

MEDIA KITS FOR B2B PUBLICATIONS

2015 is an interesting time to be developing a B2B media kit. As we shift to manage sales across multiple properties and platforms, we need to be adaptable to change. Before the development of websites, events and digital platforms, the printed publication was the only way to reach business or niche readers. Now the role of the sales representative has changed to media consultant. As media consultants we must understand the client's objectives and goals, how their industry works, how the industry makes money, and who their target audience is. Quality, succinct information that is easily digestible by our potential clients is more important than ever. Your B2B media kit must match your readers' and advertisers' needs.

We know that the B2B reader is looking for thoughtful, insightful and trustworthy content in your publication. Your media kit should demonstrate how you provide that content and, more importantly, how it uniquely engages your readers. Include as much information on your readership as possible in your kit. This applies to your printed products, digital platforms, events and even social media activities.

A readership survey is the best way to gather information for your media kit. If an independent readership survey is not available to you (as they can be expensive) even an internal survey will help you establish necessary readership demographics, including age, gender, household income, level of education, industry segment, size of company, reader's title, and reader's purchasing power. Understanding your readership is essential if you wish to serve your advertisers. Also, a sound knowledge of reader demographics will help your editorial team to develop an editorial environment geared to the reader's needs, which in turn provides the right environment for your advertisers. In addition to a readership survey, testimonials should also be considered as they provide an effective means of endorsement. Having internal readership information and endorsements is better than no information at all.

Being adaptable to change also means being able to react to economic conditions. For example, if your media kit is geared only to a regional or national advertiser, economic conditions might provide an opportunity for an international advertiser. If this is the case, your media kit will need to change to reflect the content and readership of your publication to a new potential advertiser. Your rate card may need the addition of your exchange rate policies, if payment is required up front, methods of payment, etc.

All media kits should include the fundamentals of readership/demographic information, editorial line-up and calendar, rates and ad sizes, circulation/distribution information, contract regulations (i.e. agency discounts, terms of payment, cancellation policy), how and where to submit your ad and **contact information**. If you are producing a print product only, additional information to consider might include information on reader engagement, circulation audits, editorial content (i.e. regular features and columns), advertorials, run of press, split-runs, and specialty ad options like special covers, belly-bands, and inserts. The design of your media kit should be a reflection of your publication; a sophisticated, well written and effectively designed magazine should have a sophisticated, well written and effectively designed media kit. Information specifically on your digital platforms should include readership and demographic information (as this is probably different than your print product), available ad impressions, average monthly page views, visitors, unique visitors, types of ad units and specialty ad units like videos, podcasts, and targeting options like geo-targeting, e-newsletters, e-blasts and content sponsorship.

If events have become part of your media offering, event information like when, where and audience will give your client an idea of fit. It is not recommended to include pricing in your media kit as each event is unique in its format, attendance and size and is priced accordingly.

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Rates are better quoted in gross dollars if you are a niche or regional publication that has little or no advertising from advertising agencies. National agencies seem to prefer net dollars but gross can be used as long as the rates are clearly identified. Digital is almost always quoted in net dollars.

Media kits should be available in September for the next calendar year. This is important when clients rely on an editorial schedule to help decide on timing and frequency. The most effective way to deliver your media kit is in person. As this is not always possible, it's important to ensure that your media kit is designed to provide the fundamental elements mentioned above. As we move to digital platforms, developing a media kit with customized content for your client could be a trend of the future. Imagine advertising representatives equipped with a tablet that contains specific media kit information relevant to their client's marketing goals and objectives.

Your media kit is your most valuable tool, one that should serve as the face of your publication. You might only have a single chance to make an impression, so getting the content, design and feel of your media kit right is essential.

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