

The Magazine About Magazines

# Masthead

## Q&A

Mr. Magazine,  
U. of Mississippi prof  
Samir Husni



**Q** You'll be speaking at Mags U next month. In a nutshell, what'll be your message?

**A** A lot has been said about the problems with magazine distribution. My thesis is that the real problem lies in the publishing model and not the distribution model. My message will be if we do not change our advertising-subsidized publishing model,

continues on page 22 >

# THE TOP 50 MAGAZINES

**Our annual barometer reveals 4% overall growth and vitality in surprisingly manly new places**

**N**ow, if this were a digital edition of *Masthead*, and if we were feeling cheesy enough to embed the file—you'd be listening at this very moment to the background beat of Thin Lizzy's "The Boys Are Back in Town." Why? Because an interesting thing happened on the way to this year's Top 50—male-dominant magazines elbowed their way past more feminine titles and into the top-performer category. And as a composite index of titles across an array of categories, our Top 50, trend watchers will notice, represents combined revenues \$572.8 million for a 4% gain over 2003's total of \$550.5 million. Recall there was 0% growth in the dot-bomb/9-11 hell of 2001, 1.6% in 2002 and 3.6% in 2003. So, to the men: well done in 2004.

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# THE TOP 50 MAGAZINES

Total advertising revenue up 5.5%

BY WILLIAM SHIELDS

By no means, however, is it being suggested that the hottest categories of the past several years—shelter and women's magazines—are beginning to slouch. *Chatelaine* remains the monarch of the mountain for the third year in a row after deposing sister title *Maclean's* in 2002. *Chatelaine*, launched in 1929, commands 599,000 subscribers (second only to *Reader's Digest* at 864,000) and wins over 76,000 newsstand buyers every month to generate estimated annual circulation revenues of \$9.1 million. That sort of readership attracts an estimated

\$37.3 million in advertising revenue for a sales total of \$46.4 million last year, an above-average gain of 4.4% over 2003. "I think I would want to credit [former publisher] Donna [Clark] and [former editor] Rona [Maynard] for what they built here," says

Kerry Mitchell, appointed publisher mid-2004. She was previously publisher of sister title *Profit*, both owned by Rogers Media. While Mitchell



Still the biggest



Hanging tough at #7

thinks future double-digit gains are still possible, she notes the women's service sector has gotten busier—witness last year's newcomers *Loulou* and *Wish*—and that speaks to a healthy but competitive market. Transcontinental Media's *Canadian Living*, Canada's second-largest title at \$40.9 million in sales last year, made more gains on the ad side than *Chatelaine* to post a 7.1% year-over-

2004	2003	Title	Advertising revenue	Circulation revenue	Total estimated revenue	Annual % change
1	1	Chatelaine	\$37,272,481	\$9,113,245	46,385,726	4.38
2	3	Canadian Living	\$31,450,659	\$9,485,483	40,936,142	7.10
3	2	Reader's Digest	\$18,471,484	\$21,173,972	39,645,456	2.95
4	4	Maclean's	\$20,201,049	\$15,150,898	35,351,946	-6.41
5	5	Time	\$18,948,665	\$9,001,102	27,949,767	4.27
6	6	TV Guide	\$10,322,529	\$11,417,222	21,739,751	3.52
7	7	CDN House & Home	\$14,753,341	\$5,303,045	20,056,386	12.05
8	9	Flare	\$15,866,031	\$2,177,698	18,043,728	11.73
9	8	7 Jours	\$6,926,424	\$10,289,524	17,215,948	-1.06
10	11	Châtelaïne	\$11,416,551	\$3,284,579	14,701,129	7.11
11	10	Coup de Pouce	\$9,792,484	\$4,436,623	14,229,107	3.67
12	17	Today's Parent	\$10,150,476	\$1,894,578	12,045,054	17.63
13	13	L'actualité	\$7,647,718	\$4,340,055	11,987,773	-2.09
14	16	Style at Home	\$7,989,971	\$3,731,465	11,721,436	10.64
15	15	Fashion	\$10,647,232	\$1,005,917	11,653,150	4.25
16	14	Canadian Business	\$9,360,065	\$2,123,300	11,483,366	1.53
17	19	NOW <sup>1</sup>	\$11,418,805	\$0	11,418,805	15.03
18	12	Starweek	\$10,440,601	\$0	10,440,601	-15.55
19	25	Canadian Geographic	\$2,953,229	\$7,430,226	10,383,455	22.12
20	24	Homemaker's	\$7,194,577	\$2,521,081	9,715,658	14.22
21	21	Selection du RD	\$4,130,503	\$5,558,839	9,689,342	5.90
22	18	TV Hebdo	\$2,581,382	\$6,627,757	9,209,138	-8.00
23	22	Elle Québec	\$6,956,201	\$1,865,007	8,821,208	1.47
24	26	Toronto Life	\$6,909,633	\$1,458,616	8,368,248	0.91
25	23	Elle Canada	\$6,553,575	\$1,606,369	8,159,944	-5.43
26	20	TV Times	\$7,974,939	\$0	7,974,939	-13.97
27	29	enRoute <sup>1</sup>	\$7,605,383	\$0	7,605,383	15.03
28	28	Clin d'oeil	\$6,414,262	\$1,097,368	7,511,631	8.99
29	27	Report on Business	\$7,293,206	\$0	7,293,206	-3.69
30	31	Glow	\$6,534,852	\$121,622	6,656,474	18.20
31	35	Inside Entertainment	\$6,496,101	\$23,000	6,519,101	19.38
32	30	National Post Business	\$6,518,008	\$0	6,518,008	4.98
33	34	Décoration Chez-Soi	\$4,421,101	\$1,335,351	5,756,452	3.62
34	37	Bel Age	\$3,465,834	\$2,262,388	5,728,221	13.82
35	32	Western Living	\$5,387,171	\$58,347	5,445,518	-2.44
36	41	Les idées de ma maison	\$4,278,182	\$1,027,188	5,305,371	11.56
37	36	Canadian Gardening	\$3,103,514	\$2,169,225	5,272,739	-3.17
38	40	eye <sup>1</sup>	\$5,135,921	\$0	5,135,921	5.11
39	33	Food & Drink <sup>1</sup>	\$4,952,580	\$0	4,952,580	-11.17
40	43	Cottage Life <sup>1</sup>	\$2,926,410	\$1,806,723	4,733,133	13.62
41	38	Le Lundi	\$2,106,150	\$2,443,967	4,550,116	-7.72
42	42	50 Plus	\$3,215,967	\$1,113,307	4,329,273	0.30
43	—	Famous <sup>1</sup>	\$4,260,620	\$0	4,260,620	n/a
44	—	Vice <sup>2</sup>	\$4,004,000	\$0	4,004,000	n/a
45	45	Decormag	\$2,772,678	\$1,058,770	3,831,449	6.42
46	49	Outdoor Canada	\$2,464,336	\$1,335,384	3,799,720	16.43
47	44	Good Times	\$1,705,191	\$1,999,364	3,704,555	-0.82
48	39	CDN Home Workshop	\$1,492,152	\$2,074,832	3,566,983	5.40
49	—	Harrowsmith <sup>1</sup>	\$1,604,554	\$1,898,273	3,502,827	6.58
50	46	Tribute <sup>1</sup>	\$3,463,104	\$0	3,463,104	-3.67

<sup>1</sup>Title is monitored by LNA; publisher does not supply run sheets <sup>2</sup>Publisher supplied advertising revenue figure; we applied 0.7 weighting multiple

year jump.

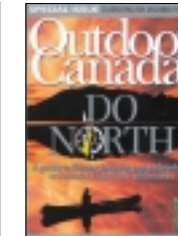
And let it not be said that the shelter books have failed to impress, with Lynda Reeves' *Canadian House & Home* posting an enviable 12.1% gain followed closely by Transcontinental's *Style at Home* at 10.6%. "Definitely, our editorial product is better than it's ever been," says Reeves, reached on her cell phone in a cab in Paris where she was scouting new products and homes to feature in the magazine as well as within her product line merchandized through the Hudson's Bay Company and on House & Home Television, which, by the

way, just moved from Alliance Atlantis to the wider-reaching Global CanWest network last month. *H&H* jumped from 10 to 12 issues in 2003. "The first year you [add] two issues, you can't maximize," Reeves says. Last year, readers, and

advertisers, caught on and gains were made. Kirby Miller, vice-president, sales and marketing, noted that the retail category was very strong in



Revenue up 22.1%



Posts 16.4% gain

2004, followed by household furnishings. He credits Reeves' nimble, entrepreneurial overall approach. "You don't have to go through too many layers to come to a decision."

#### The men show

As impressive as the shelter and women's categories are, the majority of high-performers on this year's Top 50—those posting annual gains exceeding 15%—skew toward male readers. Leading the pack like a howling wolf you might see on one of its covers is *Canadian Geographic*, where 52.7% of its 4.04 million readers are male according to PMB 2005. Estimated revenues leapt 22.1% to \$10.4 million last year.

How so? Add a 33% jump in single-copy sales—that beautiful barometer of public interest—to a cover price bump from \$5.95 to \$6.95 and the result is an on-fire 55.4% spike in estimated newsstand revenue (to \$522,000). Subscription revenue jumped 19.4% following a jump in price from \$29.95 to \$34.95. And on the advertising side, run-of-press (ROP) ad pages rose by 20.1% to 264 in calendar 2004, with auto (up 37%) and home (up 20%) categories showing the mightiest gains. "The story behind all of that is a strong brand and a superior editorial product," says publisher John Thomson, who compliments his editorial, circulation and sales and marketing staffers for pulling off yet another year of growth. The magazine's high reference value, he adds, means both pass-along and archiving rates are high, which appeals to advertisers. A

few years ago, Thomson thought *CG* was underperforming on the newsstand and the goal was set to outsell *National Geographic*. This is the third consecutive year that *CG* has achieved that goal, selling on average 25,000 single copies per month compared to *National Geographic's* 19,000. It's that sort of success that will see the magazine increase frequency from six to eight issues in 2006.

## TOP 50 COMPOSITE DATA

Revenue Category	2004	2003	% Change
Advertising Revenue	\$409,951,880	\$388,589,557	5.50%
Subscription Revenue	\$121,897,166	\$121,313,197	0.48%
Newsstand Revenue	\$40,924,543	\$40,739,523	0.45%
Total Circ Revenue	\$162,821,709	\$161,959,269	0.53%
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>\$572,773,589</b>	<b>\$550,548,827</b>	<b>4.03%</b>

Other male-skewed members of the high-performance club: Transcontinental's *Outdoor Canada* (sold by Avid Media last June), where revenues jumped 16.4%; *enRoute* (up 15%) and *Now* (up 15%), which appears to be taking the boots to younger rival *eye*, whose run-of-press ad pages declined 4.6% last year while *Now's* increased by 10.5%.

Jacqueline Howe, vice-president and group publisher at Transcontinental, says the sails at *Outdoor Canada* were filled by a "tremendous wind from the male demographic and non-endemic advertising," including truck advertising, packaged goods, travel and general men's products from companies such as Gillette. "People are interested in targeting an adult male-skewed audience," she says. Transcontinental actually has a few plans to more aggressively grow a community of male readers—remem-

ber, it also owns *The Hockey News* and former Avid title *Canadian Home Workshop*—but Howe says that those plans have been iced for the duration of the NHL lockout. There are special projects planned, however, including a one-off, 108,000-circ "SIP" (special-interest publication) focusing on a world hockey tournament in Austria this spring, which will be polybagged and sent to hockey-interested subscribers of *OC*, *THN* and *CHW*.

As for Montreal-based *enRoute*, the inflight monthly published by Spafax Canada for Air Canada, note that 58.6% of its 886,000 readers are male, according to PMB. According to national sales manager John Panagiotopoulos, a 4% jump in passenger traffic only partially explains the 15% jump in estimated revenues; what really powered sales is the magazine's "ability to bring unique concepts and ideas to our advertisers that other media outlets cannot offer." Think of the benefits of being able to offer advertisers captive business executives. Products advertised across various media, including inflight cinema, and sampling programs in AC's Maple Leaf Lounges, helped drive print sales, Panagiotopoulos says. Example: a sampling program and ad campaign for Gillette's Oral B finger-mounted toothbrush pads (an ideal product for hyper-hygienic, travelling executives) actually created out-of-stock concerns for the client, he says.

## Television books feeling the pinch

That's a problem the television listings maga-

zines would love to cause. With the notable exception of Transcon's *TV Guide*, which actually enjoyed a 6.6% increase in ROP pages, such titles continue to be caught in the vise of changing consumer habits and competition from online listings. Feeling the biggest pinch is *Starweek*, the insert to *The Toronto Star*, with an estimated ad revenue decline of 15.6% and a drop of 22.6% in ROP pages. *Starweek* general manager Tony Cahill says the ads from broad-



Captivated readers



Total revs jump 17.6%



Bucks trend, grows

casters migrated from the magazine to the newspaper, which offer shorter lead times and therefore greater flexibility. Also, ads in the paper "aren't preaching to the converted" (television watchers) and so have the added benefit of luring new viewers. Hence the rise in the use of outdoor media by broadcasters—they hit a non-traditional audience, he says. If the traditional listings magazines are to survive, "they'll need to become more [like] entertainment books than merely listings books," he predicts, noting that *Starweek* will continue to add editorial meat to its grid of listings. Over at rival *TV Times*, the insert to CanWest Global newspapers, estimated ad rev was down 14% and ROP pages dropped 24%. Account manager Xavier Antonucci has also seen broadcaster support fall off steeply. He adds that attrition rates of those that remain is high; new programs heavy up for season one and then don't return. That makes for a challenge, he says. He agrees with Cahill that listings titles must add more editorial content to attract readers. "It can give you more appeal to readers and advertisers," he says. Adds national sales manager David Titcombe: "We're certainly looking at [adding more content]."

Interesting; the listings books seem to be taking a page out of Kontent Publishing's three-year-old *Inside Entertainment*—another top performer whose revenues rose 19.4% last year to an estimated \$6.5 million. Is publisher Geoff Dawe worried that he may be facing some competitive entertainment reportage? "Great!" he says. "Maybe that means they'll be buying us

out!" Told of the remark, CanWest's Titcombe replied, "I'm not touching that one."

## The success of special interest

When we look at the other titles that have posted gains between 10% and 20%, we see many of them share common quality: they cater to distinct communities of interest. Look at *Glow* (a circ of 428,000) with an estimated growth spurt in ad rev of 18.2% last year. The genius of *Glow*, a partnership mag published by Rogers for Shoppers Drug Mart, is that it taps into the consumption habits of Optimum cardholders for three editions targeting three different demographics. Or *Today's Parent* (paid circ 178,000), growing 17.6% last year by our estimate, which "enjoys a very close bond" with readers due to the subject matter, says publisher Ildiko Marshall. It celebrated its 20th anniversary last year with a redesign and continuing direct relationships with Disney and Procter & Gamble, says Marshall. It's this success that will see *TP* go to 12 issues from 11 effective with the January 2006 number, which should arrive just before this coming Christmas, she says.

A successful 2004 at bimonthly *Cottage Life* (we estimate a 13.6% revenue gain) had publisher Al Zikovitz mulling a frequency jump to seven issues at our press time. "We're talking about it... We're already more than 10% over budget for this year," he says. A new emphasis on cottage décor and lifestyle was added last year, driven by readers who are "newcomers to the market and have no idea what in the hell to do. We didn't want them bringing the city idea to the cottage." The new content "showed well to advertisers," Zikovitz says, and helped push ROP ad pages up by 15.7%.

## The almost-made-its

While *Western Living* is the only title west of Toronto to make the list, we should note that Canada Wide Magazines and Communications' *BC Business* doesn't have far to go. Publisher Peter Legge says his circ and ad rev tally in at about \$3.1 million. Also at \$3.1 million by our estimate is Transcon's *Canadian Home & Country*, which five years ago was a 16,000-circ regional title serving Ontario century home owners. It's since been repositioned by Avid and is now owned by Transcon and sports a 123,000 paid circ. A hot B.C. economy and still-strong shelter category means strong prospects for 2005 for these up-and-comers. Look for them on next year's list. And congrats to the Top 50. **M**

## NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

Advertising revenues provided by LNA Canada and weighted with a 0.7 multiple to account for discounting. Circulation revenues tallied using ABC/BPA audit data and publishers' listings in the December 2004 issue of CARD. Subscription revenue weighted with 0.6 multiple to account for discounting (except for *Canadian Geographic* and *Cottage Life*, which don't discount); newsstand revenue weighted with a 0.5 multiple to account for sales commissions and fees extracted by distributors, wholesalers and retailers. To make the task manageable, magazine brand extensions and ancillary products, such as consumer shows, are not included.