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ABSTRACT

This document is a preliminary study of the listings of a wide variety of regional/split-run editorial practices of major American periodicals. Publications chosen for the study were selected from the tenth edition of "Magazine Regional and Split-Run Advertising," published by the Magazine Advertising Bureau of the Magazine Publishers Association. Criteria for the selection of publications to be queried included the stipulation that a given magazine produce more than six regional/split-run editions on a regular basis. Thirty-nine magazines were queried and the editors or other editorial department representatives of 25 of the magazines responded. Magazines responding included "Good Housekeeping," "Woman's Day," "Farm Journal," "Holiday," and "Life." Results indicated that the national magazine has not been destroyed by the computerization of publishing operations and the specialized interests of advertisers and that the editorial department still controls the production of the editorial material that goes to the readers. The remainder of the document is a magazine-by-magazine review of the editorial practices of the 25 periodicals responding to the questionnaire. (RB)

EDITORIAL INVOLVEMENT IN REGIONAL/SPLIT RUN EDITIONS

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It is a great temptation to begin this discussion with several pages on the romantic refinements brought to magazine publishing by the computer; to wax eloquent on the sophistication of circulation breakdown possibilities and printing controls made possible by electronic wizardry.

Computers have made it possible to carve out super-specialized segments of magazine audiences, thus permitting and even promoting the specialized market areas that advertisers find so attractive and profitable. They have, in fact, multiplied the effective audiences for products and services by facilitating the appropriate division of magazine circulations and also by facilitating the flow of print to speedily produce the right combinations of editions and mailing labels. Computers, in other words, have made it possible to create more regional and split run editions of magazines than ever before -- certainly than ever before so efficiently handled.

The magazine, though, is still a combination of advertising and editorial matter, blended at the publishing house and distributed to those vital persons called subscribers and readers. The editorial function is still important!

The increase in the number of regional/split run opportunities being made available has raised questions about editorial participation in the preparation of issues that are being directed to segmented audiences. How much editorial support is needed for regionalized editions, for instance? Who decides how

editorial copy is to be used in them? What do regional/split run editions do to "national" magazines? Rather than fantasize about the questions, the Magazine Publishers Association was contacted for any data that might be available on the subject. The MPA response was a copy of a directory of regional/split run advertising opportunities and an indication of interest. A preliminary study of the directory listings indicated a wide variety of regional/split run practices so some measures of selectivity had to be drawn up prior to writing to publications for information.

Publications selected for the study were selected from the Tenth Edition of Magazine Regional and Split-Run Advertising, published by the Magazine Advertising Bureau of the Magazine Publishers Association, Inc., and supplied by the MPA as the most recent edition. Criteria for selection of publications to be queried included the availability of more than six regional/split run editions on a regular basis. Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Fortune, and Holiday were added by the author. Deleted from the list were a number of magazines that appeared to have very specialized availabilities (American Artist, Playbill, TV Guide) or offered regional/split run opportunities on a group basis.

A list of 39 magazines was thus collected and personally addressed letters were directed to the editors, asking "your comments on the editorial department tasks necessitated by the development of regional and split run editions." More specifically, the editors were then asked "What do you and your editorial staff members have to do to make sure that sufficient amounts of appropriate editorial copy are available for regional and/or split run editions?"

Editors or other editorial department representatives of 25 of the magazines responded. Their comments, briefly presented in the pages that follow, indicate that the national magazine has not been destructed by the computerization of publishing operations and the specialized interests of advertisers, and that the editorial department still controls the production of the editorial material that goes to the readers. A variety of procedures have been established to handle copy for regional/split run editions of magazines, as will be shown.

Editors of nine of the magazines contacted indicate that regional/split run editions are entirely functions of the advertising sales departments and production departments. No editorial copy is required to face or surround regional/split run advertising in the editions of Forbes, Fortune, National Geographic, Newsweek, Playboy, Popular Mechanics, Time, or U.S. News & World Report. Glamour has a shopping guide with regional advertising support but the editorial copy for these pages remains the same in all editions.

Cosmopolitan falls between "no copy needed" and "some copy needed." "Very Occasionally," reports Jamie Wallace, Assistant to Helen Gurley Brown, "we will add a poem or cartoon to fill up a space left by a regional ad but this is a minor change and really doesn't affect any of the major articles or features." Cosmopolitan advertising representatives, says Ms. Wallace, work at filling up the book, so the editorial matter "fits" each edition. "The Cosmos you see are different from an advertising standpoint, but there's almost no difference editorially."

Editorial involvement in the regional/split run editions of 14 other magazines are summarized alphabetically on the pages that follow. Life's procedures are presented as a eulogy to Gargantuan complexity.

The American Baby is directed to expectant mothers and new mothers, and advertisers can buy space in either a prenatal or a postnatal edition as well as in the geographic editions offered by the publisher. Because of the changing interests of the magazine's readers, Editor Judith Nolte reports it is possible to re-run editorial copy from a few months previous with no danger of negative reader reaction. Editorial copy is prepared in advance in full-page and column formats for the regional/split run editions, although the editor doesn't know until closing time how much copy will be needed for a specific edition.

The editors of American Home do not prepare regional editions per se but they do publish a number of regional features each month in the regional editions sold by the magazine's sales representatives. Regional features must relate to the general tone and content of the magazine, says Mervyn Kaufman, copy editor, so they can be inserted into more than one regional edition. To assure flexibility of copy use, the articles destined for regional use are primarily text pieces requiring little or no illustration. Staff written and free lance articles that are not topical are backlogged at American Home for regional editions and the editorial department maintains a record of material used to guard against the possibility of an article appearing more than once in the same region.

The ideal editorial participation in regional editions, says James A. Autry, until recently the editor of Better Homes and Gardens, is to supply special appropriate material for all regional pages, but costs usually prevent this. Most regional editorial space in BHandG is filled from a bank of material supplied to the make-up editor, who alerts the managing editor whenever this bank is falling short in any subject area predetermined to be significant, or in any kind of space unit.

Because BHandG has so many editions and allows for so many different kinds of space, the requirements for editorial space units are complicated. In addition to the more than 150 regional editions of Better Homes and Gardens, there are several special editions that require editorial attention. Super Spot is directed to approximately 1,250,000 high income subscribers; the Movers' Edition, to subscribers who send a change of address to the magazine; and the Eastern Travel Directory and Western Travel Directory. Super Spot editorial material concentrates on higher income houses and furnishings and foreign travel. Movers' editorial copy offers ideas and suggestions on such subjects as making insurance claims for moving losses, finding doctors or dentists in new cities, analyzing school systems, and establishing credit. There are also "buymanship" articles for products and services most often needed after a major move. The Super Spot editorial material changes every month but special copy in the Movers' edition gets only occasional updating.

Autry believes the travel editions offer unique opportunities

to make creative use of regional space, giving the editors capability to extend the national travel impact of the magazine. He hopes Better Homes and Gardens will eventually have travel directories covering the nation, giving the magazine's readers special opportunities for short and long trips each month. Right now the two travel directory editions are prepared in New York and San Francisco.

Family Circle has 28 regional editions, for which Editor Arthur Hettich has his staff maintain, in type, a backlog of short features, ready for insertion according to need. Occasionally the staff prepares specific articles for a given region, says Hettich, but "this requires such a tremendous workload that they do it no more than once or twice a year."

Farm Journal's Lane Palmer suspects that his magazine has had more experience than any other in remaking its editorial content for regional editions. In 1952, the Farm Journal circulation was divided into three geographic editions, Central-East, West, and South. In the next 10 years each of these was divided again. In 1964, Farm Journal executives decided that the geographic approach was not satisfactory for reaching livestock subscribers so they launched three new editions, Dairy Extra, Beef Extra, and Hog Extra. Special 8 to 48 page inserts are bound into copies of the magazine going to the specialized livestock subscribers.

During the 60s, Editor Palmer says, Farm Journal advertisers discovered the advantages of geographic editions and pressed the publishers into offering more and more of them. The current total

is 29 editions. As a result, the editorial department regularly prepares appropriate editorial copy for the regional editions, sectional editions, and demographic editions.

Good Housekeeping publishes eight regional editions and its copy department is charged with anticipating the editorial needs and maintaining a stockpile of usable, space-available material, says Managing Editor Henry Sonkin. The staff keeps in contact with the magazine's fashion, needlework, food, travel, and decorating editors, who supply ideas for regional editorial features. Regularly scheduled articles are sometimes converted to regional layout and spacing when there is not enough space in an issue of Good Housekeeping to accommodate the copy for the complete press run. Or, if an editorial idea is not extensive enough in scope to justify its use in one or two pages nationally, the editors may develop it into a one or two-column regional article, reports Sonkin.

The magazine uses material from freelance contributors to maintain the inventory for regional/split run editions, and also to insure a varied editorial content. Light humorous writing that does not conflict with the editorial tone of Good Housekeeping is acceptable. Books that reflect a specific tie-in with GH's domestic regional/split run needs are also a good source of copy for the magazine.

When advertising sales warrant, Holiday offers as many as five regional editions. The editorial space in the form containing regional advertisements sometimes carries a major feature that the editors want to use but cannot find room for in

the major editorial well. In such a case, they might work up several different layouts of the material to fit the several different space configurations left after regional advertisements are placed. More frequently, however, Holiday editors run a filler with "cutting potential" -- one that can be cut to fit the space, or a column by a regular writer. Holiday rarely prepared major regional features because the editors cannot accurately predict the space that will be available to them. Frequently, says Managing Editor Sandi SerVaas, they don't know until a day or two before press time how much space they will actually have in an issue.

The editors of Ladies' Home Journal like to think that the difference between the regional and national material in the magazine is not very noticeable to the readers. They try to make sure that the editorial copy is of the same quality and comes basically from the same sources of both staff and free lance writers, according to Managing Editor John R. Stevens. The only problem, according to Stevens, "is having free lance writers understand the need for short, to-the-point articles, and once understanding it, deigning to write for that particular market." He believes that the smart writer knows the need for regional material and then capitalizes on it.

"The mechanics of regional makeup are special, but like most operations, pure common sense (despite the help of a computer)," says Stevens. Flexibility is a key to the production of regional editions. Stevens tries to have all material standing by at the printing plant well ahead of makeup time so he can close quickly and easily.

Nation's Business has as many as 66 different editions to accommodate regional advertising. The regional forms carry 3 to 12 columns of special editorial material of interest to subscribers in the special areas and an editor is regularly assigned to develop this copy. The magazine backs up some regional advertisements with general editorial copy prepared to fit single pages, and all members of the editorial staff are on the look-out for copy ideas for them, according to Managing Editor Wilbur Martin. At times, he reports, regularly scheduled articles are trimmed to fit one or two pages for regional advertising back-up.

Outdoor Life has six regional inserts for its six regional editions (the Northeast, Southeast, Midsouth, Midwest, Great Lakes States, and West). The articles contained in the 8-page yellow sections vary in length from short news items to articles on multiple pages, with all copy specifically oriented to the outdoor activities and life of the geographic section involved. Editor Bill Rae experimented with the regional sections in 1956 but it was not until the Fall of 1968 that the magazine picked up the regional sections in earnest. Until May 1972 they were limited to four pages each.

Rae says that there is no mystery in putting together the regional editions, but there is a considerable amount of work and money involved. The regional editors, working in New York, collect news and other material from local writers and field editors and prepare the inserts from this copy. The specially printed sections are self-contained and inserted into the copies destined for the various geographic regions.

Regional editions of Popular Science are more an advertising problem than an editorial problem, says Kendall W. Goodwyn, managing editor of the magazine. A few times each year, however, the magazine runs a special insert of approximately 12 pages. In October and November they featured a snowmobile regional edition, containing advertising for snowmobile manufacturers and relevant editorial copy. The inserts were bound into copies going to snow states and were not indicated on the contents page. In general, though, Popular Science is distributed through the country with only minor variations. House ads, book club ads, or mail order plans are regularly inserted to back-up regional advertising.

Successful Farming has 13 basic regions that can be broken into smaller regions by county or ZIP because of the computer operation of the circulation lists at the Meredith plant. It is common for an advertiser to buy an entire state, according to Richard Krumme, associate managing editor, and the editorial department must be prepared to supply editorial material appropriate to that state. But, since the magazine emphasizes farm management, the editors do not have to create too great a variety of copy. Successful Farming editors guard against using the same article twice in the same region by carefully coding the editorial copy before the copy is fed to the computer that is used to set and store it.

Mark Penzer, executive editor of True, reports that he and his editors insist that the advertising department stop selling advertisements for regional editions or special sections

far enough in advance for the editors to know how many editorial pages will be involved and to plan them. Then the editors buy articles accordingly. Recent special editorial sections have included "What's New in Snowmobiles" for the Snow Belt region of the country and an article on a national chili cooking contest for the Southwest. The plan used by True editors is obvious: Use themes that are of particular interest to the regions in question, and make sure you know how much space is needed well in advance so as to be able to plan the editorial content.

Woman's Day handles its editorial material for regional editions the same way it handles material for the national run in terms of procurement, editing, and layout. The significant difference, according to Rosanne Klass, is that regional material can have no run-over. Each piece used in regional/split run editions must be a complete unit, whether it be a page, a fraction, or more.

Regional editorial material for Woman's Day is usually off schedule and is of a nature that can be used for any edition. One editorial staff member is assigned to designate the content of each of the regional editions when the makeup for the issues comes from the advertising department. The editorial department of Woman's Day is concerned with space available and not with any specific subject matter of the advertisements in the regional sections. The magazine has 26 regional editions and Match-A-Market editions, which are sub-regionals based on market areas.

A tagalong memorial to Life: Life had a complex procedure for handling regional/split run editions. The editorial support of the 8 to 10 page regional sections was restricted to the half of the forms which ran before the centerfold and before the weekly lead article. For one of the two regional forms, reports Ralph Graves, former managing editor of Life, the magazine used half-page continuations of the "Years Ago" feature that was published regularly in recent years. Two or three of the half-page features were usually produced by the editorial staff. Regional use varied.

For the other form used for regional/split run advertising, the Life editors published variations of the Life Review section. Subscribers in different regions saw, occasionally, an additional book review, or architectural review or movie review. Or, they would see a half-page feature labeled "Life Comment" or "Life Report" or "Letter from Paris" (or Rome or some other city). These were set as half pages. Care was taken to make sure a feature relevant to an area appeared in that area edition. To keep track of the location and numerical incidence of the regions, the Life operation was computerized and a printout went both to the editorial department responsible for the features and to the production department. It was the responsibility of the production department to place the advertising and editorial materials in the correct regional editions. No regional material normally ran in less than a million copies of Life; some, in as many as four million copies, says Graves.

There are hundreds of magazines published in this country and many of them no doubt have similar procedures for the production of regional/split run editions. From the comments of those persons who responded to query about editorial practices, several points seem to surface: 1) Editorial departments are involved in maintaining the flow of special editions. 2) The editorial content of the major sections of the magazines takes precedence over any specialized or regionalized editorial material at this time. 3) There is a free lance market for articles for special editions. 4) National magazines still exist in this country. In other words, regionalization has not eroded the magazine's opportunity for directing editorial material to the whole nation.

SOURCES

The following publications, listed in Magazine Regional and Split-Run Advertising, Tenth Edition, published by the Magazine Advertising Bureau of Magazine Publishers Association, Inc., were contacted for the study. A name and title listed after the magazine indicate respondee. NR indicates no response.

The American Baby - Judith Nolte, Editor
American Home - Mervyn Kaufman, Copy Editor
American Motorist - NR
Argosy - NR
Better Homes and Gardens - James A. Autry, Editor
Big Farmer - NR
Cosmopolitan - Jamie Wallace, Assistant to Helen Gurley Brown
Esquire - NR
Family Circle - Arthur M. Hettich, Editor
Farm Journal - Lane Palmer, Editor
Forbes - Dero A. Saunders, Executive Editor
Fortune - Robert Lubar, Managing Editor
Glamour - Diane Connor, Assistant to the Editor
Golf - NR
Good Housekeeping - Henry Sonkin, Assistant Managing Editor
Harper's Bazaar - NR
Holiday - Sandi Servaas, Managing Editor
House Beautiful - NR
House and Garden - NR
Ladies' Home Journal - John R. Stevens, Managing Editor
Life - Ralph Graves, Managing Editor
McCall's - NR
National Geographic - R. S. Uzzell III, Assistant to the Editor
Nation's Business - Wilbur Martin, Managing Editor
Newsweek - Osborn Elliott, Editor
Outdoor Life - Bill Rae, Editor-in-Chief
Playboy - Michael Laurence, Senior Editor
Popular Mechanics - James M. Liston, Editor
Popular Science - Kendall W. Goodwyn, Managing Editor
Reader's Digest - NR
Redbook - NR
Southern Living - NR
Sports Illustrated - NR
Successful Farming - Richard Krumme, Associate Managing Editor
Time - Eugenia Dooley, Editorial Office
True - Mark Penzer, Executive Editor
U.S. News & World Report - John H. Sweet, Publishing Director
Vogue - NR
Woman's Day - Rosanne Klass, for the Editors