

MAGNETIC

Untapped value – why magazine brands remain an essential part of the media mix

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As a thoroughbred digi-display man, I entered Magnetic's Lab with nothing more than wide-eyed, childish sense of curiosity and a single previous print booking under my belt. Two full days of workshops and talks later and I have come out with not only a wider knowledge of the print medium, but a heightened sense of its paramount importance in the ever changing media landscape.

Talks from the legendary Dave Trott, alongside Empire editor-in-chief Terri White (and many others) shifted my mind away from the CPMs and CTRs of digital and reminded me that a true interaction, with a trusted brand, boosted by innovative creative is the only real way to tap into what your audience wants and deliver good advertising. These trusted brands of course being magazines.

An excellent example of one such trusted magazine is Time Out London, whose deep integration with the daily lives of Londoners has truly made it part of the city. I was lucky enough to spend the day at their offices hearing from them and learning why advertisers are vital not only to the upkeep of the company but also to its readers.

Time Out's gamble in staying above the line in a changing marketplace has certainly paid off, the physical copy is bigger than ever and Time Out are pushing even further into the experiential space, allowing advertisers to use Time Out as a catalyst for their ideas. Abroad, the Time Out brand is highly prevalent in most major cities across the world, some cities have physical magazines and others are just online, their willingness to adjust their model to suit different markets whilst still remaining a "magazine" at heart is what drives their effectiveness and appeal to both consumers and advertisers.

These changing methods around the world are of course indicative of all magazine brands' fight to stay relevant in the ever-widening digital world. Pure digital and programmatic offers cheap scale with strong (yet often dubious) targeting. To combat this, magazines are really working hard to promote their niche and their content quality with consumers, this was a very common topic among speakers at The Lab. BuzzFeed might post 700 pieces of content again, but only Empire has the exclusive interview with Tom Cruise.

There is strong evidence furthermore that potential customers actively seek out the ads within their favourite magazine brands. With ad-blocking and ad-fraud taking constant cuts into digital's trustworthiness, direct buys and print ads across known publications will never lose their value.

All in all, it's quality not quantity that will always be the main and undeniable appeal when it comes to magazine advertising. The desire for curated and specialised content will always thrive, and the throwaway culture of digital programmatic will only ever serve a limited (yet definitely major) part of the market. Leaving The Lab, my perceptions of magazine brands has certainly shifted and as long as they stay true to their pedigree and their audience there is no reason that magazines won't be essential for many years to come.