



A MAG FOR ALL SEASONS

Kirsty Bennett finds out how and why, in an increasingly digital world, the Partnership publishes a range of customer magazines PHOTOS: MARK MACKENZIE, JAMES MACKENZIE

Magazines, periodicals, publications, journals, zines: whatever you want to call them, we're all familiar with them. They've been around since the 17th century in Europe, covering everything from general interest to the most niche of subjects imaginable, and whether you're a never-miss-an-issue type of person, or you prefer, these days, to digest your magazine content online, magazine brands are all around us.

The Partnership has been publishing magazines for many years – this very magazine has been going since 1918 – but why does it continue to invest in magazines for its customers? A 2012 study by Mindshare UK and PPA (The Voice of Professional Publishers) – titled Magonomics – on the effectiveness of new media, examined the role of print magazine brands in driving the bond between advertisers and consumers and



influencing purchasing behaviour. The results revealed that, in the campaigns analysed, magazines showed a higher return on investment than any other media channel involved, including TV, internet and newspapers. That's a powerful message. I spent some time behind the scenes at some of the Partnership's magazines to find out about their purpose, their messages and why they matter today...

John Lewis Edition

"More smile," shouts the photographer as a female model sways in and out of poses wearing a floaty fuchsia maxi dress with gladiator-style sandals. The look – cocooned by an air of wind-swept gorgeousness, carefully crafted by a hair stylist adding just a touch of wind with a leaf blower (yes, really!) – carries an unexpected asymmetrical hem, selected by a stylist from rails of garments shortlisted for John Lewis Edition magazine's women's summer key pieces shoot.

As the photographer works, the stylist is building the shoot's next look and a make-up artist is preparing for touch-ups during a clothes change. In another corner of the studio a set builder is constructing a living wall – a backdrop for a cover shot later in the day – as a florist hydrates and thoughtfully positions giant tropical leaves within a mesh frame. All of this is happening under the watchful eyes of Editor Vanessa Thompson and Creative Director Clare Watters, as well as, for John Lewis, Edition's Assistant Magazine Manager Scott Pendrous, and also, as a one-off, me!

On the same page

That Edition shoot took place at a studio in north London in late March and while it was going on a team of creatives were also working on the next issue of the magazine at publisher John Brown Media's Shoreditch headquarters – demonstrating the herculean effort that goes into producing the pages of the magazine.

But achieving the right look for Edition is serious business: the magazine is officially the number one women's lifestyle fashion magazine in the UK, with a circulation of 572,380



LEFT: Scott Pendrous with Andy Potter, and here, with Junior Designer Lillia Bolton

(ABC July-December 2015) and a readership of 1,369,000 (TGI Q1 2016). It's the highest circulating men's magazine in the UK, too – reaching more John Lewis menswear shoppers than the Sunday Times Magazine, GQ, Esquire and more.

Edition readers are big online shoppers and they're more likely than the average John Lewis shopper to go for premium and stylish products. It's no surprise, then, that fashion remains at the heart of the magazine,

'THE BUSINESS HAS REALLY MOVED FORWARD WITH ITS FASHION AND I'D LIKE TO THINK EDITION HAS DONE ITS JOB IN COMMUNICATING THAT' Scott Pendrous, Assistant Magazine Manager, JL

says Scott. "One of Edition's main roles is to get customers to reappraise John Lewis's fashion offer. The business has really moved forward with its fashion and I'd like to think Edition has done its job in communicating that."

Change with the times

Edition was launched in September 2009, although its history dates back

almost 10 years to October 2006 when its predecessor Greenbee's Source magazine was launched, before evolving into Edition three years later. Produced by John Brown Media and managed by John Lewis Brand Creative's Scott and Louise Warren (Magazine Manager), the magazine is published quarterly: in spring, summer, autumn and at Christmas.

How has the magazine changed since launch? In some ways it hasn't, says Scott, who attributes this to

the pages of the magazine, including on the shopfloor. "There's an appetite for our images as we're representing what the buying offices want to present to customers, aligning it with the seasonal marketing 'big ideas,'" says Scott.

But what's the purpose of Edition? Its role is to do a 'brand job', says Scott. "Edition is one of the few pieces of print where we present John Lewis as one department store with products from all three directorates.

'getting it right in the first place', but there are some differences. Although the magazine has always been cross category, there's much more of a focus on blending Home, EHT and Fashion products together to 'inform the reader about John Lewis's breadth of assortment', says Scott.

Around five shoots are commissioned for every issue and Edition imagery today is used beyond

We hunt down the very best and interesting items and showcase those to customers."

Edition's tagline 'shopping intelligence' remains unchanged, but how would Scott summarise the magazine? "It's confident, it's curated, and it's... dare I say it... a little bit cool!"

The summer issue of Edition will be in shops and online from 25 May.

