

SHERIDAN MAGAZINE SERVICES'

# register

UNITED LITHO, INC.

DARTMOUTH PRINTING COMPANY

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special  
excerpt

## bigger profits on ad gimmicks

With purse strings as tight as they've ever been, advertisers are looking for maximum impact for the dollars they spend, and publishers are looking for creative solutions that leave as many of those dollars in their pockets as possible.

Enter the ad "gimmick" — the specialty piece designed to go beyond display and classified advertising, to rivet the reader's attention, to help the advertiser stand out from the competition. A wide variety of inserts, onsets, tips, wraps, bellybands and gatefolds can bring increased ad revenues, higher renewal rates and more engaged readers.

The trick is to manage the production costs so you can price these special projects competitively and still make a healthy profit. Doing that effectively takes lots of communication and plenty of planning.

Get your printer involved in the discussion as early in the process as possible, advises SMS Account Executive Jill Murray. "It's an important part of my job," she says. "My customers are looking to me as the expert, and I need to help them review every special project from the standpoint of potential pitfalls. What mistakes might lead to extra costs in prepress, in the pressroom, on the binding and finishing line, or in the mail?"

Although conventional display ads can have their share of problems — from missing fonts to low-resolution images to insufficient

bleed — they're generally not as challenging as special projects. They're printed on paper you're familiar with, and they're going to look pretty much like the rest of your magazine.

But with "quirkier" pieces, Murray says, it's critical that everyone understand all the specifications upfront — particularly if they didn't originate with the advertiser. "When an advertiser develops a piece and supplies the specs, they have a clearer understanding of the requirements. But often an ad sales rep will be in front of an advertiser, being pressed for 'something creative,' and trying to develop a concept on the fly. That's when the smallest miscommunication can turn into a make-good down the line."

Knowing the right questions to ask is half the battle, she says, noting that Sheridan Magazine Services has developed a Production Checklist (<http://www.sheridan.com/sites/default/files/insertproductionchecklist.pdf>) to help publishers navigate the process.

Does the advertiser realize that an inside tip must either be considerably smaller than the magazine's trim size, or include head, foot and face trim?

When selecting paper, does he understand the difference between text and cover weights, or the aesthetic effect of choosing a lower grade?

Does she realize that a cover gatefold must be narrower than the rest of the magazine to avoid catching the hinge in the trim? Or that it's often necessary to crop the ad slightly (leaving a narrow white strip on the right edge) to avoid a jarring cover experience?

Has he taken into account the flap required to bind an insert into a saddle-stitched book?

And what about you?

Do you know how the choices you and your advertiser make about binding method, dimensions, page count, weight and desired placement affect the production constraints for a tip? Is the position he's asked you to guarantee physically possible? Will accommodating his request force you to break your magazine into less-cost-efficient press forms? Will you wind up inadvertently tipping the piece to another company's ad?

Have you considered the extra expense involved in having to polybag barndoor covers, untabbed bellybands and cover wraps that don't come within .75" of the head, foot and face trim?

Are you aware of the "TIF Rule" for Standard nonprofit mailers, which prohibits advertising of any sort — run-of-book, insert or onsert — from travel, insurance or finance companies?

Do you know what the USPS rules are for blow-in cards in a magazine mailing at Periodicals rates?

Are you familiar with the requirements that must be met to classify a loose enclosure as a "Supplement to ..."? What about the restrictions on Ride-Along pieces?

The short answer to all of these questions is — you guessed it — "Work closely with your printer." Your account manager or account executive can help you understand the capabilities and limitations

of their equipment, anticipate potential problems, run a comparative analysis of different production or mailing options, suggest less-expensive alternatives, and even run your design past the Post Office for review if necessary.

Yvonne Kassimatis, marketing manager at the Association of Clinical Research Professionals, says that sort of careful coordination was the key to ACRP's success with a pop-up insert promoting their conference. "Months in advance, as soon as I identified the October issue as the right time to attempt this type of project, the editor-in-chief and I met with our team at United Litho to describe the general concept and discuss some potential production pitfalls," she explained.

Working closely with its graphic design firm, ACRP developed a simple pop-up that would be easy to print, have a straightforward die-cut, and require minimal glue assembly. A mockup prototype was created and sent to various vendors for production estimates as well as suggestions for modifying the design to save money.

At the same time, Kassimatis and Editor Ronnie Precup were working with United Litho to figure out how the piece would bind into the perfect-bound *Monitor*. They brainstormed about how best to extend an edge into the binding and allow readers to detach the piece from the magazine, submitted paper mockups in two different basis weights to determine what stock would work best, and found out they needed to adjust the design of the piece so that the required 1/8" head trim would not result in a misshapen die-cut.

With some trial and error, a lot of comps, and close collaboration among all the vendors, Kassimatis says, the pop-up appeared in the October issue, where it looked great and functioned just the way they'd hoped it would.

A textbook example of how to do everything right.