

The Power of Print

Pundits maintain that when a new media medium emerges, old media mediums become extinct to make room for the new ones. The Internet is the newest medium to swoop in and change the way that we consume, assimilate, and collect information. Newspaper sales declined as have the comfy, social coffee houses where people gathered to peruse newspapers and discuss local, social, political, and economic issues. But what is the future of the magazine? We've all heard the rumor that Internet eReaders, such as amazon.com's Kindle, Barnes and Nobles' Nook, and especially Apple's iPad are the catapult for the demise of the print magazine. Accessibility, portability, price, and ease of dispose are some of the reasons that these emerging online sources are set to devour print magazines; however, there are five major magazine publishers that disagree. International magazine publishers Condé Nast, Hearst Magazines, Meredith Corporation, Time Inc., and Wenner Media formed an alliance targeted at dispelling rumors of magazine's demise and providing facts about the magazine and publishing industry. The ad is successful in accomplishing its goal to "dispel many commonly held myths about the state of our industry, and to share the exciting story of magazine advertising's outstanding value, unmatched recall and vast cultural impact" (<http://powerofmagazines.com>).

Condé Nast publishes such magazines as *Architectural Digest*, *Glamour*, *GQ*, and *Vogue*. Hearst Magazine's publications include *Esquire*, *Good Housekeeping*, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, and *Redbook*. Meredith Corporation publishes *Better Home & Gardens*, *Fitness*, *Ladies Home Journal*, and *Parents*, among others. Time Inc. is most popular for its *Essence*, *FORTUNE*, *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *TIME* magazines. You will recognize *Rolling Stone* and *US Weekly* as the publications that Wenner Media publishes. The alliance of these magazines with the full support of Magazine Publishers of America (MPA) makes a strong statement of solidarity, power, and security.

These publishers created a "*Power of Print*" campaign that provides facts that challenge rumors about the demise of the magazine publishing industry. The initial press release that appeared March 2010 states that "the campaign targets advertisers, shareholders and industry influencers, and seeks to reshape the broader conversation about magazines, challenge misperceptions about the medium's relevancy and longevity, and reinforce magazines' important cultural role."

The printed ad is simple, brief, and factual. The heading "*Will the Internet kill magazines? Did instant coffee kill coffee?*" (Yoga Journal) is eye catching and a sagacious analogy. It counter argues the pundits' assessment that emerging technologies send existing technologies to the graveyard. The invention of instant coffee complemented existing coffee. Although most people prefer fresh ground coffee, when in a rush or pushed for time, instant coffee is great, but it in no way circumvents real coffee. Likewise, the *Power of Print* ad exposes that the Internet

compliments magazine consumption instead of minimizing it. When pushed for time or space, viewing a magazine online is convenient, but it cannot replace relaxing with the printed magazine, touching the pages, or connecting.

The ad reassures people, like myself, who appreciate and use digital media but do not intend to cancel print magazine subscriptions, encourages advertisers and shareholders that printed magazines are still the best medium to advertise their products, and challenges the notion that digital media will soon replace printed media. Ruminating on the emotional aspect of the print magazine, the ad does not ignore or diminish the existence, importance, or strides of digital media; instead, the authors highlight the relaxed, emollient role of the printed magazine to create relationships that digital media does not. The statement “Rather than being displaced by ‘instant’ media, it would seem that magazines are the ideal complement” (Yoga Journal), does not degrade the new media, it instead puts the new media in its respective supporting role of convenience.

The “*Power of Print*” ad also elevates the union of magazine publishers. The press release reveals that the logo for the campaign is created using the first letters of distinct typographies from major magazine logos: “M from TIME, “A” from Entertainment Weekly, “Z” from Harper’s Bazaar, “I” from Marie Claire, “N” from Fortune, and “ES” from Esquire.”

An attack on rumors with rigorous facts, such as, “Readership has actually increased over the past five years,” and “Even the 18-to-34 segment continues to grow” (Yoga Journal) destroys the erroneous assessment that the critics use to support their print media demise theory. These publishers established a bold position that strangles the pulse of the attacks on their industry.

There is also a YouTube video that accompanies the ad. The video stars the executives of the contributing magazines and supports the mainstay of print magazines. Charles H. Townsend from Condé Nast, Cathie Black of Hearst Magazines, Jack Griffin from Meredith Corporation, Ann Moore with Time Inc., and Jann Wenner of Wenner Media all appear in the video, supporting the vibrancy of print magazines. Again, they do not ignore social media or the lure of the Internet. They state the present and current fabrications of new technology “killing” old technology to advance like radio was supposed to kill theatre, television was said to kill the movies, and the VCR was going to kill the television. None of this happened; instead, as Anne Moore of Time Inc. states, “People find room in their lives for the new media alongside the media they love” (You Tube), which is exactly what happened with the technology advancements that were set to go to the graveyard but didn’t. In the video, they state the myths and provide facts that displace the myths.

These innovative magazine publishers didn’t stop with their print and Internet campaigns. There is also a comprehensive web site, <http://powerofmagazines.com> that provides facts about magazines, such as “Magazines are the No. 1 medium of engagement—across all dimensions

measured” and “Magazines outperform other media in driving positive shifts in purchase consideration/intent”. At the web site, interested readers can also find contact information and statistical facts and sources about the burgeoning magazine publishing industry. This campaign left no stone unturned. They covered all misconceptions, myths, and rumors with supporting, statistical information and topped it off with a solid alliance that demonstrates their leadership and stability.

The *Power of Print* ad campaign is an ingenious and remarkable example of an enigmatic, confident public statement that degrades amorphous claims of the disintegration of print magazines. While the printed ad states what print can do that the Internet does not, which is to create an emotional connection and relationships, the video ad extends the printed ad by providing previous examples of failed ‘death predictions’ and adding facts. It also puts faces to the magazine industry and humanizes it. The united front the magazine industry presents in this campaign will reach many readers and pulls the magazine industry out of the coffin the pundits tried to put it in.

Works Cited

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