

The Shifting Media Consumption Habits
--Implications for B2B Media Publisher
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The proliferation of media channels (digital, print, social) has shifted the media consumption habits of today's business to business media consumer. In a study conducted last month by B2B Media Company, 90% of all respondents indicated their media consumption habits have increased or remained the same over the previous 12 months. 53.9% of respondents indicated media consumption has actually increased. But, a shift is at hand that will impact all media publishers.

Channels Seeing Increased Consumption

The top channel was *Industry Webcasts*, cited by 68.4% of those increasing media consumption, followed by *Social Media* at 64.1%. *ENewsletters* (61.7%) and *Industry Websites* (61.4%) were closely behind. *Magazines* were selected by only 32.2% of respondents. When evaluating the behaviors by function, we see a shift at different levels of the organizations. 59.5% of *Senior Executives* are consuming more media, followed by *Sales & Marketing* leaders at 55.6% and *IT/Technology* (50%) and *Finance/Operations/Manufacturing* (42.8%.) *Senior Executives* and *Finance* executives are the heaviest users of *Industry Magazines* at 25.3% and 28.5% respectively. Surprisingly, 42.4% of *Senior Executives* are increasing consumption of *Social Media*, highest channel use for these executives, followed by *eNewsletters*.

Magazine Media Consumption Behaviors

68.6% of all respondents indicated they read trade magazines *to Stay Current on Industry News/Analysis*, followed by *Look for New Ideas* (67.9%) and *Learn About Best Practices* (67.3%.) When it comes to reader actions, 100% of respondents took some type of buying action. 80.8% *Use Ideas Found in Article*, followed by *Clip/Copy/Route Articles* (46.6%), *Visit Advertiser's Website* (44.5%) and *Visit Magazine Website* (42.1%). *Contact an Advertiser for More Information About a Specific Solution* was cited by 25% of those increasing their media consumption.

The Shift in Media Consumption

Today, 57.2% of all respondents are spending more than an hour each week reading industry publications- an average of 1.66 hours. *Sales & Marketing* are the heaviest reading function at 1.81 hours/week followed by *Finance/Operations/Manufacturing* at 1.63 and *Senior Executives* at 1.58 hours/week. Those *over 55* are the age group reading Magazines the most at 1.92 hours/week.

In contrast, 91.4% of all respondents are spending more than 1 hour per week accessing Internet for work-related learning industry information- 4.86 hours on average. This is almost 300% higher than Magazines. There were no significant differences by age group or function in average time spent accessing industry information online.

Respondents are most likely to access *Search Engines* (77.4%) and *Social Media* (49.5%) on a daily basis. In contrast, *Magazines* are accessed on a weekly (36%) or monthly basis (34.7%.) *Industry websites* (43%) and *eNewsletters* (43.1%) are accessed weekly. In contrast, 40.2% of respondents reported they would never contact a Suppliers Sales Rep, and 35.2% would access Suppliers Website less than monthly.

Why the shift in media consumption?

Let's look at what type of information the audience is sourcing across these channels. In this study, respondents are most likely to access Magazines to *Keep Current with Industry News & Trends* (57.5%) and *Keep Current with New Products* (52.3%.) *Access to Industry Websites* are similar with 59.4% citing *Keep Current with New Products*, followed by *Keep Current with Industry News & Trends* (58.4%) and

Investigate Solutions/Ideas for Current Problem/Project (53.4%) ENewsletters follow the same trend **reporting Keep Current with Industry News & Trends** (53.8%) and *Keep Current with New Products* (50%).

When it comes to Search Engines, we see a shift with 78.4% *Investigating Solutions/Ideas for Current Problem/Project*, followed by *Look for Suppliers/Products* (71.4%) and *Research a Vendor Under Consideration* (69.5%).

Implications of the Shift

We are all witnessing a shift in media consumption behavior. Some industry's like Technology may be greater than say Healthcare. But, there is some good news and some bad news. The good news is Magazine media is leveraged as the credible source to rely on for industry news and trends, best practices and to stay current on new products and technologies. If you will, let's call this macro-trends or setting the table.

In contrast, Search engines are micro focused. When a professional has a specific issue or need, they will research on the Internet. However, the credibility and reliance of information is slated against supplier information, creating the need for objective content and perspective. This is the wheelhouse of trade media.

So, it is vital that B2B publisher offer the full array of media channels; Magazine, Website, eNewsletter, and Webcasts, as these are leveraged by trade audiences. While we see a shift in consumption based on age, there is still a role for industry media across all age groups.

Next, the rise of Social Media and Search Engine usage means we all must participate in these channels fully. As a contributor, follower and by implementing SEO/SEM practices, our content and expertise can be promoted across these newer channels. By doing so, we can increase our reach and revenue opportunities for our marketing partners.

The shift has occurred. Media companies needs to embrace these change by leading in areas of strength and leveraging digital channels to extend the relationship with our audience and suppliers.

About the Study

B2B Media Company conducted an online survey July 1st to August 15th, 2016 and received over 700 respondents. Each participant received a \$100 gift voucher for participation. The study consisted of 27 questions and focused on the business to business media industry. 63.8% of respondents were management level, with 12% Chief Executive, 26.4% Vice President or Director level, and 25.3% Manager. The complete study is proprietary, but information published in this article may be used under creative commons copyright with full attribution and no derivatives. You can contact the author directly at cupton@b2bmediaco.com.

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