

The three things that will make an impact on Language Newspapers, on the road to 2010

The language newspaper segment is broadly categorized in penetration as urban and rural readership. The overall economic development including the rural areas coupled with growth in literacy levels in the country has made at least one member of the family educated in a rural area, and the youth population is ever hungry to get more information and the best of content. The language newspaper must redefine content, making it specific to these emerging and large number of knowledge seekers; and at the same time cater to the masses also. Today mobile phones and Internet are targeting the non-English speaking population; every bit of information is available in the Indian languages. Realizing this, language papers have already started their electronic versions and also mobile phone news services.

1. Increased Purchasing Power in Smaller Cities and Towns

Growth for many marketers will come from smaller cities and towns. As marketers increasingly move away from a concentrated city centric approach to tap these other markets, language papers are best poised to exploit the changing priorities of marketers. The traditional strengths of language papers such as penetration in smaller towns, ability to build local communities, and use of technology to offer significant reach within small geographies - coupled with increasing literacy levels - will serve them well.

2. Investments in Production and Technology

Thanks to ongoing investments and a realization that the product will have to be up to the mark in terms of quality of design and production values, language papers today look and feel as good as the English dailies. And since a reader's expectations from a language newspaper is no less when it comes to a language paper, investments in production will help increase penetration; and also aid language newspapers offering increasingly segmented offerings for various mini markets and for various audience types.

3. The Empire Strikes Back in Pricing Power

The lower rates charged by language newspapers in comparison with English dailies will see a course correction since language papers, thanks to the huge numbers, deliver premium audiences in huge numbers as well. As marketers wake up to this fact, more categories will start advertising in language newspapers. Newspapers would be able to get better yield, making it a double bonus of sorts. This increase in revenue, will get re-invested into marketing, people and training; investments which will pay for themselves, making it a virtuous cycle.

There is an also new challenge for the publishing industry, with existing and global media houses entering the Indian market through joint ventures. These challenges can be bulldozed if publications can consolidate in their respective markets with multiple media options and packages to give the advertiser an absolute reach in that specific market.



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