Future of Print Publications and Marketing Strategy for Desidoc Periodicals

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Abstract
For decades, there was never any doubt that printing had a secure future—the printing industry became the synonym for a sector with uninterrupted growth. Till the last few years the paper consumption and press output was the yardstick of wealth, civilization and economic power. Today, the increasing trend towards digitization and computerization of the media, coupled with the explosion of information on the Internet, has led to an increased popularity of online advertising, many print publishers have seen a drastic fall in print advertising revenues. This has prompted many players in the printing industry to wonder whether print still has a future. The answer is a resounding yes, with lot of challenges ahead.

Defence Scientific Information and Documentation Centre (DESIDOC) is a nodal centre for information communication and dissemination in the Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO). As the publication wing of DRDO, DESIDOC brings out regular publications including periodicals in print format. These periodicals cover a wide variety of topics in various subject areas targeting different user communities spread all over India. Recently, DESIDOC is witnessing a decline in its print subscriptions. This paper examines the current scenario in the marketing of DRDO periodicals. It identifies the various techniques being used for marketing of DRDO periodicals in India and abroad. The paper discusses the various alternative techniques that may be applied in the form of a suitable marketing mix as a part of overall marketing strategy to significantly improve the subscription of these periodicals.

A pilot project was undertaken with an aim to find future strategies for marketing online versions of these periodicals. As a first phase the open source software EPrints was used to host online versions of these periodicals on Intranet and Internet. The hosting of these periodicals on Internet has allowed subscription, access and downloading by users across the globe. This paper discusses the experiences of the past and strategies as well as future models for marketing DRDO periodicals with the declining print popularity. The paper identifies the strengths and gaps in the existing marketing strategy for marketing of DESIDOC periodicals and suggests new marketing models for the future.


Introduction
When radio broadcasts first began in the 1920s, people soon began to warn of the death of print. Radio could bring the news to listeners far more quickly than could the local newspaper, although usually that news was simply the reading of yesterday’s newspaper. Television was next, and again the talk was of it replacing print (Heger, 2009). In fact, these two electronic media spawned a large number of print cousins covering the TV and radio industries. The Internet has had the same effect, with dozens of print publications created to cover the industry.

Today the lower consumption of print media—especially newspapers are fighting an invasion of increased consumption of alternative media. Newspapers and print magazines across the globe are in trouble. Classified advertising, a huge part of their revenue, has been decimated. Advertising revenue has plummeted by the credit crunch. Consumers are asking “Why pay when I get my news for free, online?” (http://www.heavychef.com).

Despite seismic changes in the media landscape, newspapers continue to be an integral part of our daily lives. They educate and influence; they entertain and delight; they provoke and inspire debate. They help us make informed decisions on how we should be governed and provide us with the fundamental information to shape the future of our society and our lives. The blossoming of the World Wide Web presents a vast challenge to print magazine publishers, for the Web at its most alluring will spawn vigorous competition for the attention of consumers and advertisers. With magazine circulation flat for five or
more years and advertising acutely vulnerable to economic cycles, all but the very strongest magazines must cope with an end to growth – or worse (www.questia.com). Many publications, such as newspapers are being published in multiple formats – print, web, CD-ROM and microfilm – but do not always have identical content. Similarly, there are a growing number of hybrid publications, such as print, journals with added material available on the web or CD-ROM. A recent Time magazine article (http://www.time.com) in fact, discussed the ten most endangered newspapers in America. The authors also believe that print isn’t dead; it’s just in transition due to our economy and the business marketplace.

Young said the decline of the print version of PC Magazine (whose ad revenue dropped by $16 million between 2007 and 2008) and the rise of PCMag.com were inevitable as its audience and advertisers migrated to the Internet. He added that PCMag.com is up both in traffic and revenue so far this year. “I think we’re quite happy with that decision [to go online-only],” he said Calahan.

Print editions of any newspaper or magazine cannot exist solely on subscriptions. Advertising is often the main source of revenue, and with companies devoting less of their budgets to advertising, it’s logical that print will suffer – at least for now. Print is not dead - it is just in transition and those of us in the publishing world who embrace the change will continue to provide information to readers in all the formats, including print, which continues to have the most impact on buying decisions.

However, while digital media continues to proliferate, physical formats are becoming more and more uncommon. However, give someone a choice between a laptop with an Internet connection or a physical copy of The New York Times(http://printisdeadblog.com). Most people would choose the laptop. They would choose the computer because, with it, they would get not only the Times but also the entirety of the Web: e-mail, YouTube, Google, Myspace, Facebook, and Twitter. (Plus, the online version of The New York Times has audio, video, up-to-the-minute news and reader’s comments). Not only is that a win for the laptop, but it can hardly be considered a fair fight.

Magazines, most of them anyway, would appear to be in trouble too, as their lifeline, advertising, slowly bleeds away to the Web (Antman, 2009). Yes, people are reading a lot more online these days, but there are many healthy print publications (books, newspapers, tabloids, magazines, comics, etc) that are doing just fine. They have strong readership, strong subscriptions, strong advertising, strong business models and strong overall fiscal results.

There are many reasons why print should live on, its sensual apearance, the smell of pages, the crackle of pages, the joy of running fingers over a page, and being able to chat to a friend across the table and come back to the page again, and taking a computer to bed does not quite beat the friendship of a good book on a cold night.

The extremely low barriers to entry on the Internet – no heavy printing presses, no paper, no cumbersome delivery mechanisms, and so forth, not to mention the ability to imitate the look of more-substantial publications with a few inexpensive fonts – mean that virtually anyone with a small bankroll can launch an impressive-looking website, and certainly anyone with a computer can now start a blog (http://www.printisdeadblog.com). This, combined with the fact that virtually no one is willing to pay for online editorial content, and, accordingly, that most successful online operations are supported by advertising only.

With financial bailouts being handed out to mega-banking institutions, it seems that the publishing industry could be most in need of the governmental assistance. The troubled industry is suffering increasingly lower ad revenues and diminishing subscriptions, as more people are turning online to get information personalized and quicker. Print has had a difficult time transitioning to the Internet, and many claim that print is dying. But even in our difficult economy with media layoffs announced daily, new magazines are constantly being launched.

New Tools and Technologies
Sony has introduced the first (and then second) version of its eBook reader. In December 2008, Sony reported that they had sold over 300,000 eReader devices, and work continues on yet another version (this time incorporating wireless connectivity). Apple has similarly introduced the iPhone, touted by many in the press as the “God device.” Its sales are already well into the millions and, as of April 2009, more than a billion applications have been download to iPhones around the world. In addition to this, Apple has introduced a half-dozen new iPod models (all of them smaller, cheaper, and with larger memories than their predecessors), not to mention Apple has begun selling TV shows, movies, and audio books from iTunes. Electronic books – for reading on an iPhone – also appear in iTunes, but so far only clumsily, as stand-alone apps in the app store (http://www.business-standard.com). Rather than being seen truly as content, books are sold alongside gimmicky fare like video games. All this is showing its impact on DESIDOC publications also.

RCom to deliver books via SMS
Reliance Communications in August 2009 will be going to launch a mobile phone-based novel, Deaf Heaven, authored by award-winning writer Pinki Virani. The book will be packed in a set of 90 SMS messages priced at Rs 30 and made available through a specially-created SMS subscription pack. The handset-based novel is part of company’s strategy to
further drive its VAS revenues in the metros and is reportedly in talks with publishers and authors to further VAS based on literary content (Senth, and Moorthy, 2006).

**DESIDOC/ DRDO Publications**

Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre (DESIDOC) is one of the premier information and documentation centres in the country with its unique resource base and information services. All these services are supported by professional expertise and modern infrastructure. It functions as the publication wing of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and so the dissemination of the information covering the current developments in defence science and technology forms an important component of its activities. Towards this end, DESIDOC brings out a few periodicals and some ad hoc publications. It also brings out priced books and publications under Popular Science and Technology series and DRDO monographs/special publications series.

DESIDOC functions as the publication wing of DRDO, providing scientific and technical information via specialised publications, monographs, technical bulletins, online journals and popular science publications. These cover current developments in Indian Defence R&D. The publications are unclassified and some are available free of charge online. Monographs and other publications are available on payment. A team of well-qualified, talented and experienced technical editors and production specialists supports this activity. The publications brought out by DESIDOC on behalf of DRDO are briefly described below:

**Free Periodicals**

These periodicals are distributed free of cost to the specified categories of readers:

**DRDO Newsletter and DRDO Samachar**

These two monthlies cover the manifold activities of the DRDO laboratories and establishments. Being the house bulletins of DRDO, besides reporting technological developments, they cover socio-cultural activities, human resource development activities, etc. The main objectives of these publications are to disseminate information about the DRDO technological developments to the outside world besides bridging the communication gap among various levels of management and other staff of DRDO. While DRDO Newsletter is published in English, DRDO Samachar is published in Hindi.

On Intranet and Internet the user is able to view DRDO News Letter since January 2000. The archive is also available since January 1998.

**Technology Focus**

This is a bi-monthly periodical focusing on the technologies developed by DRDO. It covers the products, processes, technologies, systems, components, etc. developed by the laboratories of the organization. On Intranet and Internet the user is able to view Technology Focus since December 1999. Archive is also available since June 1997.

**DRDO Science Spectrum**

This is an annual research periodical bringing out the articles which are delivered during the National Science Day by eminent scientist and researchers. The topic covers various disciplines of basic and applied sciences, engineering and technology. All the papers of Defence Science Spectrum are available on this webpage.

**Priced Periodicals**

**Defence Science Journal**

Defence Science Journal (DSJ) is a bi-monthly, multidisciplinary, defence-related international peer-reviewed primary research journal of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), Ministry of Defence, Government of India. It is published by Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre (DESIDOC), Delhi. It is guided by an Editorial Board and an Editorial Executive Committee reconstituted from time to time. The Journal publishes research papers, review papers, and short communications in various disciplines of science and technology which by and large lead to tangible results for direct Defence applications.

The papers published in the Journal are covered by indexing/abstracting/full-text document supply service – Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, Chemical Abstracts, Elsevier bibliographic databases—(EMBASE, COMPENDEX, GEOBASE, EMBIOLOGY, ELSEVIER BIOBASE, FLUIDEX, WORLD TEXTILES, SCOPUS), Indian Science Abstracts, International Aerospace Abstracts, Thomson Scientific database (ISI Web of Knowledge), HW Wilson Co. full-text databases (Omnicile Full-text Mega, Omnicile Full-text Select), and NTIS database (World News Connection). The full-text of papers published in the Journal is available free on internet. On Intranet and Internet the user is able to view abstracts since March 1999. The print version is also available on subscription basis.

**DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology**

DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology (formerly DBIT) is a bimonthly journal that endeavours to bring recent developments in information technology, as applicable to library and information science, to the notice of academics, researchers, professionals and students and others interested in the field. The Journal publishes original research papers relating to information technology as applied to library activities, services and products. The articles published in the Bulletin are indexed in Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and the Informed Librarian. The full text of DJLIT is being reproduced in
Open Access on Intranet

DRDO Rapid Online Network Access (DRONA) is a wide area Intranet covering over 52 laboratories/ establishments and units of DRDO spread all over India with the researchers mainly focused in science and technology fields. Open Source Software EPrints has been used for hosting DRDO online publications with minor changes in some of the fields. This module is in operation under the domain name http://publication.desidoc.deldom/ on DRONA, the common platform for information exchange across the DRDO laboratories and establishments (Onsman, 2004). EPrints open source software is used to online publish these periodicals and its full text access is provided to the entire DRDO user community on Intranet.

The present Intranet based electronic publication model has recently moved into Internet domain which is mainly focused on the journals DSJ and DBIT. The back volumes of DSJ (from volume 1, 1950), DBIT (from volume 1), DRDO Newsletter (from volume 1), DRDO Samachar and Technology Focus are added to the archives to enable the subscribers to search and download articles from them free of charge. The e-journal website also contains journal title and payment option. The subscriber can pay through conventional (by cheque or demand draft or in the future by e-transfer through credit cards) means and fill in the payment particulars. The Login ID and Password will be provided to the subscriber through e-journal website also contains journal title and payment option. The subscriber can pay through conventional (by cheque or demand draft or in the future by e-transfer through credit cards) means and fill in the payment particulars. The Login ID and Password will be provided to the subscriber through which the subscribers can access the full text articles. The Login ID and Passwords will be provided and maintained by DESIDOC. In case of Institutional subscribers, IP will be enabled at the server level and to enable full text access to the users of the Institution.

Marketing Strategy for Drdo Publications

Marketing includes “those functions in a business that directly involves contact with consumers, the assessment of their needs, and the translation of this information into sales. (http://www.tmmpdx.com)

Marketing has been described as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing and promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational objectives.

The term marketing strategy refers to the process which will provide the basis for the planning of the organisation’s services and products, involving quite specific ingredients which play key role in marketing: the concept of a target public, the selection of an advantageous position in relation to the competition, or the selection of a ‘niche’ and a satisfactory definition of the ingredients of the marketing mix. The most important stage of this strategy is market segmentation, that is, the division of the market into more homogeneous sections within which it is possible to pinpoint target public. A particular mix is then adopted for each of the targets identified in order to build up the organization’s marketing strategy, which is then set out in its marketing plan.

Product Strategy

Product strategy comprises decisions about product or service offerings, package design, and product identification in terms of trademarks, brands names, warranties, product life cycles and new product development. It is involved with choosing the right good or service for the target market. Designing a winning service, offering, or product, whose features mirror the needs of customers and add value to the marketplace at a price that guarantees profit potential. It covers:

- What does the customer want from the product/service?
- What needs does it satisfy?
- How and where will the customer use it?

Product strategy comprises decisions about product or service offerings. It is involved with choosing the right good or service for the target market. A winning service, offering or product means features which mirror the needs of customers and add value to the marketplace at a price that guarantees profit potential. An important part is the constant monitoring and analysis of the use and needs of the users to determine what materials the users need and to see that they are readily available.

Here the product includes Defence Science Journal and DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology. The first one serves S&T and R&D graduates and the second one is for library science professionals. The selection of a publication should be based on market survey, to establish the need for a product. Evidently, it is the prospective customer whose expectations from such publications must be borne in mind while preparing, designing and printing the publication. Compilation of directory of subject experts, market survey and sales/subscriptions forecasting can help in finalisation of product.

Pricing Strategy

Price is linked to the customer’s perception of value. It indicates:

- What is the value of the product or service to the buyer?
- What discounts should be offered to trade customers, or to other specific segments of your market?
- How will your price compare with your competitors?
- How much does it cost us to provide this product/service?
- How much will customers pay?
Pricing strategy deals with the methods of setting profitable and justifiable prices for the firm’s products or services. An advantage with DRDO publications is that these are highly subsidised, as is evident from the pricing policy followed by the Organisation. It is mainly for this reason that all the periodicals have been priced so low. As a result, it is possible to sustain the production quality of a publication to an appropriate level without simultaneously increasing its price. Thus pricing should be self supporting to the objective of organisation. The details of subscription are as follows:

**Annual Subscription Charges (DSJ)**

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<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Inland</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Rs 500</td>
<td>£ 18 (US $ 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Rs 100</td>
<td>£ 10 (US $ 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air mail charges</td>
<td>£ 12 (US $ 27) extra</td>
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**Annual Subscription Charges (DBIT)**

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<th>Membership</th>
<th>Inland</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Rs 450</td>
<td>£ 18 (US $ 40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Rs 150</td>
<td>£ 10 (US $ 24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air mail charges</td>
<td>£ 12 (US $ 27) extra</td>
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Subscriptions are payable in advance by demand draft only in favour of Director, DESIDOC, Delhi. Local subscribers may send the subscriptions by cheque, payable at Delhi. All communication should be addressed to the Director, Defence Scientific Information & Documentation Centre (DESIDOC), DRDO, Ministry of Defence, Metcalfe House, Delhi – 110054

**Promotion Strategy**

Promotion is to make the consumer aware of the existence of a product or service (i.e., communicating with the customer). It includes:

- How do your customers find out about your service/products?
- Where and when can you get across your marketing messages to your target market?
- Will you reach your audience by advertising in the press, TV, radio, PR, Internet?

Having decided what is to be offered, how it is to be offered, and to whom, one needs to raise appropriate profile to communicate the benefits and value of one’s services. This includes advertising, public relations, personal selling (e.g., attending exhibitions), sales promotions (e.g., special offers), and atmospherics (creating the right impression through the working environment). There is a need for designing a winning promotional and advertising strategy using a blend of media, with appropriate exposure levels, targeted to the firm’s users with minimal waste. Promotion begins with identification and collection of addresses of potential customers and publishers/booksellers. And, in the process, the organization will gain higher status and recognition.

In general, the basic objectives of any promotion activity include:

- Building awareness
- Creating and sustaining differentiation
- Communicating and protracting the benefits
- Building and maintaining overall image and reputation of the services organization
- Persuading users to use or buy the product.
- Generating detailed information about core, facilitating and augmented product offer,
- Advising existing and potential users of any special offers

The sales/subscriptions through office of DESIDOC is a result of direct mail promotional method, extensively practiced by the Centre. Several channels were used for sending the publicity promotional material for these publications, including mailing of the publicity material along with different periodicals brought out by the Centre and publication of advertisements in in-house periodicals.

The channels widely used for promotion of DRDO periodicals include:

- Release of advertisements
- Book reviews
- Direct mail promotions
- Participation in conventions / book fairs
- Cooperative marketing

**Distribution Strategy**

Distribution is a means by which products and services move from producer to consumer and where they can be accessed by the consumer (or how the market is physically reached).

- What distribution channels are used to get the product to the customer?
- Do they deliver intangible benefits, e.g. convenience, increased availability, to the customers?
- Where do buyers look for your product or service?

Distribution strategy deals with the physical distribution of goods and the selection of marketing channels for the firm’s goods and services. It is the process of getting the right good or service to the firm’s target market at the right time. Several methods for distribution of publications are available. Selection of the distribution channel revolves around answering five important questions:

- Where is the clientele?
- What are the clientele’s common needs and interests?
We suggest six types of models:

- **Marketing model for marketing DESIDOC periodicals.**
- For Marketing: DESIDOC can go in for cooperative
- Strategy for the Future
- over the world.
- 
- 
- organizations, university departments and libraries all
- clients are the research institutes, cultural
- developing countries in
- should explore avenues for export of its books to
- application, aesthetic features and price. The Centre
- specifications, reliability
- strengths in at least one of the following: technical
- an export market, the DRDO publications must have
- and sale of books on approval basis yielded excellent
- of copies sold. The appointment of sole distributor
- has proved to be more effective in terms of the number
- several other techniques were also used. These
- include:
- 
- 
- Mail order distribution
- 
- Using mailing lists/standing orders
- 
- Direct selling to retailers and readers
- 
- Using publishers and wholesalers
- 
- Conventions / Fairs /Exhibitions
- 
- Distribution on Royalty Basis
- 
- Distribution through Co-publisher
- 
- Electronic Distribution
- 
- Participation in the exhibition as a mode of distribution
- has proved to be more effective in terms of the number
- of copies sold. The appointment of sole distributor
- and sale of books on approval basis yielded excellent
- results and this must continue. Finally, to penetrate
- an export market, the DRDO publications must have
- strengths in at least one of the following: technical
- specifications, reliability, simplicity, specialist
- application, aesthetic features and price. The Centre
- should explore avenues for export of its books to
- developing countries in Asia and Africa. The potential
- clients are the research institutes, cultural
- organizations, university departments and libraries all
- over the world.

**Strategy for the Future**

For Marketing: DESIDOC can go in for cooperative
marketing model for marketing DESIDOC periodicals.
We suggest six types of models:

- **Model 1:** Printing to be done at DESIDOC. Complete
  marketing to undertaken by a firm. 30-60 per cent of the
  subscription collections to be refunded back to DESIDOC by the firm.
- **Model 2:** Printing to be done at DESIDOC. Marketing of
  print subscription to be undertaken by DESIDOC. Marketing of online
  version (only) to be undertaken by the firm. 30-70 per cent of the
  subscription collections to be refunded back to DESIDOC by the firm as royalty.
- **Model 3:** Printing to be done at DESIDOC. Firm
  pays back the printing cost to DESIDOC. Complete marketing to undertaken by a firm. 50
  per cent of the subscription collections to be refunded back to DESIDOC by the firm.
- **Model 4:** Printing to be done by the firm. Complete
  marketing to undertaken by the firm. Royalty at 30 per cent of the subscription collections to be refunded back to DESIDOC.
- **Model 5:** Printing to be done by firm. Firm sells a
  few copies to DESIDOC. Complete marketing to undertaken by the firm. 20 per cent of the subscription collections to be refunded back to DESIDOC.
- **Model 6:** Printing to be done at DESIDOC. Firm
  pays 50% of printing costs. Firm takes the existing subscription database from DESIDOC. Complete marketing to be undertaken by the firm. Firm signs a contract with a minimum 20 per cent increase in subscription per year for next five years. Shares 50 per cent profit/subscription costs with DESIDOC.

We would suggest sixth model as it promises/ guarantees 20 per cent growth per year for the next five years.

For Dispatch: All the printed publications envelop and
bulk mailing addresses can be passed on to P&T
Dept, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt
of India. They shall arrange to dispatch all publications
within 24 hrs of their receipt. The details of charges
for payment for book post, unregistered, parcel,
registered parcel and airmail can be jointly worked out. The payments at Govt approved rates will be paid on actual expenditure incurred after receiving job completion certificate from the Department. By following this procedure DESIDOC can not only save considerable money and manpower but also can be assured of timely delivery of its periodicals/ publications.

**Conclusion**

Print publishers have to face major challenges that
lie ahead. These include how best to adapt to digital
distribution while finding the best ways to monetize
and combating the increasing costs of paper and fuel;
publicizing “green printing” methods to counterbalance
greater consumer awareness of environmental impact,
and proving to print advertisers that they still play an
important role in consumer marketing efforts (http://
www.gogetessays.com).

The World Wide Web threatens all but the strongest
titles. Some of the greatest titles in the United States
have declined precipitously in this maturing market.
National Geographic, Reader’s Digest, and Family
Circle have lost about 20 per cent of their subscribers
in just four or five short years. Print publishers must
respond by creating their own on-line operations, for
periodicals with a presence in both media will have an
advantage over those who do not adopt this strategy.

DESIDOC on behalf of DRDO brings out various
periodicals, monographs, special publications and
popular reading books on topics of general as well as
special interest; these publications have a big market
potential. Having identified a target group, or segment of customers, the marketer then puts together and carries out the package of actions (i.e., product strategy, price strategy, promotion strategy and distribution strategy) outlined above. This package known as the marketing mix can thus be applied for marketing of DRDO publications. The electronic/online publication model in India is still evolving. At DESIDOC the open source software E-Print was used to host its journals. Lastly, the Internet should be integrated in the DRDO’s overall marketing strategy. The marketing department together with a competent advertising agency should therefore manage the site.

References
5. “The 10 major newspapers that will either fold or go digital.” http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1886826,00.html (viewed on 17 June 2009)

Further Reading