

A NEW TOOL THAT IMPROVES PRINT MEDIA SELECTION

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Introduction

Many approaches have been developed and implemented in the USA to estimate publication audiences. The vast majority of these approaches focus solely on the number of readers reached by one publication versus another (using circulation counts and/or audience survey counts). The use of this approach ignores a publication's qualitative attributes, namely those attributes that relate to the readers' engagement and connection levels with the publication as well as the readers' perceptions of the publication's product quality (its editorial content, its advertising content, and its visual attributes). This approach also ignores the differences between loyal and casual readers. Finally, the traditional use of audience or circulation estimates in the print planning and buying processes generally ignores the readers' personal perceptions of the titles they read and therefore logically assumes that all publications are perceived by readers to be equally engaging or involving and to deliver to all readers the same product quality. There are some audience surveys that measure what are believed to be qualitative measures. Upon review, however, these measures are not directly related to the readers' perceptions and ratings of each title's product attributes; the measures tend to be descriptive and behavioral-type measures and generally include one overall title rating question.

In November 2004 Monroe Mendelsohn Research (MMR) released the results of its first Publication Readership Satisfaction Survey (PReSS), a syndicated survey specifically designed to measure the qualitative brand attributes of consumer publications across 21 different publication categories (211 titles were measured and 199 reached the required minimum respondent level and were released). After reviewing the PReSS results, MPG USA (a unit of Havas), an agency subscriber to this new syndicated survey, decided it would be advantageous to its clients to incorporate the PReSS findings into its print planning and buying processes.

This paper specifically details how MPG incorporated the PReSS data into its audience estimation practices and modified its print planning and buying processes to take into consideration how magazine readers rate and "connect" with the titles measured in PReSS. An example of how PReSS resulted in different print media selections is described. To complete the picture about PReSS, the various ways in which print publications are using PReSS will also be briefly described.

What is PReSS?

PReSS is not a syndicated audience survey. PReSS has been designed specifically to measure consumer magazines and national newspapers as consumer brands with product and brand attributes just like the products and services that are advertised in them. PReSS provides the previously missing information that allows publications to demonstrate how they attract their audiences and for advertisers and their agencies to understand how engaged or involved the readers are with each of the titles they read and how they rate each title in regard to its editorial and advertising content as well as its visual quality attributes (the cover or front page as well as photography and illustrations). PReSS data is intended to supplement the circulation and audience data used to select publications for advertising campaigns.

PReSS provides a unique, multi-purpose survey-based database that goes "beyond audience" and measures approximately 200 titles not only on a level playing field but also from a consumer branding perspective. PReSS fills a major void and provides previously unavailable publication data from the readers' perspectives to enable better planning and decision-making by the following:

- Publication management
- Ad sales and marketing staff
- Advertisers and their agencies
- Consumer marketing and circulation staff
- Editorial staff
- Investment bankers and strategy consultants

PReSS is based upon the data obtained by MMR from its annual survey of 17,500+ representative adults in the USA regarding the publications they read and how they rate them. This high quality survey is conducted by mail and in 2004 achieved an overall average response rate of 51% from its two sample sources: about 10,000 adults from the general population (with a 44% response rate) and about 7,500 affluent adults (\$75K+ household income) from recontacting the respondents from Mendelsohn's *Affluent Survey* (with a 63% response rate).

For each title released in the PReSS Survey database, the following are the 17 title-specific measures obtained:

- The readers’ frequency of reading that title (responses have been coded to preclude audience estimation)
- How the reader usually obtains the title (by subscription, single copy, or as pass-along)How much of the title is usually read (all of it, most of it, or some of it)
- The time spent reading the title on average
- The readers’ overall rating of the title (ranging from excellent to poor)
- The readers’ agreement level (ranging from agree very much to disagree very much) in regard to the following title-specific issues:
 - Differs from other publications of the same type
 - The reader looks forward to reading every issue
 - Is enjoyable to read
 - Is entertaining
 - Is cutting edge
 - Is informative
 - Is authoritative
 - Has eye-catching covers
 - Has quality photos/illustrations
 - Contains useful ads
 - Contains attention-getting ads
 - Contains ads that the reader trusts

Additionally, PReSS provides the following consumer profiling measures:

- Consumer interests (numbers of days consumers participate in 40+ interests)
- Products used by the consumer (the number of food/beverage/tobacco servings consumed in the past seven days)
- Reading preferences (whether/how often consumers read about 60+ different topics)
- Decision-making (who makes purchase decisions for 18 product/service categories)
- Consumer expenditures (past-year expenditures for 50+ product/service categories)
- Health conditions (whether consumers have or treat 40+ health conditions)
- Motor vehicle ownership
- Demographics

What did PReSS Reveal to its Subscribers?

For the 199 titles released in the 2004 survey results, PReSS discovered, as many advertisers and agencies expected, that all publications are not perceived by their readers to deliver the same product qualities. Readers indicated by their ratings that titles have unique “personalities” and some titles perform better than others in delivering the product quality attributes that readers seek when they decide to read or look at a title. This is shown in Exhibit 1 in which the range of ratings are displayed below and on the next page based on “positive” scores from readers.

Exhibit 1: Range of Ratings – Positive Scores

| | <u>Highest</u> <u>Rated</u> <u>Title</u> <u>%</u> | <u>Lowest</u> <u>Rated</u> <u>Title</u> <u>%</u> | <u>Average</u> <u>Title</u> <u>Rating</u> <u>%</u> |
|---|--|---|---|
| Overall Ratings of Publications: Excellent/Good | 97 | 64 | 87 |
| <u>Uniqueness/ Engagement Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Differs from other publications of the same type | 97 | 53 | 79 |
| I look forward to reading every issue | 93 | 44 | 79 |
| Is enjoyable to read | 100 | 66 | 92 |

(continued...)

Exhibit 1 (continued)

| | <u>Highest</u> <u>Rated</u> <u>Title</u> <u>%</u> | <u>Lowest</u> <u>Rated</u> <u>Title</u> <u>%</u> | <u>Average</u> <u>Title</u> <u>Rating</u> <u>%</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <u>Editorial Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Is entertaining | 99 | 60 | 91 |
| Is cutting edge | 98 | 63 | 83 |
| Is informative | 100 | 57 | 91 |
| Is authoritative | 98 | 51 | 85 |
| <u>Visual Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Has eye-catching covers | 100 | 44 | 89 |
| Has quality photos/illustrations | 100 | 43 | 91 |
| <u>Advertising Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Contains useful ads | 98 | 54 | 81 |
| Contains attention-getting ads | 97 | 44 | 84 |
| Contains ads that I trust | 98 | 41 | 82 |

* Agree “very much/somewhat”

The range of reader scores is much greater when more discrimination among the titles is sought as is shown in Exhibit 2 below in which the range of ratings is based solely on “top box” scores (“excellent” for overall ratings or “agree very much” for other ratings).

Exhibit 2: Range of Ratings – Top-Box Scores

| | <u>Highest</u> <u>Rated</u> <u>Title</u> <u>%</u> | <u>Lowest</u> <u>Rated</u> <u>Title</u> <u>%</u> | <u>Average</u> <u>Title</u> <u>Rating</u> <u>%</u> |
|--|--|---|---|
| Overall Ratings of Publications: Excellent | 68 | 16 | 36 |
| <u>Uniqueness/ Engagement Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Differs from other publications of the same type | 66 | 1 | 31 |
| I look forward to reading every issue | 72 | 9 | 35 |
| Is enjoyable to read | 80 | 22 | 52 |
| <u>Editorial Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Is entertaining | 75 | 15 | 46 |
| Is cutting edge | 62 | 15 | 34 |
| Is informative | 81 | 21 | 53 |
| Is authoritative | 68 | 8 | 38 |
| <u>Visual Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Has eye-catching covers | 81 | 13 | 50 |
| Has quality photos/illustrations | 88 | 6 | 54 |
| <u>Advertising Attributes*</u> | | | |
| Contains useful ads | 67 | 8 | 35 |
| Contains attention-getting ads | 67 | 10 | 38 |
| Contains ads that I trust | 57 | 9 | 31 |

* “Agree very much”

How did MPG Incorporate PReSS into its Print Planning and Buying Processes?

After the release of PReSS 2004, MPG determined that it needed to provide its media planners and buyers with a more robust print-planning and buying tool that would effectively “merge” circulation metrics, MRI audience metrics, PReSS qualitative metrics, and cost data into one comprehensive tool. This new tool was designed to score publications on their compatibility with targeted audiences (e.g., high income households, women, etc.), desired publication attributes in relation to brand positioning, readership statistics, as well as their relative cost efficiency as measured by cost/page weighted by desired audience. Furthermore, it also allowed users to “weight” the relative importance of target audience and publication attributes based on the specific brand and campaign objectives (e.g., if campaign only targets women, then men would have a weight of zero). This new tool has been integrated into MPG’s Suite of Strategic Planning and Buying Tools and is now referred to as the “**MPG Scorecard**”.

In one representative case study, MPG used the new tool for one of its financial services clients, which had been handling its print planning process in-house prior to joining the agency. The client wanted to position its new mutual fund product in trustworthy and authoritative publications targeting high-income households. As a first step, MPG ran a preliminary crosstab in MRI of likely investors against measured publications and found 110 magazines (out of 364) indexing above 125 against that target. The resulting list of magazines (the first column in Exhibit 3 below) included many titles endemic to the category (e.g., Business, Finance and News) along with some lifestyle titles (e.g., Wine, Travel and Epicurean).

In the next phase, MPG computed weights of likely investors against demographic targets using MRI audience statistics (income and gender) to use as targeting inputs into its **Scorecard**. In terms of weighting the desired qualitative attributes in PReSS, MPG fielded a consumer survey to determine the relative importance of certain advertising attributes (authoritative, trust, informative, etc.) in relation to the client’s brand and product. Once the audience and attribute weightings were input into the tool, **Scorecard** generated a list of publications based upon a “compatibility score” calculated for each of the 199 publications measured in PReSS (the second column in Exhibit 3). This preliminary score served as basis to rank order every publication’s compatibility to the target audience and engagement metrics selected. Titles that are not measured or prototyped in MRI that are measured in PReSS are tinted in grey.

As a final step, **MPG Scorecard** also incorporated cost per page (published) to calculate the final “composite score” for all 199 publications (the third column in Exhibit 3). The cost index was calculated dividing cost per page by weighted CPM based on circulation.

Exhibit 3: List of Publications Generated by MRI and MPG Scorecard (Sorted from Highest to Lowest)

| MRI 100K+ (Index 125+) | MPG Scorecard | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Compatibility Score 100K+ | Composite Score 100K+ |
| Veranda | Power & Motoryacht | Departures |
| Wall Street Journal | Harvard Business Review | Veranda |
| Business 2.0 Magazine | Departures | New York Times Magazine |
| Wine Spectator | Veranda | National Geographic |
| New York Times Daily | Yachting | Parade |
| Conde Nast Traveler | Motor Boating | Golf Digest |
| Investor's Business Daily | Runner's World | Coastal Living |
| Fast Company | Arthur Frommer's BT | InStyle |
| New York Times Sunday | New York Times Sunday | Arthur Frommer's BT |
| Skiing | Wall Street Journal | AARP The Magazine |
| Saveur | New York Magazine | USA TODAY |
| Architectural Digest | Traditional Home | New York Times Sunday |
| Barron's | Southern Accents | Southern Living |
| Fortune | Architectural Digest | Harvard Business Review |
| More | InStyle | Endless Vacation |
| Real Simple | Wired | Wall Street Journal |
| Fine Cooking | Barron's | Real Simple |
| Golf For Women | More | Conde Nast Traveler |
| Atlantic Monthly | Business 2.0 Magazine | Reader's Digest |
| Yachting | New York Times Magazine | Money |
| Tennis | Coastal Living | Food & Wine |
| Scientific American | Lucky | Southern Accents |
| Ski | Tennis | New York Times Daily |
| New Yorker | Metropolitan Home | Atlantic Monthly |
| Macworld | Forbes | Self |
| Bon Appetit | Golf Digest | Bon Appetit |
| Kiplinger's Personal Finance | National Geographic | Motor Boating |
| W | Self | Power & Motoryacht |
| Money | Golf Magazine | USA Weekend |
| American Heritage | Scientific American | Better Homes & Gardens |
| Travel+Leisure | New York Times Daily | New York Magazine |
| Coastal Living | New Yorker | Forbes |
| New York Magazine | Money | New Yorker |
| Cigar Aficionado | Conde Nast Traveler | Kiplinger's Personal Finance |
| Forbes | Bon Appetit | More |
| BusinessWeek | Southern Living | Cooking Light |
| SmartMoney | Men's Journal | Barron's |
| Sunset | Food & Wine | Runner's World |
| Wired | American Heritage | TV Guide |
| Golf Digest | Entrepreneur | Shape |
| Smithsonian | Better Homes & Gardens | O The Oprah Magazine |
| Runner's World | PC Magazine | Time |
| Traditional Home | Golf World | Architectural Digest |
| Endless Vacation | Golf For Women | Golf Magazine |
| Gourmet | Outside | Prevention |
| Golf Magazine | Real Simple | Tennis |
| Entrepreneur | Cigar Aficionado | Traditional Home |
| InStyle | Road & Track | Travel+Leisure |
| Shape | Boating | People |
| Self | Shape | PC Magazine |
| Bicycling | Atlantic Monthly | Newsweek |
| Mary Engelbreit's HC | PC World | Wired |
| Men's Journal | Elle | Economist |

Note: Titles tinted in grey were not released or prototyped in MRI.

To provide a preliminary recommendation to the client, MPG used a decision matrix that plotted each of the 110 publications from MRI (with an Index greater than 125) against its proprietary *MPG Scorecard* Compatibility Score based on PReSS Data. (See Exhibit 4 below.) The MRI Index captured how well the publication reached the investor target (with an index of 125+), while PReSS measured the level of engagement between the audience and publication, generating four quadrants to analyze.

As illustrated in Exhibit 4 that follows, the top right-hand quadrant showed publications that not only indexed highly against the desired target but also perform strongly on PReSS attributes of engagement with their respective audiences. Interestingly, the majority of these publications came from non-endemic categories, such as travel, epicurean and lifestyle (e.g., *Yachting*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Bon Appetit*, *Tennis*, *Coastal Living*, *Architectural Digest*), which traditionally would not have been considered. On a related note, very few publications from the investment and finance categories emerged in this quadrant.

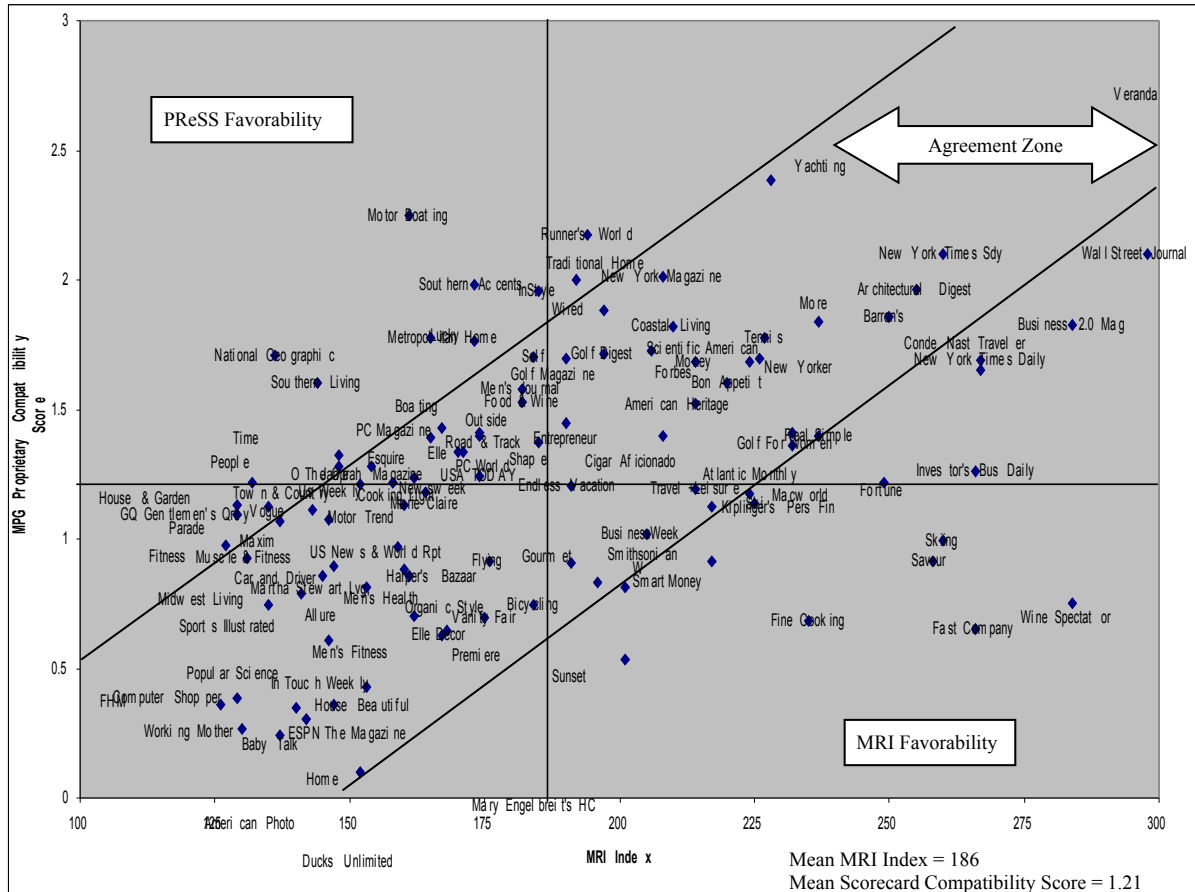
Conversely, the bottom right-hand quadrant provided a list of publications that performed very well reaching investors (based on the MRI Index), however, did relatively poorly in terms of engaging their audience. Surprisingly, the majority of these publications were investment and finance titles, including *Investor's Business Daily*, *Business Week*, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, and *Smart Money*.

On the other hand, the top left-hand quadrant revealed publications that did not index as highly as right-hand publications using MRI, however provided a highly captive and engaged audience based on their Compatibility Score using PReSS. This list again included a variety of lifestyle magazines, such as *Metropolitan Home*, *National Geographic*, *Southern Living*, *Southern Accents*, *Motor Boating* and *Instyle*.

Not surprisingly, the bottom left-hand quadrant included publications that performed below average on both criteria.

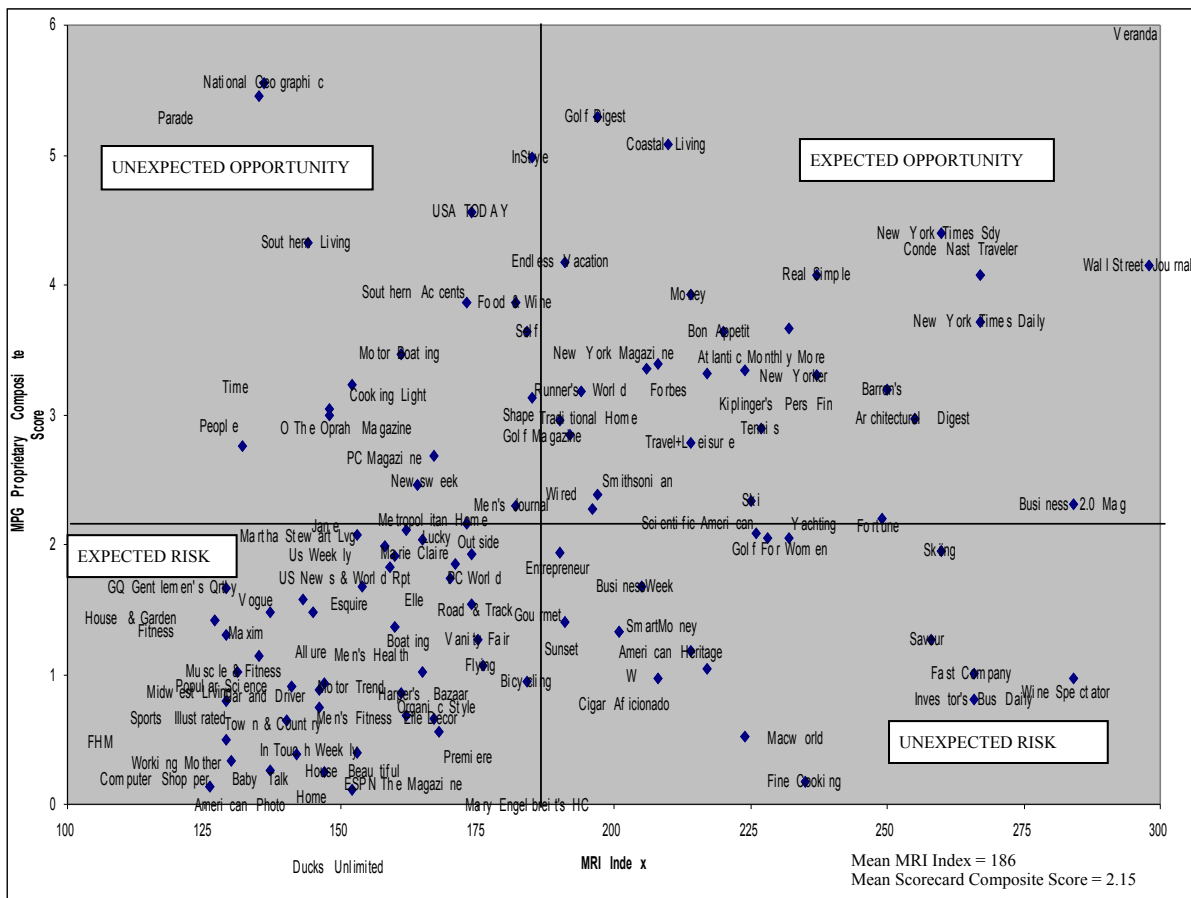
It is also worth noting that with the exception of a few publications, most converged on a straight line ("Agreement Zone") showing a reasonably high correlation between the MRI Index and the *MPG Scorecard* Compatibility Score based on PReSS data.

Exhibit 4: MRI Index (125+) versus MPG Scorecard Compatibility Score (Excluding titles not measured in MRI)



In order to take this specific analysis one step further, MPG then incorporated the costs/page, circulation and MRI audience metrics to calculate a “Composite Score”, by dividing the “Compatibility Score” by the Weighted CPM. This time, the decision matrix was produced by plotting the MRI Index against the *MPG Scorecard* Composite Score for the same 110 titles. (See Exhibit 5 on the next page.)

Exhibit 5: MRI Index (125+) versus MPG Scorecard Composite Score (Excluding titles not measured in MRI)



As shown, the top right-hand quadrant was labeled “Expected Opportunity” for its titles’ demonstrated ROI on all three dimensions against this specific target: reach, engagement, and cost. These publications included a mix of endemic and non-endemic titles, such as Veranda, WSJ, Wired, New York Times, Barron’s, Money, More, Forbes, Kiplinger’s, New York Magazine, Coastal Living, Architectural Digest, Conde Nast Traveler and Real Simple.

Interestingly, the top left-hand quadrant provided “Unexpected Opportunity” for MPG to investigate further. As seen in Exhibit 5, most of these non-endemic publications, performed consistently well on both CPM and Compatibility Score and included: National Geographic, Southern Living, InStyle, Golf Digest, Motor Boating, Self, Shape, Food and Wine, The Oprah Magazine, to name a few. Compared to the decision matrix based on Compatibility (Exhibit 4), a few titles dropped from this quadrant when factoring in cost; Boating, Yachting, and Scientific American, indicating a potential opportunity for discussing CPMs with these titles.

To the client’s surprise, the “Unexpected Risk” quadrant included well-known finance and investment titles (e.g., Smart Money, Business Week, Investor’s Business Daily), to which most of the client’s dollars had previously been allocated. Looking at MRI alone, these titles performed very well in terms of reaching the target audience (with indices greater than 200). However, they also performed relatively poorly when factoring in PReSS’ qualitative measures and CPMs, hence presenting “unexpected risk” for client’s ROI.

Last but not least, the bottom left quadrant was labeled “Expected Risk” for its relatively low performance on all desired metrics, and included high-circulation titles such as US Weekly, Town and Country, House and Garden, etc.

Additionally, MPG Scorecard identified a subset of titles not captured in MRI (but measured in PReSS) to investigate based on their above average Compatibility and Composite Scores. These titles included Departures, Harvard Business Review, Arthur Frommer’s, Power and Motoryacht, New York Times Magazine, and National Geographic Traveler.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Historically, using only MRI, this client found titles that had demonstrated their ability to effectively hit a subset of their target. With the introduction of PReSS into the selection process, the number of titles under consideration has grown dramatically and now includes many publications never before considered given the far-from-endemic nature of their contents. Using PReSS, MPG has determined that these new titles engage the client's target audience and should be included in the consideration set. The client is now in process of gathering RFPs from the highest ranking titles recommended by MPG, and is investigating the potential benefits of investing more of its print dollars in these untapped opportunity titles in the travel, lifestyle, general news, and epicurean categories.

As *MPG Scorecard* is a continuous work in progress, MPG is now considering another critical issue to address: competitive clutter. Additionally, MPG is now implementing *Scorecard* for other clients, ranging from grocery to automotive advertisers. Selected excerpts from some of these case studies will be presented at the Prague Symposium summary presentation.

In conclusion, by leveraging MRI, PReSS and cost data, MPG is now able to deliver a far superior solution to driving ROI for its clients than by using any of these data sources alone. Combining the inherent strengths of MRI and PReSS has revealed ROI opportunities and risks that would have not been uncovered otherwise and has resulted in improving MPG's print planning and buying processes to drive higher ROI for its clients.

