

Advertorials

Generate Positive Reader Attitudes

As advertisers seek new, more engaging ways to ratchet up attention to their advertising messages, magazine advertorials continue to gain in popularity.

Advertorials are in a class of their own as engagement tools. Advertorials are often made to be compatible with editorial but are clearly marked as "advertising" or "advertisement" to avoid confusion. These ad units are adapted to the magazine in which they appear to achieve a sense of integration with the environment. This can boost the credibility of the product, a main strength of this creative formula. That said, the majority of readers perceive advertorials as ads rather than editorial.

Advertorials are generally created to give large quantities of detailed information about brands or categories. And that is how readers perceive advertorials, as useful sources of relevant information.

Starch Research recently conducted research into reader perceptions of advertorials. Using a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" would be "Disagree Completely" and "10" would be "Agree Completely", readers of Canadian magazines were asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with various statements about advertorials.

% Agree Strongly (7-10 out of 10)	%
They are a good way for advertisers to communicate info about their products	76%
They generally provide me with more information than a regular advertisement	68%
It should be made clear that these are advertisements or promotional messages and not part of the magazine's editorial content	66%
Advertorials are sources of new ideas and ways to use products	62%

It has long been believed that advertorials create an affinity between readers and their chosen magazine. The powerful intimacy of the magazine brand rubs off onto the advertising, awarding it authority and trust. In other words, the editorial surround delivers a reader in the right frame of mind to be receptive to the advertisers' messages. This suggests a positive effect on the perception and absorption of advertorial advertisements.

The way an advertorial is perceived in a magazine and the level of involvement between the reader and the advertisement is likely to depend on the reader's expectations of advertisements in the publication, the advertisement's degree of compatibility with the magazine as a brand, the strength of the reader's relationship with the magazine, the advertisement's positioning relative to editorial, the mode of reading, the intrinsic qualities of the advertisement and the reader's historical relationship with the advertised product. The stronger the reader's affiliation with the magazine as a brand, the higher the level of endorsement that the advertising receives.

*Sources: Evaluation of Advertorials, Starch Research, 2009
How Magazine Advertising Works, 5th Edition, Guy Consterdine, July 2005*