**Social Media**Many companies today are pursuing a 360-degree brand and media strategy. Despite more digital distribution, printed magazines remain the emotional and trust-building anchor. Learn more in our latest blog.

**Magazines Are Trend Followers**

**When a trend manifests itself, one or more magazines usually come onto the market that take up and trigger the topic in all its facets. This is a development that has been gaining momentum over the years and was also confirmed during the corona pandemic.**

Target groups are becoming permanently smaller, and it is precisely for this that the advertising industry needs appropriate communication channels. Printed magazines still play an important role in this. Although the circulation of general-interest and trade magazines has steadily declined, the number of titles has increased significantly. In Germany, for example, the market for general-interest magazines has seen very dynamic development in recent years.

Of course, titles have also disappeared from the market. But a comparison of the figures for 1997 with those for 2020 reveals an impressive increase of almost 300 new titles. A total of 1335 general-interest magazines were published in 2020. This means that the range of publications has become much more individualized and specialized – many independent publishing houses have emerged, right down to the smallest niche.

**Problem paper crisis**

However, Philipp Welte, vice president of the Media Association of the Free Press (formerly [VDZ](%5bwww.mvfp.de%5d)) and member of the Burda board, emphasized at the [European Publishing Congress](https://www.publishing-congress.com) in Vienna at the end of June: "Many publishers still don't know what paper to print their magazines on in the third or fourth quarter." Even in the first year of the corona crisis, he said, advertising revenues fell by about 20 percent over the year. The current political situation has abruptly shattered any belief in a rapid recovery of the advertising market that existed earlier this year.

Conversely, this means that circulation revenues are becoming increasingly important to publishers. "If people buy magazines with high frequency and on a sustained basis, then that shows their relevance, and that will not remain hidden from the advertising market in the long term," says Philipp Welte, who continues: "The quality and response to our magazines define relevance in the marketing of advertising space."

**Our own four walls**

After the "back to nature" trend and the associated country life had been celebrated in many magazines, the corona pandemic spawned its own trends in the magazine market. The lockdown put the focus on one's own four walls and there especially on the kitchen. With restaurants closed for months in many places, people looked for inspiration and found it in magazines like "Essen & Trinken" («Eat & Drink») or "Einfach hausgemacht" («Make it at home»). The growth rates of both titles were well over 20 percent in the first quarter of 2021.

**Living out creativity**

Of course, the extra calories also had to be trained away again – and so many people looked for sporting disciplines that could be easily integrated into everyday life despite distance rules. Cycling became a mask-free alternative to public transport, especially in cities. Not surprisingly, relevant titles such as "Mountainbike, Bike and Roadbike" saw their circulations soar.

However, the highest absolute growth among sports-related magazines was achieved by "Yacht," the fortnightly classic for fans of sailing. However, titles that accompany children in homeschooling and, above all, keep them busy were also in demand. This was a key issue for parents even before the pandemic and will continue to be so after the health crisis, so that children can live out their creativity and not sit in front of their cell phones or consoles all day.

**Print stands for "deep reading"**

The stock market is exposed to high volatility due to the health care crisis and political developments, which is associated with large profit opportunities and risks. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of shareholders in Germany has also skyrocketed. Stock market titles and financial magazines have benefited from this with double-digit growth rates. Investors satisfy their information needs largely on the internet, where many also manage their portfolios themselves.

But as Bertolt Brecht once said, "Money people read more carefully, they know what damage can result from cursory reading. And print stands for ["deep reading"](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-deep-reading-1690373). Interestingly, traditional business magazines have also been able to increase their print circulation.

**Trust index for print increased**

The finding that print media are generally seen as trustworthy sources is nothing new. But during the pandemic, in which the wildest predatory stories were constructed by means of "fake news," the trust index of print increased again. Here, too, all that glitters is not gold. But there are still beacons that hold up investigative and fact-based journalism.

And then design comes into play. A layout that skillfully sets the scene for the content and high-quality materials create a coherent and, above all, serious environment in which companies also like to place their advertising. Print is therefore valuable, sustainable and individual – and also has a psychological advantage over digital channels, particularly because of the haptic dimension. However, one should not fool oneself: Digital editions of magazines are also increasingly finding their readers. Publishers who succeed in using both print and digital are particularly successful.

**An attractive advertising environment**

The more specific the target group, the more effective the advertising. But reach is also considered an important metric for the advertising industry, so magazines continue to be an important factor in the media mix. For many magazines, total reach is increasing despite declining print circulation due to greater digital distribution. It is also interesting to see that the digital and analog readerships overlap only to a small extent.

This also explains why companies are pursuing a 360-degree brand and media strategy. In addition to the printed magazine, consumers are wooed with online presences, podcasts and in social media. Printed magazines, however, remain the emotional and trust-building anchor.

Yours,

Knud Wassermann,

Editor-in-Chief "Graphische Revue“