

# Executive summary

## CHAPTER 1

### Consumer's use of magazines in print

Printed magazines call for the reader's active participation, with the reader fully in control of decision-making about what and how to read, and for how long. Readers find titles which connect with the personal self.

Different categories of magazine, and within category different individual publications, serve different profiles of reader needs and motivations – some titles primarily giving practical advice, some focusing on emotional support or escapism, and so on. Whatever kind of person a consumer is, and whatever interests he or she has, there is a magazine which fits that combination of interests and motivations. This naturally leads towards a reader having an emotional attachment to those magazines which match his or her own personality and situation.

When a magazine closely chimes in with a reader's self-image there is a high level of

identification with the publication. There is a feeling of ownership, that this is 'my magazine', an informed friend, and that 'My magazine helps me to become the type of person I want to be'. Readers therefore have a powerful trusting relationship with their chosen magazines.

This is a universal truth about printed magazines, and it remains true after the arrival of the internet and other new digital platforms.

A range of emotional and behavioural consequences flow outwards from the central fact of this personal relationship which readers develop with their favourite magazines. Readers savour 'the magazine moment' – 'me time', a treasured, absorbing and usually relaxed experience. There is focused attention, issues are read thoroughly, considerable time is devoted to them, issues are typically picked up more than once, and many pages are re-visited. Since the reader is in physical control, everything that strikes a chord can be dwelt on for as long as desired.

Not everyone who reads a particular issue of a magazine reads it on the day it is published. Some readers see it on publication day, some first see it in the next few days, others in the following week, and for yet others it will be one or more weeks later when they first see it. Thus the full complement of readers of a printed magazine issue accumulates over a period of time, instead of occurring immediately and all at once. The rate at which new readers of an issue accumulate is similar from one country to another.

It is vital to take account of the rate of accumulation when planning the allocation of advertisements across a campaign, in order to control the week by week delivery of ad exposures. It is also essential to incorporate readership accumulation when modelling the post-campaign effectiveness of magazine advertising, otherwise the contribution of magazine media will be significantly under-valued.

## CHAPTER 2

### Impact of advertisements in print

Magazines are unique in the extent to which the advertisements are welcomed by the audience. It's a virtuous circle. Readers choose magazines which match their own interests and outlook. Only those advertisers whose products fit in with a magazine's editorial content and audience choose to advertise there. Therefore the carefully selected ads are likely to be of interest to the readers. It's a perfect dating arrangement.

Put another way, relevance for readers means targeting for advertisers. Readers' process of selecting their magazines ensures the *relevance* of the magazine's contents to each reader, and from an advertiser's point of view, relevance of content means a *targeted* audience, with little 'wastage'. The targeting goes far beyond standard demographics, and can be defined in many other ways, including attitudes. Magazines segment consumers into like-minded groups, simply through the process of self-selection of one's own magazine.

Moreover in many markets magazines tend to target the most valuable customers – those who spend most, the enthusiasts.

Magazine advertising is perceived by readers to be relevant, appealing, inspirational, and useful in deciding what to do and buy. Consequently magazines are the one medium for which ad avoidance is not a problem. Nor are ad clutter or a high ad ratio a problem, uniquely among major media.

An advertisement will have the most impact

when the magazine, the advertisement and the reader are attuned to one another. Thus 'engaged' readers, who have strong ties to their magazines, are particularly receptive to advertisements.

For the average ad, 90% or more of readers are exposed to it, in the sense of eyes open in front of the page.

Advertisement noting is one of the most common measures of the impact of a magazine ad. It does not simply measure exposure to the ad (it under-estimates that); it measures not only exposure but also a degree of communication. Typically, around 50%-60% of an issue's readers 'note' (recall seeing) the average full page ad. Noting scores can show how this tends to vary according to size and position of the ad, by product category, and other factors. The greater a reader's interest in the product category, the greater the likelihood of recalling and receiving a communication from the ad.

Among those noting an ad, many are stimulated to take some kind of further action, such as discussing the product with someone, cutting out the ad, going online to look for more information, looking out for the product when visiting a shop, recommending the product to someone, thinking about purchase, buying it, simply feeling warmer towards the product, and so on.

Thus magazines have a major contribution to make in nudging consumers along their journey towards purchase – whether it is a magazines-only campaign or magazine media are used as part of a multi-media campaign.

## CHAPTER 3

### Creative formats for print advertising

Creative and unusual formats and devices within magazines heighten impact, invite interaction, and increase involvement.

For example, double page spreads are more than just bigger spaces. They present a chance to talk to readers on their own without distraction, and to create a world of their own. The wide rectangular space is excellent for telling a story, including ads with a strong fantasy or aspirational element. The communication value of the larger space goes beyond the higher ad noting scores that they achieve. Gatefolds take this a stage further.

Unexpected use of special papers, unusual textures or materials, embossing, or other 'paper engineering' devices demand reader attention and invite a response. They present something tactile that readers feel they just have to touch and explore.

Samples, vouchers and gifts draw the reader closer to the advertiser. Gifts are warmly received and enhance the reader's perception of both the advertiser and the magazine. However they must be appropriate. Samples have the advantage over vouchers that the gratification is immediate. Samples are considered a natural thing for magazines to carry, they create goodwill, and they are part of the fun of a magazine.

Advertorials – sometimes known as advertisement features or branded content – enable the advertiser to don the mantle and sport

the values of the magazine itself. This intimacy brings added credibility to the brand, while readers appreciate the added value of having something extra for them to read. Advertorials encourage readers to take a closer look at the product, in a receptive and favourable frame of mind. Readers feel that the editor is there to represent their interests and ensure fair play; most think the editor has written or part-written the advertorials. Readers feel that the magazine has to some degree endorsed the products.

Fragrance strips heighten the impact of an ad, and increase reader's involvement and interactivity.

Technology is driving innovation in printed magazines at an unprecedented rate, with barcodes, augmented reality, watermarks and other emerging methods enabling publishers to make their printed pages more interactive, and to lead readers to new experiences on mobile devices. It is now possible for readers to watch a video, listen to an interview or song, or link to an e-commerce store, straight off the printed page, via a camera-equipped smartphone or tablet and an action symbol such as a QR code. Reader interaction can reach new heights.

### CHAPTER 4

#### Consumers' use of magazines' digital platforms

**Websites** and print are complementary. Readers find it natural to use both platforms of

a magazine brand, looking for different kinds of information on each. Often the distinction lies in printed magazines being used for pleasurable relaxation and inspiration, and websites being used for targeted information-seeking and up to date news – though that is too simplified to be a complete description, and the situation is affected by the kind of magazine brand and its function as a printed title (for instance, practical versus entertainment).

If forced to choose just one format, most users of both prefer print to websites.

Readers of **digital editions** on mobile devices or PCs are a very desirable target audience for many advertisers: above-average incomes, well educated, and skewed towards the younger age groups.

A considerable time is spent reading digital magazines, and the issues are read thoroughly. Many consumers read them in a parallel way to their reading of printed magazines, in linear mode from front to back – contrasting with the quicker, more fragmented style of reading associated with websites.

Nevertheless tablets are beginning to change consumers' expectations of magazine content, and consumers are ready to explore more and have fun on the way. Publishers should provide content to surprise and delight.

Tablets are fun, and when a user has grown accustomed to a tablet the device becomes indispensable. Tablets also increase the total amount of magazine content that is consumed across all platforms.

The interactivity that digital editions can offer enhances readers' involvement, and enriches their reading experience. The more creatively interactive the content, the greater the engagement and satisfaction.

This does not mean that printed magazines will lose their appeal. Print will co-exist with digital formats. Among the reasons are the permanence of paper and all that flows from it; the sheer appeal of reading on paper; and its shareability.

The combination of websites, digital editions on various devices, and traditional print means that consumers have a very involving and entertaining range of magazine brand experiences available. It is the beginning of a golden age for readers – and for those publishers who learn to harness the new opportunities.

### CHAPTER 5

#### Impact of ads in digital formats

On **websites**, as in printed magazines, trust is a key element. Original content websites (including magazine media websites) are more trusted than portals and social media websites, and they perform better in terms of affecting consumer attitudes and actions.

Trust in a print magazine brand rubs off onto the magazine's website, and this trust is a valid metric when measuring a campaign's success.

Not all display ads on websites are actually seen by consumers visiting the web page: 31% are not 'in view' at all.

**Digital editions**, whether apps or replicas of printed editions, attract very desirable target audiences for many advertisers: affluent, well educated, and skewed towards the young. They are also willing to pay significant sums to subscribe.

In digital editions consumers are receptive to advertising which is relevant to them. Many users agree that the ads typically provide more information than those in print, and users can focus their attention on the elements of most relevance, thus in effect customising the ad's content to their personal needs. Many feel that the digital ads are fun to engage and interact with. Consequently the ads are an important part of a digital edition's content.

Advertisements in digital replicas produce responses which are broadly similar to responses to ads in printed format. The in-app ads however provoke even more noting and action, largely because they tend to be more interactive, with an ability to provide greater additional information and entertainment. The more seamlessly the advertising is aligned with the editorial content the greater the chance of it grabbing attention and interest.

Consumers are intrigued and excited by ads which take advantage of capabilities and features unique to tablets - watching a video, entering a sweepstake, looking at pop-up recipes, games, animations, and so on. They look for advertising to invite them in, be relevant, immersive, interactive, and browsing-oriented. They are very open to brands communicating with them on

these devices within their trusted brands.

However the majority of tablet ads are still replicas of print ads, and do not take full advantage of the new possibilities offered by tablets' interactive facilities.

Early indications are that ads on tablets perform better than ads on the smaller screens of smartphones.

Magazine publishers are in a strong position to have an effective presence on social media, taking advantage of the strong personal relationships and trust which magazine brands create with their customers.

## CHAPTER 6

### Comparing mags and other media

All media have their strengths, and consequently it is a mix of several media which produces the most complete communication.

Some of magazines' strengths - compared with TV, internet, radio and newspapers - are to do with engagement and inspiration: factors such as involvement, self-recognition, stimulation, keeping readers informed of trends, enthusiasm, indulgence and enjoyment. Another kind of strength is practical use: new credible information, tips, and motivation to do something. The combination of inspiration together with practical assistance to put the inspiration into effect is a very positive one for advertisers.

All media are subject to multi-tasking to some extent: using other media, or doing

something else, at the same time. Magazines are least troubled by this and the distraction it implies. Moreover when magazines are used simultaneously with another medium, it is magazines which generally receive the prime focus of attention. The reason is understandable: it's in the nature of reading print that one has to focus on the words and images and apply at least a degree of attention. Reading is an active process that has to engage the brain. As the pages are turned they must be mentally scanned and a selection made of where attention will alight, and then the reading of articles or advertisements in depth requires similar focus.

Magazine readers have a much more positive attitude towards advertisements than users of other media. The intrusiveness of television and radio is a benefit to advertisers in many ways, but it frequently creates irritation among viewers. Moreover the commercials cannot be turned off in order to continue with the programmes; instead, in these linear media the audience must wait until the ads run their course before the programmes get under way again. It is the broadcasters who are in control, not the viewers or listeners.

With print media it is the readers who are in control. If they scan an advertisement and in a flash decide they don't wish to pay further attention to it, they can focus on something else on the page or turn to the next page. Instead of being a linear medium, print is an easy-access medium in which one can move forwards or backwards, repeatedly if desired, mentally



screening things in and screening things out. Thus the ads tend not to create irritation.

Moreover the targeted nature of the advertising carried by magazines means that most of the ads are of some interest and relevance to most readers, and far from being annoying many ads are positively welcomed by readers, and acted upon. Magazines are unique in that the advertising they carry is an acceptable and often welcomed part of the package - ideal conditions for building and retaining trust in the ads, and making readers receptive to the advertising.

In comparison with other media, magazines are effective in driving the audience to take action after seeing ads, including in persuading consumers to go online for further information, and generating recommendations and word of mouth communication.

At the centre of magazines' unique ability to communicate with, influence and motivate their readers lies the closeness of readers to their chosen magazine brands, and the position of magazines as centres of communities of like-minded individuals. The strengths that flow from this mean that there is a distinctive and valuable role for magazine media as part of a multi-media advertising campaign.

### CHAPTER 7

#### Campaign effectiveness: magazine media on their own

There are many many case studies of successful advertising campaigns which have used magazines

on their own and proved that they have generated significant additional sales, and repaid the advertising investment several times over.

Multi-brand studies have shown magazine-only campaigns creating average sales uplifts of 10%-12%. Some of the brands have increased sales primarily through increasing the weight of purchase by existing customers, while for other brands the sales uplifts have mainly been through bringing new customers to the brand. The sales uplifts were also associated with increases market shares.

The average return on investment (ROI) was high, meaning that handsome profits were made.

### CHAPTER 8

#### Campaign effectiveness: magazines in multi-media campaigns

One of the reasons why television, internet and magazines work well together is the synergy that occurs between these different forms of media. They work in different but complementary ways; each one not only delivers unique contributions but also enhances the performance of the other media. For example, magazine advertising helps consumers to take out more from the television advertising.

Within a multi-media campaign, magazines are effective in nudging consumers along their journey towards purchase, and this applies to all stages of the journey, from creating awareness to bonding emotionally with the product or service,

and making a purchase.

Statistical evidence is presented which demonstrates the powerful incremental effect of adding magazines to TV and online advertising. It shows magazines creating substantial incremental uplifts in:

- » brand awareness/familiarity
- » advertising awareness
- » message association
- » favourable attitudes to the brand
- » purchase intent

Generally speaking, the benefit of magazines was particularly strong as the measures came closer to the point of purchase.

Analyses have shown that, in campaigns where TV advertising is the main medium, magazine advertising adds substantial value:

- » among all major target audiences
- » in all product categories
- » for launches and small brands
- » for large brands

For launches and small brands, magazines were particularly valuable for increasing the visibility and awareness of the brand. For large brands where awareness is already very high, magazines were especially helpful in improving the richness and quality of the communication delivered by the campaign.

Moving from the stages leading to sales to sales themselves, TV combined with magazines

outperforms TV used on its own. Adding magazines to TV, or TV and online, for the same budget, lifts sales.

There is much evidence that advertisers frequently over-invest in television advertising, and that re-allocating a portion of the TV spend into magazines, or more magazines, would pay dividends by increasing sales. Diminishing returns applies to media as well as to many other fields. It means that when campaigns spend nearly all the budget in TV, the last tranche of the TV money is likely to be yielding much lower returns than if that money was spent in magazines.

## CHAPTER 9

### Using econometric models to assess campaign effectiveness

Increasingly, advertisers' strategic media decisions are being guided by econometric modelling of a brand's historic performance data, to judge the effectiveness of each medium that was used.

Econometric modelling can be a great friend to magazine media. It can identify in a quantified form the best ways of using magazines for each specific advertiser. From this emerges statistical proof of the strengths and effectiveness of magazines. The results of modelling can help change attitudes towards magazine media, in a positive direction, showing in fresh ways the medium's power.

But to achieve this it is imperative that appropriate data on magazines is fed into the models. Unfortunately magazines are sometimes treated in a manner which puts the medium at an unwarranted disadvantage. Among several reasons, the biggest obstacle, unique to magazines, is that magazine exposures may be misallocated by the modeller. Magazines accumulate their readership over time, and different publications accumulate over different periods of time.

Though we know this, all too often it is easy for the modeller to overlook and assume for the

purposes for modelling that all readership or GRPs are attributed in the week in which the title is published (since at an aggregate level the GRPs are correct).

The result is that the week by week pattern of magazine exposures, as modelled, do not match the weekly pattern of sales or other KPIs – and thus the reported connection between sales and magazine advertising is much weaker than is the real case. It is estimated that this causes magazine ROI (return on investment) to be under-estimated by about a fifth on average.

It should be a priority for publishers to ensure media agencies and modellers are aware of the existence and importance of readership accumulation data, and make it simple (through software) to provide them with the relevant data.

Then the modellers will be much more likely to discover for themselves that magazine media have a powerful role to play in multi-media campaigns, and can yield impressively high returns on investment. ●

### POSTSCRIPT "IT DOESN'T APPLY HERE." REALLY?

The argument that "It doesn't apply here, my country is different" is shown to be false. In a wide range of countries, covering many different situations in the media market and varied social scenes, the same conclusions emerge about magazines – about the way they are read, the targeting they achieve, and the influence they generate on the consumer's purchase journey. The characteristics and power of magazines are global. This means that in the absence of local information it would be reasonable to quote research from other countries when putting forward the case for magazine media.

