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Mary Berner, 2012 AMC Keynote Opening Remarks

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[AMC, The Magazine Media Conference](#) [1]
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When I was approached about taking over as the CEO of MPA, I jumped at the chance for a couple of reasons. I love magazines and I believe in magazines. I believe that magazines – on both print and digital platforms have a bright future. And because I am pissed.

I am pissed that we as an industry have allowed others to hijack our story, our narrative. A narrative that is now dismissive of print magazines. That is seen through the lens of a couple of traditional measurements that only tell part of the story, and a narrative that lumps us in with newspapers. By letting others hijack our story, the conversation about magazines has become one of doom and gloom, demise, and yes, even imminent death. And that should make everyone in this room mad because that conversation- which simply isn't true - is affecting our business in the short-term, especially with advertisers.

So as the daughter of political and social activist parents whose response to any and all complaints thrown at them by their five children was “stop complaining and DO SOMETHING about it,” I jumped at the chance to lead MPA, because if there were ever a time for an industry to work together, a time for an industry organization to lead that effort, with chutzpah and balls – the time is now. We are transitioning through the most exciting, and yes, challenging time in the history of magazines and a strong MPA – which is YOUR advocate, YOUR voice, YOUR thought-leader, and YOUR business-grower –a strong MPA that is focused and relentless, and loud about pushing forward and leading our collective agenda, especially now, will not only change the conversation, but help drive the story and ultimately our growth, immediately and for the long-term. And the first thing we have to do is to change the conversation about magazines by leading the conversation about magazine media.

We are not in the [printing business](#). We are in the content business. As Michael (Clinton) said – it's the content stupid. And we unique in the content business in that we are powerful arbiters of taste, style, thought, and influence. So the ability to serve our audiences through platforms beyond print is an incredible and hugely transformative opportunity for magazines. It goes without saying that technology is re-shaping and disrupting every industry, and the magazine industry is no exception, And yes, that means unprecedented challenge and complexity— and the complexity and investment that every magazine media company is facing can't be overstated, but neither can the unprecedented opportunity. In just a little over two years the ways in which we distribute our content and extend our brands in addition to print has exploded – and I want to emphasize IN ADDITION TO as opposed to INSTEAD OF. There are now over 100 types of tablet devices on the market, multiple digital newsstands, over 15 publishing platforms as well as multiple operating systems.

In the time between leaving Reader's Digest Association and joining MPA I took advantage of the fact that my incredibly onerous non-compete pretty much prevented me from working, to take the time to really immerse myself in the exploding digital landscape. I visited over two hundred digital start-ups, almost all of them in the content space. I met a lot of [brilliant people](#) and saw a lot of cool stuff. But, if historical trends [continue](#), 80% of them will fail within two years because it is incredibly hard to build enduring and profitable content businesses without the DNA that distinguishes magazines from all other media. I don't need to tell you that there is an explosion of content challenging magazines for the attention of consumers, but our DNA puts us in the sweet spot within the tsunami of content that is now available to audiences – when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it.

As we migrate onto new digital platforms – which is an incredibly exciting way for our powerful brands to engage with our audiences – every publisher is investing, experimenting, exploring and expanding beyond the traditional print advertising and circulation-only business model to new models. This includes – customer relationship, affinity marketing and marketing services, ecommerce, multi-platform brand extensions, and new ways of creating and monetizing branded content. Digital is making all of this possible. We're still learning, and testing and experimenting. The “what” and “how” of magazine media is evolving at warp speed, and it is not yet clear which new models will prevail. What WILL remain constant is the strength and unique DNA of magazine brands as a catalyst for the industry's future growth regardless of how content is created or distributed.

Core to the DNA of magazines is that our brands are trusted and enduring, our content influences and is valued by deeply engaged communities of people around their well-defined interests and passions. Readers enjoy engaging in magazine ads and consider the relevant advertising that is intrinsic to the magazine experience an enhancement to the magazine experience – regardless of platform as opposed to paying to avoid them as they do with other media. No matter what research or study you look at, it's consistent that magazine content is trusted and influential, and reaches deeply engaged and interest-specific communities...who, by the way, like the ads! So while the picture painted of magazines has been one of doom and gloom, the fact is that magazines are well positioned. What is also true is that for lots of reasons there is an economic disconnect between the size of an audience, the depth of their engagement and the perceived value that advertisers place in magazine media. Ditto with the relentless noise about magazine media in newspapers and blogs. It is MPA's job to firmly take the lead of the conversation about magazine media, which we are aggressively focused on doing, but changing the conversation is something we all have to do together. And we've got to do it faster, and louder and with one strong freaking voice. We have to quickly command the respect the industry warrants. NOW.

So let's get started with changing the conversation, right now, at this conference. First, wherever and however possible, we need to start by tracking, aggregating, and communicating the whole magazine footprint (online, tablet, and print) with any and all qualitative, quantitative and directional data and measures that are used to tell the magazine story. Because everything is evolving so quickly it is the Wild West out there in measurement land – with no one source actually able to track what is really going on in magazine media across all platforms. So MPA is leading the conversation through our Tablet Metrics Task Force, the development of Digital PIB, and our Footprint Aggregation Initiative and our collaboration with the 4A's Next Generation Publishing Committee and ABC. And second, starting now, when as an industry we talk about magazines amongst ourselves, to advertisers and agencies, the press, to the financial community, policy makers and of course consumers, we need to stop talking about “magazines” – which to most people still means the printed version of a magazine— and instead start relentlessly talking about magazine media which includes our tablet and online footprint in addition to print.

We have to change the conversations about magazines by leading the conversation about magazine media, which includes all platforms for the simple reason that it provides a more accurate picture of what is happening.

We need to start to tell the complete story of magazine media, which is a story of increased and deepening audience engagement across a variety of platforms. For example, new data compiled by MPA that was released last week showing that the number of advertising brands advertising in magazine media, which includes online, tablet and print, has increased 57% since 2010. Also when you look at the combined unduplicated online and print audiences for magazines between 2010 and 2011, magazines grew 4%. And when the total footprint magazine media story is told – the conversation begins to change from this (slide showing negative press headlines) to this (slide showing positive

press headlines) which shows some of the positive stories about magazine media.

So let's take a short quiz which will test the prevailing conversation about magazine media. So pick up the small clickers that were placed on your seats -- and let's begin testing your magazine knowledge. And please leave them on your seats during the break so we can collect them.

Let's start with the conversation that "print is dead."

What percentage of U.S. adults read magazines?

- a. 100%
- b. 91%
- c. 88%

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...B, 91%

What percent of adults 18-24 read print magazines?

- a. 96%
- b. 85%
- c. 50%

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...A, 96%

Regardless of how you slice it (total adults, 18-34,18-24), over the past 5 years readership of print magazines:

- a. has exploded
- b. is flat
- c. has tanked

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...B, flat

Using newsstand performance as the prime indicator of magazine media vitality is "like telling someone who's got an ingrown toenail that he is dying. It's absurd" (Source MGB NY Post)

True/False

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...true

What is the top driver of web search?

- a. social media
- b. print magazines
- c. internet advertising
- d. Television

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...B, print magazines

How many print magazines have been launched so far in 2012?

- a. alas, none
- b. 86
- c. 155

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...C, 155

Here's one that's sure to be a crowd pleaser.

What about the notion that "magazine media is irrelevant"?

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...(shows slide of the *50 Shades of Grey* magazine)

At last week's ANA conference in Florida, which booth had advertisers "swarming like locusts"?

- a. Delta booth
- b. Simulmedia booth
- c. MPA booth

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...C, MPA booth

From 2010-2011 magazine media print and online audiences have:

- a. plummeted
- b. remained flat
- c. grown by 4%>

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...C, grown by 4%

In the last ABC statement total magazine circulation was:

- a. flat
- b. down only 2%
- c. unfortunately down 8.5%

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...A, flat

How many digital magazines were downloaded April 2010-August 2012?

- a. 40 MM
- b. 30 MM
- c. 10 MM

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...A, 40 million

What percentage of 18-34 year old magazine-lovers follow a magazine editor or columnist on Twitter?

- a. 100%
- b. 65%
- c. 50%
- d. 35%

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...B, 65%

How many magazine apps have been launched since the first one in 2010?

- a. 1728
- b. 896
- c. 773
- d. 450

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...A, 1728

How many of the highest grossing iPad Lifestyle apps are magazine apps?

- a. 5
- b. 13
- c. 15

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...B, 13

How many of the highest grossing news apps are magazine apps?

- a. 2
- b. 6
- c. 10

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...C, 10

What is New York Post columnist Keith Kelly's astrological sign?

- a. Aries
- b. Scorpio
- c. Virgo

And the answer for your MPA M-B-A...C, Virgo. And by the way, his birthday is September 10.

Congratulations!

So that's the end of this morning's quiz. Now going forward, we need to change the conversation from magazines to magazine media. Print magazines aren't going anywhere. BUT—and it is an emphatic BUT—considering the fact that the total global penetration of tablet devices is expected to grow from 140 million tablets in use this year to over 760 million in less than three years and that consumer consumption of all media is migrating to mobile devices—most notably tablets—at least some of the print audiences will migrate to tablets which means that we have to compile, aggregate, track, measure, and talk about our whole footprint about magazine media.

That said, for goodness sakes, we need to stop apologizing for print magazines. Michael said it best—we have a print-based business that consumers love. Print remains and will continue to remain a desirable platform for both readers and advertisers. It is the anchor of our brand equity. Print magazine journalism – the stories, photographs, the look and the feel have arguably never been better. It's portable. It's durable. And name one celebrity, politician or business leader who doesn't covet the cover of a magazine...or employ armies of publicists to land that cover. And we know that readers often buy what they see in print magazines.

We need to come together as an industry – cooperate and engage with each other and the MPA for the benefit of all. We need your input on task forces and committees. We need access to your best and brightest minds. We need your voice added to the magazine media chorus. We have great assets and a compelling story to tell. At our Board meeting yesterday we committed to some aggressive strategies to support the magazine media agenda and we will execute those with laser focus. But we can lead but only if you engage—so e-mail me with your ideas, thoughts, comments, feedback, and insights. Share your research, insight, case studies, presentations, and anecdotes. When we get back from this meeting, we are going to ask every member company to appoint someone in your organization to be your MPA Ambassador. It should be someone in a senior position who will serve as the liaison with us. We'll rely on that person to funnel your useful insights and data to us and to be our advocate within your company by disseminating and communicating anything and everything we are doing on your behalf that would be useful to you as you sell advertising, and market to consumers on all platforms, as navigate through our digital transformation. Help us to help you.

Innovate—and do it fast. In fact, innovate or DIE. Just like you, I've run magazine media businesses so I know how easy it is to say and how difficult it is to do. But I also learned that as important as deciding what to do, is to have the

courage to decide what to stop doing, the courage to continuously shift and reallocate your resources to balance the emphasis on what is currently making money with what will make money for the long-term. And the courage to stop listening to the noise. And I would like to encourage our colleagues in the press who cover the magazine media industry that to tell the complete story of magazine media, you've got to consider the fact that re-jiggering your staff like one of our large member companies did last week isn't always a sign of weakness, but might in fact be a sign that magazine media companies are innovating by making the hard decisions and tough choices around shifting resources to invest for future growth.

And finally, we've got to organize for success: Nailing the economics of the multi-platform business model of the future, supported by smart and innovative strategies isn't going to work unless both the magazine industry and advertising agencies organize for success as Michael has said. We need editors, consumer marketers, and brand sellers, and ad buyers to be platform agnostic – because the way our audiences are engaging with magazines is shifting to, from, and between different platforms and that will only accelerate. – but what remains constant and is the cornerstone of our future and the future of advertiser effectiveness in magazine media, is that our brands are trusted and influential and enduring, our content influences and is trusted by deeply engaged communities of people around their well-defined interests and passions, and magazine media audiences see ads as an enhancement to the magazine experience – regardless of platform. By re-imagining what we do, how we do it, who does it, and how incentives work to support multi-platform magazine media companies, we will be better positioned to leverage the fact that magazine brands are sitting in a sweet spot in the tsunami of content available to consumers today.

We are transitioning through the most exciting and challenging time in the history of our industry – and as we navigate through, you can count on me to lead the MPA on your behalf, to lead the conversation about magazine media...with chutzpah and balls...as your advocate and your voice. I'm psyched to be here.

Thank you.

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