

THE MAGAZINE

MANIFESTO A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE MODERN MAN

This is the working title and theme line for a proposed entry into the men's magazine market. Put simply, MANIFESTO is intended as a GLAMOUR for men.

GLAMOUR, and to a certain extent COSMOPOLITAN, appeal to their audience on a "how-to" basis. Their editorial is offered in the context of life advice: from how to apply makeup to how to get your car repaired (see Appendix #1). This editorial approach differentiates them from fashion magazines such as VOGUE or MADEMOISELLE, whose appeal is strictly a matter of clothing and style.

This "how-to" editorial approach is largely missing from men's magazines. GQ and M, like VOGUE, are strictly fashion oriented. ESQUIRE keeps its editorial focus firmly on fitness and lifestyle, while PLAYBOY'S primary focus is nudity. None of these publications supplies to men the same type of information GLAMOUR and COSMOPOLITAN supply to their female readership.

MANIFESTO was chosen as a working title because of the play on "MAN," and because of its meaning as a statement of policy or opinion. MANIFESTO has the added advantage of being a relatively common, easily understood word.

THE AUDIENCE

MANIFESTO'S editorial viewpoint is most likely to appeal to men with a median age of approximately 30. These men all require practical survival information in order to effectively manage their homes and lives. They are either young single men coping with bachelorhood, or slightly older married men with wives who work.

The **MANIFESTO** reader is also defined by his median household income (HHI). Magazines with a high median HHI are attractive to many advertisers, as their readers represent a great deal of buying power. However, a magazine that appeals to too high an HHI restricts its readership to the privileged few. **MANIFESTO'S** median HHI should be high enough to attract advertisers, but not so high as to diminish circulation. Appendix #2 suggests that a median HHI of approximately \$35,000 strikes this balance.

GLAMOUR and **COSMOPOLITAN** are the nearest equivalent to **MANIFESTO** in editorial viewpoint. Gender excepted, both magazines show readers with demographics nearly identical to those of **MANIFESTO'S** target. **PLAYBOY** also exhibits very similar demographics, suggesting that a large male readership does exist within **MANIFESTO'S** targeted demographic parameters.

THE CIRCULATION

A look at how age and HHI interact with magazine circulation will provide a clearer picture of MANIFESTO'S potential audience.

Appendix #2 compares circulation, median readership HHI, and median readership age of fifteen magazines. Information in all cases has come from recognized audit research firms.

A look at the sample as a whole reveals several key trends. Very high circulations (McCALL'S, REDBOOK, WOMAN'S DAY, and LADIES HOME JOURNAL) correlate to very low HHI's and a rise in age beyond our target. Conversely, very high HHI's correlate with a significant drop in circulation (M, SELF, ELLE, and VANITY FAIR).

In fact, of the entire sample, only three magazines show strong circulation and a high HHI: GLAMOUR, COSMOPOLITAN, and PLAYBOY. In the case of GLAMOUR and COSMOPOLITAN, the "how-to" editorial approach has clearly translated into an ideal blend of high readership and attractive demographics.

MANIFESTO conforms to the same demographic profile as GLAMOUR, COSMOPOLITAN, and PLAYBOY. The link between age, HHI, and circulation suggests that this profile contributes to the high circulations that these three magazines enjoy. In this context, PLAYBOY'S mostly male circulation indicates the large potential audience awaiting MANIFESTO.

THE NEED

The PLAYBOY model suggests that there are a substantial number of male magazine readers who fit our target demographic. What it doesn't tell us is if there are a substantial number of men in our target demographic with a need that MANIFESTO'S editorial focus can fulfill. That will require a look at how men's social roles have changed in recent times.

The overwhelming social fact of the last twenty years has been the flood of women entering the workforce. This change has profoundly altered women's lives, affecting their roles as wives, mothers, and providers.

Society has responded to these changes in a number of ways. The service economy has grown explosively, as a result of women losing the time to fulfill traditional roles; support groups have formed to help women juggle multiple responsibilities; and a variety of special interest magazines (such as WORKING WOMAN, WORKING MOTHER, SAVVY, and MS.) have arisen to help women learn the skills their new roles require.

No change in the status of women as fundamental as this could leave men untouched. As women's social roles have evolved, men's roles have changed accordingly. These changes are no less serious than women's, but society has shown little interest in helping men cope with them.

The most drastic change for men has been in their need for domestic self-sufficiency. Previously, men went directly from their mothers' care to wives who provided the same service.

This cradle-to-grave system meant that men never had to take care of themselves. They never had to think about nutrition, personal care, or the comforts of hearth and home. Once they left mother, their wives handled everything.

This is no longer the case. Men are marrying at a more advanced age than ever before. As most men do not live at home until marriage, there is a pronounced gap wherein men must be completely responsible for themselves. As mothers don't tend to train boys in life skills, most men enter this stage of modern adulthood distinctly unprepared to take care of themselves.

When men do marry, they are marrying women who are, for the most part, already employed and self-sufficient. These working women lack the time necessary to devote their lives to home management.

Single or married, today's man requires a greater degree of self-sufficiency than his previous counterparts. Unfortunately, there has been no concomitant increase in the training needed to survive this independence.

Our society has developed what can be called "The Myth of the Competent Male." In the face of compelling evidence that the modern man requires a more thorough education, we persist in believing that real men don't need to be taught; they simply know.

MANIFESTO goes right to the heart of this myth: real men do need to be taught. Being a man doesn't mean automatically knowing how to repair a car, keep in shape, fix a leaky faucet, or plan a nutritious diet. By addressing the need today's man has for practical information, without talking down to him, MANIFESTO can capitalize on the readership the PLAYBOY model suggests is waiting.

IS THE NEED FILLED?

A casual look at current men's magazines suggests that none of them fills the niche intended for MANIFESTO. In order to substantiate this, ten magazines have been analyzed for editorial content.

Editorial content was divided into twenty-four categories (Appendix #3), and each editorial page or part thereof was assigned accordingly. Appendix #4 represents the percentage of total editorial pages each magazine devoted to each category. Samples were single issues cover dated April or May 1987.

Of all the magazines surveyed, GLAMOUR has the most editorial breadth (83% of categories). Of the men's magazines, GQ comes closest, but still offers 12.5% fewer editorial categories. In its reliance on fashion, GQ more closely resembles VOGUE than GLAMOUR.

M has an extremely narrow editorial range, covering only 33% of the possible categories. With 57% of its editorial devoted to fashion, M has a genuinely obsessed editorial policy.

ESQUIRE and PLAYBOY have broader editorial ranges than M, but still significantly below GLAMOUR. PLAYBOY'S emphasis on nudity and ESQUIRE'S emphasis on fitness deprive them of the editorial balance intended for MANIFESTO.

It is clear from analyzing the content of current men's magazines that none of them provide MANIFESTO'S particular editorial viewpoint.

THE EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

MANIFESTO'S editorial philosophy is to provide men with practical "how-to" information. However, a magazine whose only theme is instructional presupposes an ignorant readership. This inherently negative message must be balanced by a more positive point of view in order to avoid alienating readers.

To provide this balance, a secondary editorial focus for MANIFESTO should perform two tasks: it should cushion the impact of the "how-to" information, and it should act as an additional attraction to potential readers. GLAMOUR, which faces a similar problem, uses fashion to both attract readers and sweeten its editorial message.

GQ and M also use fashion as a major editorial component, but with much less success than GLAMOUR. There is no reason to believe that MANIFESTO would fare any better using fashion as a secondary editorial focus. Even today, suspicion of men who show an unusual interest in fashion is not uncommon.

The "how-to" approach can be characterized as essentially supportive, nurturing, and non-aggressive. In order to counterbalance this message, MANIFESTO'S secondary editorial focus should appeal to a more masculine point of view. Articles about such traditional male interests as sports, business, and technology will sugar coat the "how-to" editorial, making it easier for "real men" to swallow.

Page two of Appendix #4 indicates how MANIFESTO would allocate pages for all twenty-four of the editorial categories. These figures reflect a full year's publishing, rather than a single issue. The Twelve Month Editorial Calendar (Appendix #5) details each issue's specific editorial focus. As a result of the shifting editorial emphasis, individual issues will vary from the Appendix #4 figures, but never substantially.

These editorial categories are only a listing of subject matter, and cannot show how MANIFESTO'S particular point of view informs the editorial content. The major themes of "how-to" and traditional male interests must be integrated across the entire range of editorial subject matter. This will prevent the magazine's differing appeals from appearing schizophrenic.

The "how-to" point of view can be incorporated into a wide variety of subjects that aren't specifically instructional. This can be done by appealing to the male fascination with how things work. For example, a media article might focus on the making of movie special effects, rather than a celebrity interview. A business article might be about how a poison pill defense works, rather than a profile of T. Boone Pickens.

Similarly, the appeal to masculinity should be integrated into a wide range of subject matter, and not just isolated as "sports" or "cars." For example, a travel article might be about rafting the Colorado River, rather than the joys of Disney World. A nutrition article might be about the specialized diets of sports stars, rather than simply listing recipes.

By successfully integrating these differing editorial viewpoints throughout its subject matter, MANIFESTO can capitalize on its twin appeals to reach a broader audience.

THE CONTENTS

The Table of Contents (Appendix #6) and the Twelve Month Editorial Calendar (Appendix #5) demonstrate how MANIFESTO'S editorial philosophy translates into specific articles.

In the Editorial Calendar, every issue has a major theme. A given month's theme is then incorporated into a series of feature articles. Each article treats this theme from a point of view suggested by MANIFESTO'S editorial philosophy. In order to demonstrate the widest possible editorial range, the featured articles in Appendix #6 do not share a common theme.

The table of contents also includes three sections which run every issue: WORKING MAN, MAN THE MACHINE, and MAN AND WOMAN. These sections provide ongoing, in-depth coverage of subjects of prime importance to modern men: career, fitness, and relationships. The subject heads in each section (e.g. Career or Business) may vary from issue to issue.

The DEPARTMENTS section features coverage from a wide variety of editorial categories. Many of these departments will change every issue, in order to maintain an editorial balance as close as possible to that detailed in Appendix #4.

THE DESIGN

Graphic design is a critical element of a magazine's presentation. As it appeals primarily to men in a relatively young demographic, MANIFESTO should have a solid, masculine look, with a tilt towards the modern.

In too many magazines, "modern" means the kind of visual clutter caused by multiple typefaces thrown together, multiple images competing on a page, and floating Memphis-style graphic elements. In this case, modern means just the opposite: clean, sleek, and carefully balanced. MANIFESTO should look neither stodgy and traditional (like ESQUIRE and M) nor busy and over-designed (like COSMOPOLITAN and SPY).

MANIFESTO should be held together visually by a simple, repeating graphic motif. This motif must be flexible enough to be repeated in a variety of formats and treatments. It could be used on the cover, the table of contents, and lead pages of feature articles in order to bring a unified look to the entire magazine. A series of bar rules is one example of this type of repeating graphic.

MANIFESTO'S cover should present a primary image drawn from an issue's major theme. That image should also reflect MANIFESTO'S appeal to traditional male interests. The "how-to" should figure prominently on the cover, but as copy, rather than a picture. By featuring the masculine viewpoint and soft-selling the "how-to," the cover will echo the editorial balance between MANIFESTO'S twin themes.

Appropriate MANIFESTO covers might be an action shot of white-water rafting taken from a major article, or a picture of a sports star featured inside. "Pretty boys" of the GQ type are more suitable to PLAYGIRL'S cover, and should be avoided.

The logo treatment should be firm and masculine, such as a bold sans serif typeface. The pun in MANIFESTO could be pointed up by using different colors for "MAN" and "IFESTO". This will make the logo much more readable than if the same effect had been achieved by mixing type faces.