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See What Print Ads Worked Best This Summer

MRI Starch Rates the Most Engaging Magazine Ads

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- MRI Starch Communications, a specialist in print-advertising research, has developed an "engagement score" to help identify the best-performing print ads out there. The score combines the percentage of readers who noticed a given ad and the percentage that read at least half of it.

For this look at the Best Ads of Summer 2008, MRI Starch considered 694 one-page and two-page ads with a minimum of 50 words. It then selected the top ads in each of 12 major categories. All selected ads were thoroughly read by over half of those who initially noticed the ad.

See what marketers like Avon, HP, Bayer and Honda did this summer to get people to pay attention to their ads.

America's Milk Processors

Agency: Weber Shandwick, Chicago

Publication: Sports Illustrated, 7-28-08

Category: Dairy, Produce, Meat and Bakery Goods

Engagement Score: 124

Category Average: 95

got milk?

Stars need stripes.
Looking for gold? Don't forget the white. Milk is a great choice after exercise, with protein to help build muscle and a unique mix of nutrients to refuel. So train hard and drink lowfat or fat free milk. Talk about a strong team. **body by milk.**
www.bodybymilk.com

The ubiquitous "Got Milk" print ad campaign scores another winner with this two-page spread execution, featuring an array of Olympic athletes gathered in a relaxed stance, all dressed in white attire and juxtaposed against the backdrop of a large American flag. With the unquestionable media buzz created by the Summer Olympics, the timeliness and relevance of the ad's subject matter and slant are virtually a given. From a creative standpoint, several effective creative elements are at work: a collection of attractive human models, all of whom seem to beckon the reader forth -- thanks to the power generated by direct eye contact (MRI Starch studies indicate that, generally, print ads containing subjects who appear to be looking straight into the camera tend to gain attention more successfully than those that depict their models as distracted and gazing off into the distance), and the bright and contrasting colors of the flag, which lend a unifying, eye-catching background.

Avon Lipstick

Agency: Soho Square, New York

Publication: Marie Claire, 5-08

Category: Cosmetics and Beauty Aids

Engagement Score: 119

Category Average: 82

The lipstick that lets you take on the world single-handedly

New from Avon
Pro-To-Go Lipstick

A lipstick and moisturizing balm in one you can open, apply and close with one hand.

Call Your Avon Representative
800-FOR-AVON or visit avon.com

Slide it open Put it on Slide it shut

Hello Tomorrow

AVON

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The advertisement features a close-up portrait of Reese Witherspoon with blonde hair and a slight smile, wearing red lipstick. In the foreground, three Avon Pro-To-Go Lipstick tubes are shown in various stages of use: one is open, one is being applied, and one is closed. The tubes are black with red accents. The Avon logo is prominently displayed at the bottom of the image.

MRI Starch Readership data repeatedly suggest that print advertisements featuring celebrities and well-known public figures seem to possess an inherent ability to attract reader attention at higher-than-average levels. Popular actress Reese Witherspoon lends her likeness and star appeal to this Avon lipstick ad. Besides the interest generated by Witherspoon's endorsement, this execution manages to find a winning solution to the common advertiser quandary of whether to simply show the product or to show the product in use. It does both by providing a clear, close-up look at the product itself, as well as a striking display of the product in use, vividly enhancing the beguiling smile of our celebrity model.

Bayer Aspirin

Agency: Energy BBDO-BBDO New York

Publication: U.S. News & World Report, 7-21-08

Category: Medicines and Proprietary Remedies

Engagement Score: 106

Category Average: 65

**LOW DOSE
ASPIRIN THERAPY.
REDEFINED.**



LOW DOSE ASPIRIN
LOWERS RISK OF HEART ATTACK

PHYTOSTEROLS
LOWERS CHOLESTEROL

If you're already on an aspirin regimen,
talk to your doctor about whether you can
get even more protection for your heart.

Introducing **NEW** Bayer With Heart Advantage,
the only low dose aspirin that reduces
the risk of heart attack, and has phytosterols,
that are proven to lower cholesterol.*



NEW!
BAYER
ASPIRIN
With
HEART ADVANTAGE
ASPIRIN PLUS
CHOLESTEROL
LOWERING
PHYTOSTEROLS
30 (81mg)

**MORE PROTECTION
FOR YOUR HEART.**

Aspirin is not appropriate for everyone, so be sure to talk to your doctor before you begin or modify an aspirin regimen.

*Dietary supplement or food containing at least 80mg per serving of free phytosterols, taken twice a day with meals for a daily total intake of at least 160mg, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering blood cholesterol. Each Bayer With Heart Advantage (81mg) contains 80mg of free phytosterols. This product is not a replacement for cholesterol-lowering medications.

EXPECT WONDERS.™ 

Of all the creative tools at the disposal of creators of print advertisements, color is undoubtedly one of the most effective. With sunny canary yellow as its predominant shade, along with the presence of the bright red packaging which contains the product, the Bayer creative has little chance of escaping readers' notice, as its high engagement score goes to show. MRI Starch results indicate that ads that make good use of palette of strong primary colors frequently perform well in securing initial reader attention. Even more importantly, the ad also manages to impart valuable benefits-related product information in its text -- thus enticing the reader and increasing overall interest. In the case of the Bayer ad, a riveting color scheme, along with copy that clearly communicates product benefits, joined forces to fully engage a large segment of readers.

Bed Bath & Beyond

Agency: SBC Advertising, Columbus, Ohio

Publication: Cottage Living, 5-08

Category: Retail

Engagement Score: 132

Category Average: 71



Some magazine readers bemoan the fact that "I had to hunt in order to find out who the advertiser was!" Not so in the case of this high-performing ad for the retail chain of Bed Bath & Beyond stores -- its name is emblazoned boldly across the top of the ad space, so there is most assuredly no sleuth work necessary on the part of the reader here. The creative adheres closely to more than one of MRI Starch's "Ten Principles for Successful Print Advertising." The power of simplicity is seen here at the height of its powers, with the image of a fork as the sole illustrative focal point. MRI Starch findings suggest that ads with one focal point generally are more effective than ads using multiple, disparate images, which can cause readers to tune out and leave the page. A small dose of wry wit is present in the ad as well, in the form of something of a visual pun: close observation reveals that one of the fork's tines is missing. A brief text explanation does double-duty as a punchline ("It's not 20% less. It's 20% off"). Some things are predictable -- one such thing is that most people love a bargain. MRI Starch measures actions taken on exposure to ads and found that almost half of those who saw the Bed Bath & Beyond ad clipped the coupon or saved the ad. The promise of saving money, as well as visual simplicity and a touch of wit, were sufficient to attract and engage numerous readers with the ad.

Fidelity Investments

Agency: In house

Publication: Forbes, 6-16-08

Category: Financial

Engagement Score: 114

Category Average: 78

The advertisement features a clean, minimalist design. On the left, a large green arrow points to the headline: "You've spent four decades growing your nest egg." To the right, a dark green banner at the top reads "Generate income for retirement". Below this, the sub-headline "Time to crack it open." is followed by a light blue box containing the text: "Retirement income. Now made easier. Congratulations. You made it. Now you just need a strategy for spending it. We have the products and tools to help with that, so you can easily set up regular monthly payments based on your needs. After all, it's your time to live the retirement you're more than ready for." Below the box, the text "CALL 800.343.2571 or your own advisor." and "CLICK Fidelity.com/retirementincome" is displayed. The Fidelity logo and the tagline "Smart move." are positioned in the bottom right corner. A small disclaimer "Investing involves risk, including the risk of loss. Fidelity Brokerage Services, Member NYSE, SIPC 468542" is located in the bottom left corner.

Generate income for retirement

You've spent four decades growing your nest egg.

Time to crack it open.

Retirement income. Now made easier.
Congratulations. You made it. Now you just need a strategy for spending it. We have the products and tools to help with that, so you can easily set up regular monthly payments based on your needs. After all, it's your time to live the retirement you're more than ready for.

CALL 800.343.2571 or your own advisor.
CLICK Fidelity.com/retirementincome

Fidelity
INVESTMENTS
Smart move.®

Investing involves risk, including the risk of loss.
Fidelity Brokerage Services, Member NYSE, SIPC 468542

With its rather stark appearance, the Fidelity Investments ad employs a direct, no-nonsense approach. Visual material is kept to a minimum -- instead, a sharp headline message and accompanying block of informative copy do the bulk of the work. When it comes to finances, it seems that, most often, ads that rely on brief, explanatory copy and emphasize the benefits of the particular product or service being offered tend to out-perform ads with creative content that pulls out all the bells and whistles (and often runs the risk of baffling and ultimately, turning off the reader in the process). The Fidelity ad asserts its message clearly and without excessive fluff or window dressing. Its high reader engagement level shows that most readers were just fine with that; apparently even preferring such an approach.

Hewlett-Packard Computers

Agency: t:m, Dallas

Publication: Wired, 5-08

Category: Computers, Software and Internet

Engagement Score: 96

Category Average: 71

HP recommends Windows Vista® Business.

AMD 64 Opteron

MORE POWER TO YOU. LESS POWER FROM YOU.

THE COMPUTER IS PERSONAL AGAIN

Help lower your energy costs without compromising performance by choosing HP's ENERGY STAR® qualified desktops with 80 PLUS® power supplies. They run on AMD Opteron™ Processors designed to deliver a high performance-per-watt ratio. It's more, for less. In business terms: efficiency.

Learn more about 80 PLUS® power supplies at hp.com/go/powersupply2

HP z440 Workstation
 AMD Opteron™ processor Model 1212™
 Genuine Windows Vista® 32-bit (upgrade to Genuine Windows® XP Professional 32-bit installed)
 80 PLUS® Power Supply ENERGY STAR® qualified

\$599 Was \$930
Price reflects \$331 instant savings.

SmartBuy #11 88-0267AABA

HP Total Care is service redefined to help you choose, use, protect and recycle your technology.

hp

The Hewlett-Packard ad serves as a fine example of the power of good ad flow. MRI Starch data suggest that the best-performing ads often manage to guide the reader's eye along, leading them through most of the most important elements of the ad in a natural, sweeping motion. The manner in which the HP ad's headline is presented (i.e., tilted toward the product, as if emanating forth from within it) almost can't help but draw attention from the headline, to the product image, and finally, downward to the copy. The yellow lightning bolt effectively functions as an arrow, pointing the reader directly below to the text, and therefore bolstering the likelihood that the text will be read at high levels.

Honda Pilot

Agency: Rubin Postaer and Associates, Santa Monica, Calif.

Publication: Forbes, 6-16-08

Category: Automotive, Automotive Accessories and Equipment

Engagement Score: 124

Category Average: 82



YOU UTILITY.

It's the new Pilot, with more functionality, more smarts and more ready-for-anything spirit than any Pilot we've ever built. Features like enhanced third-row seating, standard Class III trailer hitch, available rearview camera and DVD rear entertainment system help make you, more useful.

THE NEW PILOT
RIDE READY.



pilot.honda.com

Consisting of one word only, the headline message of the Honda Pilot ad could hardly be more brief (which is, arguably, a good thing, as MRI Starch data indicate that the most successful headlines usually consist of nine words or less). Implicit in its "Youutility" headline is, of course, the melding of an SUV with the idea of a vehicle that places its full orientation around the convenience and needs of the consumer. The ad's copy elucidates this concept further, offering detailed information on what the Pilot has to offer. Time and again, readers seem to become most readily involved with ads that offer them solutions and benefits. The ad's vivid red background likely played a key role in bringing readers to the page, and the sharp, clear image of the Pilot, strategically positioned with its headlights aimed precisely in the direction of the all-important copy, did its utmost to summon their interest.

Minwax Helmsman Spar Urethane

Agency: Brushfire Inc., Cedar Knolls, N.J.

Publication: This Old House, 6-08

Category: Building Materials, Equipment and Fixtures

Engagement Score: 98

Category Average: 72



**PRESERVE THE BEAUTY
WHATEVER THE WEATHER.**

Give wood strong, long-lasting protection
with Helmsman® Spar Urethane.

From snow to rain to hot sun, the elements can take their toll on beautiful wood. That's why you need the superior, long-lasting protection of Helmsman® Spar Urethane. It contains special ultraviolet absorbers to help protect wood from the fading effects of the sun. And as temperatures change with the seasons, its flexible finish expands and contracts to resist cracking. Harsh weather comes and goes. But with the protection of Helmsman® Spar Urethane, the beauty remains.

MINWAX
Makes And Keeps Wood Beautiful™
Learn more at minwax.com

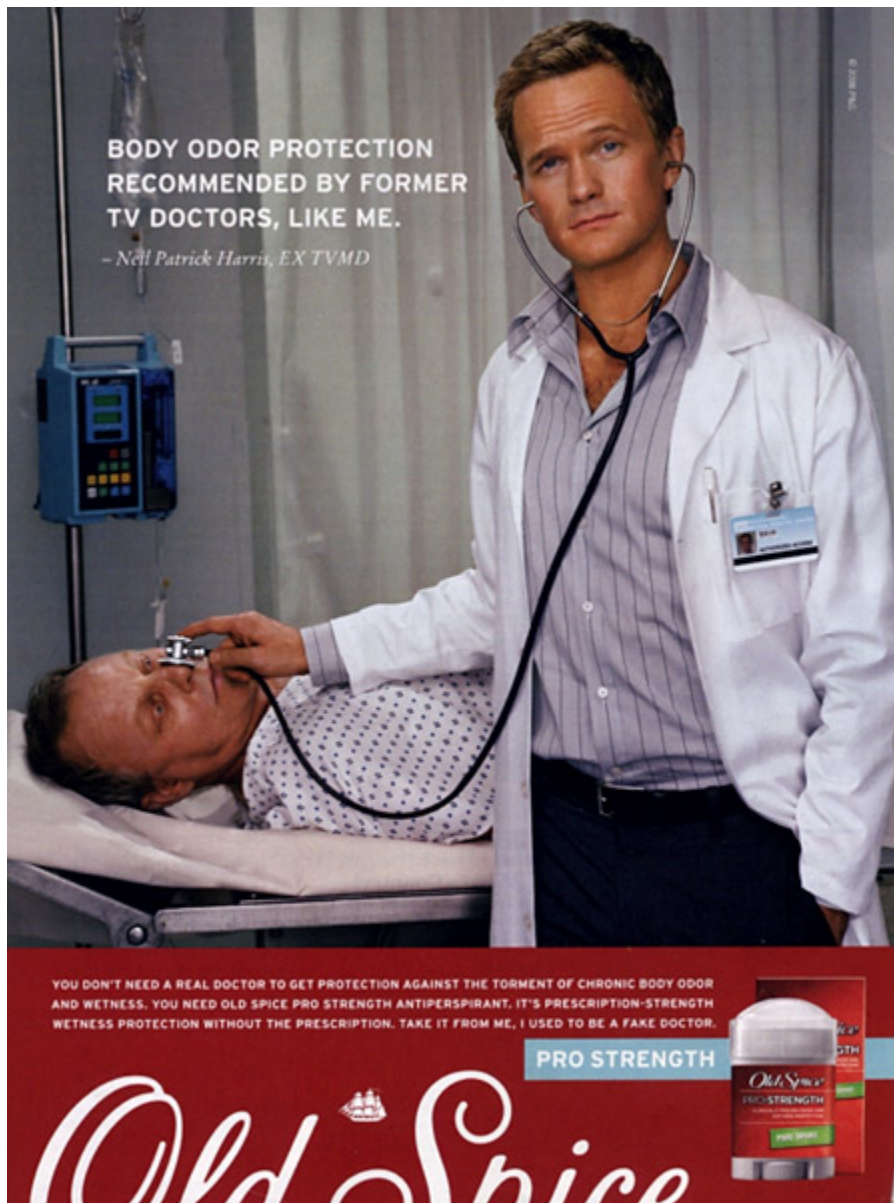
PROLESPONSOR

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When purchasing a product, it's safe to say that the consumer wants to be reasonably assured of the end result of that product's use. Rather than relying exclusively on the inclusion of written claims, the Minwax ad instead SHOWS the reader this, with an illustration that offers tangible proof of the product's benefits. By displaying a wooden door with every detail of its wood grain visible, flanked by a visual representation of harsh weather conditions, such as snow, rain, and sun -- it visually enacts the manner in which Minwax can stand up to the elements, and

Old Spice Deodorant

Agency: Weiden & Kennedy, Portland
Publication: Sports Illustrated, 7-14-08
Category: Personal Hygiene and Health
Engagement Score: 112
Category Average: 71



BODY ODOR PROTECTION
RECOMMENDED BY FORMER
TV DOCTORS, LIKE ME.
— Neil Patrick Harris, EX TVMD

YOU DON'T NEED A REAL DOCTOR TO GET PROTECTION AGAINST THE TORMENT OF CHRONIC BODY ODOR AND WETNESS. YOU NEED OLD SPICE PRO STRENGTH ANTIPERSPIRANT. IT'S PRESCRIPTION-STRENGTH WETNESS PROTECTION WITHOUT THE PRESCRIPTION. TAKE IT FROM ME, I USED TO BE A FAKE DOCTOR.

PRO STRENGTH

Old Spice
PRO STRENGTH
PURE ZINC

Humor is an approach that often attracts the attention of readers at high levels. Similarly, the portrayal of celebrities in ads has also been linked to the garnering of a reader attention. So, what happens when both creative ingredients are put to use? The Old Spice ad features actor Neil Patrick Harris, better known as "Doogie Howser, M.D.," from the old TV series of the same name. When an old television star with widespread retro-appeal is featured in a tongue-in-cheek product endorsement, enacting a silly, slapstick-style action (by placing his stethoscope on a patient's nose, no less), the result is indeed funny, but also refreshingly unusual, quirky, and yes -- engaging.

Smart Ones Frozen Entrees

Agency: Cramer & Kresselt, Chicago

Publication: Ladies' Home Journal, 5-08

Category: Prepared Dinners and Entrees

Engagement Score: 95

Category Average: 81



Juicy oranges for flavor. How Smart is that?

Our newest entrees are full of sweet, juicy fruit. Introducing Orange Sesame Chicken, a sweet and savory meal of lightly breaded chicken tenderloins and mandarin orange pieces in a delicious orange-soy sauce. It's just one of our Fruit Inspirations™ meals, the only ones that get their vibrant flavor from juicy fruit. Guess who tastes better than ever?

www.eatyourbest.com

Smart Ones Fruit Inspirations

When it comes to a recipe for successful food advertising, an appeal to the senses frequently emerges as the one of the most effective ways to tantalize and captivate the reader. What better way to display food in as appetizing a manner as possible as via the use of giantism (that is, showing the product magnified to larger-than-life size). Such a visual tends to pop off the page, and is capable of providing the reader with an inviting sensory experience. Once readers have feasted their eyes to their thorough satisfaction, they are further engaged by the descriptive and mouth-watering copy on the bottom portion of the page (which, in conjunction with the row of oranges atop the page, serves to frame the entrée on the plate quite

Titleist AP1 & AP2 Irons

Agency: Arnold Worldwide, Boston

Publication: Golf Magazine, 6/08

Category: Sporting Goods

Engagement Score: 124

Category Average: 91

ADVANCED PERFORMANCE YOU CAN FEEL.

INTRODUCING TITLEIST AP1 AND AP2 IRONS.

Now there are two new Titleist irons that combine the high performance players require with the pure feel they expect. AP1 is a multi-material iron that provides outstanding feel, shot control, higher ball flight and forgiveness. AP2 is a multi-material iron designed for players who want great feel, looks, playability and shot control. Both feature a high technology construction with a steel body and tungsten nickel sole that optimizes ball flight and performance. The dual cavity design delivers exceptional feel and playability. Feel the difference and see what makes Titleist irons the choice of Tour professionals, PGA Club pros and better players. For more details and to find a Titleist fitter near you, visit titleist.com/ap1ap2.

IDEAL CAVITY DESIGN

- Thin face
- Shot control
- Custom cavity and sole
- High density tungsten nickel sole

AP1 TUNGSTEN NICKEL
DUAL CAVITY Titleist

AP2 FORGED TUNGSTEN NICKEL
DUAL CAVITY Titleist

Titleist

Along with color, clarity and sharp contrast are two creative elements that repeatedly reveal themselves as effective means of attracting eyes to the page. Print ads that feature muddy, unclear images often fail to perform well in engaging readers, as do those with monochromatic, low-contrast ones. The Titleist ad is crystal clear, and reveals a great deal of detail in the design of the products being shown. Besides the strong degree of clarity, the visual material being presented is accentuated even more so by the eye-catching contrast that created by the clubs up against the jet-black background. The clarity and contrast within the Titleist ad endows the reader with an almost tactile sense -- as if, just as the headline suggests -- one could just reach out and feel the actual texture and quality of these clubs.

Travelocity.com

Agency: McKinney & Silver, Raliegh, N.C.

Publication: Condé Nast Traveler, 7/08

Category: Public Transportation, Hotels and Resorts

Engagement Score: 106

Category Average: 73

The advertisement is a vertical rectangular panel with a dark blue background. The top two-thirds of the panel is a photograph of a brown horse walking on a sandy beach. A small, white, cylindrical gnome with a red pointed hat is being pulled along the sand by a thin black rope attached to the horse's harness. The gnome is leaving a trail of sand behind it. In the background, there are palm trees, a clear blue sky, and a turquoise ocean with white waves. A few people can be seen walking in the distance. The bottom third of the panel is a dark blue text box with white and orange text. The text reads: "Travel Wish #11. Ride bareback on the beach." followed by a paragraph of promotional text, a line about 40,000 wishes fulfilled, and the Travelocity logo and tagline "You'll never room alone." at the bottom.

Travel Wish #11.
Ride bareback on the beach.

Got a wish? Our unbiased customer reviews let you research all of your hotel options. Our Flexible Price Calendar shows the best days to save on a room. And our Guarantee will back you up all trip long. So where there's a wish, there's a way.

Over 40,000 wishes fulfilled every day.
Start your wish list at Travelocity.com

 **travelocity**
You'll never room alone.

The attention-getting power of humor again makes itself evident in this Travelocity.com ad. The "roaming gnome" has no doubt become instantly recognizable by many magazine readers, as his likeness has become somewhat synonymous and inextricably linked to the brand. When this whimsical character is placed in a seemingly endless array of unusual circumstances and settings, an enjoyable dose of humor and amusement is often the result. Here, the reader sees one of our gnome friend's travel wishes acted out, as he (in his own fashion), "rides bareback" on the beach. MRI Starch readership results frequently convey plainly that readers find themselves engaged with ads that present some type of action as it unfolds -- and if it is enjoyable and entertaining, so much the better. The Travelocity.com ad manages to engage by its offering of amusement, a scenic and visually appealing setting, and a strong degree of ad flow (take note of how the gnome's pointed hat leads the eye directly toward the ad's copy).