



MAGNETIC
YEAR IN REVIEW · 2016

Meaningful
Connections

Content

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A Year in Magazine Media & Look Ahead to 2017

Sue Todd



“demand for magazine media content is growing not shrinking”

Year-end reviews are really about the art of telling a good story. There needs to be a central narrative which drives meaning and helps the story reach a conclusion; often a set of winners and losers (or more extremely some good and bad characters), and frequently an overcoming adversity angle.

The story of magazines in 2016 is slightly less dramatic than the storytelling rules dictate but nonetheless a solid read.

Across the industry there are many individual tales of innovation, disciplined and smart business decision making, brilliant content creation and rewarding commercial partnerships that deliver some of the strongest ROI for brands.

From new dynamic distribution strategies, to agile pricing and diversification into new channels, there are plenty of tales that underpin the overall fact that in 2016 demand for magazine media content is growing not shrinking.

In 2017 when our new audience measurement AMP arrives, we will be able to evidence this more fully.

And within this growth story, consumers and advertisers increasingly see print as offering a very different and unique experience and opportunity, with magazine media providing a more purposeful and pleasurable read and a more welcoming advertising environment than any other.

2016 was the year that book sales in print grew for the first time in four years whilst eBook sales fell, and just last week vinyl record sales overtook downloads for the first time since digital downloads came into existence.

Proof that some experiences can't be replicated digitally and that consumers are beginning to recognise what non-digital experiences offer.

There were also many dramatic twists and turns to this year in the broader marketing and media community to reflect upon. For me the most significant story of 2016 for anyone working in advertising came from research conducted by Les Binet and Peter Field, which looked at 500 case studies from the IPA Effectiveness awards.

Cont'd...





“We will step up the fight to remind advertisers to invest in channels which create meaningful connections”

Their insight found the following that *‘on average, 47% of a comms budget is now spent on short-term activation strategies, up from 31% in 2014. And in terms of entries to the awards focused on short-term goals, that has “grown explosively” from around 7% in 2006 to more than a quarter in 2016, according to Field.*

Of even more concern is the decline in effectiveness, defined as their ability to create brand fame and contribution to profit growth. According to the research that peaked in around 2009 but has since been falling. And even the long-term case studies have lost efficiency, with levels now below where they were a decade ago’.

Our own work this year with Millward Brown and Carat looked at where magazine media contributes, and what drives long-term brand equity, and we will continue to invest in more specific data and insight in 2017 that helps advertisers make the optimal choices for their campaigns.

So looking forward, what else for 2017?

Well I believe that it will be a defining year, when many of the consequences and opportunities from the turmoil of change that has been 2016 will be determined.

We will have some serious choices to make as a media and advertising industry about the future we are creating for brands, consumers and future generations of talent coming through our doors.

I hope 2017 will be the year when we better understand the consequences of our actions and look to really redress some of the imbalances that exist. The year when are more honest about our bias and make a more conscious collective effort to break them.

From diversity and digital citizenship, the fight to save quality journalism and content, to resisting the dominance of the digital duopoly and protecting children from adult content, 2017 will be the year when more businesses break from the pack and lead the way on doing things differently.

From a magazine media perspective we will step up the fight to remind advertisers to invest in channels which create meaningful connections with their customers and drive long-term brand equity and offer the opportunity to be highly relevant to audiences.

We will see more dynamic distribution strategies to get print content into the right hands, and there will almost certainly be more live audience engagement opportunities allowing brands to connect in new ways with consumers who’s core passion is a defining factor in determining what they do and how they spend their money.

It’s going to be awesome.



View From The Top

Paul Keenan



"2016 has been a year of growth, innovation and outstanding creativity from our magazine media business as we united Bauer Media and H Bauer. We have grown reach across digital and experiential platforms, connecting our audiences through new events such as Empire Live at the O2 and creating a community issue of Grazia via Facebook Live.

We have launched new magazines such as Modern Gardens, and created a world first with Empire's limited edition video cover to mark the launch of Fantastic Beasts. And finally, our magazine media brands continue to create genuine cultural impact, with The Debrief 'Make Renting Fair' campaign which has caused the government to ban unfair rental fees."

Marcus Rich



"It's been a year of transformation and celebration at Time Inc. UK. Country Life helped BBC2 shine a light on rural Britain in its documentary series The Great British countryside. Wallpaper celebrated its 20th birthday; we launched Fabled by Marie Claire, our retail partnership with Ocado; and a new craft eCommerce site The Knitting Network.*

The inaugural Horse & Hound Awards were attended by the who's who of the Equestrian world, including Olympic Gold medallist Nick Skelton. We bolstered our advertising offer with the acquisition of Collective UK, and launched The Foundry, a creative content marketing arm.

We also delivered some incredible campaigns for our commercial partners, including a fully native issue of NME for Adidas NMD trainers; a content-led partnership for Matalan with ITV; and created an exclusive activation for Google Cardboard. We end the year on a high with VO5 named headline sponsor of the NME Awards 2017."

David Prasher



"It's been a strong year for our consumer titles at Haymarket.

Stuff and Autocar allowed clients to get up close with readers with the launch of 'Great British Women in the Car Industry' and 'Stuff Innovators powered by Intel', two new and entertaining live events.

FourFourTwo has doubled its audience in the last 12 months, delivering high quality content to discerning, engaged football fans across the globe. Forever Sports (FS) magazine has rebranded whilst retaining its position as one of the leading men's lifestyle category, driving continuing circulation growth both in the UK and now internationally."



View From The Top

Anna Jones

"2016 has been another year of innovation for us, and three things stand out for me. The growth of our events business, which brought so many of our brands to life this year, with experiential events such as the Esquire Townhouse and Beauty Unbound.

Cosmopolitan – across all platforms, but particularly Snapchat – we're now engaging with millions of millennial women on a daily basis. And last but definitely not least, the continued ability of our teams to create brilliant products. A great example of which is Women's Health, which won Consumer Magazine of the Year at the PPA Awards."



Tom Bureau

"Amongst the maelstrom of 2016's shocks – Brexit, Trump, Leicester City – Immediate has held a reassuring course. We continue to deliver the highest quality content and services to our 20m UK consumers. We launched 8 new magazines this year, our subscriptions business is stronger than ever, and we continue to grow our digital audiences and revenues.

Significantly, we launched our new content and partnerships studio – Imagine – which is already creating award-winning, audience based integrated campaigns for partners. And we're using our deep brand engagement to drive platform innovation and diversify revenues around ecommerce, digital marketplaces and our growing TV shopping businesses."



James Tye

"2016 was a year of real product diversification and growth for Dennis. The company made significant investment and headway in a number of areas.

Our newly launched children's title The Week Junior notched up a colossal 28,000 subscriptions in just over a year; its parent title The Week celebrated its 36th consecutive ABC increase; our ecommerce site Buyacar sold thousands of new and used cars; and we recorded unprecedented levels of online advertising income, particularly in our market-leading motoring titles."

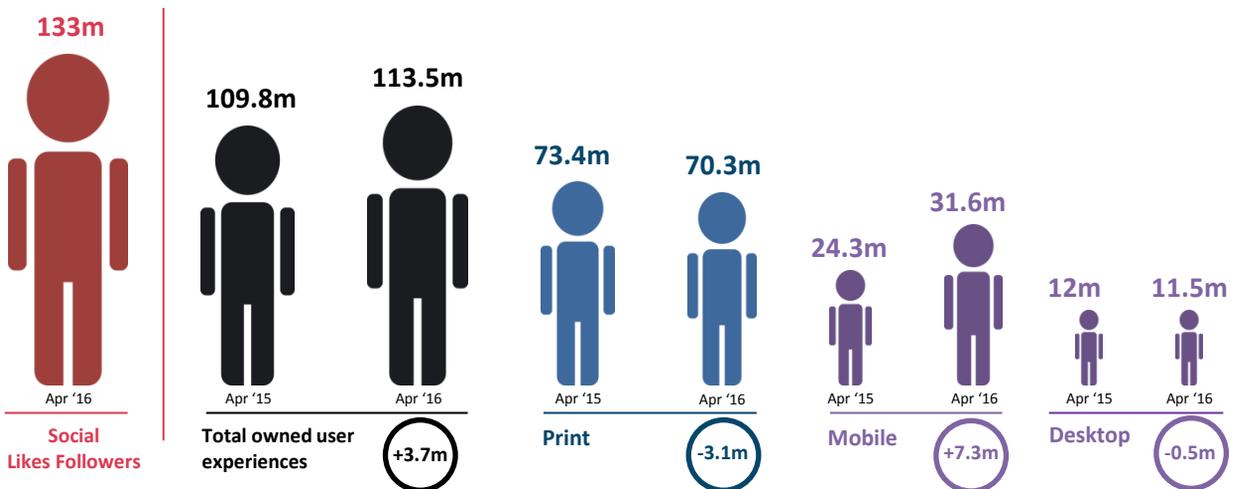


The Growth of Magazine Media: 2016 Sees Expanding Reach and Diversity of Platforms

Much like finely crafted Italian shoes, one size does not fit all when it comes to connecting people with their passions. Magazine media continued to grow its footprint this year with a consumer-centric, platform-specific approach to creating high quality original content. This requires that each piece of content is hand-picked and edited to compliment the distinct user experience offered by each platform. It is this attention to detail in making each connection with our content meaningful that is helping our total reach grow.

Magazine media monthly user experiences by platform

Source: NRS PADD, comScore, SocialFlow



Magazine media's consumer centric approach to content has helped the industry grow the number of monthly user experiences to levels which would have been inconceivable for print alone. Spanning mobile, desktop, social media, events such as [Empire Live](#), and [Fabled](#), the new shopping experience by Marie Claire, consumers now have a vast array of magazine media options to connect with their passions.

AMP the new cross-platform audience measurement system due to be launched by PAMCo in 2018 will soon give us an indication and new planning tool to truly understand and utilise the full spectrum of our audience reach across all platforms. In April this year, however, Magnetic set out to understand the scale of magazine media.

With print, mobile and desktop each providing a unique user experience, we calculated the total number of monthly user experiences (unduplicated) our members' magazine brands delivered across platforms that month.

Using NRS, comScore to compile the data, we found that that magazine media delivered 114 million user experiences across all owned platforms that month, which is a 3.7million increase year-on-year.

Additional work with [SocialFlow](#) showed that magazine media also enjoyed huge traction on social media recording 133 million followers or likes across five key social media platforms. On Twitter alone, our members had 21 million followers, three times more than national daily newspapers combined.



Resilience, Innovation and New Launches in Print

Organic growth, new distribution models as well as a flurry of new launches this year showed that consumers still have an appetite for the high quality, original curated content delivered by printed magazines. Overall the most recent [August 2016 ABC report](#) shows a 0.13% y.o.y. increase in combined circulation.

Resilient Sectors



Strong circulation performance



+60%

Cosmopolitan and Forever Sport strategy to target readers in gyms and retail pays off



308k

NME sees success with free model, starts targeting music festivals



36th

News and CA continues steady march upwards, The Week records 36th consecutive ABC increase



+38%

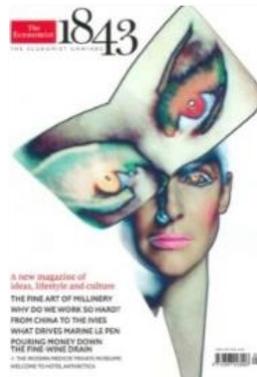


+15%



+15%

New launches [click covers for info]

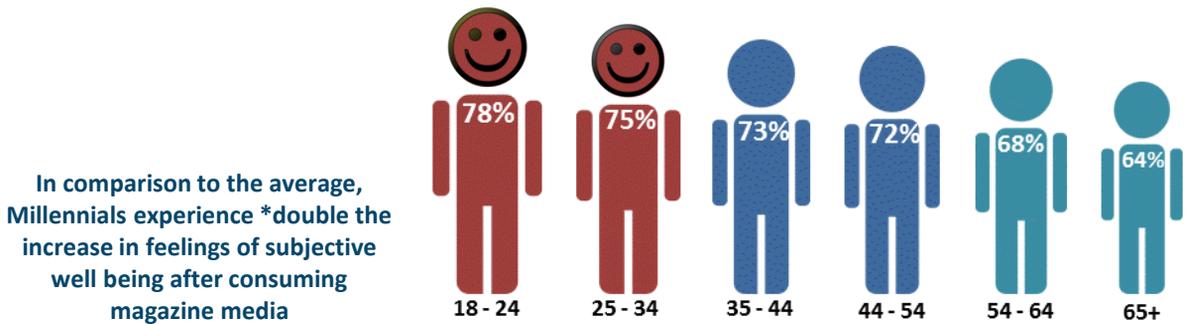


Millennials Find Purpose & Pleasure in Magazine Media

There is no shortage in stereotypes to describe Millennials: media savvy, hungry to exchange data for information, self[ie]-obsessed, entitled and lazy are a few of the most notorious. [Recent research](#) has shown that painting such a diverse group with a single broad brush is an ideal way to alienate them. They also especially dislike being labelled Millennials. These younger audiences are however attracted to one thing without exception: authenticity. Expertise and experiences provided without prejudice. They were also the group most likely to be consuming magazine media on a monthly basis this year.

Monthly magazine media readers by age group

Source: NRS PADD Q3 2016, *Moments that Mater



The enduring allure of magazine media is quite evident in the latest [NRS PADD](#) data. At 78%, 18–24 year olds are more likely to engage with magazine media than any other age group.

For Millennials as a group this figure is 77% - still a higher percentage than for any other age group.

But beyond readership figures there is also ample evidence that this group gets a greater level of satisfaction from interacting with magazine media than the population at large.

In [Moments that Matter](#) we used Paul Dolan’s book *Happiness by Design* as a framework to understand whether the experience of consuming magazine media could contribute to an increased sense of well-being.

The work found that 68% of all magazine media moments delivered against purpose and pleasure, the two key components in driving a sense of subjective well-being (or happiness).

“The danger of advertisers not thinking about this audience in the right way is...only reaching the very edges of the group, or missing them completely. Millennials are often perceived as one... we want to spell the end of that broad brush approach”

Romano Sidoli,
Time Inc. UK’s Innovation Group

More interestingly the work also found the boost to subjective well-being experienced by Millennials 200% higher than average.

We believe the appeal of our products to younger audiences is driven by access to high quality, original content and expertise where journalists and editors connect with audiences based on a shared passion. No stereotypes, no patronising, just great content that does what it says on the tin.

Planners Connect With Magazine Media at THE LAB

In May we launched **THE LAB** – a magazine media learning programme designed to create a 360-degree experience of the sector for up-and-coming agency planners. Via a series of discussions with senior publishing leaders, editors and creative thinkers, it offered exclusive behind-the-scenes time with magazine media to understand the craft of developing compelling multi-platform content. Here they offer us their reinvigorated views of magazine media.



Aneka Dew MGOMD

“As a trusted voice, magazine brands are a place you turn to for expert opinion, whether that’s the latest fashion trends, or advice on the best trainers for trail running. I always wondered how magazines stay ahead of the curve, and learnt that they use multiple sources to inform their content, whether through data from online panels, or PRs and ‘sources’ on the inside. However, what is clear is that they also use their intuition and immerse themselves in the real world to set, rather than follow the agenda – they are data enabled, not data controlled.” [Read more.](#)



Tom Sheppey Total Media

“The strength of algorithms is making the web convenient, satisfying our requirement for quick and easy information. However, sometimes we are looking for more than that; we want to consciously invest time in discovery. Magazines provide serendipity and the opportunity for rewarding accidental discovery. They do not offer up the easy answer on a silver platter but instead inspire to discover more. Magazine content is written and edited by people with a shared passion for their subject in a way no machine can replicate.” [Read more.](#)



Chloe Young MGOMD

“What was most surprising on hearing from the panel of magazine editors and CEOs was how only a very small proportion of their time was spent discussing print. Where speakers became most animated was in talking about the growth of the experiential/events space, an area that acts as almost a second tangible touchpoint after printed media, injecting new life into publishing brands. Comms planners will now need to adapt in the same way that media has and start to think more expansively about what publishers might be able to offer their clients.” [Read more.](#)



Chris Donnelly Mindshare

“We don’t want mags or print. We’re not going to reach millennials there”. I looked up from my smartphone, puzzled at what I was hearing from my planning team. Ironically, as it became distinctly apparent that magazine media of any sort was not even a consideration for this particular brand and their millennial audience brief, I’d drifted off, perusing Reading Festival content on NME.com. I was one of many young adults contributing to the 75% of millennials consuming magazine content on a monthly basis in 2016.” [Read more.](#)



Enduring Influence That Spans Platforms

Declining effectiveness and ad receptivity, media fragmentation and a proliferation of ways to communicate with consumers continue to present a major challenge for marketers. Influencer networks and algorithms appear to offer a helpful shortcut to navigate this territory, but how good are these tools at helping brands make meaningful connections with consumers? At Magnetic's **Spark** conference in September we explored the role of human connection and the importance of trusted expertise as drivers of success in the new influencer ecosystem.

The anatomy of an influencer

Nick Southgate is one of the leading practitioners in the emerging field of applied behavioural thinking. Earlier this year he worked with **Time Out** to help them define what makes an influencer, the role they play in amplifying messages and the key attributes that make them a trusted source of information, or not.

The work found that there are two distinct type of influencers; Makers and Shakers. Shakers have very large social networks, enjoy helping others, actively provide advice and are confident in their opinions.

Makers have smaller, but still substantial, networks but are much more passionate and knowledgeable about specific topics. The

research found that Makers are more likely to have an impact on the decisions others take as they are seen to provide a trusted source of expertise.

These findings were further quantified by **work done by Starcount** for Magnetic which explores the new influencer economy.

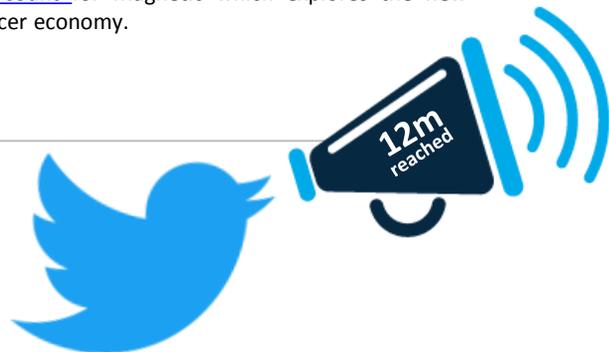
#LFW #MagMedia #Leader

Inspired by TimeOut we were keen to further understand magazine media's role in driving and influencing social media conversations. We teamed up with 2CV to work on a unique project around **London Fashion Week** (LFW) – taking place the same week as our Spark conference.

In the first instance we identified all 350,000 social media authors who participated in LFW conversations during February 2016.

This was distilled down to a list of the 50,000 most impactful authors which in turn was used to create magazine media and a blogger author groups. To draw comparisons on reach, influence and impact of each, we created our dataset based on the top 50 authors for each group.

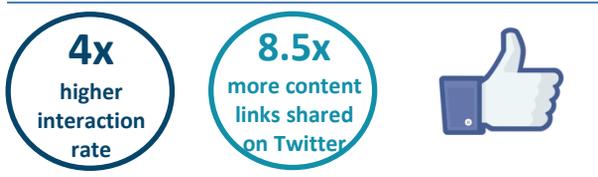
The bloggers created a much larger volume of content than



magazine media, but the data showed that people were 4x more likely to engage with the magazine media content. The trust they placed in the content reflected by the fact that people posted 8.5x more links to magazine media content on twitter than was the case for the bloggers.

Approach to content was vastly different between the two groups. Magazine media content was outward facing and brand centric, were the bloggers content was more internally focussed.

Despite the head start bloggers seemed to enjoy with size of their follower base and volume of content generated, the high level of engagement and active reposting of magazine media content saw both groups reach 12 million people during fashion week.



Editor vs. Algorithm: The Need for Human Connections

One of highlights of Spark was undoubtedly Lorraine Candy, the editor-in-chief of Elle being interviewed by Claire Beale, the editor-in-chief of Campaign. It started with a question about the role of the human editor in an age where the algorithm is powering so much online content. Candy's response that editors are walking algorithm sparked an [industry wide debate](#). Candy admitted that editors do work with and value data, but it is combining it with the editor that turns magazine media content into a powerful and exciting force. We asked Nick Southgate to give us his take on the importance of human connections in influencing decision making.

Nick Southgate Behavioural Economist



I watched Claire Beale of [Campaign](#) interview Lorraine Candy of Elle at Magnetic's annual [Spark event](#). Beale asked Candy what role human editors had in an age of data and algorithms. Candy's answer was simple - "We [Editors] are the walking algorithms". Should we believe her?

In a world where falling in love with computers is made to look plausible by movies such as Heer and Ex Machina, should we not also believe that algorithms and AI could edit magazines better, or at least as well as, the current 'walking algorithms' do? Is it not a more humble and achievable task in comparison? To understand our answer, we should turn to one of the staple questions of philosophical AI—the [frame problem](#).

In essence the issue is this. Computers can now beat human all comers at chess and even the more complex [Go](#). Yet the same computer would not know to leave the room if a fire started – something even the worst chess player in the world would know to do. AI is great at specific intelligence. Humans are very good at general intelligence.

If the problem is one of specific intelligence, then a computer would be better. Computers are good at repetitive tasks that demand great accuracy or crunching a vast number of options to find the best one. When AI really struggles is when it needs to read situations – and most of all when it needs to read people.

The AI editor we all know best is probably Amazon's Book Recommendations. I've spent a lot of time telling Amazon which books I already own and what I think of them. I'm impressed by its recommendations. It's alerted me to books I didn't know where coming out and directed me to authors I didn't know.

However, when I really want a recommendation I prefer to ask [Profs Noys](#) and [Price](#), friends of mine who teach in the English Department at The University of Chichester.

The reason is simple. The Profs can make leaps in recommendations Amazon just can't. Yes, I trust their personal expertise and deep knowledge – but that is only half the battle, and not the half where the battle is won.

What they also know is my mood and where I am in my life. They know if I want to be educated or entertained, whether my mind needs emptying or filling. More perceptively, they can suggest when my tastes need correcting or challenging. They don't just want to sell me a book. They want me to be a better reader and a better person.

This is why they are my editors and Amazon is only an algorithm. Editors choose content for human reasons – and this demands the wide and general intelligence human beings are good at. Algorithms choose content for narrower and more purely commercial reasons. Amazon only recommends books that it can sell me, for example.

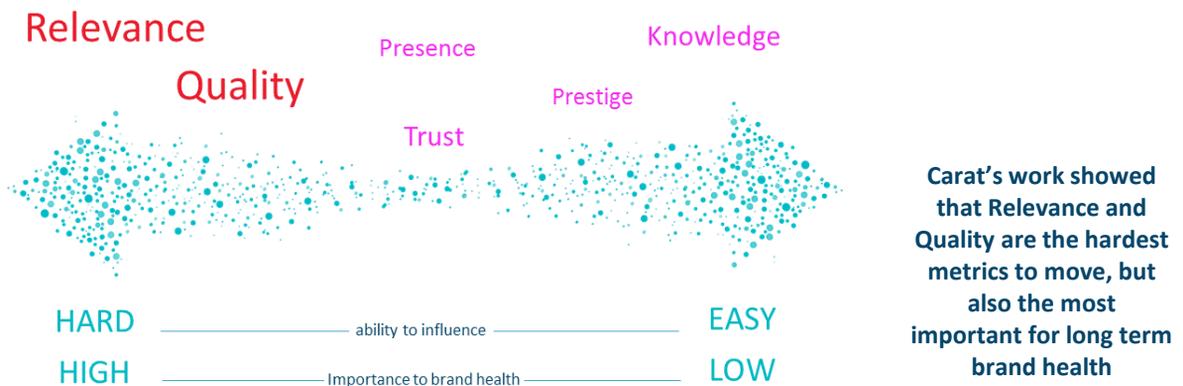
It is not just that we trust people to build a better product. It is that editors, human editors, know how to make human connections. They know that their magazine brand is not merely a commercial exchange, but a social one. Editors know when to stretch readers, when to leap forward, when to move back. Editors know how to make human leaps. And, for the moment, algorithms don't.

This article has been edited for length, [read the original](#)

Magazine Media Moves the Metrics That Matter

Launched at Spark and commissioned with Carat – [Metrics That Matter](#) – looks at the impact of the full range of magazine media assets across both print and digital, including display, advertorial and native solutions. The study found that magazine media moves the metrics that matter because it achieves a deeper, more meaningful connection with consumers and that’s what delivers strong brand KPI’s.

The key metrics to build long term brand health



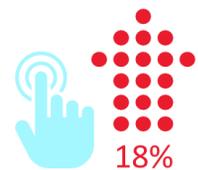
Metrics that Matter was conducted using Carat’s ICE tool. It showed that relevancy is the most important metric to move if you want to impact long term brand KPIs. Magazine media was shown as the number one media channel for moving relevancy and the second most effective channel at driving perceptions of quality.

These abilities are attributed to the fact that magazine consumption is driven by a highly personal interest in the content allowing brands to advertise in a highly relevant and complimentary environment where [advertising is welcomed](#) by audiences

Earlier work by Magnetic and [Millward Brown](#) showed that magazines excel in helping consumers understand how a brand will meet their needs (meaningfulness) as well as what makes a product unique or better than others (differentiation). The MB work also shows that brands that achieve high levels of meaningfulness and differentiation have higher levels of loyalty, can command a higher price and in the longer term enjoy growth rates that are 2.5 time higher.

[Metrics that Matter](#) also looked at the contribution of all magazine media assets across platforms and formats and found that magazine online are 41% more impactful on brand KPIs than other online environments. It also found that combining display with native or advertorial provided a 20% boost in performance in comparison to display alone.

Further work with Moat showed that magazine media’s online interaction rate was 18% higher and interaction times were 30% higher than average.



Interaction rate



Interaction time

A Welcoming Environment for Advertisers

Despite a challenging advertising market, magazine media attracted a large number of new advertisers in the last year. More than 163 advertisers also increased their spend by £100,000 or more and encouragingly this included major names in online retailing, technology, motoring, beauty, retail and food, amongst other sectors.

Top 10 advertisers by overall spend



Top 10 advertisers by increase in spend



Top 5 new advertisers by spend





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