

You can't wing it when it comes to print  
media placement. When you advertise,  
and how much you advertise, must be  
carefully choreographed.



# Print Media—How To Choose It And When To Use It

Media planning and buying has always been a technical area of advertising, or at least it can seem that way. The process has become even more complicated these days because print media outlets are working hard to compete with electronic media, particularly the Internet. To keep pace, newspapers, magazines, and directories are constantly changing their formats, sections, and content. Dozens of local, regional, and national publications have cropped up, all seeking to tap into the senior consumer market. Particularly if you're operating in a major metropolitan market, you have a head-spinning array of media options. Which ones should you use and how much should you spend? The answer to this advertising riddle is simple. Your print media placement and frequency is correlated to your marketing strategy.

You should use minimal to moderate advertising in a maintenance marketing strategy, where the objectives are to support your event and direct mail campaigns, and to keep a stock presence in a few publications or directories, such as the Yellow Pages. You're not dependent on, nor do you need, print media to generate leads.

In contrast, a growth marketing strategy requires aggressive advertising because there is a need to increase leads and/or maintain mind-share in a media-competitive environment.

## Elements of a Print Media Campaign

Your print media campaign is really an extension of your networking, special events, and direct mail campaigns. If you have laid a good foundation in these components, your print media plan has started to take shape, in terms of what media you will use (categories), how often you will advertise (frequency), and what the message will be (themes).

There are several media categories from which to choose. Fortunately, these classifications can be linked to your marketing strategy, which in turn somewhat predefines your advertising frequency.

**Major Dailies.** Major dailies are the medium of choice when there's a need to substantially increase market awareness and leads. Although they are the most expensive medium, they also enjoy high readership due to their publication frequency.

**Neighborhood Publications.** Also referred to as “weekly” newspapers, these publications have fewer readers, but enjoy high readership within their locale. Typically, there is less ad clutter, and editorial content is based on local news and events. Neighborhood publications are generally a good value, with their low-cost (compared to major dailies) and respectable response rates. This medium is best suited to special event promotions and general maintenance marketing.

**Specialty Publications.** This category includes multiple miscellaneous media, ranging from tabletop quality magazines to local business and civic organization publications and programs. Business and civic group publications fall into the realm of goodwill advertising and their use is somewhat obligatory.

**Directories.** This category also contains a large and growing number of options, from the Yellow Pages and senior housing guides and publications, to Chamber of Commerce directories. The number of telephone directories alone in a typical market is enough to give you a headache. Senior housing directories are equally pervasive. A certain amount of targeted directory representation is mandatory. The key is to select the right ones and run the right ad size.

**Billboard Advertising.** Billboard advertising is the placement of your print ad on outdoor media, such as road signs or bus wraps. It's a very expensive mass marketing vehicle that is geared toward a high-speed and highly mobile consumer—not the senior adult consumer. This medium is mentioned in passing because some providers use it, not because it's recommended. It's a lousy advertising choice—so much so that it doesn't rate further discussion.