



## Alternative Newsweeklies

We all know that one of the biggest drawbacks to advertising in the newspaper is its shrinking ability to reach the 50 and below demographic. However, reaching younger demographics is the strong suit of the newspaper industry's alter ego: the alternative weekly.

Almost all markets now have one, and these publications have done a great job of carving out a niche for themselves over the past decade. They provide many things to the younger demographics that they don't get from their local "establishment" newspaper. They offer a strong focus on entertainment, including movie reviews, new music reviews, concert listings, local nightclub information, and restaurant reviews. They also provide the market with an alternative political perspective, a forum for voices not usually heard in the traditional press, and an "interesting" mix of classified ads. While most of these publications do not offer home delivery, they are usually readily available at venues that are heavily trafficked by their target demo, and they are almost always free to the public. Interesting, entertaining, and free ... definitely not your father's newspaper!

It's not hard to see why some advertisers find this format compelling, especially businesses in the entertainment and restaurant categories. Other categories that naturally gravitate toward alternative weeklies are retail companies that sell hip and trendy merchandise like clothing and consumer electronics. Alternative weeklies also have started to get proactive in creating companion websites that are highly interactive and very high in "hip" factor. The weeklies with the best websites also are becoming the weeklies with the most advertising revenue growth.

It's also not hard to see how complimentary Radio can be in an advertising mix with these weeklies. Both media specialize in targeting younger and hipper consumers because both media are lifestyle-oriented. Radio is extremely effective when combined with alternative print in the same ways that we traditional newspaper advertisers benefit by using radio. Namely, let Radio intrusively capture the attention of consumers and build interest and desire. Then, drive listeners who are in the action phase of the buying cycle to the print ads that provide addresses, phone numbers, and price-point information. More traditional advertisers are generally squeamish about the possibility of their ads running next to those of adult-oriented businesses.

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### Advantages

Distribution: Weeklies usually are distributed free throughout a city.

Pass-Along Readership: Because most are free, readers often leave

them behind when they're done – to be picked up and read by someone else.

**Hip Image:** Many newsweeklies are targeted to hip, youngish readers who rarely look at daily newspapers. In particular, the local newsweekly is the source of choice for entertainment news among young demographics.

**"Budget" Print Ads:** An ad in a newsweekly offers many of the same characteristics as a newspaper ad, at rates that are usually considerably lower than those of the local newspaper.

**Accepting Ad Policies:** Ads for categories that may have difficulty finding a home in other media, such as liquor, tobacco, and adult entertainment advertising, are usually welcome here.

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## **Disadvantages**

**Advertising Environment:** The flip side of newsweeklies' less-strict ad and content acceptance policy is that the environment created by certain types of ads, articles for features may not be suitable for mainstream businesses or products.

**Limited Publication Schedule:** The name "weekly" says it all. The majority of these publications are produced only once a week – and that may not be often enough to achieve sufficient message frequency. To meet the weekly's schedule, ads usually must be locked in as much as a week or more in advance, limiting an advertiser's ability to incorporate copy changes.

**Production Quality:** Although some weeklies boast production values rivaling or even surpassing the local newspaper, many others are produced as cost-effectively as possible, resulting in a "cheap" look that may affect consumer perception of the quality of product, business, or service being promoted.

**Ad Clutter:** Most weeklies rely completely on advertising for revenue, so the typical issue is crammed with ads, often clustered together in groups. This practice can make it difficult for a given ad to stand out.

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## **Plus Radio**

**Personal Connection:** Radio and alternative newsweeklies share many characteristics. Both have ties to the local community, and both have loyal followings and a unique bond with their constituents, leading to highly synergistic possibilities. Radio has been proven by the Radio Advertising Effectiveness Laboratory (RAEL) studies to connect with listeners better than newspapers. Radio can be used to drive readers to

print ads, increasing recall and effectiveness. Clubs with live music, record labels, music stores....all of these core alternative-weekly advertisers can benefit from a cross-media campaign featuring the ultimate music-friendly advertising medium – Radio.

Flexible: Make copy changes with less lead time with Radio.

Quality Creative: Print ads can be creative, yet Radio combines creative and quality at an efficient cost.