The Ultimate Guide to Magazine Media Buying

Learn advertising strategies that lower costs and increase results

ERIC SIMS
The Role of Print Media in the Digital Age

When over 73% of the human race has access to the vast amount of content on the internet, and smart phones are increasingly putting that content—including paid advertising—in the palm of people’s hands, is there still a reason for your company or brand to invest in traditional print media advertising?

Study after study shows that the answer to this question is a resounding yes, and this is especially true when it comes to magazines. The reasons are many, but here’s some of the most compelling:

- When consumers read magazines they are much less likely to engage with other media or to take part in non-media activities compared to the users of TV, radio or the internet
- Consumers are more likely to have a positive attitude toward advertising in magazines compared to other media
- Consumers consider magazine advertising more relevant than advertising in other media
- Consumers have rated magazines at or near the top of the list when asked how likely they are to pay attention to advertising messages

However, just because magazine advertising can be effective does not mean that your advertising campaign will be effective. In order for you to be successful, you need a partner who has a thorough understanding of the magazine industry, who will take the time to understand your needs and objectives, and has the experience and connections to place your ads where they will reach your target audience. That partner is Integral Media.

Integral Media: Magazine Advertising that Works

Integral Media is a media buying company that specializes in helping CMOs and Media Planners double their results from magazine advertising. We do that by taking a transparent, consultative approach to magazine and alternative media buying using a proprietary advertising model, which allows CMOs and Media Planners to take comfort in the fact that they are not only getting the best possible media prices but also the best possible advice.

Integral Media has over 12 years of experience in magazine media buying and relationships with thousands of magazines, and our staff provides a personal level of service that you simply won’t find at most media buying agencies. In this guide, we’ll give you the information you need to decide if we are the best partner to help you achieve your advertising goals.
Our People

At Integral Media, we pride ourselves on delivering an unprecedented high level of service to our customers. We guarantee that you will be pleased with the personal attention you receive when you work with us. Take a moment to meet our experienced and dedicated staff:

**Eric Sims, President and Founder**

Eric is the founder of Integral Media and has over 25 years of media planning and buying experience. He has expertise in results tracking, media planning and optimizing lead generations for our clients. He created the company with a “results-driven” foundation and is always looking for new and innovative ways to create optimal results. He understands each client is unique and enjoys taking the time to know each client’s brand, past successes, struggles and learn about clients’ marketing goals. From the initial discovery meeting through implementation of each campaign, he is side-by-side with the clients to ensure their expectations are not only met, but exceeded.

**David Sandman**

David has over 15 years in media planning and buying experience. He manages the strategic marketing, consulting and implementation of the media buying for Integral Media’s clients. Through years of experience, David knows the tricks of the trade and which publications are most likely to provide the campaign’s desired results. A large portion of each campaign’s success is directly attributed to David’s proficiency in rate negotiations and ability to secure the needed rates.

**Kayla Byrd**

Kayla has experience in several different aspects of Integral Media’s skill set and has seen success in both campaign management and media buying. With a background and years of experience in public relations and business marketing, she is poised to manage all facets of intricate campaigns for our clients. While her capabilities are endless, her true passion lies in media buying. Her ongoing relationships with Integral Media’s publication partners ensures some of the lowest rates in the business, positioning benefits and countless additional incentives that makes print advertising work for our clients.

**Erin O’Neill**

Erin’s experience with high volume client management started before becoming part of the Integral Media team. The hunger she has for client’s success shines in her campaign management skills. Her analytical skills are put to great use when creating strategic campaign plans for clients and while analyzing campaign results. Erin works with our clients and the Integral Media team to formulate customized media plans using data from our publication warehouse, yielding a strategic approach to achieve our clients’ goals. Her personable attitude and understanding of clients’ needs are what makes business development a strong suit of hers. Erin tailors every media plan to be as unique as each client, while maximizing client budgets and delivering optimal ROI.
Our Ideal Customer

Some media buyers try to be everything to everyone. We're not one of those companies. At Integral Media, we have two types of ideal customers—CMOs (or those performing the duties of a CMO for their companies) and media planners. If you recognize yourself in the descriptions below, then our services will most likely be a good fit for you.

Chief Marketing Officers

Integral Media’s ideal chief marketing officer client may or may not have the official title of CMO, but he or she is responsible for handling the marketing at a company that sells products through direct-response advertising (such as collectibles, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, etc) or retail branding projects. The company has been in business for some time and has been growing, but is having difficulty “getting over the hump” and taking things to the next level.

This company has probably never invested in print media advertising and is not very familiar with it. They need someone to guide them through the process and explain why things are done a certain way. They need help determining a strategy and budget, and need a partner who will give them the personal attention they need. They need to work with a media buying company who will become their print media marketing manager and do some of the work that might ordinarily be done internally at a larger company (or by that company’s media planning agency).

Media Planners and Media Planning Agencies

Our typical media planner client deals with multiple channels of media, such as print, radio, television, etc. They don’t have the time to become experts in all of them, nor do they have the desire to. They have a less frequent need for print media and magazine advertising, so their connections within that niche are not as good.

While in some cases the agency or media planner is designing and writing the ads themselves, in many other cases they are outsourcing this to creative design agencies. What they specialize in is deciding how the available funds should be allocated, and determining the long-term advertising strategy for their clients.

In some cases, the agency has recently started working with a new client that requires more print media advertising than those they have worked with before, and especially magazine advertising. They need help stretching their available budget to get the best results, and they also need to get started fast. They are looking for a print media buyer who will help them hit the ground running and make sure they are getting the best possible bang for their buck.
Our Process

In order to make sure that our services are a good fit for our customers, we take all prospective clients through a three-part process that allows us both to make an educated decision about whether or not it would make sense to work together.

**Discovery Phase**

The discovery phase begins when you initially make contact with us, either by phone or email. During an initial phone call, we’ll ask you a few basic questions about your needs to make sure that it makes sense for us to continue the process. If that is the case, we will schedule a discovery session, which usually lasts about an hour. Prior to the discovery session, we will ask you to complete a questionnaire about your company and what you hope to gain from our services. We’ll use the information you give us to do some research prior to the discovery session so that we can prepare specific recommendations about how to proceed.

**Planning Phase**

In the planning phase, we will ask you to provide us with more specific information, such as examples of ads you have run previously, information about your target audience, etc. We will in turn prepare lists of publications and rates for you to review. During the planning phase, we schedule a meeting once a week in order to keep the project on track and make sure the lines of communication stay open. Depending on your timeline and the complexity of the project, the planning phase can last anywhere from 1-4 weeks.

**Implementation Phase**

Once we’ve agreed on a plan of action, we begin implementing the plan by starting with an initial test of an advertising campaign. This allows us to test advertising in different publications, as well as various calls to action and ad creative. Once the test is complete, we will proceed with implementing the full campaign.

When an advertising campaign is underway, we meet with our clients on a regular basis to analyze the performance of their ads and make additional recommendations. We act as our client’s print media marketing manager so that they don’t have to deal with magazine and media sales reps or worry about negotiating rates. Our staff is always available to answer questions, and we respond promptly to all client communications.

**Results Review Phase**

Once your campaign is complete, we will review the results and begin planning for your next campaign.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What percentage of my marketing budget should be devoted to print media?**
   The answer to this question really depends on the demographics of your target audience and the specific objectives of your campaign, and can range from 15-40%. During the discovery and planning phase of our process, we’ll help you determine what the right percentage is for your specific situation.

2. **What is the minimum I can invest to test print Advertising?**
   As with the previous question, this answer will vary depending on your objectives. However, to test your offer in a national print advertising campaign, Integral Media recommends a budget of no less than $20,000.

3. **Why does the process take so long?**
   Due to the way magazines are printed and the way ad space is sold, the process of advertising in print media can sometimes seem laborious and frustrating, especially to those accustomed to online advertising that can be turned on or off with the click of a mouse. However, while the process of purchasing ads takes longer, once published, print ads have a very long shelf life and can yield a lower cost to acquire new customers.

4. **How do magazines determine where my ad appears?**
   Magazine advertising space is bought and sold like real estate, with the “prime locations” like the back or inside cover costing upwards of $100,000 depending on the publication. Smaller ads on inside pages, of course, cost a tiny fraction of that amount. The key is to find the placement that is affordable but still delivers results...which is where our 25 years of experience buying magazine media comes in.
5. How are the rate structures determined?
Rates for magazine advertising are somewhat analogous to airline ticket prices. Two passengers on the same flight sitting next to each other often pay different amounts for their ticket based on when they bought it, who they bought it from, and many other factors. When it comes to magazine advertising, the rates published by magazines are the highest any particular ad space will sell for. Thanks to Integral Media’s long-standing relationships with the magazines we work with, we are able to negotiate rates up to 80% off those published by the magazines.

6. Why do I need to submit my ad creative in order to get confirmed rates?
We would love to be able to give you confirmed rates earlier in the process, but the fact is that magazines simply will not lock in your rate until the ad creative has been submitted. Prior to that point, we can only give you estimated ranges, because that is all the information the magazines will provide us.

7. Why would I want to use a media buying service instead of just working directly with publications?
When you work with a media buying service, you will almost always be able to get a better rate for any given ad space in a publication than buying the ad space directly from the publication. In the case of Integral Media, in addition to getting you prices that are up to 80% off the published rates, we can also help you strategically plan your media buys to dramatically improve your ROI.
Should Ask Questions

“Should ask” questions are, as the name implies, questions that people should ask when considering which media buying service to use (or even whether to use a media buying service at all). To assist you in your decision-making process, we’ve listed some “should ask questions” below, along with their answers.

1. **What can I do to reduce my advertising costs per lead or per sale?**
   There are several things you can do to lower your costs while maintaining, or even increasing, your results. The easiest thing you can do is to use a media buyer like Integral Media to purchase ad space instead of purchasing it directly from publications—thanks to our long-standing relationships with magazines, you can save up to 80% off of published advertising rates when you use our service. Other ways to reduce your cost include:
   - Making sure your ads are highly targeted, both in terms of what publications in which you advertise and the message the ad is communicating.
   - Use your ads to capture leads by offering something of value for free in exchange for contact information.
   - Track the response your ads generate by pairing print ads with dedicated online landing pages—this will allow you to eliminate advertising that is not cost-effective.

Thanks to the consultative approach we take to media buying, Integral Media can help you with all of the above methods of reducing your advertising costs per sale.

2. **What call to action should I use in my ads?**
   A “best practice” is to use your ads to offer something of value for free. For example, you could offer a coupon for a free sample or offer people the chance to enter a sweepstakes to win your product or service. In order to get what you are offering, people will need to provide some personal information. For example: name, email address, phone number, etc. This will allow you to follow up with them (either automatically or in-person) and begin the sales process. The better your free offer is, the more information you can ask for. The mistake most companies make is trying to make the sale in the ad. This method tends to be far less effective and will increase your customer acquisition cost.

3. **How can I track the results from my advertising?**
   Sometimes it can be hard to track leads generated by print media advertising. After all, if someone sees your ad and then contacts you through your website, how will you know that the lead was generated by the print ad? One solution to this is to make a very enticing offer in your ad (see the previous question regarding your call to action) and then direct people to a specific landing page (a one-page website designed
especially for your ad) in order to take advantage of your offer. Traceable phone numbers can also be used in a similar way. This will allow you to track leads or sales generated by the print ad, but it will also allow you to see where in the process you are losing potential customers. For example, if the analytics program installed on your landing page indicates that it’s getting traffic that is not converting, then you know that you need to change the landing page rather than the ad. Through our network of partners, Integral Media can assist you with designing and testing landing pages for your print ads.

4. What should I look for in a print media buying service?
In many cases, print media buyers are viewed as a commodity—i.e. the only difference people see in them is what rate they charge. When you select a print media buyer using this criteria alone, you are setting yourself up for frustration. Here’s some additional things you should consider when deciding who to work with:

- **Customer service:** Will you have a dedicated account manager? Are all phone calls and emails answered promptly? Is there good communication?
- **Strategy:** Will the media buyer help you develop a strategy for success and take the time to learn about your business so that they can give you the best possible advice?
- **Results:** What does the media buyer do to insure that your advertising campaign actually gets results? Saving 50-80% off of published rates is great...unless it didn’t get you a single new customer.
- **Relationships:** How many magazines does the media buyer have relationships with? Can they place your ads in publications that reach your target audience?

At Integral Media, our combination of outstanding service, strategy development, relationships, and emphasis on producing and tracking results makes us the best choice for your media buying needs.

5. What is alternative print media?
Alternative print media refers to things like direct mail postcards, package inserts, catalog blow-ins (third party ads loosely inserted into a catalog), etc. In addition to magazine advertising, Integral Media offers advertising using alternative print media through our network of partners. Several of our clients have had great success with this strategy.
Case Study: Integral Media Helps Agency Increase Clients’ Placements by 40%

Background

Mar/Com Services, Inc. is a small integrated brand communications company based in San Francisco. They work with a wide range of national and regional clients and provide a full-spectrum of integrated brand positioning and marketing communications services. Their services include media analysis, strategy, planning and incorporating various forms of media into that plan.

Whether on a consulting, project or full-service basis, the principals of the company take a hands-on approach and work closely with each client. Mar/Com’s analyst and strategist creates a plan for each individual client based on product, target demographics, goals and budget. The budget is divided and allocated to each selected form of media and details, such as placement and scheduling, are laid out. It is imperative to the campaigns’ success to stay within the budget allocated for the various mediums.

The Problem

Mar/Com had taken on a new client and it was determined print media would aid in making this client’s campaign a success. Mar/Com was not engaged in consistent print media placements or buying and did not have a strategic buying partner. The client had a fairly small budget and Mar/Com needed a print buying agency that could stretch the budget and ensure all desired magazine buys would be possible, despite the limited amount of allocated funds. In addition, the amount of time that passed while searching for a buying partner created a time crunch and need for quick placements and buys.

The Solution

After a consultation with Integral Media, Mar/Com decided to utilize Integral Media’s services. Integral Media has long term relationships with nearly 2,400 magazines helping secure last minute placements and lower advertising costs keeping the client on track with the budget. Mar/Com presented the desired magazine placements to Integral Media and the team immediately began securing space and negotiating rates.

Results

Integral Media was able to secure all of the last minute placements in addition to negotiating deeply discounted rates. The rates far surpassed Mar/Com’s expectations and not only were the pre-determined ads placed, additional ad placements were added to the plan with a surplus of funds. Mar/Com was able to reach millions of additional people thanks to Integral Media’s buying power. The campaign has been extremely successful and has been running and growing for four years.

Testimonial

“Integral Media has really helped our agency be successful. They are great to work with, and our clients have seen their businesses grow because of them. Integral Media is my secret weapon!”

-Kristen A., President of Mar/Com Services
Case Study: Integral Media Helps New York Mint Dramatically Lower Customer Acquisition Costs

Background

For over 30 years, New York Mint (now GovMint.com) has been one of the largest retail rare and collectible coin marketers in the country. Besides a wide selection of rare and hard-to-find U.S. coins, GovMint.com offers many other collectible products including paper money, coin jewelry, foreign and ancient coins, and specialized numismatic services.

Prior to becoming GovMint.com, New York Mint had been selling a large variety of collectible products on television—ShopNBC, QVC, HSN, CVN, USA Direct, WSS and Value Vision International.

The Problem

After a long run of marketing their products on television, revenue was slowly declining. As a result, New York Mint hired a new marketing team to expand their marketing efforts and create new business. One of the new sales initiatives was to introduce a print media campaign. New York Mint’s marketing team began looking for a strategic partner to assist with the print media buys and placements.

The Solution

Through a referral network, New York Mint came to Integral Media to handle their print media buys. An initial test of $30,000 was executed in several select titles. The titles were determined by the products’ target demographics and Integral Media’s known responsiveness within the thousands of titles with which they consistently book. Each ad was created to be unique for tracking purposes and data was carefully monitored for optimal results.

Results

New York Mint found print advertising to be extremely successful for several reasons: the sales curve for each advertisement lasted much longer than other forms of media. New York Mint was collecting sales from ads that had run months prior as many of the new customers became repeat customers. New York Mint’s cost per acquisition was significantly lower via the print media campaign when compared to previous marketing programs. This allowed New York Mint to increase their print budget nearly 2,000%. New York Mint was able to recoup their print media costs within 6 months and bottom line revenue increased with returning buyers and on-going profits.

Testimonial

“Integral Media helped eliminate our growing pains, and for all practical purposes became our print media marketing manager. They’ve been a really good partner.”

Steve S., New York Mint
Testimonials

Here’s what some of our satisfied customers have to say about their experience working with us:

“We’ve relied on Integral Media to help market a variety of our products. Time and again, they've consistently delivered ad placements that really pull—whatever the product—at the absolute lowest cost. Plus their customer service is extraordinary.”

G.D., President of Electronics Products Marketing Co

"Integral Media has been critical to the success of our client's branding initiatives. Integral's team of consultants has helped us target the right audiences and stretch our client's dollars by doubling, and sometimes even tripling, our client's brand presence."

G. Q., Principal of Marketing Agency

“Integral Media is very good at what they do, they’re efficient, and are good people to work with. Whenever I reach out for assistance, I always get it. Using their service is far more efficient than trying to contact publishers directly.”

C.D., Marketing Agency Client
Glossary of Terms

A/B Split: Two creative messages may be tested within the same issue of a publication using an A/B split. In a true A/B split, every other issue will be printed with the varying creative copies and randomly distributed across the DMA. This technique is typically only available in large, national publications. Integral Media has years of experience with A/B splits and will guide the client through this valuable creative testing tactic.

ABC: Audit Bureau of Circulations. This bureau is in charge of auditing the printed circulation as reported by the publication. This ensures advertisers they are reaching the quantity of people as indicated by the publication’s media kit.

AOR: Agency of Record. This document is provided to the publications, upon request, by the agency representing the advertiser. The AOR document states the named buying agency is the designated print media placement agency for said advertiser. Although the document is signed by the advertiser, it does not contractually bind the advertiser and the agency, but gives reassurance to the publications that the agency named in the AOR is authorized to make the ad submission.

Checking Copy: A printed copy of the issue in which the advertiser placed an ad is sent to the agency for confirmation the ad ran as contracted and to verify placement in the publication. Once the agency has reviewed the checking copy, the issue will be passed along to the advertiser for their records. Integral Media requires checking copies for every ad placed and verifies that your ad runs. In addition, several extra copies are requested and given to you for your records and promotional purposes.

Circulation: The number of printed copies of each issue. The copies may be distributed via newsstand, subscriptions or as free copies in designated areas. Publications use circulation as a strong factor in rate determination. A publication’s circulation should not be confused with its readership as they are two different statistics.

Clearance: The process by which a publication reviews an advertisement for legal, ethical, and taste standards, before accepting the ad into publication. The agency will submit the ad for clearance and once the ad has been granted clearance, rate negotiations will begin and an IO is requested by the publication.

Closing Date: The final date in which a publication will accept ad space reservations and an IO for the upcoming issue in the production calendar.

Cover Position: There are four cover positions in nearly every publication: First cover (outside front cover), second cover (inside front cover), third cover (inside back cover) and fourth cover (outside back cover). These positions are typically offered at a premium price for their high visibility.

CPL: Cost per Lead, also referred to as CPA (cost per acquisition). This is the cost incurred by the advertiser, through advertising costs, to obtain new leads, acquisitions, or sales. This is an important factor in many companies’ budgets and also a strong indicator of the advertisements’ success.

CPM: The cost, per thousand people reached, of buying ad space. The circulation against the gross rate is used to determine the CPM.
Creative: The completed advertisement with product/service information, CTA and imagery. Basically, the creative is the advertisement.

CTA: Call to Action. The messaging, or offer, within the ad that tells the customer what is expected of them. Examples include: “Call Now”, “Go to www.website.com”, “Order now to save”, etc.

Demographics: Basic classifications of consumers used to describe the target or ideal consumers. Also used by publications to describe their average reader. Demographics include but are not limited to: age, gender, average income, marital status and homeowner status.

Direct Response: Promotions requesting the consumer directly contact the advertiser via mail, telephone, website, email or any other preferred method of contact. Direct response advertising traditionally has a strong CTA and effectiveness of the ad can easily and accurately be tracked, recorded and analyzed.

DMA: Designed Market Area. The geographical area in which a publication is distributed. DMAs can be specific to cities, counties, states, regions, or national.

Drop Date: Also referred to as the on-sale-date. The earliest date a publication will be made available to its readers.

Endemic: In advertising terms, endemic refers to the likeness of an advertised product to the publication and its readers. For example, if an advertiser wanted to place an ad for golf clubs in Golf Magazine, a title geared towards golf enthusiasts, the advertisement would be considered endemic.

Frequency: The number of times an advertisement is placed in the same publication, but in different issues.

IO: Insertion Order. A contractual agreement submitted to the publication from the agency on behalf of the advertiser. This document details the dollar amount the advertiser is expecting to pay, the circulation the advertiser is expecting from the publication, positioning statement (if applicable) and all other pertinent information regarding the ad placement.

Market Place: The section in the back of the magazine that solely serves the purpose to advertise. Market Place sections may look similar to a classified section with several smaller advertisements on one page. This is the alternative to a cover position or run of book positioning.

Media Kit: Details all relevant information about a publication in regards to advertising. It will contain a production calendar, demographic information, rate card, circulation and advertisement specs. Media kits are public information and available for anyone’s viewing.

Placement: The purchase of space within a publication and the insertion of an advertisement into that publication. Several placements equate to frequency.

Production Calendar: A schedule pre-determined by each publication providing each issue date, the closing date, deadline for submitting creative and the drop date. Most production calendars are created annually.
**Positioning:** Used when describing the location of an ad within the publication. Page number and surrounding content, such as other advertisements or editorial content, determine if the positioning was favorable. Integral Media believes in the power of positioning and uses it as a leverage for negotiations.

**Rate Card:** The list price of an advertisement. This will be the highest rate charged for an advertisement in a publication and is broken down by size of ad, black and white versus color and frequency of ad placement.

**Readership:** The numbers of reads per issue, per publication as deciphered by the publication. Readership is generally higher than circulation as most publications anticipate there will be more than one reader per printed copy of the issue.

**ROI:** Return on Investment. A statistic used to determine whether the monetary benefits from an advertising campaign are above or below the amount of money spent on the campaign. Running a direct response campaign can help determine ROI with more certainty and accuracy.

**ROP:** Run of Press/Paper. This category includes daily newspapers.

**Run of Book:** Positioning in the publication throughout the editorial pages of the book. Exclusions to run of book are cover positions 1-4 and the marketplace section.

**Specs:** Dimensions (sizes) of the advertisement as specified by the publication. The specs are important for the creative designer to know in order to make the ad suitable for press in the desired publication.

**Supplements:** Also referred to as inserts. Supplements are add-ins to free standing ROPs; a newspaper section in magazine format. Some of the more popular supplements are Parade and Spry found in Sunday newspapers across the country. Several of Integral Media’s clients have enjoyed success with these types of publications. With a quick turnaround time and lower CPMs, supplements can be a great option for your advertising campaign.