

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Hearst Magazines banks on "print proud and digitally smart" strategy

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Hearst Tower in New York

By STAFF REPORTS

Media group Hearst is preparing for further changes to the media landscape in the coming years, looking at the upheaval in 2017 as just the beginning.

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In his annual New Year's letter addressing employees, Hearst Magazines president David Carey said that from his perspective, the winners going forward will view disruption as an opportunity. From embracing digital media distribution to acquisitions, Hearst has looked to expand and further diversify its business.

Evolving field

While the Hearst Magazines Group's 2017 earnings were slightly lower than its 2016 figures, the last year was still one of its best in the past decade.

In January, Hearst expects to close its acquisition of Rodale, which will add titles such as Men's Health and Women's Health to its portfolio. Rodale has an audience greater than 100 million and a global reach.

Along with acquisitions, Hearst has also focused on creating new brands. One of the magazine titles launched this year was Airbnbmag, which encourages readers to be travelers and not tourists.



Airbnbmag's debut issue. Image credit: Hearst

Airbnbmag, which hit newsstands in May, culls the expertise of the hospitality brand's local hosts and other insiders to provide inspiration on destinations around the globe. After disrupting the way in which consumers travel, Airbnb's magazine debut is also aimed at upending the idea of travel content for a modern audience ([see story](#)).

Even though Hearst Magazines did not see revenue growth overall, its digital business grew. Its magazines saw an average of 1.4 billion monthly page views and 15 billion video views throughout the year.

Hearst launched five new brands on Snapchat Discover, making it the largest publisher on the platform with seven titles. Through this channel, Hearst has 81 million unique monthly views.

The publisher also invested in video content production, creating new shows for Facebook Watch, including a partnership with Carine Roitfeld's CR Fashion Book. In November, the group opened a new video and multimedia production studio.

Hearst also launched brand partnerships, including Miele's Kitchen of the Future for Good Housekeeping ([see story](#)). Marie Claire also took its magazine brand off the page with the opening of a pop-up that leaned on the Internet of Things ([see story](#)).



Sketch of Marie Claire's first-ever The Next Big Thing concept shop. Image credit: Hearst's Marie Claire

2017 saw a number of changes in the media landscape, as rivals merged, companies consolidated their leadership and titles closed or reduced their publication.

"It may be hard to imagine, but I do believe that, in a few years' time, 2017 will be seen as a relatively tranquil period for the media business," Mr. Carey said in his statement. "The pace of change will only increase in the future, as transformation tests every sector of the economy."

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