



Published on *MPA* (<http://www.magazine.org>)

Mary Berner: Swipe 2.0 Keynote Address

Mary Berner
President & CEO
MPA

Swipe 2.0 Keynote Address
[Swipe 2.0 Conference 2013](#) [1]
March 28, 2013
New York, NY

Good morning and thanks for coming. I'm delighted you are here. It's going to be a great conference, with interesting speakers, covering really important stuff.

So let's cut right to it. I'm going to say something that will surprise you. There has never been a better time to be in the business of magazine branded media. Sure, it is a time of transition, but if you ignore the pundits and the potshots and focus on the very real strengths of the industry, then you'll be able to see why this is true.

Just a few years ago, the buckets of what comprised "media" were clear and defined by specific formats and usually a single method of distribution. A "magazine" was a printed periodical with articles, photographs and advertisements, with a beginning and an end, distributed through the mail or sold on newsstands. In fact, the always provocative Bo Sacks noted that it wasn't too long ago that Publishing Executive Magazine proclaimed: "If it isn't in print, it isn't a magazine." Today, it's a rare publication that doesn't deliver content to its readers on and through multiple platforms and through an increasingly wide-range of formats—written words, pictures, video.

According to AAM, just three years ago, only 51% of publishers were distributing their content on mobile devices. That number is now 90% with the remaining 10% scheduled to develop mobile optimized content before the year is out. It is no longer accurate or appropriate to talk about ourselves exclusively as "magazines" which to most people connote just print—because it doesn't begin to measure our reach. Instead, we and others—the press, the advertising community, and Wall Street, for starters—need to think about, calculate and interpret the entire business and footprint of Magazine Media because our readers' desire for magazine branded content transcends any one platform.

OK. So you may be thinking...so what? All media distribute content across a bunch of platforms. What makes Magazine Media so special? Why do I believe that Magazine Media will not only survive, but flourish in this wild west of a media landscape, when so many others think our best days are behind us?

Let me give you six reasons--reasons informed by a huge range of third-party consumer behavior insights and proprietary research from our member companies, analysts and allied associations--six reasons why it is the best time to be in the business of Magazine Media.

1. Powerful Brand Relationships

2. Growing Consumer Demand
3. Advertising "Wantedness"
4. Print Appeal
5. Digital Opportunity
6. Content Is (Still) King

Reason #1: Powerful Brand Relationships

All media are fighting in an attention economy. Competition for audience and advertising has never been fiercer, which is why the trusted and enduring relationships magazine brands have with their consumers give us such an edge. Magazine Media, usually, but not always, anchored in print, enjoy unique brand equity that is built from a convergence of content and community around the specific interests and passions of readers.

This is an important distinction because as our words, pictures and stories travel across platforms—they carry with them highly engaged consumers who trust and look for our brands, and will pay for our content. In fact, magazine branded apps are among the highest grossing iPad apps sold on iTunes—9/10 top lifestyle apps, 6/10 food and drink apps, 8/10 [health and fitness](#) apps and 6/10 of the highest grossing news apps are magazine apps.

I've always loved working in magazines, but in a past life I must have been a teacher. I cannot resist a pop quiz.

1. How many magazines have thrived for over 50 years?

A. 12 B. 35 C. 105 D. 338 million

Answer: Ok, It isn't D...The correct answer is: 105

Guess how many TV brands can claim the same thing? Nine

2. What percentage of 18-34 year old social media users who also read magazines—follow a magazine editor or columnist on Twitter?

A. 56% B. 13% C. 45% D. 49%

Answer: 56%—and more than half have re-tweeted a magazine editor's tweet.

3. What percentage of consumers went to a digital newsstand in search of a specific Magazine Media brand?

A. 12% B. 22% C. 45% D. 79%

Answer: The answer is 79%, indicating our branded content is a destination purchase on digital newsstands.

As I said earlier, we are competing in an attention economy—it is incredibly hard to build an enduring and profitable brand. However, with the tsunami of content available to consumers now, magazine brands are not only holding their own, they are growing their audiences.

Reason #2: Growing Consumer Demand

Which brings me to Reason #2: Magazine Media don't have an audience problem. In fact, with the ability to expand the delivery of our content beyond print, Magazine Media audiences have actually grown over the past two years. Consumers are decidedly not abandoning magazines. They are reading their magazines where, when and how they choose. And with the rapid adoption of mobile reading, the movement between and among devices by magazine readers will continue.

Let's check the industry's vital signs.

The audience for Magazine Media—both print and tablet—is UP +1.6%. The print audience alone is up 1.3% and tablet audiences grew +47.5%.

The Magazine Media audience for print and online is also UP +3%. And paid subscriptions grew nearly 1% in the second half of 2012 over the prior year.

And, by the way, newsstand, while down, still gets reported as a barometer for the health of our entire industry, despite the fact that it only accounts for 10% of total paid circulation and its decrease reflects secular brick and mortar retail trends. I cannot stress how important it is to keep stats like this in proper perspective.

And these data don't just represent a bunch of older people. Magazine media boast undisputed appeal for all age groups. In fact, 91% of adults 18+ read magazines. How about the younger crowd? Magazine media have never been more popular among youth, with 96% of 18 to 24-year-olds reading print magazines. Not only that, adults under 25 read more print/digital magazines per month than adults of all ages.

So clearly, as I said, we don't have a consumer problem. What we do have is a perception problem among certain segments of advertising communities.

Reason #3: Advertising "Wantedness"

Despite the fact that--unlike other media--consumers not only like, trust, and engage in advertising in Magazine Media—they actually want it, along with the content, to be part of the experience. This dual immersion phenomenon is unique to the Magazine Media industry. Unlike TV and other media, where the advertising keeps you AWAY from the content you are looking for, in magazines, it is actually wanted. This is duplicated in only one other place in the media landscape—does anyone know? The Super Bowl.

It should be no surprise that magazines rank #1 among consumers as their most preferred place to see and engage with ads, according to multiple studies.

In about two months, broadcast networks will spend millions of dollars treating advertisers to all the shrimp they can eat and all the propaganda they can bear at their annual upfront "proms." Their hope is to convince advertisers to invest in TV, despite another year of falling ratings, including, according to Variety, record low ratings for some of their shows. Like I said before, we, unlike television, don't have an audience problem, we have a perception problem. Maybe we ought to serve more shellfish.

While the broadcast networks are beating their chests over their increasingly diminishing medium, Magazine Media are proud to say that our print business remains a distinctive and invaluable asset.

Reason #4: Print Appeal

Print magazines will continue to be a desirable platform for both readers and advertisers as they provide a tactile and immersive experience unique to Magazine Media. With print, the power is firmly within readers' hands, and the relationships that develop are both intimate and emotional.

Despite all the hoopla about print magazines closing, 195 new titles were launched in 2012, an increase of 7% over 2011, which significantly outpaces closures at 82.

Even purely digital content players have expanded into print, recognizing the value of that format. For your consideration: The Knot.COM launched the Knot Magazine. You also have GILT with Du Jour and a Net-a-Porter print title coming this fall. Those digital properties are strengthening their consumer connection through print launches because they know what works.

Excluding those who have been busted for shoplifting, arrested for DUI or caught up in a sex scandal, I challenge you to name one celebrity, politician, or business leader who doesn't covet the cover of a print magazine. While many consumers enjoy their content on screens, there are plenty of readers who will continue to prefer the hands-on control print gives them.

Reason #5: Digital Opportunity

I know I am preaching to the choir here, but #5 is digital opportunity.

As you all know, digital and mobile media provide huge opportunities for our business—to engage and expand our brand communities even more deeply than we already do in print. In fact, consumers reading magazine digital editions increased 44% in 2012. While it is still early days for magazines on tablets—remember, the iPad only launched in April 2010—initial research from leading publishers indicates that reader engagement levels on tablets are either equal to—or better than—print, with regard to both content and advertising.

And let me remind you that our industry has been exceptionally successful in creating recurring revenue streams. We are pretty good at this model, especially when you consider that in 2011, there were nearly 283 million magazine subscriptions in circulation—a damned impressive number, particularly when considering that the U.S. population is just under 314 million. And we fully expect that our subscription expertise will be deployed just as profitably across digital platforms as it has been in print.

Reason #6: Content Is (Still) King

So, indulge me for a moment . . . I have found—over far too many years than I care to admit—that it's ALWAYS been a good time to work in this business . . . I LOVE magazines. We don't just report the news, we make it. We shape the conversation and drive the culture . . . sometimes ahead of the zeitgeist. "Not Just Another Prom Night," a story about a same-sex couple going to prom. This didn't appear in 2010. It was 1992. Glamour Magazine. It's about the way we tell stories and entertain readers. It's about authority and trust. Check out morning television. Flip the channels—MSNBC, NBC or CNN—who are the experts? They're from Magazine Media. Where do you expect to find groundbreaking long-form journalism? Magazines, of course. Think about Steven Brill's story on health care in TIME, Ann-Marie Slaughter's essay on women's work in The Atlantic, and Lawrence Wright's reporting on scientology in The New Yorker—stories that are unique to Magazine Media, told in a way that only Magazine Media can tell them that have ignited the cultural conversation and even, sometimes, societal change.... And, Page Six, what would you do without us?

I joined MPA six months ago because I believe in the future of Magazine Media.

With MPA leading the charge, we are working together as an industry with laser-like focus to address and seize the opportunities ahead of us:

- Our CTOs are working together on standards that will allow for vast improvement in the marketing, development and delivery of our digital product.
- Our consumer marketers, heads of sales, research directors and publishers are working together and with our key stakeholders – most notably the advertising community – to determine the best ways to track, analyze, and measure magazine audience, as well as engagement, across our whole footprint.
- Our corporate PR leaders are working together to communicate a more accurate narrative of Magazine Media across all platforms to the press, Wall Street, investors and partner constituencies.
- And our CEOs are convening regularly, recognizing that while we want to move quickly together as an industry – it is equally as important that we are smart about what we do and how we do it.

Thank you all for coming today. This is truly a great time to be in the Magazine Media business. You are innovating, you are creating, you are enhancing and you are answering the consumer call for multiplatform content. You are

making our footprint bigger and the Magazine Media brand experience more dimensional, more immediate and more available...where, when and how the consumers choose.

Enjoy the conference and thank you.

Source URL: <http://www.magazine.org/industry-news/speeches/mary-berner-swipe-20-keynote-address>

Links:

[1] <http://swipe.magazine.org>