MEASURING THE QUALITATIVE VALUE OF MAGAZINES

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Subject Matter: Measuring the communication value of magazines' relationships with consumers using results from TME Media Brand Asset Valuator^{TM}, the media subset of the of the Young & Rubicam Brand Asset Valuator^{TM}.

Background

Half a century of research across several fields of inquiry substantiates the existence and impact of consumers' relationships to media on content in the media, like advertising messages. Questions persist about the relationship in agency client discussions of media investments and budget allocation.

Excellent, accounting-quality counts of total audience exist and struggle on with the 'Five Stones' of research, so named by Jon Swallen as Technology, Technical Issues, Differing Methods, Response Rates, Circulation vs Readership[1].   They are necessary as the currency for media commerce to account for financial transactions of media space and time. We hope for a solid measurement of audience Opportunity-To-See -- the body count.

The ideal print research has been described as a tool used when media investments could be "bought on the basis of (audience) reach and frequency achieved for valued OTS, under valued circumstances, against valued individuals per creative treatment per four week period."[Alan Smith [2]].

A large volume of data exists already on the circumstances by which all this valuation occurs. It stands ready in commercially-available, syndicated research, but often, sadly, under-utilized. The estimates to 'value' individuals and creative copy testing methods, likewise, exist in abundance. Reach and frequency [the accounting unit] in the context of communication value should give rise to lively debate on the order entry process and left for this year's Symposium to the fusion discussion. As for the four week period, it seems that media mix models lead us to consider even smaller time frames.

The research challenge, beyond the count of audiences, is the multi-varied and -flavored nature of the brand/consumer relationship, or circumstance of reading, and the protocol required to elicit meaningful research.

This discussion focuses on using image and attribute measures to understand communication value of consumers' relationships with magazines and the 'value of the circumstance' in which reading occurs.

Situation

Quality-of-reading measurements vary in content and context reflecting different elements of the circumstance.

The US tradition in syndicated audience surveys includes quantitative measures based on respondent self-reported measures -- source of copy, time spent, number of occasions, % of pages read, action taken; with a taste of liking scores.   Other studies report ad-to-edit comparisons which can be used as a measure of clutter. Starch still provides results from in-copy ad recognition/recall methodology.

The fields of psychology, advertising and editorial research, consumer and brand behavior research are active with the study of valuation of circumstances and relationships.

Results generally indicate that magazines deliver on the promise of leveraging communication synergy between the message and medium:

- Effective communication happens in the mind of the consumer,
- Aligning messages with media environment exploits shared images,
- Ad impact is facilitated by association with media that share attributes and images on which a brand wants to build – a co-branding relationship,
- Every media buy is an opportunity to leverage imagery related dimensions.

The Young & Rubicam Brand Asset Valuator is a study of the images and attributes consumers relate to brands. The study is conducted in more than 30 countries covering over 50 measures per brand. In the 1998 fieldwork, brands of media entered the Study with 106 magazine titles for the 1999 release and 115 for the first quarter 2001data release.   A brief on study specifications is provided as an Appendix.

This paper describes activity at The Media Edge in evaluating the "qualitative" contribution of magazines to media accountability discussions.   Two avenues for improving media investment portfolios are:

- Harmonizing image and communications across borders – gender and culture matter.
- Balancing image across the media portfolio to leverage advertising – qualitative has to relate to "the buy".

There is a real-world challenge and responsibility in applying research results in a commercial, decision-making setting. The cases that follow are interesting because of the commercial outcome and curiosity value, as well as their theoretical basis.

Harmonizing Across Borders:

Perhaps the most challenging elements of quality are the words used to describe it.   It seems best to set aside linguistic, cultural and anthropological issues for now and accept respondent answers as given.   Needless to say, considerable resources have been focused on the Brand Asset Valuator survey protocol.

Gender matters. There seems to be a difference in what is "stylish" and "fun" to men and women.

**Table 1**: Percentage of Respondents Attributing Image to Magazine

	Men 18-49		**Women 18-49**
Stylish	%		%
Vogue	36	People Magazine	40
Elle	35	Vogue	39
Cosmopolitan Magazine	31	Elle	38
Bride`s	30	GQ	37
GQ	28	Glamour	36
Glamour	27	Modern Bride	36
Redbook (Magazine)	24	Cosmopolitan Magazine	35
O (The Oprah Magazine)	23	Martha Stewart Living	34
Southern Living	23	Bride`s	30
Mademoiselle	21	House Beautiful	29
Fun			
Nick Jr.	59	Nick Jr.	59
Sesame Street Parents	40	People Magazine	45
Sports Illustrated	35	Rolling Stone	38
This Old House	33	Sesame Street Parents	37
American Baby	32	Entertainment Weekly	37
Rolling Stone	31	Walking	32
Hot Rod	31	Sports Illustrated	31
Family Fun	30	Family Fun	30
Automobile (Magazine)	29	This Old House	30
Road and Track	29	Better Homes & Gardens	29

It is a tribute to the data that it reflects what is arguably a more egalitarian attitude toward gender issues in the US than in some of our global neighbors.   That parenting and sports magazines are seen as fun by both sexes suggests some agreement between the sexes on topical concerns – are Venus and Mars' orbits drawing closer? Maybe, but 3 of the top 10 'fun' magazines for men are in the automotive genre; an opinion not shared by women.

The understanding of style is more similar, except for the Oprah vs. Martha competition. Differences appear greater in data from some countries wherein Playboy goes right to the top of the style list for men, while women give top rank to local women's magazines.

Age appears to operate in a narrow range across image and attribute statements.   Composite estimates for female age segments fit closely together. Income and child status seem to register a difference.

Chart 1: Magazine Constituency

Magazine A - Y&R Power Grid
Constituency Analysis
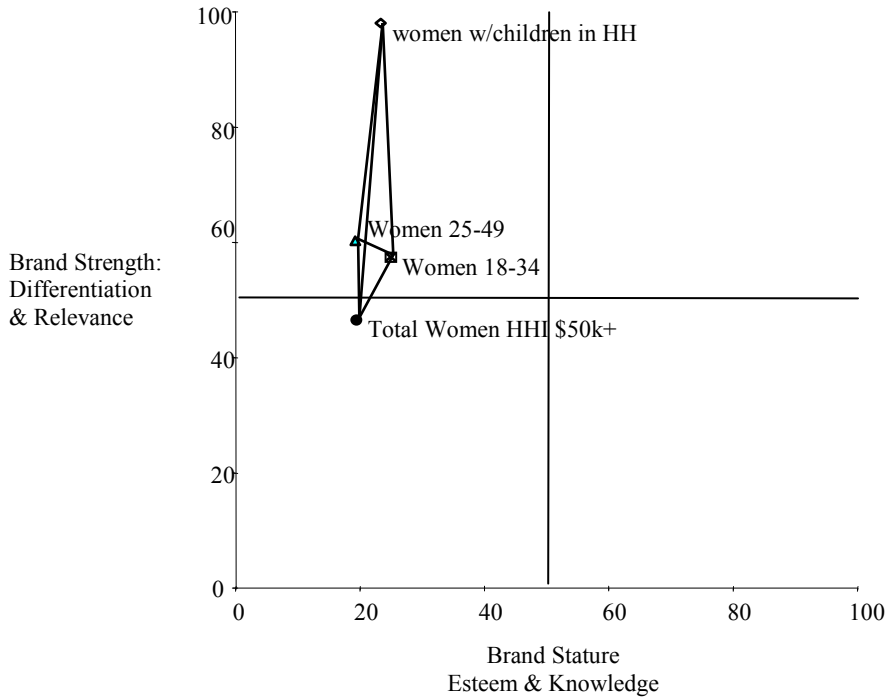
Differences on income seem to pivot in the range of Household Income $50,000 in the US. This may be a relief to media practitioners tempted by syndicated research to develop long lists of competing targets that differ by increments of $10,000.

On the marketing side of evaluation, a constituency analysis of brand health components suggests differences that might be addressed as editorial or content issues.   The Young & Rubicam Four Pillars of Differentiation, Relevance, Esteem and Knowledge are primal building blocks of brand portfolio management. Results for female target segments vary. For publishers, this is a brand building exercise, that means greater potential communication for advertisers

Chart 2: Magazine Brand Pillars

Magazine A -
Pillar Patterns
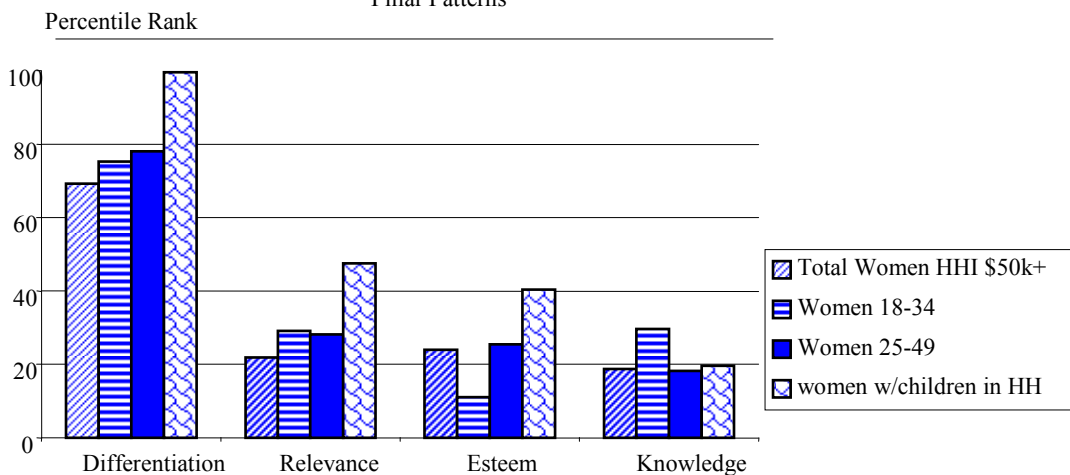
There appears to be a common thread of intra-country difference. Hopefully, the following example in Table 2 offers enough commonly known media vehicles for a glimmer of knowledge. For media investment purposes, there is evidence for the adage "think globally, act locally," despite potentially greater cost savings or accountability for global media investments.

Table 2 : Percentile Ranking of Top Ten Media by Country

Venezuela	%R	Mexico	%R	Colombia	%R	Brazil	%R	Argentina	%R
RCTV	98	Vogue	99	Caracol	99	Claudia	88	Telefe	97
Diario de Caracas	96	Vanidades	99	Semana	96	Quatro Rodas	97	Clarin	94
Cosmopolitan	94	Eres	98	Jes	95	Time	87	El Grifico	93
Venevision	94	DirecTV	98	RCN	93	Elle	84	Canal 13	92
Reader's Digest	93	Sky TV	97	Cromo	93	Criativa	83	HBO	92
El Nacional	91	Somo	97	El Tiempo	92	O Globo	82	Vogue	88
HBO	91	TV Azteca	97	RTI	92	Wall St. Journal	81	Para Ti	88
Televen	89	Cosmopolitan	97	CBS	91	Playboy	79	Time	87
Vogue	87	Cablevision	96	CNN	91	Veja	78	Reader's Digest	87
Playboy	85	TV y Novelas	95	OTI	91	Reader's Digest	78	Gente	83
El Universal	84	Elle	95	Playboy	89	BBC	75	Playboy	82

%R = Percentile Ranking Among All Brands

Number of Media Measured = Venezuela/24, Mexico/60, Colombia/30, Brazil 23, Argentina/29

Source: Adult Samples, Y&R BAV, 1998/1999 Fieldwork

What consumers think of media brands, the image and attribute profile, appears to differ by gender. Consumers' frames of reference seem to differ across countries as much as the mechanisms of media commerce.

However, being defined as "not" having an image does not necessarily mean the opposite state, or reflect a good/bad, more/less, bigger/smaller dichotomy. No more than 'temperature and size' do [Politz[3]]. If zero % of consumers think a magazine is "stylish", it can mean it is not stylish, or just that it is something different.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution

Fun	M1844%		W1849%
International Herald Tribune	0	International Herald Tribune	0
The Economist	0	The Economist	0
Inc Magazine	0	Inc Magazine	0
Smart Money	0	Smart Money	0
Kiplingers	0	Kiplingers	0
Family Money	0	U.S. News & World Report	0
Fast Company	0	Financial Times	0
U.S. News & World Report	2	Departures	0
Essence	2	Black Enterprise	0
Fortune	2	Time	1

Intelligent			
National Geographic	54	National Geographic	44
Time	49	International Herald Tribune	44
The Wall Street Journal	47	Time	41
U.S. News & World Report	43	Fast Company	41
Newsweek	41	U.S. News & World Report	38
Money Magazine	39	Reader`s Digest	38
Business Week	37	The New York Times	37
Fortune	37	Forbes	35
Reader`s Digest	35	Popular Science	35
Forbes	34	Newsweek	33

Media Brand Asset Valuator data indicate agreement as noted in Table 3, wherein a number of venerable titles were ranked as the bottom ten on "fun", but among the top ten on "intelligent".
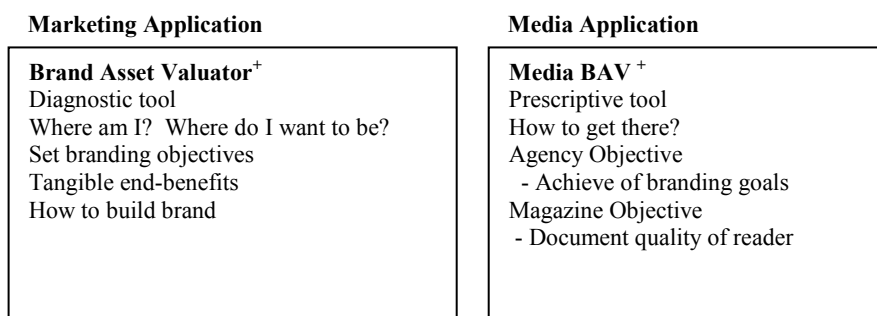
This perspective is supported by research conducted by the Henley Center [4]in the mid-1990's that identified different types of needs that media [magazines] satisfy. The needs were categorised into two types – information needs and cultural needs. The first type included the need states of instrumental, analysis, enlightenment, and self-enhancement. The second included ritual, default, relaxation, entertainment, and escapism.

It is ok be to a ZERO on style, if you are satisfying a need for intelligent information for analysis or enlightenment. Although it probably helps ad sales position if you, also, are top in your genre on style. It is worth noting a major finding of the study was that among magazines, NO ONE selected the cultural default – because it was there -- as is often the case for television watching.

Balancing Use With Currency Measures

The use of image and attribute in real-world situations takes two forms – the marketing application and the media planning and buying application.

Chart 3: Brand Asset Valuator Applications

Marketing Application

| Media Application |

Brand Asset Valuator[+]
Diagnostic tool
Where am I? Where do I want to be?
Set branding objectives
Tangible end-benefits
How to build brand

Media BAV [+]
Prescriptive tool
How to get there?
Agency Objective
  - Achieve of branding goals
Magazine Objective
  - Document quality of reader

For media practitioners, the objective is to select a media portfolio that favors or leverages the case of advertised brands. Qualitative research has to relate back to "the buy". So, a useful framework for integrating image and attribute knowledge has been to introduce the concept on both the product and media brand parts of the process.

Chart 4: Image and Attribute Measures in the Media Process
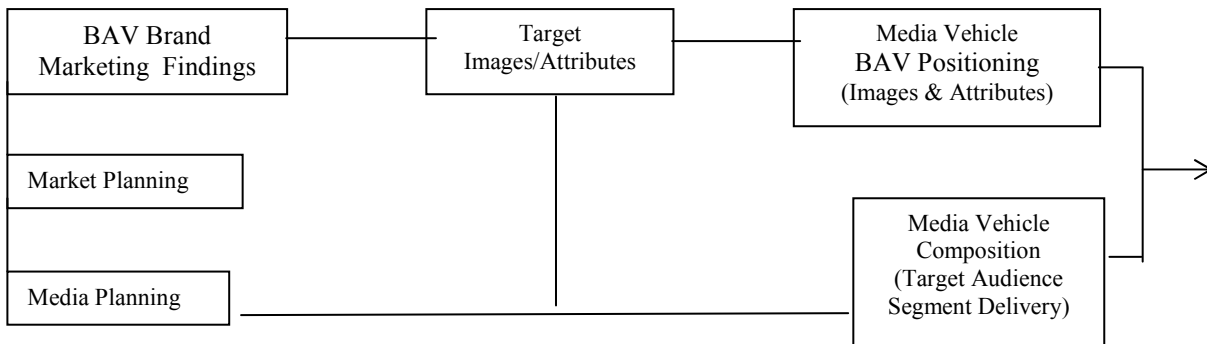
Using image and attribute data is the media equivalent of appreciating size and temperature differences. It sometimes creates palpable dissonance when these data are introduced into the real-world media process.

The previous section provided evidence that images are shared by larger segments of the population than often are executed as target audiences for reach frequency analysis.   Gender, income and country appear to dominate finer cuts of the data described by multi-definition targets – i.e., "Women Aged 25-54 with Children and a Household Income $50000+."

Drilling down to the most finite demographic and behavioral target is not necessarily warranted.   In contrast, for better or worse, the legacy of large syndicated, magazine audience surveys operating, also, as single source behavior studies has been, in the US at least, significant attention to the AND, OR, and NOT statement as a means of finding a better magazine schedule.

The dissonance is furthered by the higher level of analysis required when qualitative data are used to their utmost; which is a higher level of analysis than the norm in media planning and buying.

This said, and with due respect to the terrific media practitioners willing to hear the voice of research, the best approach seems to be the KISS method – Keep it Simple.   The objective is to provide an integrated framework for thinking without using the words modeling, hierarchical clustering, fusion, critical path analysis or econometric methods.

For real-world consumption, so far, estimates that have worked are percentages, percentile ranks expressed as correspondence and quadrant charts.   We've adopted a visual, quadrant approach we call a Media Imprint Chart. Media vehicles' qualitative estimate rankings are plotted on the vertical axis; media vehicles' audience compositions for a salient target [from a syndicated audience study] are plotted on the horizontal axis. The visual is drawn so that "good" media value [on both image AND usual audience estimates of composition coverage, or CPT] occur in the upper right-hand corner.

Chart 5: Media Imprint Chart Structure
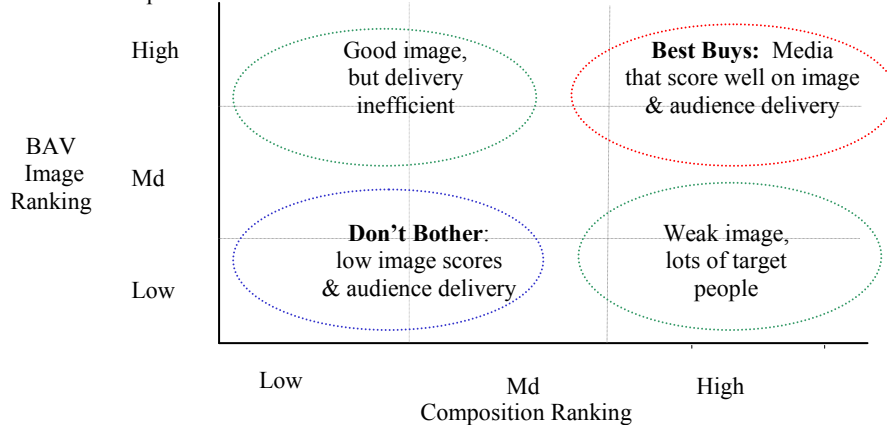
A simple, arithmetic solution, gratefully borrowed [PIMS[5]] based on ranking magazines on image and comparing to the magazines' ranks on composition or other familiar currency based measures. This brings two different pieces of information together to enhance knowledge about media portfolios. Played out for an advertiser seeking to leverage a strength in being thought of as healthy, good value, high quality, reliable and trustworthy, the Media Imprint Chart would look like this:

Chart 6: TME Media Image vs. Audience Profile
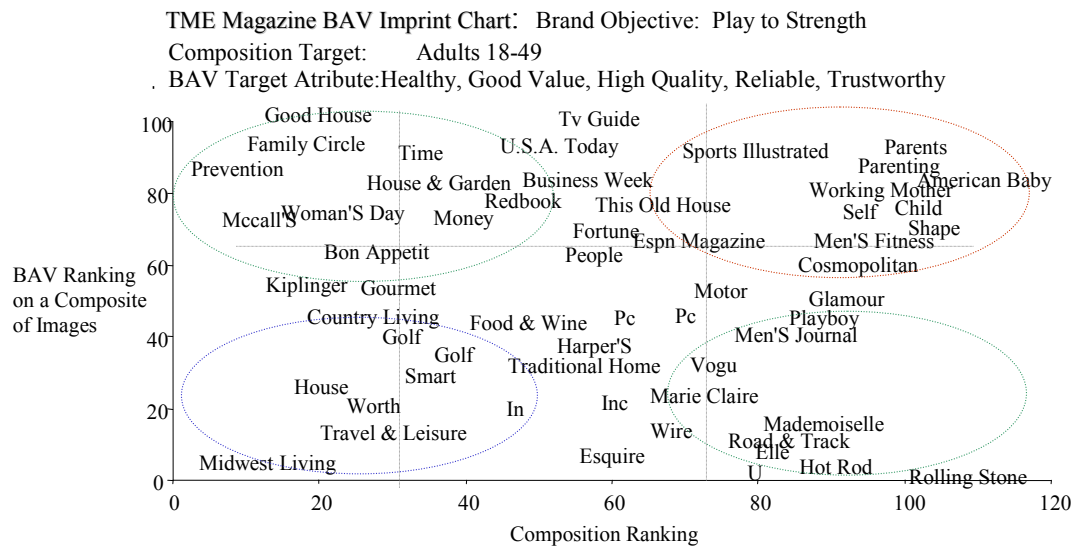
The process often begins with a planning group analysis of the client brand performance to identify key attributes to use in selecting congruent media vehicles. Or, advertisers often have image and attribute studies of their own from which target image profiles can be drawn.
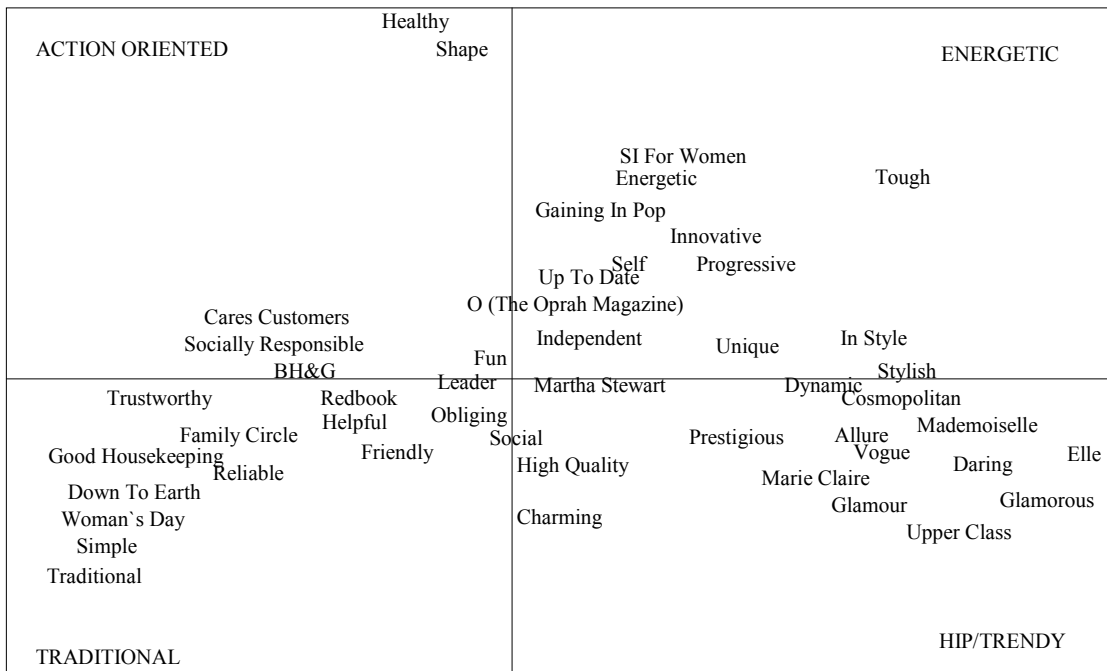
Chart 7: Product Brand Correspondence Analysis

Brand Correspondence w/ Images & Attributes: Correspondence
➢ Play to strength
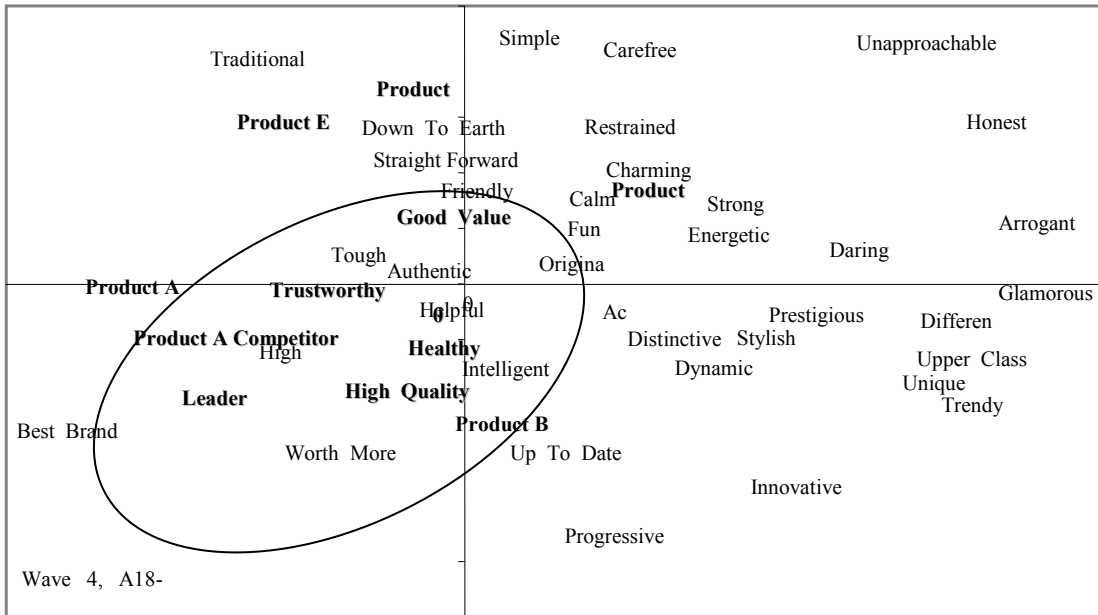
Publishers and media buyers can track image correspondence to magazines in a similar fashion.

Chart 8: Magazine Brand Correspondence Analysis

Theoretical Perspective

The concepts of circumstance and relationship pivot on a basic principle of psychology. Discussions are as many as the words used to define them.   This is a challenge even before quantification begins; the words, semantics.

Alfred Politz provided a perspective and potent reminder of the semantic issue:

"The familiarity principle – something that is known to the consumer inspires greater confidence than something that is unknown.   Reasoning and emotion are not opposite, any more than temperature and size. Semantics and relationship affect each other, too."[3]

Semantics begin with media research's own house-keeping.   The vast archive of qualitative research seems to cover five areas of inquiry:

Involvement – Time spent, % pages opened, source of copy, action taken,
Attention – Recognition, recall, concurrent activity, reader intensity.
Feeling – Image, attribute, likeability, appreciation, loyalty, satisfaction.
Need measures -- Purposes of media in persons' lives,
Human factors – Size, position, color and the tactile, physical elements of the reading occasion.

Quality of reading seems to be a component of communication, if cast in the ARF model; paraphrased
here without comment to relation or semantics between stages.

Vehicle Distribution	Vehicle Exposure	Advertising Exposure	Communication	Sales Response
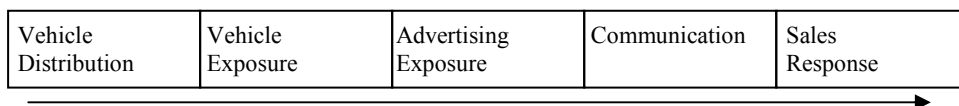
The first two are relatively documented. Moving to the right, knowledge becomes more sketchy, until it gets slapped in the faced by hard, accounting figures of sales response.

The MPA sponsored seven studies between 1980 and 1996 covering involvement with attention and feeling measures thrown in [6].   Guy Consterdine in his book, How Magazine Advertising Works, 3rd Edition, identifies
fifty studies on the relationship of readers, magazines and advertising [7]. An Academy of Marketing Science Review article on image and alcoholic beverage advertising [M Geuens, P. De Pelsmacker, 1998] cites 47 more drawn primarily from academic psychology and popular business sources [8].

The qualitative line of thinking must be important and probably has a place in the media planning and buying process, or at least in the realm of sanctioned media research. If consideration can mitigate in any way the dysfunction between the media research estimates and those of the advertisers financial department, magazines win.

Herbert Krugman is credited with saying [W. Schaefer[9]]:

"Although some of the major findings were quite clear, what is not clear is how the industry has managed to repeatedly forget them in the ensuing years."

This can't be so the industry will have the pure pleasure of investing more research budget to re-learn. Hopefully, this is not a sign of ensuing forgetfulness of an industry in its senior years.   It is likely due to the real-world challenge of applying research results in a commercial, decision-making setting.

If data and method are available to enhance media decision-making. Let's use them.

Concluding Remarks:

There are some wonderful individual studies and frameworks for thinking about quality of reading. The image and attribute method described here is humbly offered as an option that seems to integrate a strong theoretical foundation regarding consumer/magazine relationship- with actionable decision tools.

It is hard to believe research on reading quality has been so little used when there is so much data available
to understand the "co-branding" or synergy that inevitably occurs between clients' advertising messages and the media in which they are carried.

Perhaps the pressure to match TV with statistical timeliness and "goodness" of audience estimates or media vendor horror over what agencies can potentially do with the numbers has constrained efforts.

Many buyers have thrown up their hands and reverted to basic accounting procedures, buying with audited circulation estimates combined with their personal assessment of the quality and editorial fit of a magazine with advertiser values.

As printing technology has improved, added-value or premium impact units became possible so now the decision regarding the magazine investment is largely ratebase and creative driven.

The challenge is that the media budgets are given or allocated away based on serious econometric measures of Return on Investment. This produces an allocation process in which AIR or RR are ill-prepared to serve, despite recent developments in audience accumulation measures.

In time this deficit may disappear as the 10K measurement change brought on by personal metering devices in a "10-k" change to our methods [Grove[10] referring to rate at which computer micro-chips initially increased in power]. The Arbitron Personal People Meter and/or a revised Weinblatt/Douglas Meter schemes will come to pass.

Until then, magazine research offers ample opportunity to leverage one of its greatest strengths – the circumstance in which reading occurs, and...

'---to have patience with everything unresolved. . . and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language…the point is, to live everything. To live the questions now. Perhaps then someday . ..[we can] live into the answer…' [R M Rilke[11]].

Bibliography

[1] John Swallen, ARF Proceedings, 1996, 'Post Berlin: Some Comments on the State of Readership Research".
[2] Alan Smith, Admap, 1991, "The Ideal Readership Survey – A Suggested Design".
[3] Alfred Politz, ANA Speech, 1961, in Hugh Hardy, The Politz Papers, 1990.
[4] Henley Center Report, 1995, Magazines in 2000, in Guy Consterdine, How Magazine Advertising Works, 3rd Edition, 1999.
[5] Derek Abell & John Hammond, Strategic Market Planning, 1979.
[6] Magazine Publishers Association, Studies of Media Involvement, I-VII, 1980-1996.
[7] Guy Consterdine, How Magazine Advertising Works, 3rd Edition, 1999.
[8] M. Geuens & P. De Pelsmacker, Academy of Marketing Science Review, 1998, "Feelings Evoked by Warm, Erotic, Humorous or Non-Emotional Print Advertisements for Alcoholic Beverages".
[9] W. Schaefer, Admap, 1995, "Recognition Reconsidered".
[10] A. Grove, Only the Paranoid Survive, 1997. [Founder of Intel Corporation]
[11] Quote from post card credited to R. M. Rilke.

Appendix: Y&R Brand Asset Valuator[TM] Source Data Description

The TME MediaBAV[TM] data set represents a subset of data produced from the Y&R Brand Asset Valuator[TM], a proprietary image and attribute study produced from The Y&R Consumer Panel.   The media portion of the study provides attribute and image data about brands of media.   The purpose is to document aspects of reader quality and the delivery of a relevant media environment.   The benefit is to extend circulation or audience CPM sales positioning to recognize magazine strength in providing a media environment appropriate for advertising communication.

The US Domestic BAV Data:

- Y&R Consumer Panel
- 10,000 consumers
- Owned by Y&R
- Fielded by NPD
- Incorporating BAV
- BAV metrics every 3 months
- Client re-contact opportunities

The US fieldwork was transferred to a panel collection method in Year 2000 with first results effective with the Year 2001 data releases. Prior to the current data, fieldwork was conducted as a re-contact of respondents from syndicated audience studies. The single survey, re-contact method, still, is employed through most of the global network. A brief of specifications for the US study is:

Structure:
・20 cells
・100 Brands per cell
・200-300 observations per brand per quarter
・4,000 completes (all cells)

Content:
・Familiarity
・Personal Regard
・Relevance
・Popularity
・Image 1 & 2
・Brand Usage
・Client specific A&U/Tracking
・Consumer profile (e.g., 4Cs)
・Behavioral measures
・Media behavior
・Demographics
・Category Usage
・Personal Computer
・Online & Internet
・Personal Opinions
・Self Image

The TME Media Brand Asset Valuator portion of the study contains as brand entries:

- 115 Magazine Brands
- 75 Television Programs
- 41 Television Networks
- 11 Entertainment Events
- 61 Sports Events
- 4 Charity Events

The data reported are reported as :
- Percent of sample reporting yes to attributing an attribute/image for a media vehicle
- Vehicle percentile ranking among a defined set of media vehicles
- Unweighted vehicle sample count