

Women's Magazines - UK - December 2010

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What is this report about?

The 2010 half-year ABC results revealed a relatively stable women's magazine market in the UK. The hugely fragmented and crowded market is just about supporting the plethora of titles in operation. The year 2009 was an extremely tough one but publishers are faced with renewed optimism having experienced some return of advertising volumes, an improved performance for many brands with some star performers and a strong future in a digital world which is still evolving.

Women's magazines are looking to the future, faced with integrating old media and new media without losing consumer engagement along the way. Print magazines are a long way off becoming redundant, however, they are under pressure to find new commercial partnerships moving forward. The success of ad revenue-funded free magazines is challenging existing business models.

What have we found out?

- Following a fraught 2009, there are signs that the UK women's magazine market is stabilising. Mintel estimates 530 million copies of women's magazines will be sold in 2010, creating revenues of around £691 million.
- Since the latter half of 2008, when the magazine industry really began to feel the effects of the advertising cuts, a new era of frequent cover-price discounts, magazine bundles and giveaways has taken over – and this mentality will be difficult to shift even as conditions improve in the coming year.
- Circulation has grown in the women's weekly market. Fashion weeklies such as Look, Grazia and More! have proved resilient while real-life and celebrity weeklies have struggled apart from lower-priced and heavily promoted titles.
- It seems inevitable that readers will become increasingly aware of the vast amount of free content available online, particularly since the most prolific magazine readers are young (16-24) and also regular internet users. However, for now at least, the proliferation of online magazines has had relatively little impact on women's purchasing behaviour; around one in 16 women are buying celebrity weeklies and glossy magazines less often as a result.
- Celebrity weeklies and glossies are considered good 'skimming' material. However, one in three glossy readers will read their magazine in detail, particularly the fashion- and beauty-conscious, and the same goes for general-interest magazines.
- Women who read them cover to cover are most likely to pass them onto friends etc to read when they are confident they have exhausted all the reading material.

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EMEA: +44 (0)20 7778 7151
Americas: +1 (312) 932 0600
APAC: +61 (0)2 8284 8100