

MULTICHANNEL

Why luxury brands should care about magazines' digital presence

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By RACHEL LAMB

To avoid the fate of the flailing print newspaper industry, magazines are pouring their resources into digital endeavors and presenting new and interactive advertising opportunities for luxury marketers who usually take advantage of print versions, according to a study from L2 Think Tank.

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Luxury Daily

Magazines that attract affluent individuals are typically chock-full of ads from luxury brands and the amount of effort that a magazine puts into Internet and mobile could have an effect on the marketers that advertise within them. Magazines such as Time, New York Magazine, GQ and Glamour were the magazines with the highest digital IQs, while Town&Country, Elle Décor, Travel + Leisure and Architectural Digest fell by the wayside.

“Advertisers are taking a serious look on the return of investment of magazines,” said Colin Gilbert, associate and lead researcher of the study of [L2 Think Tank](#), New York.

“There are a lot of magazines that are very influential in driving transactions online, which was a big component of the study,” he said. “As magazines got more digital, luxury advertisers in the print sections were saying, ‘What’s in it for me?’”

“With digital, both advertisers and publishers get more out of the ads because they provide

more interaction than static ads.”

The L2 Think Tank Digital IQ magazine study looked at four components: Web site, digital marketing, social media and mobile.

The magazines were put into different categories – genius, gifted, average, challenged and feeble – based on how well they did in the four sections.

Time is right

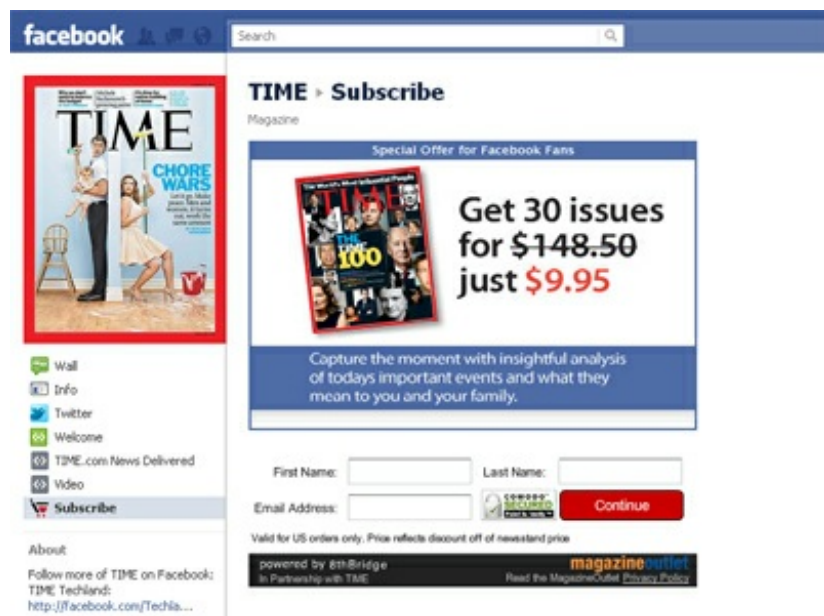
The only magazine to receive the genius ranking was Time magazine, which the study called “inspiring.”

“It all depended on how the magazine did across all sectors, and Time was the only one that really wowed us,” Mr. Gilbert said.

Time’s online component has an interactive feature on its Web site that allows consumers to easily browse content and watch videos.

The brand also has an impressive array of mobile applications spanning Apple, Android, BlackBerry and Windows smartphones and tablets.

This is important since magazines want to reach as wide an audience as possible, and most magazines are "Apple-centric," per Mr. Gilbert.

A screenshot of the TIME magazine Facebook page. The page header shows the Facebook logo and a search bar. The main content area features a 'Subscribe' button and a 'Special Offer for Facebook Fans' banner. The banner displays a magazine cover for 'The 100' and offers 'Get 30 issues for \$148.50 just \$9.95'. Below the banner is a form with fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', and 'Email Address', and a 'Continue' button. The left sidebar contains navigation links for 'Wall', 'Info', 'Twitter', 'Welcome', 'TIME.com News Delivered', 'Video', and 'Subscribe'. At the bottom, there is an 'About' section with the text 'Follow more of TIME on Facebook: TIME Techland: http://facebook.com/Techla...' and a footer with 'powered by 8thBridge In Partnership with TIME' and 'magazine outlet Read the MagazineCafe Privacy Policy'.

Time's Facebook page

Time also allows subscriptions from its Facebook page, joining the few in the “f-commerce” ranks.

Consumers can click on the same number of upscale ads as Time’s print issues, such as IBM and the Smithsonian Museum.

Other magazine sites such as New York allow consumers to interact with its ads.

For instance, New York readers can click on ads from apparel and accessories designer Bottega Veneta, taking them to the branded site with options for campaign photos, videos

and shopping.



New York Mag boasts Bottega Veneta ads

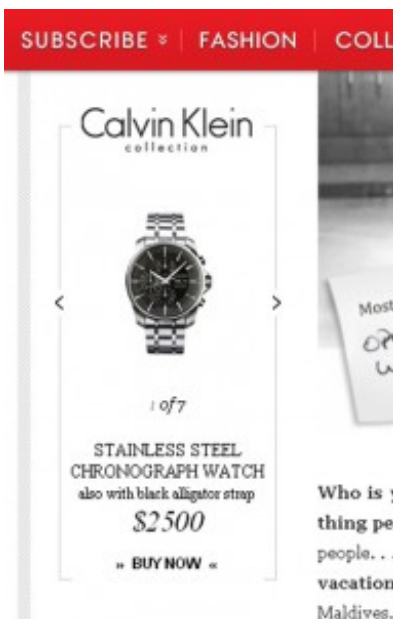
Conde Nast's GQ magazine also received high standing, most notably for its sharp customer service and irreverent Twitter handle.

Luxury brands such as BMW take advantage of both digital and print GQ ad opportunities.

Digital adds

Many luxury brands are taking advantage of digital ads.

For instance, fashion retailers Oscar de la Renta and Calvin Klein are targeting tech-savvy consumers with exclusive video and banner ads on the Vogue.com site ([see story](#)).



Calvin Klein ad on Vogue.com

In fact, some brands are putting their focus on magazines that are purely digital, with no print component.

For instance, Christian Dior is trying its luck with advertising within VIVmag's all-digital magazine that connects consumers to click-to-buy ad units ([see story](#)).

In 2007, ad revenue for magazines was at \$25 billion. This dropped during the recession to around \$20 billion and is just beginning to pick up speed.

While some magazines such as *W* are flaunting their deep bench of ads ([see story](#)), it makes sense that many brands and magazines turned to digital ads to gain revenue.

This not only saved money on print ads, but kept companies up-to-date with the consumers who read the digital magazines as well as the print versions.

That said, magazines such as *Town&Country*, *Elle Décor* and *Travel + Leisure*, which all achieved some of the lowest scores for digital IQ, should try to up their digital strategies as consumers continue to spend time online.

However, magazines trying to keep up should be aware of current online trends emerging, according to experts at L2 Think Tank.

“It’s clear that banner ads are no longer working,” Mr. Gilbert said. “However, Facebook ads are rising dramatically in terms of the amount of investment and value that people are putting into them.

“Magazines have amazing content and information on the Web, and the opportunity for ads in terms of this is to make sure that they are connected with the content,” he said.

“There are many opportunities to do this in new and creative ways.”

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York