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Bringing GLBT Sensitivity to Corporate Advertising

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# THE REPORT

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## Gay Press Ads Drop Slightly, Gay Themes Rise

By Michael Wilke

October 12, 2002



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The flagging 2001 economy produced the first revenue slide for the gay press since reporting began in 1994, but despite cutbacks advertisers are also increasingly tailoring their efforts to win the market.

Advertising spending in gay publications dropped a modest 1.7% to \$208.1 million last year, compared to a heartier loss of 6.2% among general consumer magazines, says the latest Gay Press Report from Rivendell Marketing and Prime Access. The drop follows the second-highest growth year on record for gay media, in 2000, and a long period of expansion. Ad revenues have quadrupled since 1994's \$53 million and previously enjoyed consecutive double-digit gains annually: 1995 - 16.2%, 1996 - 19%, 1997 - 36.7%, 1998 - 20.2%, 1999 - 29%, 2000 - 36.3%.

The 2001 picture wasn't bad for all. When breaking out local from national gay publications, the report showed ad gains of between 7% and 10% for local newspapers. Hearty ad increases were also felt by publications dedicated to arts & entertainment (up 36.8%), like New York City's HX and Atlanta's etc. magazine, or listings resources (up 28.6%), like *The Guide* and *Metrosource*. Losses were mainly felt at the national glossy magazines, such as *The Advocate* and *Genre*, which were down 30.1%.

Additionally, circulation drops affected nearly all, down 11% to a combined 1.94 million readers for local publications and down 15% to 828,000 for national magazines. Such losses

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made it harder for advertisers to achieve a critical mass in the already difficult-to-reach market.

Circuit parties and music/film both got less ad support, down 9.1% and 1.4% respectively. Particularly hard hit were classified ads, falling 32.4%, and small business card-like ads, down a whopping 80.1%. But the categories that came in strongest were financial services, which rose 32.2%, alcoholic beverages was up 25%, as well as medical/health, health/fitness and retail/home.

### Gay Messages Grow in Popularity

The report also tracks advertising subject matter and found that corporate ads custom made for gay readers jumped by over a third, increasing 34.2%. The trend is primarily in national magazines, rather than for local newspapers, and still represents just 5.1% of the total. Among new arrivals this year with gay-specific ads are Bridgestone, Lufthansa, orbitz.com, and the troubled US Airways.

"If it hadn't been a down year, these would've really been up," says Evans. "Even if 2002 is down, gay-specific ads will still be up. It's a trend that can't do anything but go up because anyone that's going to make an effort here is going to try because they see that's what they have to do to fit in."

When polled about what types of ads corporations should run, the opinions of visitors to Commercial Closet Association's web site, CommercialCloset.org, varied. About 21% of 1,000 polled said that ads should feature gay-specific pictures, while 17.9% thought mainstream ads would work -- so long as they didn't picture heterosexual couples. But a majority, 52.8%, said that ads should be a mix of both. Surprisingly, a number of ads still show opposite sex couples in gay magazines, including Altoids, Armani, Bacardi, Camel, Captain Morgan, Dolce & Gabbana, Kahlua, Puma and others.

Reflecting on the popularity of picturing shirtless men in gay men's magazine ads --particularly favored among fashion brands like Abercrombie & Fitch and Calvin Klein and beer advertisers like Miller Brewing Co. and Anheuser Busch -- most CommercialCloset.org visitors polled said they liked them, with 48.8% of 1,500 respondents calling them "sexy/memorable." However, a large portion, 34% also answered that such an approach was "predictable/boring," another 14% were neutral on the matter and 3.1% even found them "offensive."

### Targeting Gays

September 10, 2004

[Gay Radio and Subaru Get Sirius On Satellite](#)

August 5, 2004

[Low-Carb Craze Targets Gay Waistlines](#)

July 12, 2004

[Pepsi Marches Into Gay Prides](#)

June 5, 2004

[Viacom's LOGO Will Vie With Others To Be First Gay TV Network](#)

May 22, 2004

[U.S. Census Offers New Same-Sex Couple Data, As Research Booms](#)

March 27, 2004

[Log Cabin Doubles Budget for Bipartisan Marriages Ad](#)

February 29, 2004

[Wyndham, Westin and W Hotels Bed Gays](#)

February 3, 2004

[Casio Shoots for Gay Market, Panasonic & Mitsubishi Tune in Too](#)

December 31, 2003

[IBM Seeks Gay Business-to-Business](#)

November 9, 2003

[Chereskin Finds Gay Dads Fashionable](#)

September 23, 2003

[Bravo Rejects Commercials Courting Randy Gays](#)

September 5, 2003

[Avis Puts Domestic Partners in the Driver's Seat](#)

August 14, 2003

[Del Monte Pounces on Gay Pets](#)

July 22, 2003

[EarthLink Ups Its Connection, Gays Seen as](#)

## Changes Expected for Gay Market Report

This year's report reflects the data of 284 publications, a reduction of 15 papers and magazines that went out of business since April 2000, but Todd Evans, president of Rivendell, also hopes to add online media for the 2002 report, due in early 2003. Negotiations to add online media have been under way for the last two years but requires agreements with PlanetOut Partners, which owns the two largest gay web sites, planetout.com and gay.com.

The annual Gay Press Report was founded by the now defunct Mulryan/Nash gay marketing agency and was acquired in 1999 by Rivendell, which represents most gay newspapers nationally for advertising. Minority marketing agency Prime Access became a partner the following year.

The report tracks ads just in April publications -- considered an average month -- and projects the revenue for the year. Because of increasing volatility in the ad market, says Evans, adding another month to the report's data is under consideration. He confides that 2001 seemed to turn even more sour after the April reporting period and that the 2002 report may follow with much greater revenue losses.

With some dread, Evans says, "2002 looks like it'll be terrible, but we won't know until we have the numbers."

### [More High Tech](#)

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June 22, 2003

[Orbitz Travels to Cable TV to Reach Gays](#)

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June 3, 2003

[Tylenol PM Wakes Sleeping OTC Drug Category](#)

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May 6, 2003

[Volvo Bids for Gay Families](#)

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March 31, 2003

[Is Spending on HIV Drug Advertising Up or Down?](#)

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February 18, 2003

[Super Bowl Delivers Gay Ad Themes, Companies Remain Mum](#)

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January 17, 2003

[Gay Ads in 2002 Lack Taste](#)

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December 23, 2002

[Jaguar Stalks Gay Market](#)

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December 7, 2002

[Yahoo and Virgin Mobile Like Predatory Gays for Ads](#)

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November 5, 2002

[Saturn and VW Ads Take Different Roads](#)

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October 12, 2002

**Gay Press Ads Drop Slightly, Gay Themes Rise**

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September 23, 2002

[Trojan Finally Gets Into Bed with Gays](#)

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August 27, 2002

[Coors Print Campaign Reframes Longstanding Issues](#)

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August 11, 2002

[Hallmark Greets Gays with Maya Angelou Cards](#)

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July 29, 2002

[DaimlerChrysler and Ford Give Gay Market A Test Drive](#)

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July 15, 2002

[Mitchell Gold Brings  
Same-Sex Ads to  
Mainstream Magazines](#)

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June 24, 2002

[Guinness and Nike  
Sponsor Gay Rugby  
Tournament](#)

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June 2, 2002

[7UP Prison Ad Gets  
Locked Up](#)

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May 13, 2002

[Are Gay Stereotypes  
Gaining Ground and  
Losing Bite?](#)

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April 18, 2002

[Gay-Coded Subaru Ads  
Return to Mainstream](#)

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March 27, 2002

[Gay TV Provides Fizz for  
Pepsi](#)

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March 2, 2002

[Nair and Nivea Groom  
Gay Men](#)

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February 11, 2002

[Cross-Dressing Scores At  
Super Bowl As Gay Ads  
Hit New High in 2001](#)

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January 17, 2002

[Miller is Leader in a Year  
With Many Laggards](#)

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December 24, 2001

[Transgender Ads in  
Transition](#)

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December 7, 2001

[The Sims' Hot Date is  
First Gay-Friendly  
Gaming Ad](#)

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November 5, 2001

[New Research Brings  
Updates and Controversy](#)

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September 17, 2001

[First 24-Hour Gay TV  
Network Debuts in  
Canada](#)

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August 24, 2001

[Bridgestone, American  
Airlines and Others Look  
To Gay Banner Ads](#)

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August 6, 2001

[Tanqueray Rides Down A New Road](#)

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July 20, 2001

[Volkswagen, Volvo and Jaguar Make Gay Drive](#)

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June 29, 2001

[Do Gay Roles Make Advertisers Shy Away From Actors?](#)

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June 11, 2001

[Are Gays Really Brand Loyal?](#)

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May 22, 2001

[Miller Ads Get Gay Inclusive](#)

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May 7, 2001

[Gay Themes Rise in Commercials Worldwide](#)

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April 16, 2001

[Minute Maid Gets Gay on Two Continents](#)

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April 3, 2001

[Marlboro, Jeep Target Gay European Market, But Missing in U.S.](#)

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March 18, 2001

[AIDS Ads Upset Gays and Conservatives Alike](#)

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March 4, 2001

[CBS Show Heightens Gay TV Presence](#)

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February 19, 2001

[Wrigley Chews on the Gay Market](#)

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February 4, 2001

[Government Crafts AIDS Message to Gays](#)

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January 21, 2001

[Chevron Includes Gays in Diversity Drive](#)

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January 8, 2001

[Smint Finds Success in Gay Themes Again](#)

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December 23, 2000

[P&G Shoots for Gay Vanity](#)

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December 11, 2000

[Same-Sex Kiss Ad Gets Covered Up in Brazil](#)

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December 1, 2000

[Designer Gaultier Features Gender-Bending Sailor](#)

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November 11, 2000

[Inside the Gay TV Ad From Miller](#)

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October 28, 2000

[Showtime Delivers Biggest Gay Campaign Ever](#)

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October 16, 2000

[Hillary, Legislator or Lesbian?](#)

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October 2, 2000

[A Tale of Three Dot-Com Ads](#)

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September 18, 2000

[MTV Includes Gays in Homophobic Debate](#)

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September 4, 2000

[John Hancock Has Two Mommies](#)

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August 21, 2000

[Are Gays All Rich?](#)

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August 7, 2000

[Reebok Sells Sneakers with Gay Sex](#)

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July 24, 2000

[Ad Agencies Embrace Gay Employees](#)

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July 10, 2000

[MasterCard, Pillsbury Join Gay Parade](#)

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June 26, 2000

[Gay Radio Earns Some Respect Online](#)

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June 12, 2000

[Will Media Consolidation Mean Fewer Voices?](#)

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May 29, 2000

[Advertisers Battle Dr. Laura](#)

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May 15, 2000

[XY Wants To Grow Up With Advertisers](#)

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April 24, 2000

[Benetton Goes Gay With Sisley](#)

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April 10, 2000

[Advertisers Follow Gays Online](#)

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March 27, 2000

[Gay Themes, Dual Audiences](#)

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March 13, 2000

[Awkward Advertisers' Gay Themes](#)

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February 14, 2000

[WNBC Listens to Gay Youth](#)

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January 24, 2000

[AT&T Calls Gays Back](#)

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January 10, 2000

[C1TV Debuts, But Is Gold Under the Rainbow?](#)

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December 28, 1999

[Lesbian Ads Still More Male Fantasy](#)

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December 3, 1999

[Corporations Say 'We Want You'](#)

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November 9, 1999

[Gay Ads Promote MTV](#)

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October 26, 1999

[Gay Families from Mitchell Gold](#)

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October 12, 1999

[Xerox Copies Market Trend](#)

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September 14, 1999

[United Airlines Rising With Gays](#)

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August 17, 1999

[Abercrombie Boys Hit TV](#)

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May 3, 1999

[Budweiser's Controversial Gay Ad](#)

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