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VOUCHER HYBRID^(SM) PACKAGES HELP MAGAZINE CIRCULATORS FIGHT BACK!

Sage Communications' new "Voucher Hybrid" concept was the buzzword at DMA's Circulation Day – less than one month after the term was first coined in CM Magazine's online publication, The Circulator.

February 4, 2004 (Westboro, MA). At DMA's 18th Annual Circulation Day on January 21, 2004, the theme was "Circulation Reloaded: Battling Back Together." Throughout the day, 500 publishing industry professionals listened to fresh ideas and innovative solutions to help them get their magazines' circulation back on track toward greater growth and profitability.

A common theme expressed by presenters was the need for circulators to return to selling benefits, rather than focusing solely on price. "Eighty percent off" is not a reason to buy. That's no reason to read anything..." said John Q. Griffen, president of the magazine group at the *National Geographic Society*, during his luncheon keynote address. He said it was time for "creativity to return" and for circulators to "think fresh."

THE VOUCHER HYBRID: THE NEXT BIG IDEA.

One fresh approach that was discussed during breakout sessions on direct mail was the new "Voucher Hybrid" package – a term first introduced by Sage Communications in an article published in *The Circulator* on December 28, 2003. Voucher Hybrids combine key creative elements of traditional DM component packages with the cost efficiency of standard voucher packages. They focus on edit content and key reader benefits – while keeping pay-up *high* and printing and promotion costs *low*.

Depending on the nature of the magazine, a Voucher Hybrid can include benefit-oriented headlines, taglines, covers, editorial spreads, captions, a letter from the editor, reader testimonials, and guarantee language – all printed directly on the voucher form itself. This way, cost savings are preserved, while delivering a more powerful and complete brand-focused message tailored to the unique needs of a magazine's audience.

Car Craft, a Primedia title, saw a significant lift in response to their fall '03 test of a Voucher Hybrid package featuring a letter from the editor and 4C graphics. This new hybrid package, created by Sage Communications, will roll out as their control in 2004. Early results from winter '03 Voucher Hybrid packages being tested with several leading women's titles and technology magazines look very promising as well.

By combining fresh design approaches with powerful benefit-oriented sales copy, the Voucher Hybrid just may be the next "Big Idea" in magazine marketing.