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Magazine Ad Sales: How to Make Your Print “Act” Digital

IN STRATEGY FOR AD SALES /

Digital technology is causing significant change in the way publishers manage magazine ad sales. The good news: the benefits that attract advertisers to digital can cross media and support print ad sales as well.

Digital content allows for consumption in a variety of convenient formats—websites, mobile apps, digital issues, and e-newsletters among them—and the medium provides always-available access.

Still, these advantages alone may not be what make the digital platform appealing to advertisers. By recognizing the full value of digital, print magazine ad sales can mimic several of its most important features.

Show Advertisers Results

Digital magazine ad sales offer a variety of revenue models. For a detailed overview, see our post, “[CPM, CPC, CPL, CPA: Which Online Ad Models are Best?](#)” Each model can track performance metrics—even if they are only impressions—and show advertisers what their ad buy has gotten them.

Print ad sales teams typically share circulation, readership, and other details about the audience to demonstrate the potential return on investment. However, “potential” may not be enough.

One solution: **conduct more extensive research** into the sales impact that exposure in your publications makes. Then, share this data as part of your [advertising sales strategy](#). Some options include:

- A small study, consumer panels, or extensive data collection about reader buying habits.
- Testimonials from current advertisers.
- [Partnerships with advertisers to include tracking codes or special URLs](#), which can help you evaluate an advertisement’s influence.

As an example, [Meredith Corporation](#) used data from Nielsen Homescan to show that subscribers to its publications bought more of certain products than non-subscribers. It incorporates a guarantee of ROI as part of its sales program with certain brands. Using these types of tactics with your own publications can offer concrete evidence of their value.

Offer Multiple Experiences with the Advertiser’s Message

Digital magazine ad sales can deliver messages to readers in a variety of ways, but so can print. Sharing the message multiple times in the same print issue or across several issues is **more likely to make an impact—instead of just an impression.**

Ad sales management teams should promote combinations of ad placements that include:

- Double page spreads or gatefolds.
- Special textures and papers.
- The use of samples, gifts, and vouchers.
- Advertorials.
- Sponsorships (associations that publish magazines should explore our post on [non-dues revenue](#) for more ideas.)

Advertising programs with multiple ad units and features likely mean higher costs. That’s why it’s even more important to sell the return on investment that advertisers may receive (see above).

Alternatively, your [advertising sales manager](#) can offer these additional placements at a discount. This tactic makes the most sense when discounts **prove your publication’s value to an advertiser** and help to **create a long-term advertising relationship.**

Ensure Relevant Advertising

One of the most effective aspects of [digital ad sales](#) is the ability to incorporate data about readers from their online activities. Publications can then present an advertisement or offer that is individually tailored.

Print magazine ad sales aren’t so dynamic by the nature of the medium. However, publications should do everything that they can to provide advertisements that offer interest and value to their audience. The better the fit, the better the return advertisers can expect.

A greater opportunity lies in the ability to segment print readership and, potentially, to customize advertisements to specific audiences. [2010 research by the CMO Council](#) found that 63% of readers surveyed would go online for more information if the advertising in printed-subscription magazines were customized. Interest was even greater in customized content.

While digital ad sales will grow in importance, print publications continue to offer readers an experience for which they—and advertisers—are willing to pay. Improving that experience with everything we have learned across media can support the publisher’s bottom line.

AdBoom Advertising assists publishers in each of the areas we’ve recommended. [Contact our advertising sales agency](#) to help your print “act” more like digital.

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