Why is printed advertising still important to magazines, newspapers and other forms of print media?

Printed advertising is the primary source of funding of local and national newspapers and also magazines – the revenue drawn from advertisers ensures that the production values of the text can be maintained. Print media has suffered from declining circulation in recent years and with this, advertisers are reluctant to advertise in a magazine or newspaper that has low circulation figures according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertisers will still advertise in free print media like The Metro or men’s magazine Shortlist but the lower production values will be apparent. Print media with the highest production values tend to be monthly glossy magazines like Cosmopolitan, Glamour and Men’s Health that typically contain a ratio of 65% advertising content to 35% editorial content, sometimes higher.

Advertisers and print media are able to exercise a form of synergy with brands advertised in the magazine or newspaper reflecting the target audience of the text e.g. brands like Chanel and Versace would appear in magazines like Vogue and Harpers and Queen that have a similar ABC1 demographic. Technology, beer and male grooming products frequently appear in men’s magazines like FHM and Shortlist while GQ magazine will run adverts by more upmarket clothing brands like Armani, Ralph Lauren and Rolex (upmarket men’s magazines are littered with adverts for watches).

Newspapers are no different and also rely on advertising revenue. Broadsheets like The Times and The Daily Telegraph target a primarily male, ABC1 succeeds, a business professional, 35-65 and frequently adverts for business class flights will target this consumer including Virgin and British Airways. Upmarket car brands like Honda and Mercedes will also commonly run adverts in these broadsheets.

Typically, a whole page advert for a film in Time Out magazine can cost £30K each edition – this will be paid for by the film distributor as part of an integrated, overall advertising and marketing strategy. The most expensive place to advertise in a magazine will be a double page spread, followed by back page, inside page, whole page, half page, quarter column etc. The cheapest form of print adverts are classified ads which commonly are seen in local newspapers but also appear in national newspapers (display ads is the term referring to traditional advertising as discussed earlier). Classified advertising can mean anything from adverts for Births, Deaths and Marriages to adverts for items for sale, trades and services. Local newspapers rely on classified advertising.
Compare the Market Advertising Campaign

Compare the Market the company was founded by The BGL Group (insurance companies) in 2005 as a ‘Price Comparison Website’ while *Compare the Meerkat* is an advertising campaign for this brand. The campaign was launched January 2009 and is still running as of July 2015, centred around a CGI anthropomorphic Russian meerkat called Alexander Orlov, plus his family and friends.

The idea of choice that is represented in the advertising is mythical – many companies on CTM are part of BGL group (synergy) with key competition being GoCompare (USP - Gio Compario) and Confused.com. The USP and ESP of the Compare the Market advertising campaign is Alexandr Orlov with Orlov voiced by actor Simon Greenhall who plays Michael from Alan Partridge. Catchphrase and taglines are important in advertising and Orlov’s catchphrase is “Simples”.

The characters were designed by Darren Walsh from Passion Pictures, who also directs all of the commercials. Passion Pictures are a west London film and animation company (visuals – Gorillaz) with Darren Walsh himself a critically acclaimed writer/director using stop frame animation and CGI. In his early career he worked at Aardman Animations (Angry Kid) but now works almost exclusively in advertising. Walsh’s clients include: Peperami, Specsavers, BBC iPlayer, Duracell, National Express Trains and the Sony Bravia ‘Play-Doh’ commercial (live action animation only – the narrative involves plasticine rabbits taking over New York).

The Advertising Agency used was VCCP: a British advertising agency (Marketing Magazine’s Agency of the Year 2011). Their clients include MORE THAN Freeman, O2, Carling, Saga, nPower and were founded in 2002. VCCP aim “to make iconic adverts that become part of popular culture”. They are owned by the wealthy Chime Communications PLC (a holding company for a portfolio of 35 PR/Advertising businesses including VCCP). Lord Bell (Tim Bell) is CEO and a PR Executive known for running Margaret Thatcher’s three successful election campaigns.

The campaign takes a viral approach utilising digital technologies and creating ‘talkability’ (Orlov – has half a million Facebook ‘Friends’ and 39,000 Twitter ‘Followers’. In 2010 the campaign evolved into three short films (60 second adverts) charting Orlov’s historical struggles from: ‘Journey of Courageousness’ to ‘Battle of Fearlessness’ to ‘Streets of Ambitiousness’ (where they open a shop – comparethemeerkat.com), This constructed a mythical narrative which subsequent adverts have built on. In terms of measuring success, in the first 9 weeks there was an 80% increase in quotes and perceived brand awareness tripled (according to market research). In 2014 the brand is a market leader, thanks to a considerable degree to this advertising campaign which creates a viral, convergent link between [www.comparethemeerkat.com](http://www.comparethemeerkat.com) and [www.comparethemarket.com](http://www.comparethemarket.com).
The Target Audience are primary: male/female but with male skew, 30-60, family orientated – urban/living (higher risk factors). These higher risk factors are reflected by the need to have insurance. The secondary target audience are children aged 12-16 who recognise the comedic representations and have a degree of cultural capital (popular culture via viral advertising) and may recognise the brand identity through social networking – it is helpful for a brand that primarily it is an insurance price comparison website (paid for by insurers who are asking you to protect your family) to be recognised by a whole family.

Traditional media and new media were used in this advertising campaign including printed adverts (making it a cross media campaign using a range of platforms). The website ensures the brand has a recognisable colour palette (green with bright primary colours) and very traditional, family orientated representations – it directly targets male audiences that are ‘head’ of their family. On YouTube, the availability of viral adverts including spoofs is considerable with social networking including FB and Twitter targeting both the primary and secondary target audience. Interactivity, and the myth of personal communication is used as part of the social networking marketing campaign. E mail advertising included large skyscraper adverts in Hotmail that ran down the right hand side of the page when you open your e mails. This further evidences high production values (Hotmail is widely used and is owned by Microsoft) along with elaborate. Time consuming CGI also increased the production costs.

The Compare the Market advertising campaign uses comedy genre conventions in the cultural stereotyping of Russian ethnicity (there is a tenuous link with Borat in terms of accent). Accent is one of the USPs of the campaign and British audiences respond to ‘notions of difference’ as well as the cuteness of the characters and amusing dialogue. The tagline ‘Simples’ anchors the comedic representations with anthropomorphism a key comedic convention – Meerkats are often used as the subject of light hearted comedy and have been used in iconic, natural history documentaries.

The printed and audio-visual adverts have a humorous narrative appealing to both a primary and secondary audience, depending on cultural capital – there are ‘in jokes’ for older audiences and also amusing anecdotes in terms of narrative which act to soften the blow of paying a lot of money to insure your house, car etc. The use of Russian Folk Music as a non-diegetic soundtrack positions the audience into this preferred, comedic reading in the hope that they are one step closer to buying into the brand.

As with many adverts, a linear 3 Act Structure is evident (filmic representations) to allow audiences to understand the basic story that is being represented. Encoded narrative themes include traditional family values and the idea of insurance as PROTECTION which reflects the stereotype of Meerkat culture – in the Meerkat BBC documentary their (the Meerkats) ability to fiercely protect their family was foregrounded which is the perfect parallel to what insurance is seeking to achieve with the ‘what is narrative’ high on their agenda – what if my house burns down, what if I have car
crash etc.? Finally, Todorov’s narrative theories can also apply – as well as being understood in terms of a three act structure a 4 act structure can lead to a new equilibrium where you are safely protected by an insurance brand.

The Meerkats have an eccentric family structure which deviates from traditional representations – this makes them both interesting, escapist and aspirational. They represent an audience wishing to improve their lifestyle which has broad appeal in terms of social class – it may potentially passively exploit middle class culture in terms of protecting the family unit and ensuring financial stability but also represents the generic notion of a family unit itself, universally understood across all social classes.

The representations are solidly mainstream and traditional in terms of gender representation - Orlov is the classic male patriarch head of an extended family which is echoed in the narrative content which describes his struggles to set up a family business. The whole campaign is male orientated including the colour palette on the website with the comedy genre investing more in attracting a female demographic. The business-orientated aspect stereotypically attracts a male audience where the male member of the family is often the one that pays for insurance.

Close Textual Analysis: “OLEG LOVES TOYS” (TV ADVERT – APRIL 2014)

This advert is a shorter television commercial that forms part of the merchandising campaign launched in 2011 where initially a cuddly toy representing one of the characters was given away which each policy sold via the website – this policy has almost doubled the revenue for Compare the Market over the last three years as evidenced on eBay where complete collections of the toys regularly sell for between £70 and £150. Baby Oleg was introduced late into the campaign and was an immediate success with the previous advert to “Oleg Loves Toys” seeing Aleksandr Orlov struggling as a father with a new baby in an advert called “Daily Life with Baby Oleg” (Match 2014). Helped by Sergei, his long term IT Technician, general ‘tea-maker’ and sidekick he comes to terms with parenthood – a globally recognisable theme (in this commercially successful UK based campaign).

Audiences immediately see Baby Oleg holding the toys at the beginning of the advert creating an initial, emotive representation. The interior of what seems to be a very grand house reflects tradition as we see wooden furniture, sash windows, old fashioned drapes with elaborate gold tie backs and dusty books on a large dusty bookcase. Compare the Market target a mainstream audience who would potentially see tradition and something to aspire to as opposed to be critical of. This tradition is anchored by Aleksandr’s iconic robe with cravat, a historical middle class look that would only be reflected by more upper/middle class audiences which is exactly the point – there is
an element of aspiration to Aleksandr’s representation. Aleksandr’s heavy, Eastern European accent (for which the brand have received some criticism in regards to ethnic stereotyping) is also recognisable to audiences who have at some time or other seen media artefacts from this long running, five year campaign.

Oleg’s role as the USP of this new campaign is clearly evident as he sits, framed centrally in medium shot holding his toys with ‘OLEG’ spelt out in building blocks on the bookcase behind him. The sun streams through the window as we see a semi functional father and son relationship – again, not unfamiliar to fathers who are suddenly asked to look after children for periods of time. In two shot we see Oleg and Aleksandr, Oleg sitting (lower) and Aleksandr (standing) higher but also signifying his authority. The narrative suggests a clear reward for consumers if you buy into a Compare the Market product (you get a toy) but in the advert Aleksandr is seen to take the three toys away from Baby Oleg. Comedy conventions are encoded as Oleg clings on so tight to the last toy that he is lifted up by his father (this create a degree of mythical, intense desire and appeal for the toys which studying the success of Compare the Market’s merchandising has clearly worked).

The 21 second narrative can be studied in three acts – Baby Oleg is comfortable and happy with his toys in a safe, warm family environment (act 1), they are taken away from him by his father which makes him very upset (act 2) and they are then returned because they are just ‘too good’ (act 3). This is seen with a cutaway shot in close up to reveal Baby Oleg’s sad facial expressions (he is crying) after ‘Papa Aleksandr’ (again, escapist non English representations through ethnic stereotyping) takes the toys from him. Textual signifiers at the bottom of the screen anchor the narrative stating: “To adopt Baby Oleg toy get car or home insurance or switch energy through Comparethemarket.com”. This suggests a direct mode of address with key use of language through the word ‘adopt’ which has a range of different connotations – the toys need help, they are alone, they need you to look after them etc. and again, effective use of emotive representations target a consumer who is looking after his or her own family. The giving of the toys back and the uttering of the words ‘Simples’ reinforces an original USP of the campaign which is the fact that it is easy access to the price comparison site and the ability to change your insurer is possible in a non complex way.
ADVERTISING GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Advertising copy:** The advertising content of printed media e.g. magazines or newspapers.

**Editorial copy:** The non-advertising content of printed media.

**Marketing:** Including the 4ps (product, price, placement and promotion) - marketing is the umbrella term that advertising is a part of.

**Advertising:** The physical communication of making an audience aware of a brand.

**Product:** An object being sold e.g. trainers.

**Brand:** The image, name and identity of an object e.g. Nike trainers.

**Brand identity:** How that image is sold through advertising e.g. through logo, colour, sound, typeface, connotations, star marketing, graphics, use of language.....it is recognisable and memorable.

**Advertising agency:** The organisation that is often approached by a brand to coordinate their marketing campaign. Barnardos approached the agency BBH (Bartle, Bogle and Hegarty) in 2000 and they have been designing their campaigns ever since. BBH are an in-house agency while some agencies will contract out film production and digital campaigns for example.

**Creative brief:** The document, or agreement that is drawn up between the client and the agency e.g. Honda and Widen and Kennedy.

**Corporate brand:** A brand, like Virgin who have a number of products that share the same brand name – Virgin Airlines, Cola, Phone Network, Broadband, Make Up, Credit Card....

**Global brand:** A brand, like Coco-cola, which is advertised, and sold all over the world.
**Product use**: Where audiences see the product physically used and perform in the advert e.g. Calgon (washing machines).

**Advertising jingle**: A piece of music that is often associated with an audio-visual advert.

**Product image**: Where a brand is sold through imagery associated with it – sometimes you don’t see the brand until the end of the advert.

**Media agency**: An organisation that is responsible for buying advertising space e.g. slots/spots between television programmes, on the back cover of magazines, banner adverts running along the top of website homepages etc.

**USP**: Unique selling point.

**ESP**: Emotional selling point e.g. baby Orlov in the Compare the Market (not Meerkat) advertising campaign.

**Viral advertising**: Where digital media is used to make audiences aware of a brand e.g. spoof website like Compare the Meerkat, seeded videos on YouTube, parodies and pastiches (non traditional forms of advertising).

**Lifestyle advertising**: Where advertising exploits aspiration to sell a brand e.g. car, perfume or loan adverts (the myth is if you buy into the brand it will improve your life).

**TVR's**: Television ratings (BARB) showing how many households were reached by television programme – important to advertisers in terms of reaching their audience.

**Consumerism**: An ideology (big idea of belief) that suggests we are all defined by the products and services we buy into.
**Commercial advertising:** Where products and services are advertised for profit.

**Charity advertising:** Where adverts seek to raise awareness of a charity e.g. Cancer Research.

**Government advertising:** Where adverts seek to reinforce a message communicated by the government e.g. anti smoking advertising.

**Cause advertising:** Where advertising seeks to raise awareness of a temporary event e.g. the Ebola outbreak.

**Tagline/strapline:** The recognisable text that appears in all adverts as part of a coordinated campaign e.g. the fictional brand Skin Deep could have a tagline: “For when you’re in too deep”.

**Logo:** The graphic image that is often associated with a brand e.g. the Nike tick.

**ASA:** The Advertising Standards Authority – an organisation who regulate advertising in the UK. They are a post publication, or post transmission regulator that means anyone can complain about an advert and it will be investigated. The ASA either uphold, or do not uphold complaints, dependent on whether the advertising communication breaks any of their extensive codes of practice.

**Clearcast:** The organisation that studies drafts of moving image adverts and give approval, before they are fully realised into media products.

**Circulation:** How many people buy print media products e.g. magazines and newspapers – this figure is important to advertisers in relation to how many people their advert is likely to reach.

**Ratings:** How many people are watching a television programme – important in the same way for advertisers. Apart from BBC brands that are primarily funded by the TV licence fee, advertising provides the revenue for many media products.

**Advertising campaign:** A deliberately timed, coordinated campaign that often appears in a range of media forms and platforms.
**Brand consolidation**: How a particular advert, e.g. an advert in a magazine brings all aspects of the campaign together, making audience more aware of the brand from this cross platform approach.

**Superbowl**: The TV advertising break that costs the most to advertise in.