

# YOU GAVE US THE ‘ANSWERS’, NOW ASK US THE QUESTIONS! – HOW TO MAXIMIZE MAGAZINE ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS IN THE PLANNING/BUYING PROCESS.

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## Summary

In attempting to understand how to maximize magazine advertising effectiveness from both a planning and buying perspective for his clients, the author turned to the findings of many papers presented at previous magazine symposia and conferences and additional work by leading media researchers.

The key to fulfilling the goal was in isolating, translating and linking a wide array of work and reducing it to a very pragmatic level. It was then necessary to execute a series of focus groups (still on-going) with the planning and buying groups, plus ultimately clients, to fully understand what could be efficiently and effectively achieved in any new print planning and buying process and what further research would be required. It was understood that only on this basis could “new dimensions for magazine planning and buying” be considered. The author of this meta-paper was ultimately able to conclude, “You gave us the answers. Now ask us the questions!”

The author posits that these works, plus others, have together offered direction to many key questions that if appropriately connected are critical to maximizing ad effectiveness of magazines in the mix on a day-to day basis. When linked, these “answers” not only demand new dimensions to magazine planning, buying and selling but also raise significant questions regarding the measurement of magazine readership, *notably velocity*. They also raise important questions regarding future measurements of magazine effectiveness. It is argued that this new print planning approach has significant implications regarding fusion and multi-media optimizers.

## Background

The richness and value of many papers presented at the Worldwide Readership Research Symposia and other similar magazine research events has not come close to being fully captured in day-to-day practice by agency magazine planners or buyers. This is understandable as the majority of submissions naturally focus on very specific issues of magazine readership, research and effectiveness. Their findings are often difficult to translate into better daily approaches for the planners, the buyers or the sellers of magazine space, notably as planners pursue a total communications (media neutral) approach. This paper is one attempt at overcoming this shortcoming and offers recommendations that can be applied immediately.

## Key Questions

1. Should print be allocated more of the TV/Magazine budget?
2. Should advertisers run a print campaign without testing the creative? And, should print be tested with TV?
3. Should advertisers increase the number of creative executions per print campaign?
4. Should print be planned weekly, similar to TV, albeit against the strategic target audience?
5. Should print be planned by creative execution as well as for the campaign?
6. Should print be planned at higher weekly TRP and reach levels, similar to TV? Is this achievable?
7. Should the “new” magazine planning approach be better coordinated with TV planning?
8. Should magazines be planned before Network TV?
9. Will the industry commit to further research?
10. Is the industry willing to commit to a long overdue improvement of the measurement of magazine audiences and their velocity, which are currently out-moded and out-dated?

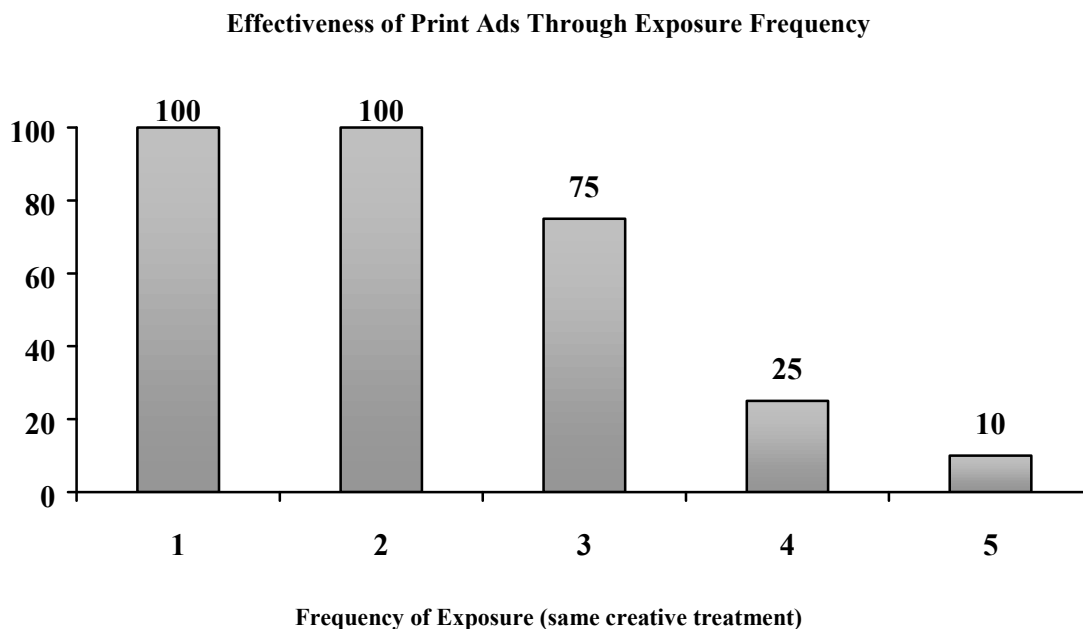
## Current Rationale for TV & Magazine Advertising

In the age of accountability, focussed on achieving next month’s results, the reason to advertise in TV is apparently short term brand sales. (The Recency principle). The reason to advertise in magazines is apparently long term, to achieve slow build brand effects. However, those effects are measured in brand equity/ad awareness, not sales. Consequently, this rationale places magazines at a disadvantage.

## How Magazines & TV Work

Print ads get “immediate” attention - the power of print - and appear to wear out quickly. According to Millward Brown, UK, Ad Track 1994, ad recall drops off significantly after 3 exposures indicating print’s suitability to produce immediate effects. (The direct response medium, before the Internet).

### The Wear - Out Factor - Assumptions of Best Fit Model\*



\*Based on best-fit computer modeling between magazine ad inputs (after allowing for readership time lag) and ad awareness scores collected by MB in their normal manner.

Source: Millward Brown, UK, Ad Track 1994

### Other factors supporting magazines versus TV, all of which requiring further study, include:

- First OTS Awareness Indexes are 1.8 times higher in magazines than TV (FIPP)
- Print ad copy quality is strongly influenced by magazine editorial content and consumer’s interest in the product category being advertised
- Magazine messages are assimilated quickly if they are considered relevant
- Print advertising appears more likely to produce active consideration of the brand than TV alone
- TV ad recall does not demonstrate wear out (Millward Brown) which indicates its suitability to build long term brand awareness, brand equity and long term sales.
- The average weekly GRPs for magazines for 113 brands over two years (1997, 1998), studied by Millward Brown for the MPA in its Ad Effectiveness study, was 11!

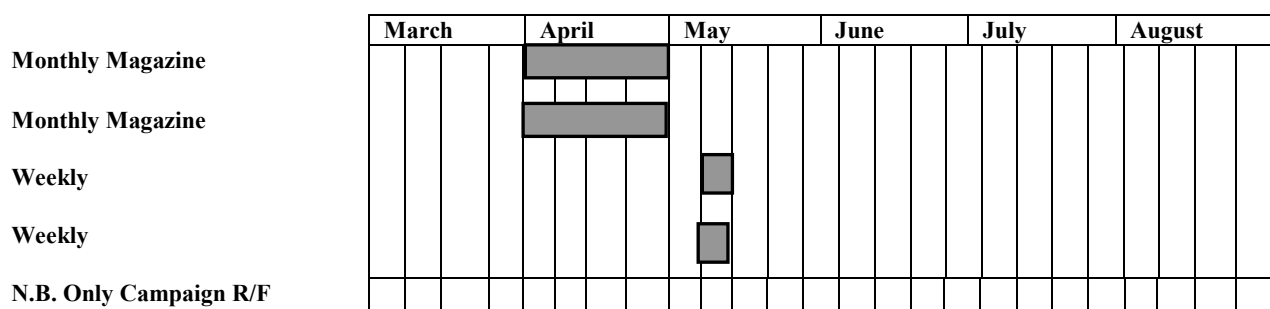
A key questions arises. Why is the sales impact of magazine advertising so often not obvious in real life? The probable answer in many cases...*because too little weight is put behind most print schedules.*

### The Premise:

In order to maximize the effectiveness of magazine/print advertising for any given investment level, we must apply our collective understanding of how magazines and print work. It requires new dimensions to magazine planning/buying and a substantial change in the way magazines are measured, analyzed, planned, bought (and sold), and scheduled.

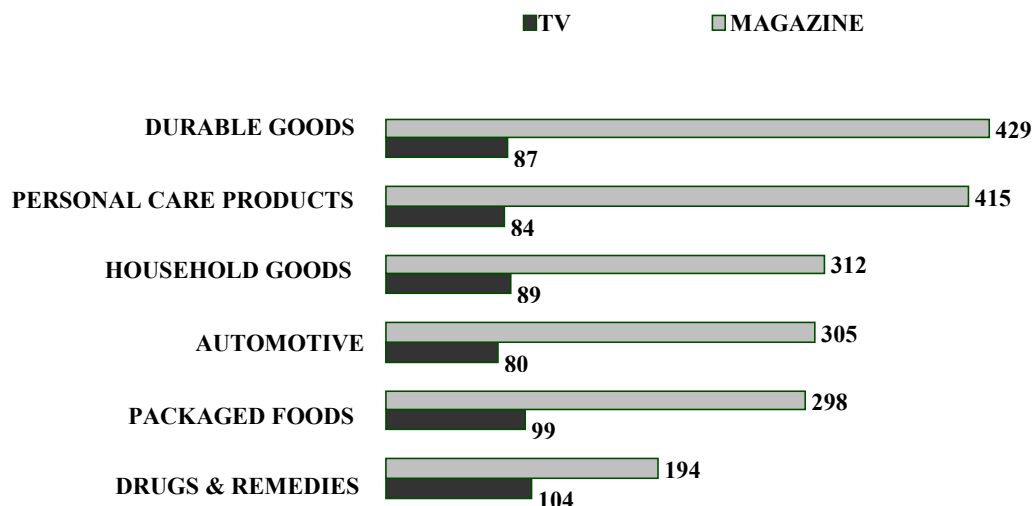
**Some key magazine (USA) attributes (lest we forget):**

- Lower CPMs than network TV (\$8 vs. \$18; W 18-49)
- Higher ratings than the top TV shows (Parade, Reader's Digest, TV Guide, People, USA Weekend, Better Homes and Gardens, National Geographic versus ER {CBS})
- Produce equally high reach levels as TV Prime when used in combination
- Take time to deliver their average issue audience. (TV is immediate)
- The single campaign ad is rarely tested (What makes a good magazine ad?)
- Creative typically executed in a studio or locally, not on location in an exotic locale
- Typically compared to TV on \$'s or # insertions not weekly GRPs or reach/frequency - an "apple and pears" comparison
- Are analyzed, planned and bought for the campaign period rather than on a week by week or 4 week basis like TV
- Are presented to the client via art directed flow charts that bear no reflection of the size of audiences delivered over time. Such charts create a very dangerous illusion.

**Conventional Magazine Flow Chart**

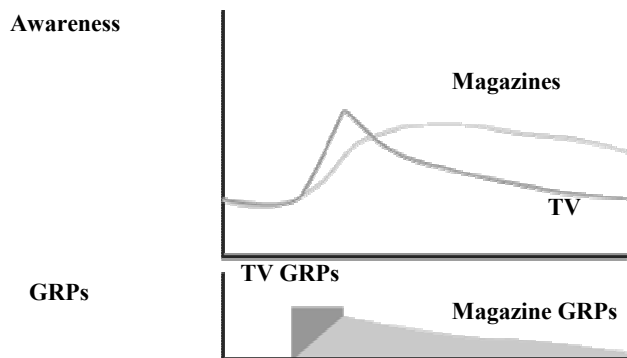
According to the 1999 MPA study, magazines probably deliver ad awareness more cost efficiently than TV in the *typical* TV/Magazine mix (80%/20% or 90%/10%):

- Across categories
- At different budget levels
- With different spending mixes
- In various competitive situations
- For new and established brands

**Awareness to Cost Index (MPA Study 1999)**

Source: MPA Ad Effectiveness Study 1999

The same study alluded to “Media Interaction Differences,” e.g. the same weight produces different patterns in awareness and decay over time (MPA Millward Brown Study, 1999).



### Some Suggested Answers to the Key Questions

#### Q 1. Should print be allocated more of the TV/Magazine budget? YES?

“If print is less than 50% of the ad spend, increase that proportion by a minimum of 10% points.” *John Philip Jones, Telmar Workshop, 1998.*

Example:

Original Plan	
TV/Magazine Budget	\$40 million
10% magazines	\$4 million
90% TV	\$36 million (5800 GRPs)

New Plan	
TV/Magazine Budget	\$40 million
20% magazines	\$8 million
80% TV	\$32 million (<5160 GRPs)

#### *Evidence supports media mix...*

- Family Circle Study, US, 1990
- JWT, \$400 Million Brand, US, 1992
- Campbell's Soup, UK, 1994/95
- Kraft Jacobs Suchard, Kenco Coffee, UK, 1995
- Tin Tam Biscuits, Australia, 1996
- 147 Brands 5 Years, Germany, 1997
- MPA Ad Effectiveness Study, 1999

The evidence is clear. However, much more work on media mix modeling will be required to determine the optimal media mix by brand by category. This will include potentially increasing TV for a magazine heavy schedule.

#### Q 2. A) Should advertisers run a print campaign without doing copy research? NO!

There are many \$\$ millions in print as well as TV at risk. Why run any campaign without understanding how well the creative is working and communicating the intended message? It has recently been suggested that ad effectiveness (short and long term ROI) is driven by “creativity” in combination with SOV (Share of Voice).

#### Q 2. B) ... And, should print be tested with TV? YES?

Test TV and magazines in combination. While a basic rationale of using combined media is to increase reach of the target, the enhancement of the communications effects are equally important (the media multiplier effect). The consumer is likely to be exposed to the ad messages from each medium in similar time frames. The reality is that to the best of my knowledge, no one has ever explored whether or not different conclusions would be drawn from the different pre-testing circumstances. Surely, this is the type of R&D project which should be undertaken by the MPA, FIPP or the ARF.

**Q 3. Should advertisers increase the number of creative executions per print campaign? YES?**

Due to indications of “a fast” magazine wear out rate, which desperately requires further testing, the number of creative executions should likely be increased to increase ad effectiveness.

The additional creative variations...

- Must all address the strategy, but
- Can be variations on an overall brand theme, e.g. "a family of treatments" and synergistic to the genre of each magazine and its audience

“Increasing the number of creative treatments from 4-6 theoretically increased campaign effectiveness 35% [63%-85%].” *Alan Smith, FIPP, Canadian Advertising Research Foundation Workshop, Toronto 1997.*

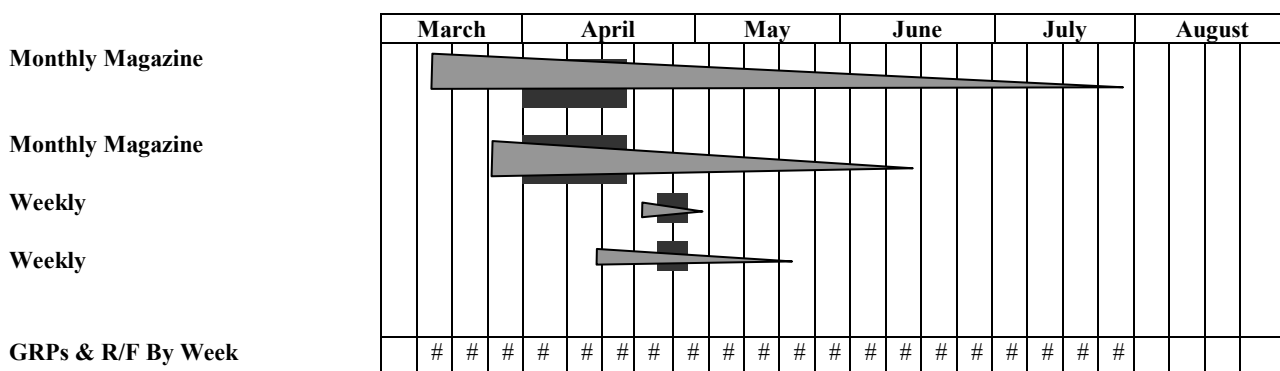
Again, this is another arena for a potential in-depth study by MPA, FIPP or ARF. How does this hypothesis vary, if at all, by the nature of the creative treatment, by the time between exposures, and by the knowledge of the product field which the reader brings to the ad?

**Q 4. Should print be planned weekly, similar to TV, albeit against the strategic target audience? (Message delivery over time.) YES?**

The new U.S. magazine audience velocity *pilot* study was fully released by MRI (Spring 2000) at the end of 2000. Telmar (TimePlan), IMS (Adcume) & MRI (MEMRI) have weekly audience planning software available which run off magazine syndicated audience magazine databases (MRI, Mendelsohn, etc.) based on velocity data.

As alluded to earlier, magazine flow charts must be re-designed to better reflect the reality of the size of audiences delivered over time.

**New Century Magazine Flow Chart (versus “old” shaded blocks)**

**Q 5. Should print be planned by creative execution as well as for the campaign? YES?**

If the Millward Brown magazine wear-out research stands up, OTS at 4+ for any creative execution are probably of significantly reduced value.

A guide to scheduling an increased number of creative pieces will be provided by:

- Controlling the frequency distribution for each creative execution.
- Minimizing the number of target consumers at 4 or more OTS.

This is a tricky concept and time consuming but again, do not accept pretty pictures on a blocking chart. Print schedules ideally need to be evaluated on the reach/frequency they achieve:

In total [ Per the period (1 week & 4 weeks) ] Per creative execution

*The overall Goal? Minimize the level of less effective exposures.*

**Q 6. Should print be planned at higher weekly TRP and reach levels? Is this achievable? Probably?**

Use typical TV weekly planning goals as an initial guide.

Period	TRPs	Reach
1 week	60-80	35-50%
4 weeks	240-320	70-80%
13 weeks	780-1040	85%+

However, focusing on weekly reach will likely increase the number of publications used and potentially reduce the magazine frequency discounts. Reach goals may have to be set lower than TV or set in combination with TV on a weekly or four week basis.

**Q 7. Should the “new” magazine planning approach be coordinated with TV planning? YES?**

Although communication effects may be different and contribute more or less to short and/or long term effects, consumers do not specifically differentiate the medium delivering the message at the time of delivery. *It is the combined reach and frequency and the ability of the creative to cut through (impact) that achieves the advertising objectives.*

In pursuing this new planning and buying approach, reach and frequencies for week-by-week and for sequential weeks need to be analyzed to ensure the same people are not being reached each and every week of the entire campaign. *Beware running optimizers on total budgets! For print or for TV.*

*"Print plus TV makes ad budgets work harder because the ad message is being communicated differently."* Alan Smith, FIPP, CARF Workshop, Toronto 1997.

*"The tools for allocating budgets between the different communication channels are rudimentary and thin on the ground."* How to Plan Advertising, Alan Cooper (Editor) 1997.

**Q 8. Should Magazines be planned before TV?**

Bertrand Russel said: "Every great idea starts with a blasphemy!" So, the blasphemous answer is *YES!* The current practice could be considered UPSIDE DOWN MEDIA. Is planning magazines after TV like planning spot TV before network?

**Q 9. Will industry commit to further research?**

If the premise of this paper is accepted, are advertisers, their agencies and publishers willing to commit to extensive creative testing and ad tracking combined with sales tracking in order to evaluate and continually improve this new magazine (communications) planning and buying approach? Are various industry groups and associations willing to invest in the further research required?

**Q 10. Is the industry willing to commit to a long overdue improvement of the measurement of magazine audiences and their velocity, which are currently out-moded and out-dated?**

To maximize magazine campaign delivery, it is imperative to:

- Plan for communications effectiveness against the right target
- Buy based on issue (on-sale) date and audience velocity
- Analyze weekly or monthly

However, there are critical research implications to achieving this.

1. Much better on-going velocity data is required:

- Many more magazines measured (42 out of 200+ unacceptable)
- 52 week measurement (eliminate/account for seasonality)
- Electronic (NOT diary) measurement based on real "read issue first time yesterday"

2. Time-based magazine optimizers must be developed

3. MRI/NTI Fusion must be made to work well

4. Fast Multi-media optimizers (time based) are essential to increase for use with fused databases and to increase industry productivity

## Summary

Based on a wide array of evidence from research and analysis conducted over many years by some of the best in the business, we require *new dimensions for magazine planning and buying*. If the direction and subsequent approach in this Meta paper are generally accepted, it will help put magazine's place in the media mix on a more defensible basis than ever before and potentially with a larger share of advertising budgets for some brands. However, this new approach requires a substantial improvement in the way magazines are measured, analyzed, planned, bought (and sold), and scheduled in order to maximize the effectiveness of magazine/print advertising when used in combination with other media. It also requires that magazine advertising is consistently tested and evaluated both from the creative and brand performance perspective.

## Special Acknowledgement

Alan Smith, Research Consultant, FIPP

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