

# Ezine Circulation: A Look Behind the Numbers

By Vincent Gomory

Ezine Circulation: A Look Behind the Numbers

Vincent Gomory  
vincentj@nameplanet.com

hnb resources <http://www.hnbco.com/hnbco/c.cgi/vincent>

Ezine Circulation: A Look Behind the Numbers

## ASSUMPTION:

All Ezine Readers are Subscribers, But all Subscribers  
May Not Be Readers

## PROBLEM:

Most ezines, in fact almost none are audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulation. All ezines maintain a subscriber list and to the extent that it is clean - maintain a private circulation total. Circulation numbers alone though, don't tell the whole story.

## A Clean List

Most Ezine publishers are responsible and update their subscription list on an ongoing basis. Since the opt-in email list is the life-blood of an ezine publisher, that list must be accurate. This is one reason all publishers include an UnSubscribe email link. But, no matter how zealous a publisher is, the reader must hold up their end.

There is absolutely no way to know if a reader has turned off unless they click that UnSubscribe link. Herein lies the problem:

All Subscribers may not be Readers.

## Redundancy and Pass Around

In the magazine and newspaper world publishers like to tout that their circulation is higher because the entire household 'reads' the paper. Hence, it is passed around to 2 or three people in addition to the subscriber.

Ezines cannot claim this benefit The ezine you subscribe to is sent to your email and most likely you will not forward it to others.

In fact, because Ezines are free, the odds are that you have subscribed to many ezines and do not even read all of them. Hence, Redundancy.

Redundancy reduces true ezine circulation levels two ways:

1) Because Ezines are Free, most ezine subscribers are usually subscribed to multiple ezines. Remember Lays Potato Chips? No one can 'read' just one!

2) Because Ezine are Free, and readers subscribe to many, most people don't have time to read them all - and they don't have time to unsubscribe to them either! Hence, they are listed as loyal subscribers on multiple opt-in lists.

Consider for a moment, that you are a Newbie in the Internet Marketing industry. As an intelligent person, you want to read everything you can to educate yourself about this industry. You download ebooks, visit web sites, follow all of their links and of course, you subscribe to a zillion ezines.

When I broke into the IT industry 17 years ago I was a newbie in technology. I learned by soaking up knowledge. I read everything I could and YES - I subscribed to many computer magazines. (There were no ezines in 1984).

I was a redundant subscriber and an overwhelmed reader. There was one important difference though. My subscriptions cost money and I cancelled as many as I could when I realized I was not reading them.

What is my incentive to unsubscribe from a free ezine?  
NOTHING.

Do you see the problem with circulation numbers?

Don't get me wrong. I am convinced that Ezine advertising is the best bang for the buck in the internet marketing business. I do it and will continue to do it.

I just want to open your eyes and minds to the fact that circulation numbers must be taken with a grain of salt.

### The Good News

The Direct Mail Business requires testing but is not guesswork. If you test your ads properly, you will determine what your response rate is and what your conversion rate is from a particular ad.

The message here is that if you can make what you believe to be a suitable profit from your ad, you really don't need to care about the true circulation or 'reach' of your ad campaign.

### The Bad News

Most advertisers in this business receive a response rate of .5 - 3 percent. They then receive a conversion rate (the number of people who buy) of about 2 - 5 percent.

Read the example below and you will see why you must add a discount factor to determine the true circulation of an ezine you want to advertise in.

Let's say that you have decided to run your ad in a group of ezines that all cater to the internet marketing and promotion industry. The total circulation of the group (say 7 ezines), is 14,000. If the

advertising is sold as a group buy then everyone who advertises becomes a new subscriber of each ezine within the group.

Now, to be fair, the vast majority of people who read ezines do not advertise in them. But, we must assume that some percentage, say 10 -15 percent will place ads in this group of ezines. In addition, we must assume that some percentage of subscribers are subscribed to every ezine in a particular niche because they want to know everything about it. Let's say the hard core group represents 5 percent. For our example, we will use a discount of 17.5 percent.

#### True versus Effective Circulation

Since my background is in traditional Marketing, I am sensitive to things like circulation, reach, Cost Per Thousand (CPM), and spillover. Audited or Unaudited circulation is the True Circulation. This is the stated number of subscribers that an ezine publisher reports in their ezine. The Effective circulation is what we are after here. The Ezine publisher has no control over the spillover effect or redundancy effect - but as a savvy advertiser and publicity hound - you and I have to be.

#### The Calculation

Let's calculate what the effective circulation is with the discount built in.

$14,000 \times 17.5\% = 2,450$ . This means there are 1,750 redundant readers.

$14,000 - 2,450 = 11,550$ . This is the true circulation for the group of ezines you will advertise in.

#### The Effect on Response Rates and Conversion Rates

Here we will calculate a 2% response rate and a 2% Conversion rate.

Full Circulation -  $14,000 \times 2\% = 280$  responses

$280 \times 2\% = 5.6$  or 6 sales.

Discounted Circulation -  $11,550 \times 2\% = 231$  responses

$231 \times 2\% = 4.62$  or 5 sales.

Now I can hear you thinking -

"Big Deal! So I lost one sale! Is this guy serious?",

Yes.

Remember, I've used very small numbers to make a point.

Over time, weeks, months and years, you will lose sales.

NOW - Let's look at some real numbers...

If you execute a mailing to 500,000 people

FC =  $500,000 \times 2\% = 10,000$  responses

$10,000 \times 2\% = 200$  sales

DC =  $500,000 \times 17.5\% = 87,500$

$500,000 - 87,500 = 412,500$

$412,500 \times 2\% = 8,250$  responses

$8,250 \times 2\% = 165$  sales

In this scenario you lost 35 sales.

Now, 35 sales at \$100 a sale is \$3,500.00

For the gurus, that's ckicken feed. But for the proletariat like you and me, that \$3,500.00 can pay for two months of summer camp or a truckload of stuff from the wholesale market!

## Final Word

Some professional e-marketers will do a 1/2 Million mailing every month. In this scenario, that's \$3,500.00 x 12 or \$42,000.00 of lost sales per year.

Do I have your attention now?

Think about it. Lost sales add up.

Remember, don't give up on ezine advertising. It is the most productive form of advertising in the online marketing business. Just be open-minded and Look Behind the Numbers.

## Helpful Links

If you want to learn more about Circulation, Cost Per Thousand (CPM) and media buying in the Advertising industry follow these links:

Audit Bureau of Circulation  
<http://abcas1.accessabc.com/ecirc/>

Standard Rate and Data Service  
[http://www.srds.com/media\\_resource/](http://www.srds.com/media_resource/)

Calculate Your Ad Budget  
<http://wdfm.com/advertising.html>

Thank you for your time. I hope my two cents was helpful to you.

Happy marketing,

Vincent

## ByLine

Vincent Gomory is an information specialist and technical writer with 17 years of experience involved in marketing technical solutions, Big 5 consulting, and Independent consulting. He is a newcomer to the internet marketing world and is crafting his own web site now.

You can visit his affiliate site at: <http://www.hnbco.com/hnbco/c.cgi/vincent>

Or - receive free ebooks by sending a blank email to:  
[rightanswer@getresponse.com](mailto:rightanswer@getresponse.com)

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)