

Key Newspaper Experiences

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The New Readers study reveals that various readers “experience” newspapers in many distinct and measurable ways that are closely linked with whether they read more, or whether they read less.

Many of the newspaper-reading experiences identified in the study are positive – they are associated with higher readership (Motivators); some are negative and linked with lower readership (Inhibitors).

Of the 34 experiences identified, the Readership Institute selected eight to highlight. Improving existing products and creating new products around these experiences represent, in our opinion, the industry’s best opportunities for impacting readership in meaningful ways.

The criteria for choosing the eight:

- They have general applicability and also special relevance to younger adults; African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders. In other words, they have potential for all readers and even more opportunity for the target groups.
- They are actionable for newspapers.
- They offer opportunities for both basic improvements and innovations.
- There are conceptual links among the experiences. That is, innovation made around one experience can have positive effects on others.
- There is applicability to service as well as news and advertising content.

The experiences and the individual statements from the consumer survey that comprise each experience are listed below.

Looks out for my civic and personal interests (motivator)

Reading this newspaper makes me feel like a better citizen.

I think people who do not read this newspaper or one like it are really at a disadvantage in life.

Reading this newspaper adds to my enjoyment of other things I do.

I feel like the day is incomplete if I miss reading this paper.

Our society would be much weaker without newspapers.

People would be better parents if they read this newspaper.

I count on this newspaper to investigate wrongdoing.

I feel like the money I spend on this newspaper is a good thing for my community.

It gives me ideas about how to help in the community.

Makes me smarter (motivator)

I look at the newspaper as educational. I gain something.

Even if I disagree with things in this newspaper, I feel like I have learned something valuable.

This newspaper has columns that give good advice.

This newspaper is good at telling stories about things that happen and how they turn out.

It is a way to learn about new products.

It shows me how other people live their lives.

I learn about things to do or places to go.

Something to talk about (motivator)

I bring up things I've read in this newspaper in conversations with many other people.

I like to talk about the national news and current events I read about in it.

I like to give advice and tips to people I know based on things I've read in this newspaper.

I show things in the newspaper to people in my family.

Part of my role among friends or family is to keep them informed because I read the newspaper.

Good service (motivator)

I always get it when I want it.

I always get the newspaper in good condition.

This newspaper offers very good service.

I don't have problems getting the paper delivered to my home because of where I live.

I do not have to deal with my paper being missing or stolen.

I would probably not read the paper more even if it were easier for me to get it.

Value for my money (motivator)

Overall, this newspaper provides pretty good value for the money.

I save more money from its ads and coupons than I spend on the paper.

The newsstand price could probably be higher and sales would be the same.

Even if this newspaper cost twice as much as it does now, I would still read it.

Ad usefulness (motivator)

- I look at most of the ads.
- I use the ads to know what is on sale.
- I like the ads just as much or more than the stories.
- I like the ads for unusual things.
- It makes me want to go shopping.
- I value the coupons in this newspaper.

Too much (inhibitor)

- I wish this newspaper had fewer pages.*
- It has too many special sections.*
- It tries to cover too much.*
- Too many of the articles are too long.*

Discriminates and stereotypes (inhibitor)

- I worry that other people reading this paper will get the wrong impression of minority groups.*
- This newspaper perpetuates racial or ethnic stereotypes.*
- This newspaper is basically about white America.*
- This paper is sometimes unfair in its stories about minorities.*
- They only target minorities for their money. They don't really care about them.*
- This paper has a history of discrimination against minorities.*

MEASURING THE EXPERIENCES

Experiences are evaluated in two ways:

- **Impact on Readership:** The number represents the strength of the relationship between this experience and readership (time, completeness and frequency, as measured by Reading Behavior Scores). Those with higher correlations have stronger potential to increase readership. Think of this as an indicator of potential or opportunity.
- **Current Experience Rating:** This number indicates how strongly readers tend to agree that they have this experience with their local daily newspaper. Think of this as a measure of current performance.

Impact on Readership

To read this chart, look first at the “impact on overall readership” column. This number represents the strength of the impact of the experience on RBS. For example, “looks out for my civic and personal” interests has a score of .81, the highest of the key experiences. Results for key demographic groups are listed across the rows.

Experience	Type	Impact on Overall Readership	18-24	25-34	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	African American
Looks out for my civic and personal interests	Motivator	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.60	0.57	0.64
Makes me smarter	Motivator	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69
Something to talk about	Motivator	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56
Good service	Motivator	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45
Value for my money	Motivator	0.34	0.59	0.36	0.37	0.00	0.28
Ad usefulness	Motivator	0.08	0.35	0.14	0.08	0.08	0.08
<i>Discriminates and stereotypes</i>	<i>Inhibitor</i>	-0.31	-0.33	-0.14	-0.19	-0.15	-0.08
<i>Too much</i>	<i>Inhibitor</i>	-0.38	-0.38	-0.38	-0.38	-0.38	-0.38

Current Experience Ratings

Readers responded to the statements that constitute the experiences on a five-point scale.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

As the table indicates, the average scores are generally positive, but fairly tepid – all hovering right around “neither agree nor disagree.”

Experience	Type	Overall	White Non-Hispanic	African American	Hispanic/Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	18-24	25-34	35+
Looks out for my civic and personal interests	Motivator	3.16	3.16	3.11	3.14	3.26	3.00	3.00	3.23
Makes me smarter	Motivator	3.56	3.53	3.65	3.58	3.60	3.48	3.51	3.59
Something to talk about	Motivator	3.28	3.23	3.41	3.35	3.31	3.24	3.21	3.32
Good service	Motivator	3.70	3.72	3.71	3.67	3.62	3.61	3.66	3.73
Value for my money	Motivator	3.01	2.95	3.14	3.08	3.06	3.03	3.06	2.99
Ad usefulness	Motivator	3.27	3.21	3.41	3.34	3.34	3.31	3.44	3.21
<i>Discriminates and stereotypes</i>	<i>Inhibitor</i>	2.58	2.44	3.03	2.67	2.82	2.65	2.52	2.59
<i>Too much</i>	<i>Inhibitor</i>	2.51	2.48	2.51	2.52	2.68	2.62	2.52	2.48