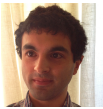


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Why LGBT Is One of the Fastest Growing Niches In Media

Ad spending in LGBT publications rose 18.2 percent last year.



By Michael Rondon
03/20/2014

As print advertising revenue erodes for the consumer magazine industry as a whole, there are titles finding success catering to pockets of readers. Epicurean, city and regional and high-end luxury are a few of the most-commonly cited—the LGBT segment falls into that group as well.

LGBT advertising spend rose 18.2 percent to \$381 million last year, with circulation jumping 15.1 percent to 2.7 million, according to a [study released by Rivendell Media](#), an ad agency serving the market, this week.

The report factors in all LGBT publications—magazines, newspapers and local arts and entertainment guides—with magazines accounting for about 20 percent of the total market, \$74 million.

It's still a very small slice of the total consumer magazine market—less than 1 percent, in fact; Veronis Suhler Stevenson [estimates](#) ad spending in consumer magazines totaled more than \$10.3 billion last year—but LGBT media is clearly growing while the industry's ad base trends downward in the aggregate.

Since 2008, overall consumer magazine ad spending has declined 20 percent while LGBT magazine ad revenue is up 24 percent.

Part of that can be attributed to the growing cultural acceptance of and around LGBT media outlets. Another part is the small base it started out with. But it's also one test case in a larger shift toward targeted opportunities for brands, says Joe Landry, group publisher for Here Media which publishes several national LGBT magazines, including *Out* and *The Advocate*.

"Advertisers are getting more targeted in general," he says. "We're fortunate to be in a niche that has a high household income demographic [and part] of a marketplace that buys. They're affluent and they spend their money on premium products and services."

Landry adds: "Half of the advertisers running in *Out* [Here's largest publication, with a total circulation of 196,000] are looking to reach affluent men, but it doesn't mean they have an LGBT target."

Stephen Rocheford, CEO of Lavender Media, a local LGBT magazine publisher in Minnesota, agrees.

"General publications are in decline because general audiences are being fragmented," he says. "It's turning into more and more niche markets."

National Market Growth

Particularly in national magazines, growth has come rapidly. Circulation and the number of ads have doubled since 2008 (revenue figures weren't available for that year).

Eric Carlyle, publisher and CEO of Media Out Loud which publishes two sports-centric LGBT titles, says the pool of readers has gotten bigger on a national level as well, while not diluting the value of readers in their niche.

"A lot of our readers were always curious about what's going on in the gay community, but now they feel like they can check into it because there isn't a big stigma behind it," he says. "Female readership for *Compete Magazine* [one of Media Out Loud's titles] has changed in the past several years. While the number of female readers has increased, proportionately the increase of straight women has outpaced the increase of lesbian readers. This is largely due to the general acceptance of society, but also because increased visibility and positioning of LGBT allies."



Advertising Spending by Type of Publication

	2012		2013		Change in % 2012-2013
	\$	%	\$	%	
Total Dollars	322.6	100.0	381.4	100.0	18.2
Local Newspapers	249.0	77.2	211.4	55.4	-15.1
Local A&E Guides	21.9	6.8	96.4	25.3	340.2
Local Magazines	36.4	11.3	40.2	10.5	10.4
National Magazines	15.3	4.7	33.4	8.8	118.3

Local magazines haven't fared as well—circulation and ads are actually down over the same time span—but that's impacted by a high turnover rate, according to Rocheford, who's been tracking launches and closings in the LGBT press since 1999.

The success of local A&E guides—they've seen readership and ads rise significantly since 2008—has also played

a role.

Even with the growth on a national scale though, the LGBT magazine industry is still small enough to deal with clients on a direct sales basis which complements the targeted ad opportunities, Carlyle says.

"In the LGBT media, there are so many of us that are hands-on, that work with our customers, advertisers, readers directly," he says. "Even the bigger ones still have a small enough base that we're able to stay more in contact with our employees, advertisers and everyone in the industry."



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