Sir Kensington’s Makes a Magazine All About Condiments

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Key Insights:

- Creative house TCO London produced the quarterly magazine
- More brand marketers are turning to specialty publications

If you don’t think condiments get their proper due, Sir Kensington’s has a magazine for you with Sandwich, a quarterly publication that aims to explore modern society through a fun, food-based lens.

The New York-based condiment maker, part of the Unilever family, released the first issue last month, dedicated to the BLT. It features an article on female butchers, vivid illustrations of its ingredients and some lively photography of the cleanup after Spain’s annual La Tomatina festival, where participants throw tomatoes at each other for the joy of it.

The magazine’s debut installment, which consists of nearly 70 pages, costs $15 and is available for purchase on Sir Kensington’s website, along with at a few select shops in the U.S., including Brooklyn bar/concert venue Public Records and all locations of the boutique newsstand Import Store. The publication contains no ads.

“The big idea is to cut through in a world where condiment brands don’t necessary have a heritage of doing things that add value in this space,” said Simon Baker, managing director at TCO London, the media company and creative studio that produced Sandwich.

Sir Kensington’s approached TCO London because of the agency’s history with the medium, according to Baker. TCO London runs Little White Lies, a film magazine, as well as Huck, a culture publication—or the “nice Vice,” as Baker puts it.

Baker hopes Sandwich can give Sir Kensington’s a position in the marketplace that it couldn’t occupy without its own publication. “Our form of content marketing is actually just content,” Baker said.

Consumer goods leviathan Unilever, which also owns brands such as Hellmann’s and Ben & Jerry’s, acquired Sir Kensington’s in

2017 for $140 million, according to Bloomberg. Another Unilever acquisition, Dollar Shave Club, has also experimented with a print publication with Mel Magazine.

Baker acknowledged the trend of young companies making print magazines to enhance relationships with potential customers, but also argued that because the distribution of these publications tends to be limited, the trend hasn't hit a saturation point. Only a few thousand issues of Sandwich were printed, for example. Some of the content will be repurposed for digital.

"While we've seen many shuttered print magazines over the past few decades, we are certainly seeing young brands producing print content as part of a content marketing strategy," said Stephanie Stahl, general manager at the Content Marketing Institute. Stahl listed Bumble, Away, Airbnb, Casper, California Closets and Red Bull as some prime examples.

"Likewise, some established brands continue to invest in their print products or have launched new print products," Stahl added, nodding to REI, AARP and Amtrak.

According to survey data from the Content Marketing Institute, this year 25% of consumer-facing brand marketers said they used print magazines for content marketing purposes at some point in the past 12 months. Two years prior, 17% said the same.

Both Stahl and Baker argue there's something special about a print magazine that a digital medium simply can't replicate. People engage with it more. They take their time. They soak it up.

"Presumably, brands that are launching new print products have heard directly from their customers that print is a desirable or preferable way to engage with the brand," Stahl said.

Survey data collected by the Association of Magazine Media, a

trade group, claims that 73% of adults “feel that reading a printed magazine or book is more enjoyable than reading on an electronic device.”

If print publications are so compelling, should every brand do it?

“Definitely not,” Stahl cautioned, citing the cost compared to other forms of digital media, the difficulty of tracking a return on investment, and the need to recruit great writers, editors and designers. Plus, it absolutely must be unique—and good.

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