



# Are We Marketers or Masochists?

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It's June and the snow has mercifully retreated. The SARS thing appears to be under control. And the Canadian government is actively engaged in damage control for betting on Chirac instead of Blair...finally.

I'd say the glass is looking half full, rather than half empty. Plus, the Canadian dollar is rising, our economy is out-performing the G7, and did I mention the snow has retreated?

The other thing you may not know is that the newsstand scene in Canada is pretty robust too. Sure, things could always be better. But have you ever noticed how you rarely hear any good news about newsstand sales in North America?

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Sadly, the evidence seems to suggest that we Circulation Professionals rather enjoy negativity. How else can a rational, logical, analytical marketer explain the constant chorus of pundits, experts, and columnists singing the blues?

Even if there is statistical evidence that irrefutably highlights weaknesses, isn't our job as marketers to "Spin" the message? Isn't part of our job to convince

advertisers, ad agencies, retailers and consumers that magazines are sexy, that magazines are relevant, that magazines are profitable, that magazines generate traffic, that magazines are fully returnable, that magazines drive sales of other products that are featured in both editorial and advertising messaging?

Don't we understand that ad agencies and retailers read the same trade press we do, and that if they see us hanging our heads like a tired-old hound dog on a blistering summer day in Texas that they are going to give us a good swift kick?

What other group of Marketers do you know that talk themselves down so effectively?

How fast did all of us hear that Wal-Mart de-listed Maxim, FHM and Stuff? In a New York second. We're good at negativity. I don't want to suggest that this isn't news, and that it isn't a very important issue, but it does illustrate how fast bad news travels in our industry. We seem to feed on it, and my worry is that it becomes a self-fulfilling cycle that continues to generate a negative ion vortex around us that just keeps sucking us down.

Does anyone want some good news? I'm sure there are plenty of examples out there.

## *News Flash*

Newsstand Sales in Canada are up! Who says so? The Audit Bureau of Circulations, that's who.

Sales of Canadian magazines have reported increases in both 2001 vs. 2000 and 2002 vs. 2001. Many quality U.S. magazines are also posting robust sales up here.

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Canadian wholesalers reported at their annual conventions that 2002 was a very good year. Routability deals have been worked out between the CMMI wholesalers and the News Group wholesalers.

Why? I could be self-serving, but I'll resist the temptation. Maybe it's just because Canadian winters are so long that we have nothing better to do than curl up with a magazine. Maybe it's because we weren't distracted by Iraq. Maybe it's just because we are being a bit more pragmatic these days and less bellicose. Or maybe, just maybe, it's because Canadians are behaving more like Americans these days...that is to say we are acting like marketers, we are being aggressive, and we are determined and optimistic.

But, who cares what the reasons may be. It's really all about Results, right! ■