



By John Bosacker

## Read Between the Lines

*“The press is the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral and social being”*  
— Thomas Jefferson

**D**uring the time of Jefferson and our country’s early existence, the printed press was the sole media for both information and advertising. Today, consumers are exposed to a vast number of media and sales channels, leading to the question in today’s media marketplace: *Is print dead?*

Three key factors exist in today’s media industry. First, consumers are the prevailing “customers” of mutable media choices — what media is best for them and their lifestyle? Second, dozens of media choices exist for direct marketers, all vying for consumers’ attention and response. Finally, testing these mutable media channels is required in order to gain the widest and deepest return on investment (ROI) within your target market.

Broadcast media is facing a number of challenges, including media fragmentation, fluctuation of rates, further use of digital video recorders (DVRs) — according to a study by Accenture, more than 10 percent of ads will be skipped by 2009, accounting for \$63 billion of lost ad revenue — and a host of alternative media choices. Those alternatives include direct mail, E-mail, Web search, podcasts, blogs, text messaging, social networking/software and others in development.

All this points to the fact that as DR pros, we must find our target markets where they are today, across those mutable lines. This is where print media still holds real benefits for direct response marketers.

Print media, in today’s space, is maintaining a strong presence for the consumer marketers are focused on reaching. Here are some key facts you may not know:

- Print media (newspapers and magazines) are read by more than 90 million Americans everyday
- 60 percent of consumers rate print media as the primary media source of shopping and buying decisions,

according to a December 2006 Ketchum/USC media usage study

- The same study shows 69 percent of consumers consider print media as being more comprehensive, reliable and credible than other media channels

- 46 percent of consumers prefer advertisements when reading a newspaper or magazine
  - Print holds one of the highest levels of “engagement” then other media choices consumers have — readers are less likely to listen to or watch other media while engaged in print media
  - Next to television, consumers spend more time per sitting with newspaper media than radio or the Internet
- Print media must be considered for any lead-generation and customer acquisition strategies, “soft offer” programs, and any other direct product offer of more than \$100.

The top 10 reasons to test print within your mutable media offers are:

- 1 Low out-of-pocket cost.** Both developing and testing a print ad are less costly than other outlets — tests can be done for 10 to 15 percent of your average DRTV and creative test
- 2 Fast to market.** Newspapers allow DR marketers to test within three business days of receiving a final print ad and sign off
- 3 A/B tests.** Print’s low cost allows marketers to test mutable offers, creative ad unit sizes and creative types
- 4 Scaleable.** With more than 90 million monthly, weekly and daily print circulation available, a DR pro can grow a print test into a rollout within weeks
- 5 Targeting.** Print allows marketers to test target markets with niche magazines or more mass offers through newspapers or broad-based magazines
- 6 Baby bombers and seniors.** With the ever increasing need to reach baby boomers and highly active seniors, print media is still a preferred media for both
- 7 The welcome “lag.”** Print generates an even response volume at a call center and the highest level of “lag” calls/orders of any media channel — up to two weeks for newspapers and even 90 days for magazines
- 8 Trackable.** Print’s response tracking accuracy is huge, as the “prospect” has the ad in hand
- 9 Incremental revenue.** Testing and proving the viability of print media not only generates incremental sales revenue, but can increase the lift of your current broadcast activities as much as 5 to 12 percent
- 10 Simply, it works.** Print media continues to prove its effectiveness as a profitable media channel for direct marketers. ■

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