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Despite Harsh Media Climate, Community and Niche Publications Show Circulation Stability

ST. LOUIS – Despite a tough climate for the publishing industry, community and niche publications have shown circulation stability throughout the past year, according to recent audit data from Circulation Verification Council (CVC).

“Some niche publication industries have actually seen an increase in circulation, including ethnic, business and children’s publications,” CVC President and CEO Tim Bingaman said. “Even though community and some categories of niche publications have seen a slight decrease in circulation over the past year, the numbers pale in comparison to the double-digit circulation drops that have been making news the last few months.”

Overall the news for community and niche publications is quite positive considering the economic conditions.

Circulation Gains and Losses for Community and Niche Publications*

Publication Type	Circulation Change from Q4 2008 to Q1 2009
Agricultural Publications	-0.07%
Alternative Newsweeklies	-2.69%
Business Publications	+6.94%
Children’s Publications	+0.27%
City and Regional Magazines	-2.18%
Community Newspapers	-1.96%
Ethnic Publications	+2.0%
Parenting Publications	-1.21%
Senior Publications	-4.0%
Shoppers	-2.47%

“Although there are losses to both free and paid publications, circulation losses in free publications typically do not have the same impact as losses in paid publications,”

(more)

Bingaman said. It's common for publishers to shave circulation in area fringe markets outside their core distribution area to cut costs while having the least impact to advertisers, according to Bingaman.

Two other indicators – readership and purchase intention – also illustrate the stability and value community and niche publications offer to their readers and markets.

Readership of community and niche publications remains stable. Nationally, **76.9%** of people report they read the community and niche publications they receive through home delivery or mail distribution. This figure has remained stable over the course of the past two years, according to CVC audit data.

“A stable readership figure tells advertisers that these publications are relied upon by readers who depend on these publications for community news and purchasing decisions,” Bingaman said.

Increasing numbers of readers indicate they frequently purchase products or services from advertisements seen in community and niche publications, as indicated by CVC readership studies. Up from 74.4% in 2007/2008, 75.6% of readers now indicate they make purchases based on ads in these publications.

“This increase is potentially significant, because purchase intention scores have been stable for years,” Bingaman said. “A blip in the national average of **one to two percent** requires *substantial* change in purchasing behaviors from existing readers. This shows that readers are *increasingly* looking to community and niche publications to research sales and buying opportunities before spending money.”

**Figures in this article are based on like comparisons between the fourth quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009. Figures in this release are based nationwide edition reporting with an overall circulation of 33,077,623.*

About Circulation Verification Council

*Circulation Verification Council (CVC) is an independent, third-party reporting audit company. CVC audits more than **4,900** editions nationwide with a combined circulation of more than **70** million. Our audits cover printing, distribution, circulation and readership studies to give an accurate picture of a publication's reach and market penetration. Using the most thorough methodology and most experienced staff in the audit industry, CVC has built a reputation as a true resource for the publishing industry. For more information about CVC, visit www.cvcaudit.com or call 1-800-262-6392.*

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