

## 10 suggestions for a magazine ad with stopping power

A print ad has on average no more than a second to attract the reader's attention. When an ad has stopping power it will not only attract but also hold their attention. But what makes a magazine ad catch your eye? First and foremost the X-factor: creativity. Whether an ad is successful depends on the work of your ad agency. Creativity breaks all rules. Nevertheless there are a few rules we can apply which make every magazine ad work harder!

A number of physical characteristics of the ad and of its environment influence the effectiveness. We have learned from ad tests how that Works and have laid down a few ground rules that make your ad work harder. Guaranteed!

### 1. Use a larger size ad

The size of your ad influences its attention value in a big way. A bigger ad captures the reader's attention longer than a smaller one. A spread will therefore have more impact on the readers than a full page. It has more stopping power and a better brand recognition even.

A bigger ad will also get more appreciation from the readers. They rate a large ad as more original and containing more information.



### 2. Put your brand and/or product name in the ad so people can recognise and read it

A brand or product name that is readable and recognisable works as a unique visual stimulus. And thus attract attention. When you print your brand or product name larger than 1.5 cm in the ad (based on a standard magazine size) it will have positive effect on attention, appreciation and the ability of the ad to convey information. Larger product images or pack shots also have a positive influence, specifically on attention, appreciation and brand recognition. Apparently people like you better when you are clear about who you are and what you are selling!

### 3. Use images in your ad

A reader will focus on your ad for no more than a few seconds in total, usually far less. The visual elements attract most of the attention: 50-75% of the time will be spent on images and other visuals.



The image attracts the attention, the text will hold it (if it is relevant to the reader). The image in your ad should mirror the main message, be recognizable (not confusing) and stand out.

### 4. Limit the text volume in your ad

When the text volume is limited (max. 33% of the ad) improves attention, brand recognition and appreciation of the ad. The inclination to read an ad decreases progressively with the increase of text volume in the ad. If you have a lot to tell, use a bigger ad. And try to communicate as much as possible through visuals.

*Please note that there is a difference between men and women when it comes to the way they look at visuals and text in an ad. Women are primarily focussed on the visual. They judge the relevance and attractiveness of the ad based on that. Men will in general glance at the visual and then search the text to see if the message is relevant to them. Men prefer brief product information whereas women like to get as much information as possible.*

## 5. Use creative formats

Creative formats are non-standard ads. We can stimulate all senses with these formats by adding extra visual stimuli or scent, sound, taste and touch to a page. Examples are scent strips on a page, a discount card, samples and gatefolds. Even a simple glued on card or a brochure will attract more attention than a normal ad. From the 2008 research of Sanoma Uitgevers/Motivaction we learn that 99% of readers smell a scented ad, 95% opens a gatefold and removes samples from their magazine. 87% looks at the enclosed brochures. Data that put the strength of creative formats beyond doubt!



## 6. Put a recipe in your ad



People are often on the look out for new recipes. That is why ads who provide them generally attract more attention (if there is relevance to the product of course). Half of the Dutch people who cook regularly are interested in recipes, according to the study 'Trends at the table' (Sanoma Uitgevers/TNS Nipo, 2006). With new products 71% like it if recipes are provided. And 40% indicate that recipes are a good reason for them to try out a product that is new to them. Our 'cooks' are in need of inspiration! And an important source of inspiration is magazines: editorial information and ads with recipes for new or existing product. A recipe in an ad attracts and keeps the readers attention. It generates more contact with the text and a better recognition of the product.

## 7. Use images of people, children or your animals

An ad which features people (celebrity or not), children or young animals will attract more attention and keep it. Several studies show that adults are moved by certain characteristics like big round eyes and round cheeks. They have natural inclination to protect and take care of the young. A person or part of a human body or face will increase the attention for your ad as well. Especially if the person is looking at you directly.



## 8. Put the ad in a relevant environment

The immediate editorial environment of the ad influences its effectiveness. Several studies show that ads placed next to a related editorial piece achieve better results on attention and appreciation. .

The ad environment in a broader sense is the magazine itself. People have certain expectations from a magazine's content and they adjust their perception accordingly. This is called the Halo effect. Studies show that people will interpret an ad differently when it is placed in a different magazine. So, the medium is part of the message. Magazines are not a neutral carrier of the commercial message, but they are an essential part of it.

## 9. Advertise on the back cover

One of the key learnings from ad impact research (post testing) is that the back cover of a magazine will generate significant better results on attention, brand and product recognition than other positions. The same goes for cover 2 (inside front cover) and cover 3 (inside back cover). Another remarkable finding is that the right page position does not work better for advertising than the left. There is hardly any difference at all. The position of the ad in the magazine, whether first, middle or last part, does not have an influence on its effectiveness either.

## 10. Advertise in the summer



While TV ratings show a considerable dip during summertime, magazines are bought and read more intensively. Longer days, better temperatures and the holiday season drive people go outside with their magazine in stead of staying in and watching television. The magazines focus their editorial content on the summer feeling, summer activities and fashion and in many cases include special premiums like books or beach accessories to seduce the readers. No reruns in magazines during summer! Media spending in summer is half that of winter for all media types. For magazines it would be more logical to increase them! The summertime is magazine time and advertisers can benefit from that!

### Sources:

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- Trends aan Tafel, Sanoma Uitgevers/TNS Nipo, 2006
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