

# ***Newspapers: The Weaknesses***

***While the strengths of newspapers are well known among advertisers that use the medium, newspapers' weaknesses aren't as obvious, but they are becoming more prevalent each year.***

## ***Crumbling Circulation***

***Daily newspaper circulation has been eroding steadily over the past 20 years as reading habits change and as people turn to other media to catch up on the news and entertainment information they seek. In 1970, daily newspaper circulation penetrated almost 98% of U.S. households. In 2006, household penetration for daily papers was less than half that – at 47%. Sunday penetration dropped from 77% in 1970 to 49% in 2006 based on Editor & Publisher and U.S. Census data.***

***And, while this print medium struggles to redefine itself by moving contents online, it still means fewer newspapers can be found in U.S. households.***

## ***Diminishing Reach and Readership***

***Since 1992, the number of people who say they regularly read newspapers has fallen by more than 20%. According to the Pew Research Center, data shows that lifestyle shifts, especially when it comes to people's perception of time and convenience, are the major factor. Forty-percent of the people surveyed said they just don't have time to read the paper. Consumers have many choices on where and when to get the information they covet, so newspaper readership is expected to continue to decline like it has for the last 20 years.***

## ***Climbing Costs***

***Due to increased production costs, the cost to advertise in the newspaper has increased over the past few years, while readership has declined. Newspaper advertisers are paying more for less.***

## ***Clutter***

***With almost 60% of a typical daily newspaper and 70% of a Sunday paper devoted to advertising, few businesses that pay for ad placement get much attention since it's hard to stand out in a crowd of clutter. The plethora of ads can often confuse readers and frustrate advertisers. Even bursts of color – which add additional dollars to the cost of an ad – can't penetrate the confusion or grab the attention of a weary reader.***

## ***Unable to Pursue New Prospects***

***All retailers – both those new in the business and those with a historic tradition – need to reach new prospects and customers to succeed. Newspapers tend to reach the same stagnant market of loyal subscribers or those who purchase the paper from newsstands. That means advertisers will only reach current customers, making it difficult – if not impossible – for them to expand their customer base and their business.***

## ***Low Emotional Involvement***

***When newspaper readers are engaged it's usually with the editorial content, not the advertising. As a one-dimensional medium, newspaper advertising simply can't compete the way electronic media can and does.***

## ***Passive Papers***

***Consumers have no choice but to leave newspapers behind – either in the recycle bin or in the trash. Without sound, motion and emotion, newspaper advertising doesn't have the intrusive selling power of advertising in the electronic media. For decades, newspapers have been a valuable advertising alternative for retailers, giving them their first chance to reach mass audiences. They continue to have their place on the media landscape, but the benefits they offer retailers are declining.***

## ***Quality Control***

***For advertisers to stand out in what is mostly black and white newsprint, color is the only choice. But, color ads in newspapers rarely translate into a compelling and attractive message because of the use of low quality paper and color. Since the production process is intended to be fast, there is little quality control once the final product comes off the presses. Unless an advertiser has an impressive budget, a color ad placed near a competitor's more extravagant ad can do more harm than good.***