

AdvertisingAge.

Magazine Ads That Drove Readers to the Web

MRI Starch Picks the 10 Most Effective Print to Online Ads

By [Michal Galin](#)

Published: December 18, 2008



[See](#) what marketers such as Acura, Dell, and Orbitz did to get people to visit their web sites.

NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- Which print ads were best at moving readers to a company website this year? MRI Starch Communications, a specialist in print-advertising research, measures a range of actions readers take as a result of seeing ads, and here examines the best-performing ads that led readers to company websites.

To find the most effective ads at driving online traffic, MRI Starch considered 4,071 one-page and two-page ads across all product categories. The following "Visit website" scores are based on those readers who saw or read the ad. All selected ads were above average in initially attracting readers to the page. Here MRI Starch investigates the ads' creative elements, the product categories as well as the context or the magazine genres that contributed to higher traffic to the website.

~ ~ ~

Michal Galin is senior VP at MRI Starch, part of the GfK Group, which specializes in measuring print-ad effectiveness. For more information on ads that spark reader action, please visit [MRI Starch](#).

Acura TSX

Category: Cars and light trucks

Publication: Motor Trend, June 2008

Visited company website: 37%

Category average: 14%

Agency: RPA, Santa Monica, Calif.

This isn't trust-fund luxury.
This is start-up, do-it-yourself,
this is gonna be the
next big thing luxury.
A new generation has arrived.

TSX

Introducing the all-new Acura TSX. Forget silver-haired luxury. This is modern, i-VTEC, ELS Surround® Sound luxury. Luxury that innovates, with features like the most advanced on-screen weather information and alerts. And luxury that thrills, with an aggressive new body style, a re-tuned engine, and a sport-minded suspension. The TSX with Technology Package. It's luxury for a whole new generation. See it at acura.com.

ACURA
ADVANCE

The two-page spread Acura TSX ad uses a two-pronged approach to attract readers' eyes to the page. On the left side, two young men are pictured engaged in hearty laughter, which sets an infectiously upbeat tone for the ad. Nestled between them, a few lines of fairly sparse copy end with the statement, "A new generation has arrived," conveying a sense that something new and noteworthy (and, by implication, worthy of further exploration) is now on the scene. In effect, the creative is announcing that the reader should sit up and take notice -- and if the jovial pair and the deftly-worded text aren't enough to make that happen, then the head-on, high-contrast visual of the TSX seems perfectly poised to finish the job. The final sentence in the copy on the lower right ("See it at acura.com") is as direct as they come -- and it worked successfully with a large percentage of readers. The high traffic to the website also was driven by the MRI Starch finding that readers of magazines in the automotive genre are more likely to visit company websites than readers of most other types of magazines, with 15% of readers of ads going online and clicking into the websites.

BlackBerry wireless phones

Category: Telephone equipment

Publication: Fortune, June 23, 2008

Visited company website: 30%

Category average: 15%

Agency: Arc Worldwide



Life On BlackBerry

Connect to everything you love through the power of a BlackBerry® smartphone. Phone, email, browser, or anything and more that fit seamlessly with your life. BlackBerry®. The object for your desires.

©2008 Research In Motion Limited. All rights reserved. BlackBerry®, RIM®, Research In Motion®, iMagine® and all other trademarks, names and logos are the property of Research In Motion Limited or their registered owners and/or their U.S. affiliates. All other trademarks owned by their respective owners.

BlackBerry.
www.blackberry.com

MRI Starch Readership data consistently indicate that color is a key creative element when it comes to attracting attention to the page. The BlackBerry ad features a large and intensely colorful photo image of the product, which is made all the more prominent by its placement at the center of the page. The headline "Life on BlackBerry" is a succinct announcement, and the three lines of text on the bottom portion of the ad go on to elucidate some of the features offered by this very front-and-center product. Having whet the reader's appetite sufficiently with a strong headline, an up-close look at the product, a splash of color and informative text -- it's not surprising that a sizable segment of readers were intrigued enough by the ad to visit the advertiser's website (which, incidentally, is well-positioned: the long lines of copy flow right toward the logo, so the reader's eye is consequently also led directly to the website information located just beneath).

Bose SoundDock Portable

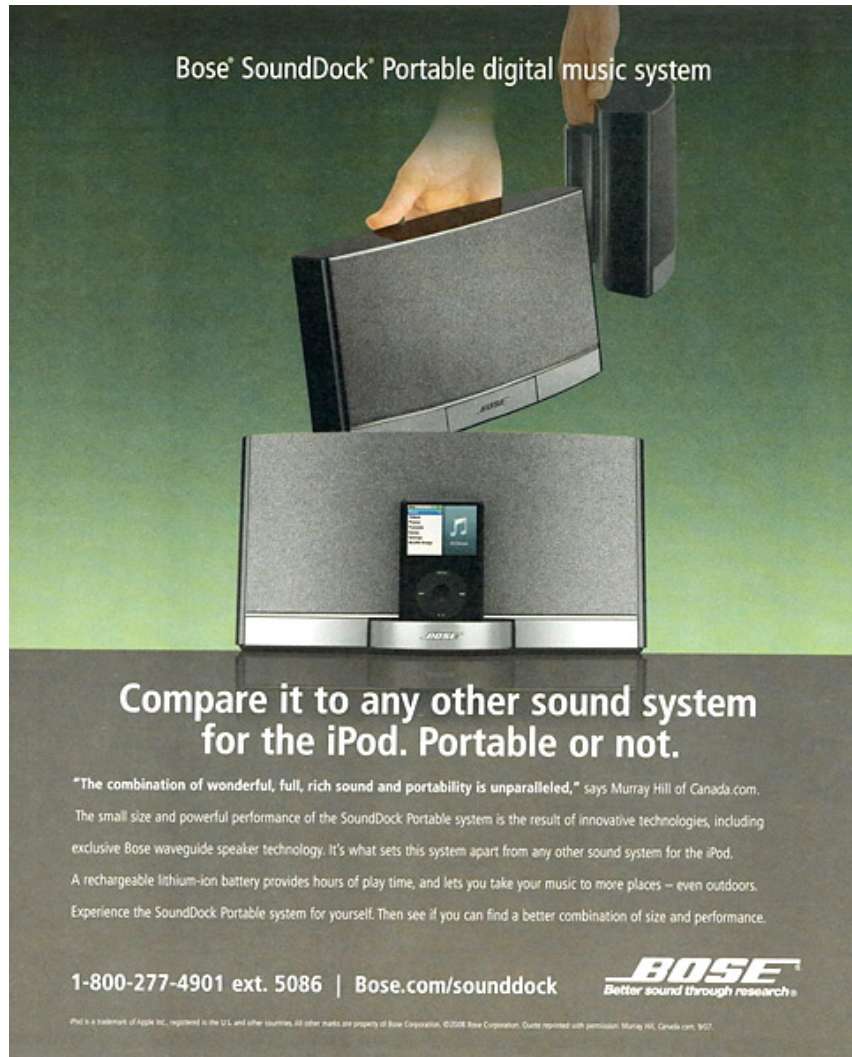
Category: Electronic entertainment equipment

Publication: ESPN The Magazine, June 16, 2008

Visited company website: 31%

Category average: 15%

Agency: Not available



Bose® SoundDock® Portable digital music system

Compare it to any other sound system for the iPod. Portable or not.

"The combination of wonderful, full, rich sound and portability is unparalleled," says Murray Hill of Canada.com.

The small size and powerful performance of the SoundDock Portable system is the result of innovative technologies, including exclusive Bose waveguide speaker technology. It's what sets this system apart from any other sound system for the iPod.

A rechargeable lithium-ion battery provides hours of play time, and lets you take your music to more places -- even outdoors.

Experience the SoundDock Portable system for yourself. Then see if you can find a better combination of size and performance.

1-800-277-4901 ext. 5086 | Bose.com/sounddock

BOSE
Better sound through research®

iPod is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. All other marks are property of Bose Corporation. ©2008 Bose Corporation. Quotes reprinted with permission: Murray Hill, Canada.com, 9/07.

The Bose advertisement's headline acts as something tantamount to an invitation to the reader, imploring him/her to "Compare it to any other sound system for the iPod." In addition, the illustration shows the product clearly and well (in fact, it shows it in triplicate -- with each image seen from a slightly different perspective), and the deep green background shade is one that many MRI Starch studies have indicated to generally be pleasing to the eye. The ad's block of text describes the product vividly, in terms of both the convenience of its portability and of the appeal of the excellent quality sound that it delivers. Once engaged by the visual and text provided, a sizable group of readers flocked to bose.com -- captivated enough by what they saw and read to want to learn even more. In addition, the prominent display of the Bose 800 phone number adjacent to the web address prompted 4% of the ad readers to call the company, double the average for readers of electronic-entertainment-equipment ads.

Bowflex exercise equipment

Category: Sporting goods

Publication: Men's Fitness, April 2008

Visited company website: 31%

Category average: 14%

Agency: In-house



**No Membership
REQUIRED.**

**GET THE BENEFITS OF A GYM,
RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME!**

The Bowflex® Home Gym delivers fast and easy total-body results. Compact enough to fit any workout space, it provides gym-quality exercises whenever YOU want. Get tight abs, firm legs, sculpted arms and a strong chest. Get the Bowflex® body you want...in the comfort of your own home!

All this starting as low as **\$20 a month*** – less than half the monthly dues of a typical gym membership! Get a real Bowflex® body. Get a Bowflex® home gym.

**CALL (800) 840-7415
TO REQUEST A FREE DVD
OR TO PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY.**
www.BowflexWeb.com

The Bowflex Ultimate® 2 Home Gym Offers Exceptional Standard Features that can Transform Your Body in Just 20 Minutes a Day, 3 Times a Week:

- 300 lbs. of resistance standard
- Lat tower with angled lat bar
- Leg extension/leg curl attachment
- No-change cable pulley system
- Integrated squat station
- Built-in rowing machine
- 12-year limited warranty
- 300% Satisfaction Guarantee†

BOWFLEX Be Strong. Be Fit. Be Bowflex.

*See website for details and restrictions. The advertised amount is based on a promotional interest rate of 12% of purchase price. The amount of your first monthly payment will depend on additional purchases and account interest. See Credit Card Agreement and Bowflex System for details. †300% Satisfaction Guarantee includes full refund of purchase price, less shipping and handling. Call for complete details. ©2007 Bowflex, Inc. All rights reserved. Bowflex, the Bowflex logo, and Bowflex Ultimate are registered trademarks of Bowflex, Inc. BOWFLEX® is a registered trademark.

MRI Starch readership study results have consistently demonstrated that ads that show the product in use in their creative seem to be particularly engrossing to readers. The same is true of ads that place a strong emphasis on benefits offered by the product. The Bowflex execution does both, with its two photo illustrations of the product in use and its text's convincing discussion of the many positives that are attainable through the advertised item. An 800 number and website information are both boldly featured just below the center of the page, and, as such, become an integral part of the ad's focus -- likely much more so than if they had been placed in a location that was not quite as readily visible. Not much hunting or scanning is required on the part of readers here -- instead, the call to action jumps out quite freely to greet them. In addition to high traffic to the website, this ad also prompted 9% of readers to call the company, more than three times the category average.

Careerbuilder

Category: Business-employment recruitment

Publication: Fortune, May 5, 2008

Visited company website: 38%

Category average: 22%

Agency: Moveo, Oakbrook Terrace, Ill.

ADVERTISEMENT

Strategy for **GROWTH**

To attract hires, HP Software is touting its leadership position in the industry.

It was a scenario most companies would welcome: a booming business unit with growth significantly outpacing the market. But at Hewlett-Packard, success also presented a challenge. By 2007, HP was the sixth-largest software company in the world, but it was far better known—by customers and potential employees—for its printers, PCs, storage, servers, and services. Before the company could carry out an ambitious growth plan that called for the hiring of over 1,000 new employees, the world had to know that HP Software was an industry leader, too—and a great place to work.

"Software is a big part of our overall enterprise strategy, and over the last three years we've invested \$7 billion in it," says Paul Good, vice president, HP Software Global Staffing. "We've become a key player in the space. But we needed to increase our visibility and attractiveness as an employer, because the best talent wants to work at the best companies."

HP Software in partnership with its global staffing department adopted a multipronged staffing strategy. First, it set out to expand its pipeline of candidates. In November 2007, when HP Software began to ramp up its hiring, that pool numbered 2,000—a figure that was respectable but left room for improvement.

Next, with support from top management—an essential condition for any recruitment initiative—the employee referral program was enhanced. This enabled the company to leverage a recruitment asset it already had: its network of employees.

But by itself, a referral program wasn't going to support the scale of hiring HP Software had envisioned. The



third step was to find partners that could add even more candidates to the pool—partners like CareerBuilder.com, the nation's largest online job site. With more than 25 million unique visitors, CareerBuilder.com helped HP attract candidates essential to success: sales representatives who had closed multimillion-dollar software deals.

"Working with partners including CareerBuilder.com, we were able to get the message out about HP Software, and get it out to the sort of candidates we were seeking," says Good. "These are people who might not be actively looking for a job but have expressed an interest in taking a look should the right opportunity come along." By the end of February, HP Software's candidate pool had grown to nearly 17,000.

But a successful recruitment strategy doesn't end with more candidates. "If you don't have the resources to move people through the application and interview process, you haven't done anything to bring them in-house," says Good. So HP Software built up its internal recruitment teams to support its new level of hiring. The internal recruitment team helped proactively recruit candidates, screen applicants, and ensure that HP was hiring the top talent in the technology industry. Weekly reporting kept management in the loop—and kept the process on track.

Based on early returns, it's all working. In its first quarter of operation, the HP Software recruitment initiative brought in 500 of the 1,200 new employees the company had projected for the full year. "We've always had great software solutions," says Good. "Now we've got the great sales force we need to get them to customers." ■

EMPLOYEES WITH INSIGHT NOW IN SIGHT

Zero in on stellar performers at CareerBuilder.com. With millions of qualified job seekers, you're sure to find talented employees in the blink of an eye.

START BUILDING

careerbuilder.com

> buildmydreamteam.com or 1-877-FW-A-Job



Learn more about CareerBuilder.com's solutions at

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/Fortune>

The CareerBuilder ad creative appears to be geared toward prospective employers rather than employees -- based on its headline ("Employees With Insight Now In Sight"). This two-page spread ad is one part advertorial, with an editorial-style article, entitled "Strategy for Growth," on its left side, and a bold copy message presented in giant-size font on its right. The arresting bright-orange color that is featured almost can't help but grab the eye and bring attention directly to the copy juxtaposed upon it -- and the CareerBuilder website address is right in the line of sight, increasing the likelihood of a high level of visitation. At 38%, it is apparent that the use of giantism for its dominant headline, as well as the vivid orange color helped to draw eyes to the ad and to its website, which interestingly stands alone and unencumbered, with nothing immediately flanking it that could potentially detract. The movement of readers to the website was also facilitated by the product category -- MRI Starch findings show that 22% of readers of employment-recruitment ads search for additional information on the company website.

Dell Precision Computers

Category: Business direct response

Publication: Forbes, July 21, 2008

Visited company website: 31%

Category average: 19%

Agency: Enfatico, New York



DELL Dell recommends Windows Vista® Business.

SO SMART IT JUST CRUNCHED ITS OWN NUMBER

Starting at
\$3559

Dell® Precision™ Workstation T5400

Versatile yet compatible.
A blend of power and performance.
Order Code: 89W5H5G
Price includes 24" Flat Panel Monitor

Adobe® Acrobat® 9 Professional.
An additional \$429.99

Adobe

Software, documentation or packaging may differ from retail version.

Share files securely and confidently with Dell® Workstations and Adobe® Acrobat® 9 Professional. Together, they make creating and combining multiple files into a single PDF document simple. It's an ideal solution for reliable and secure group project collaboration.

Let Dell work harder for you. Call 800.847.4139 or visit DELL.COM/CS3

Dell recommends Adobe® Acrobat® 9 Professional software.

Call 800.847.4139 for details. © 2008 Dell Computer Corporation. All rights reserved. Dell, the Dell logo and Dell Workstations are trademarks of Dell Computer Corporation. Windows Vista and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Adobe, the Adobe logo and Acrobat are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the U.S. and/or other countries.

In order to grab the attention of its audience, the Dell Computer ad uses two creative elements that have frequently proved effective, based on MRI Starch data. First, it employs wit and humor in its headline ("So Smart It Just Crunched Its Own Number"). Second, it uses an eye-appealing shade of blue liberally throughout its visual. Primary and secondary colors, and blue in particular, often seem to achieve positive attention-getting results among readers. The product is shown off to good advantage, in an illustration which is presented with excellent clarity. But more to the point: When considering the ad's power to draw readers to its website, its benefits-oriented approach deserves the greatest nod. The text line reading "Let Dell work harder for you," which is immediately followed by both 800 number and website info, undeniably played a crucial role in spurring a solid number of readers to Dell.com.

Infiniti G

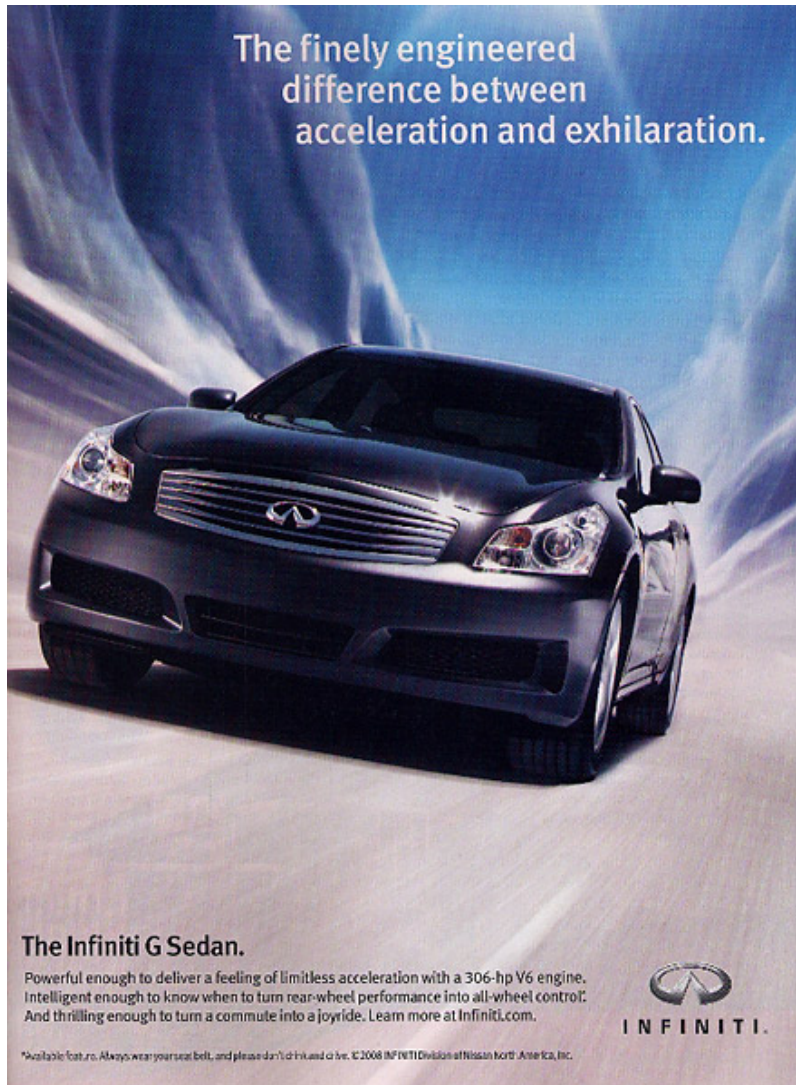
Category: Cars and light trucks

Publication: Fortune, June 23, 2008

Visited company website: 33%


Category average: 14%

Agency: TBWA/Chiat/Day, Los Angeles

The advertisement features a dark-colored Infiniti G Sedan driving on a road that curves into the distance. The background is a bright blue sky with white, ethereal clouds or smoke trails that create a sense of motion and speed. The car is shown from a front-three-quarter perspective, highlighting its grille and headlights. The overall aesthetic is clean and dynamic, emphasizing the car's performance and design.

The finely engineered
difference between
acceleration and exhilaration.

The Infiniti G Sedan.
Powerful enough to deliver a feeling of limitless acceleration with a 306-hp V6 engine.
Intelligent enough to know when to turn rear-wheel performance into all-wheel control.
And thrilling enough to turn a commute into a joyride. Learn more at Infiniti.com.


INFINITI.

*Available feature. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2008 INFINITI Division of Nissan North America, Inc.

There is a lot that's working effectively for the Infiniti G ad, and several of its most eye-catching creative elements adhere closely to the MRI Starch 10 Principles for Effective Print Advertising. The ad's focal point is a clear shot of the vehicle itself, which nicely shows its attractive front-grill design. It also manages to evoke a definite sense of speed and exhilaration, which ties in appropriately with the intriguing headline. Various tones of blue delight the eye, and help showcase the Infiniti G. It's not surprising the a strong percentage of readers felt compelled enough by what they saw in the ad to visit the Infiniti website, which is integrated neatly at the conclusion of the copy -- nestled in close proximity to the company's logo.

Orbitz Travel Service

Category: Travel services

Publication: Travel & Leisure, April 2008

Visited company website: 35%

Category average: 23%

Agency: Mullen, Wenham, Mass.

ENJOY YOUR SAVINGS WITH A SPA TREATMENT. BY A PROFESSIONAL.

SAVE \$150 ON YOUR FAMILY VACATION to destinations like Walt Disney World® Resort, the Bahamas and Hawaii. Get planning ideas, tips and expert advice from a panel of parents and exclusive travel deals to family destinations.

Visit family.orbitz.com for details.

ORBITZ
A STEP AHEAD™

Special Advertising Section

FAMILY FUN MADE EASY
TAKE THE HASSLE OUT OF PLANNING YOUR FAMILY VACATION.

Busy moms already wear a lot of different hats, so when it comes to planning a family getaway, Orbitz has all the tools you'll need for playing travel expert.

TRAVEL DEALS: Get special discounts at family-friendly hotels for affordable—and stress-free—family trips. Plus: check out special promotions and offers.

USEFUL INFORMATION: Read hotel reviews by parents and see which resorts earned top scores. Plus: find info on the best family destinations and kid-approved attractions.

TIPS & ADVICE: Get useful advice from the new Orbitz Parent Panel, a group of Orbitz moms and dads coming together to share experiences and help you plan the ultimate family vacation. Plus: practical tips for traveling with kids.

The Orbitz ad freely extends more than one intensely appealing offering to its readers. There can be little doubt that the idea of significant cost savings will usually resonate with most people, and this ad brings the idea of savings front and center. In addition to the enticement of potential money saving, the ad speaks to the almost universal human needs to have fun and be pampered. With its shots of tropical settings, including palm trees and crystal-blue ocean waters, along with the tantalizing offer of spa treatment being announced in the headline, the Orbitz ad seemed well-positioned to create not only interest, but action. The \$150 vacation-savings offer is located strategically, very close to the Orbitz logo and the all-important website information -- which most assuredly helped boost the rate of visitation. The ability of this ad to move readers to the website is also bolstered by the MRI Starch finding that readers of magazines in the travel genre are more likely to visit company websites than readers of most other types of magazines, with 15% of readers of ads clicking into the websites.

Sephora

Category: Health and beauty

Publication: W Magazine, August 2008

Visited company website: 30%

Category average: 18%

Agency: In-house



Your destination for
SKINCARE

TRUST Our skincare experts are the most educated, and don't work on commission.
OPTIONS We carry the most effective skincare products from over 70 brands.
INNOVATION Our brands bring you the newest technology, first.
CONFIDENCE You can sample products before you buy them.
SATISFACTION We value your happiness. If you're not satisfied, bring it back.

SHOP ONLINE AT SEPHORA.COM

SEPHORA
THE BEAUTY AUTHORITY

The very fact that the Sephora.com ad's headline asserts: "Your Destination for Skincare" seems to bode extremely well for a high level of website visitation, and, not surprisingly, it did. The simple, striking beauty of the model and her dead-on eye contact seem perfectly geared to garner strong attention levels. Also key is the manner in which the ad lists, in something like bullet-point fashion, several unanimously sought-after qualities desired by many consumers ("Trust. Options. Innovation. Confidence. Satisfaction"). With this list of admirable ideas being conjoined to the "destination" that the ad offers (sephora.com), it is entirely natural that a large segment of readers felt inspired to explore the site's offerings more fully, and did so via a trip to the website.

Victoria's Secret Lingerie

Category: Underwear and lingerie

Publication: InStyle, March 2008

Visited company website: 31%

Category average: 13%

Agency: In-house



An old expression exists that asserts, "Never use two words when one will do." Another states matter-of-factly that "Sex sells." Both sayings might easily apply to this Victoria's Secret creative. Short on words, but long on provocative visual imagery, the photo of this seductively-clad model in a suggestive pose seems highly capable of gaining a great deal of reader attention. In this case, it's safe to say that the VS brand name is so strongly associated with the idea of alluring women's apparel that there seems no need for descriptive or sales-oriented copy, and the highly-charged visual speaks for itself. Indeed, the only written text present (besides the company name itself) is the Victoria's Secret website address. This understated approach obviously provided all the prompting many readers needed to go online.