

Cosmopolitan: an advertiser's playground

[Media](#), [Advertising](#)



Christine Johnson Mr. C. Bell English 1101 13 September 2006 Cosmopolitan: An Advertiser Playground One glimpse at the cover of Cosmopolitan, and a rush of emotions assaulted my senses. To begin with, mega pop star Christina Aguilera strikes a bold pose on the cover and superimposed around her are titles like " 30 Sex Boosters, " " Discover the sex fantasy 68% of men have, " and my favorite, " Every guy's private marriage checklist". Each eye catching title entices the reader to open up and discover. Who wouldn't want to add thirty sex boosters to their repertoire? However, there is a catch. The reader must be prepared to swift through numerous amounts of advertisement before getting to the promised articles. The October's issue of Cosmopolitan has two hundred and sixty nine pages. Of those pages, seventy-nine contained an actual article, survey, story, or non-ad related information: that's only thirty percent. Cosmopolitan is a magazine primarily marketed toward women. Therefore, by inundating their targeted readers with an abundance of advertisements and offering a scarce amount of literary works, the editors and writers of the magazine make a statement that shopping is more important to women than reading. Most magazines have advertisements. It makes sense to have them because advertisers pay for the privilege and the added revenue that advertising generate increases profit margins. However, not all magazines have a seventy-thirty percent ratio of advertisement to articles. (Do some research and include some comparisons of other magazines like, GQ and Time magazines.) Perhaps the editor of Cosmopolitan had a valid reason for including so many ads in the magazine so I decided to slowly go through the magazine to see if I could come up with this valid reason. I began my search at page one and,

immediately, I had to do adjust to the strong scent emanating from the magazine. The first four pages had an advertisement for Pleasures; a woman's perfume by Estee Lauder (Describe the ad). One of those pages had a sample of the perfume and that explained the aroma and my slight headache. The next two pages was an advertisement for Double Wear Foundation makeup for women, also by Estee Lauder. An ad for the cellular phone manufacturer LG was next advertising Chocolate, a cell phone the looked a lot like Verizon's Razor. The onslaught of ads continued with the turn of each page (fix this sentence: it does not read well). Not easily deterred though, I went in further. I turned page after page in hopes of finding a reason for so many ads and so few articles. Page thirteen listed the Table of Contents. Quickly scanning the list, I discovered that the first article was on page thirty six, twenty-three pages later. The pages mostly contained more ads. Included were two pages for Redken hair color, the second page of the Table of Contents, Channel foundation (more makeup) and many more ads. Page eighteen had me confused for a moment. Did I report incorrectly? Was this a missed page of something other than advertisements? No, it turns out " Everything Cosmo" is a page advertising Cosmopolitan's " online world". No incorrect reporting here, just another ad so I continued with my quest. Page thirty-six was specifically set aside for Kate White. Her picture, displayed on the top left-hand corner, blended well with her elaborate signature on the bottom right-hand corner of the page. White is the editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan and I looked forward to reading her piece. However, what she wrote did not read like an editorial. An editorial is an article, written by the editor, detailing his or her opinion(s) in regards to the publication.

White's article was more was more like a continuation of the Table of Contents. " Flip to page 172 to find out. " " Our article on page 76 will help your guy learn what to say after sex. " At the bottom of her page was a bulleted section called " Things I Didn't Know Till This Issue. " Of course, each thing listed the page where it could be found. What I had hoped for, but did not get from White, was an idea of what she thought of the issue. I did not get what she, the other editors and other writers had planned to accomplish with the issue or if that goal, in her estimation, was reached. In essence, I did not get an editorial. Turning more pages and going through more ads, surveys, and a few articles, I came to page one hundred and thirty-two and paused, puzzled. My eyebrows raised and forehead furrowed, I tilted my head to the right side and stared at an ad for Kool cigarettes. The cigarette advertisement is not why I am puzzled. I turn one page in the opposite direction and there is the information page for the birth control pill YAZ. Usually, for prescribed medicines, this is where the particulars are listed. Again, that is not why I was puzzled: what caught my attention was the warning in a box with bold lettering in the middle of the right column. " Women who use oral contraceptives should not smoke. " I turn the page again, this time in the right direction, and sure enough, there it was. My eyes were not playing tricks on me. The Kool ad depicted a beautiful young woman smiling and smoking. I thought instantly, I hope she does not take oral contraceptives. I was puzzled because I remember Steinman's telling of a cigarette company whose instructions were that their ad not be placed in close proximity to smoking and health related articles, stories, or information. These two ads placed next to each other showed that the editor

of Cosmopolitan did not agree to such terms. As I near the home stretch, it occurred to me that I had yet to come across a complementary copy article. Complementary copy, another term coined by Gloria Steinman, refers to articles in a magazine that complement the advertisements close to it. I doubled back to make sure I had not miss one and found none. The truth is there was no need for it. The magazine was so full of ads that the few pages or sections of pages dedicated to literary pieces were used for just that. However, to get to those articles, you have to brave waves of advertisements and splashes of fragrances, but eventually, you will get to them. Works Cited: Cosmopolitan October 2006 Issue