless change. Books' permanence can be understood best in terms of paper chemistry. A book printed with good ink on good paper could last for 1,000, or even 2,000, years," said Stanton.

"If you want quick communication, your computer is a great tool. If you want permanence, the book is a good way to get it."

Despite its dedication to the printed word, Echo Memoirs also produces digital projects for clients, including websites and video, that extract elements from the book, which remains the core project, according to Reynolds.

It is an approach that ensures accessibility for future generations.

"Books are the gold standard of memory devices," said Stanton.

"We have a lot of these devices now but most of them require electric power use and the various media including DVD's, video, photography and digital forms will be unusable with the passage of time. The book has a good chance of telling your story long after you are gone." ■

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