

Why Magazines Thrive in Europe

HAMBURG, Germany — Among the many formulas for survival tried by the magazines of Europe, those in West Germany seem to be the surest; the competition from television is so limited that the advertisers have no place else to go.

In Italy the magazines are hanging on to their readers by serving up generous portions of sex and scandal that are not available on television or in the newspapers.

The better French magazines have avoided the bad luck of American magazines by making thriftier use of personnel and photographs, and by keeping the quality of printing high.

British magazines are struggling out of a bad couple of years, mainly by searching out the specialist trends and selected readerships.

The West German magazines do all these things. Some use a printing quality fit to advertise sparkling diamonds and the most exquisite perfumes.

They are doing well, but the real reason for their success is to be seen less in how they cope with their problems than how an advertising man copes with his.

Advertising Is Key

"Very often I have no place to go but to a magazine," explained Heinz Beecken, a partner in the Markenplan Advertising Agency in Düsseldorf. "The magazines have no real competition here."

Two German television channels are allowed commercials under their charters but they are limited to a daily total of 20 minutes to be broadcast between 6 P.M. and 8 P.M. on weekdays, and not at all on Sundays and holidays.

As a result, there is just not enough room for all the advertisers to squeeze in.

One of Mr. Beecken's clients asked him to introduce a Scotch whisky, an inexpensive brand with the unlikely name "Prince of Wales."

For four weeks before Christmas, in the glossy weeklies Quick and Neue Revue and in the television journal

TV-Hören und Sehen, the whisky was advertised, offering to give each customer who applied a special label with each bottle, with his name printed on it, and the note that it had been imported especially for him. More than 20,000 Germans responded to the offer.

The booming days of 20 years ago are gone. There were 11 glossy weekly magazines of general interest in West Germany in 1950 and now there are four. All are healthy; none sells fewer than 1.5 million copies. All of them lean toward lightly clad and pretty girls on their covers.

There are still 250 magazines published here, not counting the technical magazines. Most of the publishing is done in Hamburg and Munich.

There are still 53 magazine publishers, but only four giants: Heinrich Bauer in Munich and Hamburg, Gruner and Jahr in Hamburg, Burda in Offenburg and Axel Springer in Hamburg.

The magazines are improving steadily. The quality of printing in Gruner and Jahr's Stern exceeds that of Paris Match.

The rates for advertising are high, too. A full page, black and white, in Stern costs 30,000 marks (about \$9,310). In four colors it costs 57,000 marks (\$17,650).

Hör Zu Top Seller

A full page in black and white in Mr. Springer's Hör Zu, a television journal that sells 3.5-million copies a week, more than any other magazine in West Germany, costs 55,000 marks (\$17,050). A page of four colors costs 88,000 marks (\$27,300).

Thirty seconds on the first television channel costs 38,000 marks (\$11,800); on the second channel it costs 25,000 marks (\$7,760).

In Britain, the magazines are still searching for the right degree of specialization. Nova was directed at "the new kind of woman," but has not been having an easy time of it. Yet Queen was merged with Harpers and has been fairly successful as a glossy

monthly. A British edition of Cosmopolitan is being brought out in February.

In France, production costs have added to the suffering the magazines feel from television's competition.

Staff Cuts Help

Jean Prouvost, the owner of Paris Match, has skimmed some of the surplus staff and feature material from that magazine and put them into Ambre, which he founded on the model of the German magazine Jasmin, aimed at trendy, sex-conscious young couples.

Trendy magazines run a special risk of falling victim to the next trend that puts them out of date. Jasmin, for example, carried only half as many ads last year as it had the year before.

But Mr. Prouvost is fast-moving and resourceful. Paris Match had itself been founded because of the excess of pictures that piled up at Paris-Soir before the war, then a Prouvost daily.

The Italian magazines have a couple of things going for them. Television is sexless, unlike the magazines. And although Italians have a high illiteracy rate, it is of little consequence to magazines that are famous for their bulldog photographers, good art work and first-rate scandals.