

A READERSHIP SURVEY OF OSU MAGAZINE:
THE OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

By

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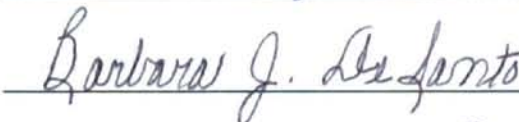
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PREFACE

This two-part research study was conducted to discover what value readers placed on the content typically found in issues of OSU Magazine and how readers valued its design. Additionally, this research sought to explore readers' preferences regarding issues of electronic publication and what suggestions could be made for the magazine's improvement. Survey data was collected through a self-administered mail questionnaire sent to a random sample of Alumni Association members. Data was compared to findings from an earlier readership survey. A focus group examined readers' attitudes for the magazine's physical appearance. The proceedings were transcribed and analyzed for common themes and differences. Based on this research, it is hoped that an improved publication may be produced that better suits the needs of the university and its alumni, while helping university administrators better serve their audiences.

I graciously thank those serving on my thesis committee—Dr. Steven J. Smethers (Chair), Dr. Barbara DeSanto and Stan E. Ketterer. A heartfelt thanks is extended particularly to Steve, my advisor, for his superb guidance, inspiration and encouragement throughout this project's resurrection and eventual completion.

This study would not have been feasible without the support of Natalea Watkins, who sponsored this research and provided financial support through her office of Communications Services. I am indebted to Janet Varnum, OSU Magazine editor, for seeing the value in this research effort and serving as a sounding board for this study. I'd also like to thank her for wrangling the members of the focus group and volunteering to transcribe the proceedings.

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Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the subjects of this investigation—the readers of OSU Magazine who generously gave their time. This study is also dedicated to all those who are most likely to benefit from it: the readers and staff of OSU Magazine and to those mass communications graduate students who may be contemplating a similar research effort.

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NOMENCLATURE

N	Number/Frequency
SD	Standard Deviation
SEM	Standard Error of the Mean

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

Effective communication is a key element for successfully cultivating positive relationships between an organization and its external audiences. In the pursuit of this effort, many organizations use a variety of media outlets to communicate with their designated audiences. Publications, such as newsletters and magazines, are a relatively inexpensive way to reach large groups of individuals. But to achieve maximum effectiveness as a vehicle of communication for the organization, however a publication must not only be read by the intended audience, it must be understood to create the desired effect. Knowing what readers expect from a publication will ensure that the audience is adequately being served by the communication medium. Planning effective publications that communicate toward a specific goal, particularly for large, diverse groups, can be a complicated and sometimes a haphazard process (Henerson, Morris, & Fitz-Gibbon, 1978).

Because many forms of informal feedback are unsolicited and, therefore, biased, they may not accurately reflect the overall views of a publication's audience (Henerson et al., 1978). Therefore, more objective methods of gathering audience opinions need to be established. Effective sociological research provides the tools necessary for a systematic investigation of a particular mass communication problem, linking it to possible solutions (Hsia, 1988). Quantitative research provides a systematic process for investigating, collecting and analyzing information based on

sound premises and evidence, eliminating a reliance on unsupported assertions. When producing publications for a mass audience, editors and art directors may be unable to consistently evaluate their performance, or be aware of their work's evaluation by their intended audience. Those who disseminate information need to be concerned about how it is conveyed through both content and presentation.

This study investigates readership preferences regarding the editorial content and design of Oklahoma State Magazine (also known as OSU Magazine), and seeks to ascertain pertinent data about the publication's audience. Based on this research, it is hoped that an improved publication may be produced that better suits the needs of the university and its alumni, while helping university administrators better serve their audiences.

Background

Since its beginning Oklahoma State University has acknowledged the importance of its supportive and loyal alumni; in 1896, the graduates gathered to form an association days before graduating its first class (Dollar, 1992). Through its strategic plan, the OSU Alumni Association seeks to serve alumni, to communicate "the achievements, concerns and activities of the Association and the University" (p. 229), primarily through the use of timely, effective and professional publications that project a positive image (Dollar, 1992).

The first alumni publication, A. and M. Boomer, was voted into existence in 1920; its first issue was published in October the same year and its last issue saw publication in late 1925 (Dollar, 1992). Resurrected as part of a determined effort to build a stronger organization, the first issue of a newly renamed alumni publication, Oklahoma A&M College Magazine, appeared in September 1929. In its first issue, the magazine stated that it sought to keep former students "connected with each other, hold their interests nearer to the college, voice their opinions" (McElroy, 1929, p. 3).

Following a national trend in similar publications to promote a more professional alumni magazine, the first issue of Oklahoma A&M College Magazine appeared in September 1929 (Weiner & Colasurdo, 1980; Dollar, 1992).

The intervening years have seen the alumni publication go through several name changes. In July 1957, the magazine saw its name change to Oklahoma State University Magazine after the name of the school was changed to Oklahoma State University for Agriculture and Applied Science. Three years later it was changed to Oklahoma State Alumnus to more closely identify the magazine with those it sought to serve. Another change in name came in 1973, as Oklahoma State University Outreach Magazine sought to attract a broader audience, such as university personnel and its friends. This change reflected a desire to use the publications as a public relations tool for the university (Dollar, 1992).

In the fall of 1991, to gain a larger audience outside the university, Outreach became Oklahoma State Magazine, or OSU Magazine, and publication responsibility was moved to OSU's Communication Services. Concurrently, responsibility for the magazine's graphic design and production moved from the OSU Foundation to the university's Graphic Design Services unit of the Audio Visual Center.

The underlying goal of an alumni publication is to maintain relationships to "produce favorable attitudes toward the institution and produce behaviors supportive of the university" (Bartolomero, 1986, p. 488). Although OSU Magazine has gone through a myriad of changes in size and scope, this quarterly news magazine continues to have a tone for news and human interest that serves to inform its alumni and friends about the institution's successes, accomplishments and plans. It also provides alumni information about their classmates and is also used as a vehicle to foster effective communication and beneficial relationships between the university and its audiences. Additionally, the magazine seeks to cultivate relationships with active alumni as potential donors with the university's development program.

Following the publication of the President's Report issue in the fall of 2000, a change in the magazine's design is tentatively planned. To give the readership what they desire from the publication, those who produce it—editors, writers, art directors, graphic designer, photographers, and even printers—need reliable, accurate and objective research. For the magazine to succeed, it is important that both content and presentation reflect the needs of the university and its audience. Therefore, a formal method for evaluating the preferences of the magazine's readership was needed.

This research thus examines interest in—and usefulness of—Oklahoma State University's alumni magazine as a vehicle to provide information on university issues and concerns while fostering effective and fruitful communication among its alumni and friends.

Problem Statement

The last readership survey for OSU Magazine was conducted in 1992. Since that time different editors, art directors, graphic designers and photographers have joined the publication staff, but there has not been a systematic program of market research designed to ascertain readers' attitudes about the publication.

Without adequate information from formal research, those individuals responsible for producing the magazine must rely on their best judgment when planning and executing the content and design of the magazine. Because of its importance to the mission of the university, a more current study of the magazine's readership was needed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research effort was to determine readers' opinions concerning the content in Oklahoma State Magazine and to determine their preferences in the magazine's design and layout. Additionally this study sought to determine readers' preferences regarding their use of the magazine and preferences

for its possible electronic publication. Demographic information was collected to learn more about the readership. The data collected for this study was compared to Moore's 1992 readership survey to examine continuing and/or changing trends regarding these preferences.

This research will help illustrate the dynamics of the relationship between OSU Magazine and the alumni who rely on it for information about Oklahoma State University. The mass communication theory known as media system dependency seeks to understand a dependent relationship created from the dynamic interaction between individuals seeking to satisfy personal needs through media content they deem important (Loges, 1994). The theory suggests that university alumni will have a need for information about OSU, which will be satisfied by OSU Magazine.

Research Objectives

Several conversations and communications took place with those responsible or involved in the magazine's production: OSU's Assistant Vice President of Communications Services, the OSU Alumni Association's Director of Communications and Public Relations and OSU Magazine's editor and art director. From these discussions, the objectives derived for this study were:

- 1) To determine magazine usage;
- 2) To determine preference for editorial content;
- 3) To determine the readership's use of media;
- 4) To determine preferences in the magazine's design, format and layout;
- 5) To determine the feasibility of alternative methods of publication and distribution;
- 6) To determine the demographic characteristics of the magazine's present readership in order to make comparisons of preferences between groups within the readership; and

7) To determine continuing and/or changing trends regarding these preferences.

From these research objectives, the questions guiding this study are as follows:

Research Question One

What value do readers place on the content typically found in issues of OSU Magazine, and what changes would they suggest?

Research Question Two

How do readers value the design of OSU Magazine, and what types of changes would they suggest?

With the information ascertained in this study, the OSU Alumni Association and Communication Services, which includes the magazine's editors and writers, art director, graphic designers and photographers, will better understand the needs of the magazine's readers as they relate to its purpose, content and design. This study will also assist in facilitating a better understanding of the magazine as a vehicle to foster effective communication between the university and its alumni.

Methodology

Several approaches to data collection exist. The survey, often in the form of a questionnaire, is a quantitative methodology that collects, tabulates and analyzes responses drawn from a sample of respondents. A readership survey is one research strategy and can be an essential first step toward improved communication with a publication's designated audience. The focus group is a qualitative method that is designed to better understand attitudes and behaviors and allows exploration of opinions in ways that questionnaires and surveys do not. Readership opinions of OSU Magazine were collected by surveying a sample of readers using a mailed questionnaire and by conducting a focus group interview with a smaller sample of magazine readers.

A readership survey in the form of a mailed questionnaire was the research mechanism for examining subjects' views regarding the editorial content of the magazine, media use and audience characteristics. The sample group included 600 randomly selected participants chosen from a database of 20,463 university alumni. The data for this portion of the study was collected via a self-administered questionnaire mailed to each individual member of the sample.

A focus group was the research instrument for examining subjects' views regarding the design and layout of the magazine. The focus group consisted of nine individuals gathered at the Oklahoma State University's Stillwater campus in mid October 2000. The sample was obtained by recruiting active alumni through various means such as through scheduled alumni events and activities, the Alumni Association subscriber database, and personal alumni connections. Materials included samples of past OSU Magazine issues and a written outline of questions for the facilitator.

Availability of Sources

The database of approximately 20,000 active alumni and friends of the university was used to derive the sample for a mail survey. The focus group sample was obtained by recruiting active alumni through various means such as through personal connections of various Alumni Association personnel and university officials.

OSU Communications Services, which includes the magazine's production staff: editor, art director, graphic designers and photographer, provided nearly all the funding necessary to conduct this research.

Significance of the Study

Due to the nature of a changing readership, changes in opinion must be sampled more than once (Henerson et al., 1987, p. 13). The first study of OSU Magazine's readership was conducted in 1992. While this initial research did seek to uncover attitudes concerning the magazine's editorial content, its investigation into

the magazine's design and format was minimal. This research sought to provide the university another objective evaluation regarding reader attitudes toward the content and format of OSU Magazine.

At the conclusion of this study, the university will be able to use this research as a planning tool to determine the:

- 1) Effectiveness of OSU Magazine;
- 2) Content and physical format of future issues;
- 3) Dissemination of news and information concerning the university;
- 4) Possibility of alternative methods of publication and distribution;
- 5) Nature of the magazine's present readership; and
- 6) Continuing and/or changing trends in the magazine's readership.

Additionally, it is hoped that this study will be useful to editors of alumni publications at other higher education institutions.

Limitations and Assumptions

This study was designed to assess the readership of OSU Magazine. The major source difficulty in conducting this research was encouraging a sample of subjects to complete and return the readership survey and to get individuals to participate in a focus group. The number of returned questionnaires may have been too small to be representative of the larger alumni population. Studying subjects during a particular time of the year may have yielded different results than if they were studied at another time of the year.

Therefore, this study is limited to the sample and events analyzed and should not be applied outside this framework. The results from this study should not be generalized to other Oklahoma State University publications or to the same audience at another time. This research is not intended to be generalized to other institutions.

It is assumed that all respondents and participants in this research effort would answer the questions honestly and accurately.

Organization of the Research

In order to improve communication between Oklahoma State University and its alumni, this study was designed to provide reliable information about the content and format of OSU Magazine.

Chapter II examines a brief history of OSU Magazine and other readership research studies relevant to this research. It also reviews theories of mass communication that are significant to this study.

Chapter III outlines the research methodology employed in this study, including the methods used to administer and analyze the information collected.

Chapter IV presents the research data gathered in this study from the readership survey and focus group. This chapter also includes a statistical analysis and a detailed interpretation of the data.

Chapter V summarizes the significance of the findings of this study. It includes recommendations concerning implementing changes to OSU Magazine's content and format. This chapter includes suggestions for further research and the author's concluding comments.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The term “media” suggests that mass communication “mediates” an objective reality between the senders of messages and the receivers who pay attention to them. By its very nature, the process of communication establishes, alters and reinforces the opinions and behaviors of people. Because information typically flows through various media channels, communications media have the capacity to exert powerful influences on the way individuals perceive, think about and ultimately act in their world (Roberts & Bachen, 1982). To those who attend to it, the informing capacity of news offers an extension of the world that becomes the reality against which the real world is compared (Harris, 1994).

According to Altheide (1984), the process of “transforming events into news is an act of power” that is influenced in many ways (p. 12). The news process “decontextualizes” an event, a procedure that removes it from the context in which it occurs (p. 24). This power relationship, then, implies obligations on the part of journalists.

Three important tenets of journalistic responsibility are truth, balance and a comprehensive account of the news (Hulteng, 1993). This accountability emphasizes journalistic accountability to gather, report and interpret those facts in a meaningful context as fairly and objectively as possible. If news audiences cannot rely on this, says Rosenblatt (1992), “... then journalism has no reason for being” (p. 133). In contemporary journalism these responsibilities have generally centered around the notions of truth and objectivity.

But it is impossible for the media to present a complete picture of the world, because the never-ending search for truth often seems completely unattainable (Hohenberg, 1973). Lippmann (1922) distinguished between news and the truth:

The function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act. (p. 361)

Greater than any other form of media content, says Harris (1994), society assumes and often expects that news will “convey objective reality to us in clear and unbiased form” (p. 146). Therefore, the news is one area of the media that people are unlikely to reject as creating reality, rather, that it reflects reality.

Because they are the primary vehicle of “relevant” knowledge about the environment, the media are dominating influences, far more extensively than some would acknowledge. Media messages gain strength through volume and repetition. Often unknowingly, patterns of behavior and ideas seem reinforced and perpetuated by the media system, resulting in mismatched depictions of reality. In so doing, the media not only provide information, but often tell us what to think and how to behave (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Media System Dependency Theory

The mass communication theory of media system dependency provides a model to illustrate the relationship between OSU Magazine and its readership. Media system dependency research seeks to uncover the underlying reasons for an increased dependent relationship on various media systems by individuals who find this connection consequential (Loges, 1994). This research effort assists in understanding the relationship between the OSU Magazine and its effects on its readership at different levels.

The mass communication theory of media system dependency (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989) provides a framework for analyzing

media effects that describes media dependencies in the context of motivation at the social and the individual level. The dependent relationship between an individual, group or an organization and a particular media system results from the attainment of personal goals through the access of information in that system. The media system is a social source for gathering, producing and disseminating information.

From a broad perspective, the media system dependency theory is a useful framework for examining the interdependency of the media with other societal institutions (Ball-Rokeach, Power, Guthrie, & Waring, 1990; Power, Guthrie, Waring, & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). The theory is based on the media being an integral component of an interdependent, three-way audience-media-society relationship (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). This dependent relationship is determined by the types of information intended to satisfy societal, organizational, and personal goals.

To achieve certain goals, each component of the relationship (individuals, groups, and systems) must draw on the resources of the other parts of the relationship. In this partnership the media is perceived as an important social source for collecting, producing and disseminating information. Specifically, media system dependency is the extent to which the media system's informational resources are perceived by an individual or group to be helpful in the pursuit of goals. The media system must respond to the needs of the audience and social systems, while the media system is dependent on the audience and social systems for content and revenue resources. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) suggest that a sense of social relationship leads its participants into "selective patterns of attention, perception, recall, and action regarding specific forms of media content" (p. 198). Therefore, the media is seen as a linking force in the communication process (Ball-Rokeach, 1985).

Social networks (such as an association of alumni) may hold important consequences for media dependency (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, and Grube, 1984) and

media use (Sotirovic & McLeod, 1998). What individuals want from the news may or may not correspond to what they want for themselves. Social understanding is self-indulgent and should be differentiated from perceptions of what media, as public institutions, should pursue. How people use media would then be affected by both personal goals and desired personal objectives for news media performance. For example, Loges and Ball-Rokeach (1993) suggest that an individual's perception of media usefulness in attaining social understanding (such as keeping up to date of what is happening at the university) predicts a dependency relationship with newspaper reading.

In a magazine, differences in interest in particular types of articles can generate substantially different responses to the same content. This can make it difficult to determine which articles have a desired effect, which sometimes causes the media to produce different interpretations of content (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984).

Individual Media Dependency

Seen as a subcomponent of media system dependency, individual media dependency is the perceived importance of the media by the individual in satisfying self-seeking goals. Loges and Ball-Rokeach (1993) categorized this dependent partnership into three dimensions: understanding, orientation, and play.

Understanding is meaning and knowledge to comprehend and interpret the world around oneself; orientation refers to the need for a guide to behave effectively and appropriately with others and to help make personal behavioral decisions; play is a way to learn societal roles, norms, and values and also provides coping mechanisms and includes escapism, entertainment and enjoyment (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

Each of these dimensions has a self-to-society link (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). Individual media dependency theory recognizes the degree to which an individual relies on a medium to fulfill personal goals and how those relationships of dependency develop over time (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

Based on prior exposure to content, information from interpersonal networks, or cues from media sources, individual media dependency suggests that a person who perceives it is important to satisfy a goal intentionally seeks out media content with expectations of having that goal fulfilled (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

The type and intensity of dependency may vary by medium (i.e., magazine), media genre (news magazine), and a particular product in that genre (OSU Magazine). One medium may fulfill more than one dependency, and individuals may use the same medium to fulfill different dependencies. Individual media dependency is a means for assessing media impact. It suggests that the intensity of the relationship between an individual and the media may predict the probability that a message will have a desired effect (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Grant & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) suggest that an individual must have a pre-existing dependency with a medium for a genre dependency to develop. It is also possible for dependency to fail when an individual finds the content is not perceived to be personally relevant, resulting in a lowered motivation to attend to the medium thus reducing exposure. Ball-Rokeach et al. (1984) and DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) have theorized that the greater the genre dependency, the greater the degree of cognitive arousal (attention) and affect (like, dislike) during exposure to that content. When goals are fulfilled as a result of content exposure, the perceived value of the content intensifies, which increases the dependency, resulting in further involvement and exposure (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

According to Ball-Rokeach (1985), relationships of dependency are developed with the media in order to attain certain goals (play, orientation and understanding) that have both personal and social dimensions. An individual who has a selective information-seeking dependency can develop a habitual relationship with media. Habits of media use can be seen as a part of the process leading to the development of

relationships reinforcing the patterns of dependency, which develop over time (Rosenstein & Grant, 1997). Therefore, repeatedly engaging in a desirable process may intensify and sustain media dependency relationships. This self-reinforcing aspect of the interaction between behavior and the development of dependencies as an automatic or habitual processes of an individual who returns to a previously used a medium finds it easier and more comfortable than going elsewhere.

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) indicate that users develop a media habit not determined by media constraints, but by choices made by the user. A habitual relationship with particular media (such as a magazine) is related to the development of individual media dependencies, because exposure is required in order to develop the kind of dependency that may be satisfied by attending to certain kinds content. Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979), suggests that the discrepancy between what is sought and what is obtained may be most important in explaining media dependency, frequency and duration of use.

Therefore, media dependency theory, including individual media dependency, is a framework to help understand the underlying psychological process that helps create and maintain patterns of reading behavior of OSU Magazine. To understand what is happening at Oklahoma State University, reading the magazine then, becomes analogous to a habitual relationship.

Design and Layout

Graphic design solves communication problems with visual solutions. It is a means for transmitting information to a reader, or viewer. In print, it is a means to create a clear, orderly flow of elements, to attract an intended audience with both focus and a stimulating presentation. Design also supports the content (Baird, Turnbull & McDonald, 1987). To assist graphic designers and art directors, a plethora

of information is available offering advice and tips on improving nearly any type of printed publication. This information includes advice on designing magazines.

Gerlach (1987) states that empirical research of magazine design is difficult to locate, probably because the research is being done by the publishers, not by academics, and because research emphasis has been placed first on newspapers.

Hollingsworth (1987) discussed the amount and type of research by the companies that produce magazines, finding that 90% of consumer magazines said they conducted research. Lack of time, money and staff was cited as the main obstacle in doing magazine research. The Hollingsworth survey indicated that most magazine research uses mail surveys at least 80% of the time and focus groups 5% of the time. Some magazine research uses multiple methods.

Jacobson (1988), summarizing the types of research conducted by medium and large-sized magazines found that the majority magazine research studies generally include editorial interest and content recall studies; audience studies (estimating and measuring the readership), and audience characteristics and demographics. Art and design studies ranked 17th on the list and cover analysis ranked 16th (reader profile studies were most common) (p. 513). This may be because magazine research is fundamentally similar to those conducted for newspapers.

Consequently, the model for magazine design seems to use the same model as that for newspapers. But even in this popular media vehicle, design research has been infrequent and has been mostly confined to experiments in the classroom, which may not be applicable to the general readership (Moen, 1989).

Moen (1989) says that much of the significant research on newspaper design is being privately conducted by the newspapers themselves or their corporate offices, and, "Even if the generalized results are made public, the methodology and specific findings are seldom revealed" (p. 12). Research on various aspects of newspaper design, however, does exist, but the bulk of the literature is between 15 to 30 years old.

Some studies are even older. However, Moen still suggests reviewing the available literature of research to reach some conclusions about newspaper design. His conclusion may be applicable to magazine design.

Testing reader reaction to a newspaper design, Pippis (1985) found that there are elements important to newspaper readers other than content. Ranked in order of importance, these elements are organization, typography, attractiveness, photography, and color.

Format, Organization and Style

Before processing individual elements, readers tend to scan the total layout for an overall impression of a printed publication. Therefore, it is important to consider the overall visual a publication presents (Baird, Turnbull & McDonald, 1987). Click and Stempel (1968, as cited in Rarick, 1975) found that a newspaper's front-page format becomes the personality for the paper. They also found that the front page provides an important first impression. Readers prefer the appearance and style of modern layouts, but they see traditional layouts as slightly more ethical.

Readers respond well to modern design concepts (Price, 1973b). In 1974 (as cited in Rarick, 1975), Click and Stempel replicated their previous format study and found an overwhelming preference for modern-format pages versus traditional formats. This study was done among a general audience of newspaper readers with varying characteristics. The results showed an overwhelming preference for modern-format pages (horizontal, modular, low story count). The study did not support the assumption that younger or male respondents proffered modern over traditional formats more than older or female respondents. Sissors (1974) found college-educated readers had mixed reactions to different front-page designs, but found that an extremely low rating was given to a non-modular formatted page. Bain (1980) confirmed this finding, also establishing that readers prefer a modular layout.

Research by Rarick (1975) supports the findings of the 1968 study by Click and Stempel that these more modern formats are also seen as slightly less ethical. But Moen (1989) says that contrary to the earlier study, readers do not consider the modern formats sensational or unethical. Studying contemporary versus traditional newspaper design and average versus well-designed pages, Siskind (1979) found that the contemporary pages of either design format are better received than either of the traditionally-designed pages. It is the horizontal format that is perceived as more modern and pleasant to read. Stanton (1986), replicating an earlier study on style, found that students prefer contemporary or ultramodern styles over conservative, even moderately conservative, design styles.

The organization of the features in a paper is a factor that is as important as is style, but this variable has been studied less frequently. Clark (1979) used focus groups to study format and found a strong preference for newspapers that are well-organized. Readers said they want stories grouped by subject matter.

Eye Movement

Reading obviously requires the eyes to focus on words and groups of words to be stored in memory until the reader has reached the end of the sentence, when meaning is attributed. When looking at images, eye movements proceed in a series of jerks and pauses, much the same as in reading (Buswell, 1937; Brandt, 1945). In 1955, Tinker and Paterson noted that scientific investigation of typography should be based upon eye movement measurements, as well as upon performance tests. They noted that in general, there had been a diminished interest in eye movement studies and that there was a need for more basic research in this area. Until the recent studies by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, little research on the visual process of reading (a newspaper) has been done.

Initial experiments in understanding eye movement when reading a newspaper page began in 1985 with the Poynter Institute Color Research. In 1988, a more encompassing study using EYE-TRAC research technology was conducted to study how readers process color. In their 1991 publication, the researchers suggest that these results should only be used as a starting point for newspaper design (Garcia & Stark, 1991).

This recent study suggests that readers will enter the page at the place where the most powerful element is located. And depending on the design, readers' eyes will track as suggested by the format.

Whether they are in black and white or color, photographs and artwork are the primary points of entry on a page. Boxes placed on the front page for promotion attract attention from most readers. But readers do not automatically look at the traditional position for the lead story on the front page (top right). Readers initially enter the page with the dominant photo, then proceed to a prominent headline for other dominant photo. Readers evaluate facing pages as single units and usually enter facing pages through the dominant photograph on the facing page, then move to the dominant headline or photo on the left-hand page (Garcia & Stark, 1991).

Color

Color dominates printed publications; for many print consumers, printing and color are synonymous (Crow, 1986). Color seems to have both a physiological and psychological impact and can be used effectively to attract attention, develop associations with content or other elements, aid in recall and lend an atmosphere to a printed piece (Baird, Turnbull & McDonald, 1987). Therefore, it is important to understand the impact of color on newspaper readers' perceptions.

Readers have a preference for color. Click and Stempel (1976) reported that pages with color rate higher on 19 of 20 semantic differential scales. Their 1982

research showed that readers' preferences in modular formats are for colored formats and not those in black-and-white.

One of the most ambitious studies of the editorial use of color sought to replicate the 1976 Click and Stempel study to determine how color affects eye movements and how readers think about color in newspapers. Sponsored by the Poynter Institute, a 1986 study by Garcia & Fry reported finding the same high ratings of color as that found in the Click and Stempel study. A full-color page rates higher than a black-and-white page. And when they have a choice, readers choose color over black and white. Color pages are perceived as more modern, louder and easier to read than black-and-white pages. Color also does not seem to negatively alter the perception of a newspaper's credibility or ethical rating, but seems to improve these ratings. Color is regarded as more credible and more ethical than the use of black and white (Garcia & Fry 1986).

Garcia and Fry also found a dominant photo attracts initial attention, but is affected by the use of color. The positioning of color on the page will ultimately influence how a reader's eye moves around a page. Color guides the reader's eye from the top to the bottom of the page. They also found that it is often better to use one color for organization than a variety of clashing colors that contribute to disorientation.

The Garcia and Fry study also showed that readers prefer some colors over others and that color implies relationship. When color tints are placed over text, the information stands out more prominently, and there is color below the flag, but not on the teasers, the teasers do not get as much notice. More educated readers seem to prefer color less, but older readers seem to prefer color more than younger readers. Readers who live where newspapers already use color seem to like color better than those who live where color is less used. The later Poynter Institute study showed that color screens seem to have no effect on how much text is read and that colorful pages seem to be preferred over those pages that are muted (Garcia & Stark, 1991).

This extensive study also indicated that by itself, color is not as significant. Contrary to perceptions that readers cannot tolerate an over abundance of color, they will accept even the use of outrageous color. Color does not necessarily attract more attention than does photography, but when it attracts attention, it does not work independently of other elements, but synergistically with other elements on the page. The study also showed that color photographs do not automatically attract more readers; it is the content, size and placement of them that is most important (Garcia & Stark, 1991).

Photography and Art

Although there are publications that are designed exclusively with words, or exclusively with photographs or illustration, “most publication designers rely on all three for their visual presentation” (Hurlburt, 1971, p. 43).

Photographs and artwork are not only the main points of entry on most pages, they generate more processing than do headlines or text (Garcia & Stark, 1991). Bohle and Garcia (1987) conducted experiments to gauge reader response to color halftones and spot color in newspaper design. Their results showed that color increases the appeal of the paper, also making it appear pleasant and powerful.

Measuring the attitude changing effect of news-related photos as used in newspapers and news magazines, Mehling (1959), found that photos with words induce more change than do words by themselves. Rarick (1967) found that art (drawings or photography) tends to increase the readership of a newspaper ad, and that the more dominant the art, the greater the increase in readership. Bain and Weaver (1979) found that stories with photographs attract more attention and hold it more than those stories without photographs. After seeing the photograph, the readers' eyes are then drawn to color at the bottom of the page. If the bottom is colorless, readers go to the lead story instead (Garcia & Fry 1986).

A large study in four cities by the Gannett Company (Curley, 1979) revealed that packaging graphics and appearance are important to general satisfaction of the paper. Graphics and packaging are especially important to those readers who are younger and to those who occasionally read the paper. The study also showed that a significant minority of readers, particularly younger readers, want color photographs.

Placement and size of a photograph appear to have greater importance than whether the photograph is color or black and white. Readers also prefer large photos over smaller ones in conjunction with a story. Larger photos also seem to keep readers better connected to the story (Bain, 1980). Larger photographs attract more attention; however, fewer than 50% of the so-called “mug shots” seem to be processed (Garcia & Stark, 1991). Grouped photos receive more attention when they are in color (Garcia & Stark, 1991).

A 1983 study by Henry and Solano revealed a wide range of personality traits significantly associated with a preferred style and content of photographs. Unconventional pictures were associated with creativity, a need for dominance, and a sense of personal effectiveness. Including people in the photograph was associated with aggression, extraversion, autonomy, and masculinity. Photos of objects were associated with femininity, interpersonal sensitivity, and a need for affiliation and nurturance.

Typography

Typography is the design, or selection, of letterforms organized into words and sentences composed as printing on a page, which are used to provide meaning. Typography is also one of a range of cueing systems used to signal the structure of ideas in a text (Waller 1987). Decisions about when to pause, rehearse, skim, or skip material in a text are strongly influenced by typography, which Waller (1987) broadly defines as the visual attributes of written language. Waller says that typography can either enhance or diminish the comprehension of text and that it is partially dependent on a text with a clear structure. But “making correct typographical

decisions is a classic duel between form and function. an irony that puts design and content at cross-purposes" (Baird, Turnbull & McDonald, 1987, p. 66)

Characteristics

The look of certain typefaces have a "feel" and a "mood" of compatibility with what message is being communicated. They often have certain aesthetic qualities and psychological implications assigned to them by readers and designers alike. Haskins (1958) tested the suitability of ten typefaces for ten different kinds of subject matter. Some typefaces are rated as significantly higher in "all-purpose" appropriateness. Other faces rank low in this respect, but are relatively high with specific topics. And that selecting a correct typeface appears to make more difference with some kinds of content than other typefaces.

Brinton (1958, as cited in Bush, 1967) and Blankenburd (1958, as cited in Bush, 1967) both used a semantic differential scale to ascertain the aesthetic qualities of certain typefaces among "professionals," (printers and commercial artists) and "laymen" (sic), which for this study were students. Thirteen different typefaces were compared with polar adjectives. Overall, there is a general similarity in key adjectives used by both groups to describe most of the typefaces. The greatest difference is a greater consistency and in the use of more adjectives used by professionals to describe most faces. Tannenbaum, Jacobson and Norris (1964) found that non-designers are capable of attributing similar characteristics to typefaces as those attributed by design and production professionals.

Bush (1968) describes an ANPA News Research Center-sponsored study by Haskins, Snow and Flynn who tested the feminine-masculine qualities of several typefaces using a semantic differential scale. The findings showed that some typefaces are judged "ultra-feminine," while others are judged "inappropriate" or "essentially neutral." In general, similar typeface effects were found regardless of the age or socio-economic status

of the subjects. Headline content, and not typestyle, is the most important factor in a woman's decision to read or not read a newspaper item (as cited in Bush, 1968). Even though readers may describe certain typefaces as having feminine characteristics, Haskins and Flynn (1974) found that those faces do not affect readership.

Headlines, Subheads and Captions

In the Garcia & Stark (1991) study, it was found that headlines, cutlines and briefs are processed often and in depth. However the study also found that only 25% of the text is processed and is highest in the news section, least in the sports section.

When they accompany text, headlines perform an important function. They supply a synopsis of the text and entice the reader to not only to read the story, but to assist the reader in selecting which stories to read. When the headline differs from the story, some readers, those who spend little time reading both, are most likely to accept the interpretation the headline provides (Tannenbaum 1953). Several studies have found elements that lend to headlines attracting attention to a story and how they can be legibly constructed.

Capitalization of headlines affects legibility. Breland and Breland (1944, as cited in Bush, 1967) found that all-caps headlines, on the average are less legible than the caps and lowercase (herein called sentence case), headlines. The same year, Earl English compared headlines set in all-caps and in sentence case. The average loss in legibility for headlines in all-caps is about the same that Breland and Breland had found (English, 1944). English (1944) also tested reading speed for headlines set in square serif and sans serif type and found that headlines set in serif are the least legible. Bush (1967) summarizes an unpublished thesis by Warren, cited by Paterson and Tinker (1946a), who compared headlines in all-caps and in sentence case. Warren found that the sentence case headlines are significantly more legible than the all-caps headlines. Bush states further that Tinker performed several experiments to explain why all-caps

headlines are less legible as those that include both uppercase and lowercase letters (Tinker, 1965). Bain (1980) found that readers enjoy headlines in boldface, light type, or varied type sizes rather than roman and italic combinations of letters.

Deutschmann (1956) studied headline perception. The study's findings did not offer rules for writing headlines, but suggested that readers' psychological needs facilitate their perception to select or screen out certain words. To determine how well initials (groups of letters substituted for groups of words for brevity) in headlines are understood by newspaper readers, Goldsmith (1958) found that headline writers overestimate the ability of readers to understand initials in headlines. A nut graph is the conversational headline deck that includes a complete sentence (Moen, 1989). Clarke (1986) found that nearly all of the readers who classify themselves as regular readers said they always read the nut graph. Experiments by Coleman and Hahn (1966) found conventional horizontal typography to be more readable than headlines arranged vertically.

Rarick (1967, as cited in Bush, 1968) found that on an inside page, a six-column headline attracted no more attention than a two-column headline on the same page. Nor do larger and longer headlines increase readership. Rarick found that increasing the size of a headline, to a point, does increase readership. His data showed an increase in readership when a larger headline is substituted for a smaller one. Bush (1967) summarizes a study by Wilcox and Fern of the University of California who studied headline length and found that headlines of longer letter count are found to be better understood. These studies were verified by the Click and Stempel (1974) study, which noted that larger headlines that span several columns attract attention and add color and weight to the page.

Sometimes subheads are used in a story to break up the copy, or written as complete sentences they are used to persuade the reader to continue reading (Hvistendahl, 1968). In studying where and why readers stop reading, Schramm (1947) suggests, that in some cases, subheads, boldface paragraphs and paragraph

bullet devices function as signs of stopping, rather than suggesting that the reader continue. This study also showed that high initial readership does not guarantee that a reader will continue reading. High initial readership may be due to presentation and not subject matter. Building on a study finding that readers believe subheads made a story more attractive and easier to read than bold lead-ins or bold paragraphs, Hvistendahl (1965) found no significant difference between longer or shorter subheads, and hypothesized that typographic ornaments could be substituted for a subhead to provide necessary eye relief.

Captions often accompany photographs. When captions accompany photographs, Ling (1955) found that they act much like the comprehension function of headlines, allowing for very few erroneous interpretations of the photo's subject. Exploring the effect of combining pictures and captions, Kerrick (1959) found that in general, the picture-caption combinations are different in meaning from either the pictures alone or the captions alone. An unexpected finding by Culbertson (1974, as cited in Rarick, 1975) showed that a plain verbal description of a situation or event tends to have more emotional impact than sharp photographs of the same subject matter.

Readability and Legibility

A wide variety of typefaces is available for print materials. Therefore, it seems desirable to investigate the legibility and the aesthetic merits of type using tests of speed and comprehension, the influence of typeface, boldness, size, spacing, length of line, and width of columns on legibility and readability.

Often confused with readability, legibility is the measure of speed and accuracy of reading and understanding type, while readability is a measure of the difficulty of the content (Moen, 1989). However, the two terms are often used interchangeably. Graphic designers often use readability when describing how a typeface is used. The

first studies of the variables of typography that contribute to legibility and readability were published in the 1920s and 1930s.

Typesetting

Roethlein (1912) showed that the shape of the bowls of the typeface and the space within the bowls determine its legibility. Comparing reading speeds of serif and sans serif typefaces, Tinker and Paterson (1929) found that a sans serif face is read more slowly than a serif face. A few years later, they noted, after ten type faces were compared with respect to their effect on reading rate, that typefaces in common use are equally legible (Paterson & Tinker, 1932b).

Robinson, Abbamonte and Evans (1971) and Hvistendahl and Kahl (1975) confirmed the early finding of Tinker and Paterson (1929) and showed that Roman type is read faster than and is preferred over a sans serif typeface. Poulton (1975) found that it is the differentiation of individual letters, especially in sans serif typefaces, that is the important factor in determining legibility. The readability of many commonly used type faces can also be increased better by increasing the boldness than by changing its configuration (Luckiesh & Moss, 1940). Overall, though, readers have requested that text typefaces should be larger and more readable (Curley, 1979).

Early experiments by Paterson and Tinker (1929) showed that 10-point type yields faster reading than 6-, 8-, 12-, and 14-point type with a constant line length. Davenport and Smith (1964, as cited in Bush, 1967) found that type size is the most important factor in reader preference, with respondents preferring 9-point type. Respondents prefer justification as less important and find hyphenation negligibly important.

Tinker and Paterson (1946) demonstrated that an 18 pica line width with 1 or 2 point leading produces the most readable text; textual materials with a rather wide range of line widths and leading are equally legible; and that very short and relatively

long line widths produce poor readability except when the long lines are generously leaded. Later, Tinker (1963b) showed that 1-pt. leading is desirable and that 10-pt. body text with no leading is read faster and is found more pleasing than 8-pt. type with 2-pt. leading, replicating the findings of the Paterson and Tinker study (1932a). But this may hold only for this size of type and 19-picas line width (Paterson & Tinker, 1932a). Becker, Heinrich, Von Sichowky, and Wendt (1970) found that text with no leading generally slows down reading, but too much leading can have a similar effect, an effect also noted by Paterson and Tinker (1947).

Tinker (1963b) showed that italics should be restricted to rare occasions when emphasis is needed. Tinker and Paterson (1928) made comparisons between the speed of reading the all capitals versus the lowercase text and the italics versus the lowercase text. A difference is shown in favor of lowercase over capitals and a very small preference in favor of lowercase over italics.

An experiment by Scripps-Howard Newspapers' research staff suggests that non-justified, non-hyphenated and smaller-than-standard size body text does not affect amount, speed or accuracy in newspaper reading (Davenport & Smith, 1965). However, Fabrizio, Kaplan, and Teal (1967) found no significant difference on reading speed whether text is justified or unjustified. The Bain study (1980) found that type, whether it is in columns of equal depth or wrapped irregularly, it is still readable.

When white type is reversed out of a black background, Holmes (1931) found reading speed slows significantly. Significant advantage of black type on white is found to give an advantage in speed of reading (Paterson & Tinker, 1931). They also compared ten color combinations, in addition to black on white, with respect to their effect on reading rate. Providing good legibility were: black on white, grass green on white, luster blue on white, and black on yellow. Providing fair legibility were: tulip red on yellow, tulip red on white. Providing poor legibility were: grass green on red, chromium orange on black, chromium orange on white, tulip red on green, black on

purple. A maximum brightness-contrast between print and background is desirable for greatest legibility (Tinker, & Paterson, 1931a). Slight differences in color of printing surface and striking differences in degree of gloss do not influence speed of reading during relatively short periods. In comparing readability of newsprint type to book print, Paterson and Tinker (1946b) found that the newsprint type is read more slowly than book type. Differences in brightness contrast between print and paper appear to be the important factors.

Rehe (1972, as cited in Rarick, 1975) compiled a literature review of studies on the effects of typographic design on legibility. For each proposed typographic convention for which were found two or more studies in substantial agreement, Rehe presented a recommendation. Where only one study was found, Rehe offered a proposal. Where conflicting or ambiguous studies were found, the results were only discussed.

A summary of Rehe's recommendations include:

- For body text, 9- to 12-point type is optimal;
- For typefaces with a small x-height (the height of lowercase letters, excluding the parts of the letter which rise above the midline or fall below the baseline), which should be 11- or 12-point and for a large x-height, 9- or 10-point type;
- For these point sizes, use a line width of 18 to 24 picas with 10 or 12 words per line;
- for these optimal type sizes, maximum legibility is found with leading of one to four points with heavier typefaces needing more leading;
- Unjustified body copy is recommended because extensive research findings did not find significant differences between justified and unjustified text lending the style to be more contemporary and relaxed;
- Wherever possible, avoid the use of type set in all-caps, if emphasis is needed use a larger type for boldface the text;
- Avoid reversed-out words for small type sizes and use sparingly in larger type.

Rehe's proposals include:

- A medium weight should be used for body text, use boldface instead of italic in text, but sparingly;
- The usage of ligatures is encouraged particularly in headline and display type;
- Numbers should be set in Arabic numerals, not word form, that Old Style numerals are more readable than Modern Roman numerals and should be particularly used in headline and display type;
- A moderate indention of about one em increases reading speed, but additional leading may be equally adequate;
- Double columns of a maximum line width should be used instead of a long, single column;
- Headline type sizes from 14 to 30 points can be used with equal results;
- Newspapers should use a horizontal front page makeup.

Column Width and Line Length

Tinker and Paterson (1929) found that a wider, six-column format, of 18 to 24 picas, easier to read than a narrower, eight-column format of 12 to 14 picas. When 10 point type is used an optimum number of 10 to 12 words per line is generated. Reading tests were conducted using type of varying in size (6 to 14 point) and line length (16 to 27 picas). The smallest text (six point on a 16 pica line) is read significantly more slowly than the standard (10 point on a 19 pica line). The next larger (eight point type on 17 pica) is approximately equivalent to the standard. The two largest text (12 point on a 23 pica line , and 14 point on 27 pica line) are read slightly more slowly (difference not statistically reliable) than the standard. Neither size of type nor length of line can be independently considered as a variable in determining optimal set-up of text (Tinker & Paterson 1931b).

Later research by Tinker & Paterson demonstrated that excessively short lines (9 picas) and excessively long lines (43 picas) are both read much more slowly than lines of moderate width (19 picas) (Paterson & Tinker, 1940). Paterson and Tinker (1942) later showed that a slowed rate of reading excessively short lines appears to be due the eyes being unable to accurately locate the beginning of successive lines of print indicating that excessively long lines are read less efficiently than lines of moderate length.

Tinker (1963a) found that text in relatively long lines, very short lines, and small type size, or combinations of these with little or no leading are read significantly slower. Additionally line width and subject matter affect choosing the proper size of type (Tinker 1963b). Hvistendahl (1964, cited in Bush, 1966) tested reading type in different column widths and arrangements. The study found that readers think it takes longer to read copy in one 11-pica column than it does to read five other type arrangements (double column 16 pica, one column 16 pica, double column 11 pica and three-column 16 pica). Wiggins (1964, 1966) tested the effect of reading speed of line length and spacing of body copy and found that text with constant spacing is read at the same speed as text set with variable spacing. Earlier, North and Jenkins (1951, as cited in Bush, 1968) showed that more words are read with spaced typography and with comprehension is typical type spacing. The Wiggins research also showed that the speed of reading increased as the line length increased. This implies that wider characters and wider spacing reduce reading speed.

Rarick (1967, as cited in Bush, 1968) tested typographical presentation of setting body copy of a news story in two columns and found that doing so does not increase readership over setting the copy in a single column. Nor does readership increase if the story is broken up into seven columns of type. Harley and Barnhill (1971) failed to find a significant difference between reading speed and line length over different double column widths and whether the line of text included various

amounts of hyphenation. Hvistendahl and Kahl (1975) found the highest reading speed for a 14-pica-wide column set in roman type.

Inspired by the Click and Stempel study in 1968, Price (1973b, as cited in Rarick, 1975) studied reactions to various styles of standard eight-column pages and two specially-designed pages. The results showed that readers respond well to a five-column format over other wider formats, finding this format “neat, bold, active, modern, interesting, exciting, easy” (p. 100).

Multiple Variables

Price (1973a) studied some possible effects of manipulating three typographical variables (horizontal versus vertical headline display, horizontal versus vertical picture display, and 11-pica-wide versus 19-pica-wide body type) on readership. The results strongly suggests that none of the variables by itself significantly influence readership. However, interaction of the variables does produce significantly different readership scores. The results indicate that:

1. For stories at the top of the page, vertical headline display combined with vertical body type (11 picas wide) or horizontal headline display combined with horizontal body type (19 picas wide) increases readership while mixing them impedes readership.
2. Placement of a story in the upper left-hand corner of a page enhances readership over a more horizontal display lower on the page.
3. Readership is greater for wider body type in shorter columns or narrower body type in longer columns.
4. Combining horizontal headlines with vertical photos or vertical headlines with horizontal photos will increase readership.
5. A story that has its headline adjacent to a cutline for a photo has higher readership than if the same story is separated from cutlines.

6. Combining wider columns of body copy with vertical photographs or narrow set columns of body copy with horizontal photographs will increase readership (as cited in Rarick, 1975).

Publications Research at Oklahoma State University

Research specifically designed to assess the opinions and attitudes of publication audiences has yielded several studies at Oklahoma State University. Few research studies have been conducted concerning readership preferences for magazine produced by the university. Several of these studies include readership surveys and were found relevant to this research effort.

Marketing and Reader Analysis

A Variance and Factor Analysis of Readers' Preferences for Three Types of

Higher Education News

A relevant study of Stillwater's community newspaper was conducted in 1969 with the assistance of the university's Public Information Office (Cox, 1969). This study surveyed the city's residents on their preferences for news about higher education in the city's newspaper. The study also dealt with similar editorial content similar to that in the Oklahoma State University Outreach. Readers expressed interest in news stories about students. However, stories about faculty, departmental and administrative news were least popular. The study found an overall low interest in stories about higher education, even stories regarding higher education in Stillwater, the location of Oklahoma State University.

A Marketing and Readership Analysis of the Oklahoma State University

Community

This 1994 study by Darby focused on describing of university students, faculty and staff in terms of habits (such as reading, shopping, dining, finances and travel) relating to marketing and advertising as well as defining the basic demographics such as employment status. With this description the results were to be used by the O'Collegian advertising staff to give advertisers a clear picture of its audience. The editorial staff would also have a knowledge of the readership's preferences in content.

Circulars and Newsletters

A Readership-Use Study of Nine Oklahoma Extension Circulars

A study of nine selected Oklahoma Extension Circulars (Sharpe, 1962) was designed to address the problems facing extension publication editors and extension specialists in meeting the needs of a changing audience. This study looked at circular application and audience analysis. Editorial considerations included information needs, content for future publications, the nature of the audience and publication effectiveness. The study showed that the circulars were meeting most reader's needs, that content should be specific and be carefully considered.

A Readership Survey of BlueLincs Member News Tulsa, Oklahoma

This readership survey by Minjares (2000) was designed to provide the editors of BlueLincs Member News, a health maintenance organization newsletter, demographic information regarding their readership as well as information about reader interest in the newsletter. To understand if important member health benefit information was being effectively communicated, respondents were asked questions regarding their readership habits and preferences; whether or not they felt

information provided was easy to understand; whether they felt the information provided was useful and questions regarding the readerships demographics. The research results indicated that respondents did not read or read very little of the newsletter. Only 36% said they read 50% or more of the newsletter. The majority of respondents indicated that they preferred to read stories with illustrations and that they preferred to read articles of one-half page or less in length. Recommendations included writing articles to match the educational level of the readership.

A Readership Survey of The O'Club Newsletter: A Publication For Former Athletes at Oklahoma State University

This study (Harris, 1994) was designed to provide reliable and objective information about the university "O" Club Newsletter. Published by the university's Athletics Department, the newsletter was studied for its editorial content and to provide a more accurate description of the readership. Specific objectives included determining reader preferences for regular material, to determine if readers believe the newsletter representative of all Oklahoma State University sports and to gauge readers' overall opinions of the newsletter. The study showed that most readers did not keep the newsletter for future reference. The study showed high interest in reunion information and the "Where Are They Now" column indicating an interest in past teammates and coming events rather than informative letters from the athletics administration staff.

A Readership Survey of the Oklahoma State News

A readership survey of this Oklahoma State University faculty and staff newsletter was conducted by Cooper (1992) for a master's thesis. This bi-weekly newsletter originated in 1968. Prior to this publication, no regularly distributed printed communication was available on campus. This study examined the interest in and the

usefulness of the newsletter as a communication tool directed at university employees, particularly to determine which news topics interested readers most. Additionally her study sought to provide insight into its physical appearance, preferred method of distribution, reader demographics, and sources of information about Oklahoma State University.

The regular feature that was reported as most useful was "Health Insurance." Other useful topics included "Oklahoma Teachers Retirement Information" and "Payroll Policies," and "Personnel Services Program." Stories about emeritus faculty were found to be least useful. News topics that respondents did not find useful included "Emeritus Activities," "Club Activities," and "Videoconference Schedules." Of those who completed the survey, 83% reported that they received the magazine, with 79% reporting that they did not keep issues for future reference. Only 24% reported passing copies of the newsletter to their spouse. Of the suggested changes, the use of photographs was the most often recommended (40%). Other suggested changes included using colored paper, color photos, more white space, and a different typeface. (Cooper, 1992)

Campus Newspapers

A Readership Survey of The Daily O'Collegian

Several studies have been conducted regarding the university's student-run newspaper. The earliest study for a master's thesis (Klock, 1975) dealt with readership preferences for news content. The study showed that "Editorial Cartoons," "Administrative Policies," "Editorials," "Letters to the Editor," "News in Brief," and general news about the university faculty were those most frequently read by the non-student survey respondents. Additionally, the study also showed those surveyed had less interest in the newspaper than the student population.

A Readership Survey of The Daily O'Collegian

Building on earlier readership studies of the student newspaper by Klock and others, Laotaweesub (1993) set out to determine reader preferences for different types of published editorial content. Additionally, she studied the dependency relationship between the audience and media systems. This study found that state news, national news and international news were read more often by readers than any other type of content. Campus government news was read least often.

Off-Campus Magazines

A Readership Survey of The Oklahoma Banker

As part of his master's thesis at Oklahoma State, Beard (1976) surveyed readers of The Oklahoma Banker magazine, an organizational publication of the Oklahoma Banker's Association. This research was developed to gauge reader preferences for several regular featured subjects in the magazine. The study was also designed to identify specific areas of content that could be valuable to the editor in considering content for future issues. The study found that "People and Places" to be the most important and most well-read feature of the magazine and that more editorial space should be devoted to "Topics peculiar to Oklahoma," suggesting that some attention should be paid to stories of geographical importance to the readers.

On-Campus Magazines

A Readership Survey of Agriculture at OSU - The Magazine for the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at Oklahoma State University

In the spring of 1994, Wanjohi conducted this study to examine the opinions towards the College of Agriculture's magazine. The primary focus of the study was to determine the usefulness of information in the magazine, interest in topics and the

format preferred by the survey respondents. The study also investigated the physical appearance of the magazine, finding that 58% of the respondents recommended no changes be made. Among the suggestions for change in appearance was the use of more photographs. Another change recommended was the use of more charts and diagrams. The study recommended that the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources continue to be used as a communication tool for reaching its diverse audience and to supplement its messages with similar messages.

Readership Survey Results for CHES Magazine

As part of a master's thesis, but not completed, Brimberry (1995) prepared a cover letter and a questionnaire for a readership survey of the College of Human Environmental Sciences alumni magazine. The survey was designed to understand whether the magazine met readers' need and expectations, and whether alumni in the College of Human Environmental Science found the magazine "useful and enjoyable."

Of those who responded, 96% said they read at least part of the magazine. The study's findings suggested that the college not reuse stories also covered in OSU Magazine. It also suggested that readers preferred stories regarding outstanding and successful alumni and alumni information in general and those regarding advances in research. The study's preliminary findings recommended that most editorial content be devoted to this focus. The research found an interesting correlation between relatively lower income levels and a preference for reading the magazine than readers with relatively higher income levels. The study found that articles were rated the right length, but did not indicate significant findings regarding the appearance of the magazine. This study was not developed into a thesis.

OSU Spectrum, Spring 1996 Magazine Survey

Following the first publication of Spectrum, a survey was developed by the office of development for the College of Arts and Sciences (Spectrum, 1997). A

questionnaire with nine questions on one page was mailed during spring 1996. The initial mailing went to 2,000 Oklahoma State University alumni and friends who had given to a College of Arts & Sciences fund in the past. A second mailing was sent that fall to an additional 2,500 A&S alumni who had previously given to funds other than to the College. Only 28 completed surveys were received. The meager results indicated magazine topics about A&S alumni rated highest in importance while stories about students rated lowest. Stories about teaching, faculty and degree programs received the highest grades rated for interest.

A Readership Survey of Oklahoma State Alumnus Magazine

The first documented readership study of the Oklahoma State University alumni publication, then known as the Outreach, was completed by Dollar in September 1968 (Dollar, 1974). Dollar states that this survey was conducted in conjunction with a national advertising questionnaire that dealt with the content and format of the magazine. This survey consisted of only two pages. A 68% response rate was obtained.

Dollar states this survey reported that 12% surveyed found the magazine's content exciting and that 81% found the content only acceptable. This early survey indicated that 54% of the readership found the regular feature, "Class Notes," the most interesting of all content, that 52% of the readers said they read every issue and 43% said they read most issues. The questionnaire asked some format and typography questions: 34% had no opinion, 33% found it exciting and effective, 26% regarded it as immaterial.

A Readership Survey of Outreach Magazine

In 1974, Dollar completed an in-depth readership study of the OSU alumni magazine, Outreach, as part of his master's thesis. The decision to conduct the survey came at a time when the magazine's content and format were being reevaluated

“because of possible changes in reader tastes and innovations by other alumni publications” (pp. 4–5). Dollar’s master’s thesis was designed to improve the readership of the magazine with attention to improvements in content and appearance by measuring the preferences of the magazine’s readers. Dollar’s sample size was 300 respondents, the study had an 84% response rate.

Dollar’s study showed that “Class Notes” continued as the magazine’s most interesting feature. “Alumni Achievements” and community contributions also ranked high in interest. Of least interest were “Honors and Awards Banquets,” OSU Administrative Programs,” and “Staff and Faculty Changes.” Dollar’s study did not ask any design-related questions.

A Readership Survey of Oklahoma State Magazine

Moore (1992) conducted a study of the university’s alumni magazine. At the time, Moore was attached to OSU’s Communications Services and was a contributing writer to the magazine.

Moore’s study was initiated in response to a 1990 mail survey conducted by the OSU Alumni Association and a change in how the magazine was written and produced. The association’s questionnaire dealt with alumni programs and local alumni chapters and included three questions about Outreach Magazine. In response to the magazine changing its name and format, Moore took the opportunity to survey the readership since it had been 18 years since the magazine had done so. At the time, the quarterly magazine served approximately 18,500 households.

The study’s purpose was to determine whether the magazine met its purposes and goals: readership needs, interests, and opinions; personally relevant news; editorial content focus; and format. By surveying the readership, the study hoped to uncover preferences in the magazine’s editorial content and format.

A spring 1992 mailing list was used to select respondents for the survey. Only those individuals with a military APO address, those identified as friends of the university and those who did not graduate from OSU, were excluded from the research population. A skip interval of 46 was used to randomly select 400 alumni from this revised mailing. Included with a cover letter, the four-page questionnaire was mailed in March 1992 with a second mailing in April.

Types of questions included multiple choice, ranking and open-ended questions. The first three questions sought to determine basic information about the magazine: how much of the magazine was read; should the frequency of publication be changed; and if the magazine was the alumni's main source of news about the university.

The fourth and fifth questions asked respondents about their favorite section of the magazine and which sections they initially turn to. The eighth question examined alumni interest in successful alumni feature stories. The ninth question sought to determine if more emphasis and space should be placed on "Class Notes." The tenth question sought to discover if alumni believed the magazine adequately addressed controversial issues involving the university.

Questions 11 through 18 sought to determine whether various sections, photography and advertising in the magazine were interesting and of adequate coverage. Questions 19 and 20 were open-ended questions that were used to solicit suggestions for story ideas and changes to the magazine. The survey's final questions, 21 through 26, were demographic questions: gender, spouse's attendance at OSU, degrees obtained, academic college attended, year graduated, and annual income.

The questionnaire was photocopied, front and back on plain white bond paper, and included sample images from various magazines. Once returned, data was entered and analyzed utilizing a computer statistical program. After two mailings, 225 questionnaires were returned, yielding a 56% response rate. A summary of some of the study's significant findings follows.

Description of Respondents. Demographics on the returned sample revealed more men (71%) than women (29%) responded to the survey and that the typical Oklahoma State Magazine reader graduated from the College of Business (26%) and earned an annual income between \$25,00–45,999 (34%). Additionally, the typical reader graduated between the years of 1980 and 1989 (29%) and the majority (71%) had obtained a bachelor's degree from the university.

Stories on Successful Alumni. In rating feature stories about successful alumni, the study indicated that women were slightly more interested in these stories than men. The data also showed that individuals making more than \$116,000 a year found these feature stories to be the most interesting; alumni with salaries between \$66,000 and \$85,999 found the articles to be least interesting. Graduates who attended the College of Education, College of Agriculture, College of Home Economics, and the College of Arts and Sciences found feature stories the most interesting, while those from the College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Business and College of Engineering found them the least interesting.

Stories on Controversy. Those former students who received their doctoral degree from the College of Education said they believe the magazine adequately addressed controversial issues surrounding the university. They were followed by those who had not received a degree from OSU. Those alumni who received a degree in veterinary medicine and those who had graduated with a master's degree believed the magazine did not adequately cover these issues. The majority of readers, those with bachelor's degrees, were neutral on the matter. Those who had graduated during the 1940s and 1950s said they thought the magazine adequately covered controversial issues, but those graduating between 1980 and 1989 did not.

Stories on Specific Academic Colleges. The data showed that alumni who graduated in 1990 or 1991 strongly believed the magazine needed to include more stories addressing specific colleges. They were followed by readers who graduated between 1980

and 1989. All groups agreed to some degree that the magazine should include stories about specific academic colleges. Those who graduated from the College of Agriculture strongly agreed that the magazine should do more college-specific stories, but those from the College of Veterinary Medicine were not as likely to agree with this need.

Interest in Photography. Results indicated that females considered photography to be of more interest to them than photography was to males.

Preference for Article Length. On average, men were more likely to consider the OSU legacy articles “somewhat long,” while women considered them to be “somewhat short.” Persons graduating between 1950 and 1959 and those readers who did not graduate from the university, considered campus news articles to be “somewhat short,” and those graduating in the 1960s as well as those graduates from the College of Veterinary Medicine considered them “somewhat long.” Also, readers with a doctorate in education or a bachelor’s degree believe them to be “somewhat short.” For research articles, those students with degrees in veterinary medicine believed such information to be too short, while those from the College of Arts and Sciences did not consider articles too long or too short. Stating preference in magazine article length overall, alums graduating in the 1990s and those in the 1970s considered them “somewhat long.” Those graduating in the 1940s were more likely to consider them “somewhat short.”

Extent of Magazine Read. The study indicated that the majority of alumni only read some of the magazine. Those respondents who were most likely to read all of the magazine had a 1980s bachelor’s degree in agriculture and those alumni who had income ranges of \$25,000–\$45,000 and \$46,000–\$65,000.

Publication Frequency. Overall 69% of the respondents indicated there was no need to change the frequency of publication, to continue publishing it quarterly. Only 17% indicated a desire for more frequent publication, 11% indicated decreased frequency of publication.

Main Source of News about OSU. The study found that Oklahoma State Magazine was the only source of news for 39% of the surveyed readers. Of those surveyed, only 23% said they received news about OSU from their local newspaper and 19% said they got their news from friends and acquaintances.

Preference for Class Notes. This section of the magazine was a major proportion of the magazine and was felt to be most important to readers. Nearly equal percentages of respondents indicated that they would like to see more of "Class Notes" and some that said they would like to see less of them (35% and 36% respectively). Gender was not a good predictor for class notes preference.

Interest in Magazine Sections. While the study did not show a significant difference in the type of stories, there was varied interest in various departments of the magazine. The study found the "OSU Legacies" section the least interesting and enjoyed "Campus News" most, followed by "Class Notes" and "Cowboy Sports." Although readers enjoyed "Class Notes," they did not want to see the section expanded if it meant reducing the number of feature stories. Those graduates with bachelor's degrees found "Class Notes" to be most enjoyable, while those with master's degrees found "Campus News" the most enjoyable.

Magazine Sections Read First. On those responding, 28% said they read the cover feature first, 24% said they read the "Class Notes" first and 20% indicated "Cowboy Sports" was read first. The section least read first was the "Research Update."

Future Stories. Nine specific categories of stories were rated, including news from branch campuses, guest speakers, and alumni chapters. Most requests were for controversial stories and features on interesting alumni. Branch campus stories were indicated the fewest times, followed by guest speakers and stories on faculty. Respondents suggested several stories that were not listed. Some suggestions included stories on minority students and alumni, a calendar of events, articles on Stillwater,

changes in colleges and departments, and articles on OSU's future and the future of higher education.

Perceived Value of Oklahoma State Magazine. Although alumni receive the magazine as part of their paid dues in the association, the study looked to see how much readers would pay for it if it was sold on the newsstand. Of those responding, 34% said they would pay between \$1.00 and \$1.99, 28% said they would pay \$2.00 to \$2.99; and 19% said they would not pay for it.

Recommendations for Further Research. Moore's recommendations included a suggestion that future research include more specific questions that could provide more detail information to editors. It was also suggested to include a copy of the magazine with the survey, have more directed and less open-ended questions, and to focus more on the demographics of respondents. Moore also suggested analyzing placement of department articles to see if placement is related to the attention given them.

Recommendations to Alumni Magazine Editors. Moore also suggested that readers of the magazine should be surveyed on an regular basis, such as every five years to allow editors to keep in touch with a changing readership. The recommendations also included having stories proportional to the demographic makeup of the audience. In particular, increasing the number of stories about women. To enhance credibility, especially with readers who graduated within the past 30 years, Moore also recommended more hard news about the university, including coverage of controversial issues. There was also a recommendation to make the magazine more appealing, not only using additional art and updating its design, but also by adding more photography. Other recommendations included cutting the length of articles and increasing the number of stories and widening the focus to cover individual colleges and departmental activities, but doing so as to not detract from readership interest of other alumni. Moore also suggested to not only keep, but to expand the "Class Notes" section and that the editors should investigate ways to combine this section with interest in

stories on successful alumni to make that section more valuable to the reader. It was recommended that the magazine remain a quarterly publication, but the possibility of special issues or supplements was not precluded. Finally, Moore recommended that the magazine continue to be provided at no cost to association members, but if it was provided at cost, a range of \$1.00–\$1.99 was suggested, (Moore, 1992)

Focus Group Research at Oklahoma State University

Research specifically designed to assess the opinions and attitudes of publication audiences in focus groups has yielded few studies at Oklahoma State University. Still fewer studies have been conducted concerning design and layout preferences for magazines produced by the university. Several studies by the College of Human Environmental Sciences were found relevant to this research effort.

Report to CHES University Extension and Development

During the summer of 1998 (July 8-16), the college conducted two focus groups consisting of college “Associates” to gather opinions on the college’s publications newsletter and magazine. The sessions revealed very positive responses to both publications.

The sessions revealed the consistent importance of including “people” in the college’s publications and that it is the people and their stories that make connections with these readers. Participants said they enjoyed reading articles about people and that they enjoyed having a person’s story or history told.

Photographs of people were found to be “attention-getters,” enticing reading of the associated article. Photographs were indicated as the favorite part of either publication and are looked at first. Participants were particularly drawn to photographs of people, particularly to people they knew. Participants indicated that the greatest impact came from the magazine’s cover, emphasizing its glossy and colorful look featuring individuals.

Participants said they enjoyed the use of color in the magazine. Compared to the magazine, participants thought the newsletter was not as attention-getting, primarily due to its use of color. In terms of readability, participants indicated that they preferred white space to large amounts of copy. That articles with too much text were intimidating, and therefore, were not read. Some participants thought that text over graphics colored backgrounds made it difficult to read the text.

The participants noted that they do not completely read either publication, choosing instead to scan the articles. They indicated that it takes too much time to read the entire publication and suggested that shorter length articles are more readable.

In regards to the content of the publications, participants commented on feature sections, timeliness of the information, and type of information presented. The participants indicated that they enjoyed reading the letter from the Dean in each publication. They suggested having regularly occurring feature sections, such as editorials and student features. A few participants commented that the articles were not up-to-date.

Other items of interest included a desire to share the magazine with friends or to display it. Some indicated they had a difficult time discarding it, some keeping issues. Many of the participants complained about an over use of abbreviations and said they preferred to have them spelled out.

Participants were unable to suggest ways to improve the college magazine.

Conclusion

To survive, a magazine must maintain editorial quality and visual appeal — it must be picked up and read. The success of producing a magazine lies in the mutual cooperation between the editor and the art director, reflecting the needs of the magazine's audience. While the editor molds the content and internal character of the magazine, the art director creates its physical external personality.

In the field of journalism and mass communication, magazine research appears relatively infrequently in academic publications. What little research has been conducted is not relevant, or is not being published. This void in magazine research may reflect an element of confusion regarding the magazine's place in the journalistic rubric that it is regarded as a second-class subject of inquiry (Abrahamson, 1995).

This chapter has examined several relevant readership studies of various publications at Oklahoma State University. But the review of content studies of the OSU alumni magazine reflected here is dated. The 1992 Moore study certainly provides prescriptive guidance, but its findings are outdated and some of them were offered that were not reflected in the findings. To date, design issues have not been seriously addressed in the three readership surveys of OSU Magazine.

At the time of the Moore study, the magazine began life with a new editor and went through a momentous design change. Since then, there have been significant changes in both the editorial and design staffs in the magazine itself. There have been changes in the university and its alumni as well.

In retrospect, Moore's study devoted considerable amount of effort and space to content concerns, but did not address design issues. The correlation of variables related to opinions regarding content was largely interesting, but not entirely helpful in shaping the editorial direction of the magazine. Some conclusions, however, were valid.

Moore's study indicated that the majority of alumni only read some of OSU Magazine, with a little more than a third of the readership using it as their only source of news about the university. While the study did not show a significant difference in the type of stories, there was varied interest in them.

"Class Notes" and "Cowboy Sports" continue to be important to readers, previously indicated by the Dollar studies, but "Class Notes" has fallen in reader interest since the earlier studies. "Campus News," however, ranked higher in interest. When asked which they read first, approximately equal portions of the readership said

they read either the cover feature first, "Class Notes" or "Cowboy Sports." The section least read first was the "Research Update," and "OSU Legacies" was found least interesting. Nearly all respondents agreed that to some degree that the magazine should include stories about specific academic colleges, but there was interest in including more feature stories about successful alumni.

Even though readers continued to enjoy "Class Notes," they did not want to reduce the number of feature stories to get more of them. Moore recommended to not only keep, but to expand the "Class Notes" section. It was also recommended that the editor should investigate ways to combine this section with interest in stories on successful alumni to make that section more valuable to the reader. This recommendation was made even though an equal percentage of respondents desired to see less of this section and an equal percentage desiring to see more of it. The study's findings do not seem to reflect this recommendation.

Interest in future stories included news from branch campuses, guest speakers, and alumni chapters. Most requests were for controversial stories and features on interesting alumni. Interest in branch campus stories was indicated the fewest times, followed by stories on guest speakers and stories on faculty.

The study reported confusing data on preferences for article length. Several correlations reported different preferences for various groups of readers, but with no clear findings presented. Moore, however, recommended cutting the length of articles. Other recommendations Moore provided seemed to perhaps come from being an editorial assistant on the magazine and not reflected in the study's data.

Moore recommended having stories proportional to the demographic makeup of the audience, in particular, increasing the number of stories about women when this issue was not addressed by the study. This is a reasonable recommendation, and Moore did correlate interest in stories by gender, but to date, there has not been a

content analysis of stories in the magazine with respect to stories oriented toward any particular group.

The study also recommended more hard news about the university, including coverage of controversial issues. However, Moore's analysis indicated that the majority of readers were relatively neutral on the subject, believing the magazine "only somewhat covered controversy adequately" (p. 49).

There was also a recommendation to make the magazine more appealing to include not only through graphics and design, but also by adding more photography. Design questions were not addressed in this study and the analysis showed that more women than men found photographs more interesting. While the study asked a question about quality of photographs, these results were not reported.

In the available literature, there is not a solid base of conceptual and theoretical magazine design research available. There are, however, sources lamenting the lack of magazine research in general. An examination of the design references cited in this literature review shows that nearly all sources used newspapers as their design model. The application of these findings was initially intended to be of value to newsprint media, but they seem to have been applied to magazines as well. Most of the industry literature on design is relevant to newspapers, not magazines, and is decades old.

Significant changes have taken place in graphic design technology. Since its facelift, OSU Magazine has become more costly to produce, while improvements in hardware and software offers more flexibility in all aspects of publication design and production.

Little, if any empirical magazine design research exists. Because the body of newspaper design research that has been applied to magazines is significantly outdated and since design is a major focus of this research, there is an important need for research in this area.

With the increasing diversity of those attending Oklahoma State University and with the university's changing focus, there is a vital need to periodically assess the effectiveness of OSU Magazine.

Prior to this study, it had been assumed that the magazine's goals were being met without fresh knowledge of the readership's needs. In the absence of this information, realistically evaluating the effectiveness of OSU Magazine and making generalizations about potential changes in its content and design are ambiguous.

This study adds to an evolving body of knowledge that will provide empirically based knowledge about OSU Magazine that will have theoretical significance for inquiry and practice.

Currently, available literature fails to address the parameters of this study. Further exploration into issues of content and design of OSU Magazine must be pursued. This study has been designed to fill this gap.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General

The purpose of this research effort was to determine readership preferences of the content and design of Oklahoma State Magazine. Research objectives for this study were developed from the magazine's 1992 readership study and from communications with OSU's assistant vice president, Communications Services and the OSU Alumni Associations's director of communications and public relations, along with OSU Magazine's editor, writers, art director, graphic designers and photographers.

Multiple Methods

Several quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection exist. The survey, a quantitative methodology, is the primary data-collection technique in mass media studies (Singletary, 1994). In its simplest form, from a sample of respondents, responses from a questionnaire are tabulated and analyzed with statistical tools. The results are inferred to the larger population. The use of focus groups is a qualitative method that relies more on observation, intuition and personal insight (Singletary, 1994). Consequently, this research approach is very popular among magazine staffs seeking clues to the changing needs and interests of readers, focus groups may make the difference between a magazine working and not working (Love, 1994).

Focus groups allow exploration of opinions in ways that questionnaires and surveys do not. Some universities, like Emory University, have been using focus groups of alumni have been conducting comprehensive marketing studies to learn

how the graduates feel about the program. A focus group cannot be generalizable. The internal consistency of the data was not reliably made.

No one method of data collection produces valid data because of the small sample and are subject to sources of error present, such as human error and bias. Focus groups. Several authors have used focus groups as a stand-alone method, but most recommend them as methods (Agar & MacDonagh, 2000). Experts recommend using focus groups by following up with other methods.

The history of focus groups is not a stand-alone method. As the example of triangulating qualitative and quantitative data (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). The use of focus groups in qualitative and quantitative research is a problem (Reynolds & Johnson, 2000). The use of survey methodology was used in the study of OSU Magazine and the use of focus groups provided insight into reader preferences.

The questions guiding the study were:

Research Question 1

What value do readers place on OSU Magazine and what changes would they like to see?

Research Question Two

How do readers value the design of OSU Magazine, and what types of changes would they suggest?

Methodology Overview

Readership Survey

The survey design is one research method used to objectively measure an individual's subjective viewpoint. When combined with statistical applications, the survey provides researchers with a systematic and quantitative means for examining human subjectivity. The method's premise is based on the assumption that points-of-view are communicable by understanding the subjective feelings of an audience (Fowler, 1984).

A readership survey is designed to help editors stay in touch with their audience. When applied to a magazine's audience, a survey gives readers a forum for expressing their opinions. It can point to the strengths and weaknesses of the publication, and it helps clarify misconceptions. A survey can uncover information that may have only previously been assumed or guessed it. Moreover, a survey can answer questions about who reads the publication, how they read it, what they read, and why they read it (Stratton & Angerosa, 1995). Therefore, the information gleaned from a survey boosts the magazine's value to the reader and the editor.

Focus Group

Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to better understand attitudes and behavior. Focus groups can often help the researcher better understand what's in people's minds because "they allow individuals to respond in their own words, using their own categorizations and perceived associations" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p. 13). The flexibility of a focus group can be used to gain a greater

insight into issues too difficult to study with other methods (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Morgan and Krueger (1993) pointed out that focus groups should be considered when there is differential between decision makers or professionals and target audiences (group participants) and when the degree of consensus on an issue is desired.

A focus group has several strengths. It can be used to explore and discover issues and ideas, it can uncover attitudes and opinions in context and in depth, and it offers interpretation of information (Morgan, 1998). This research method allows the researcher to obtain data within a social context and allows the participants to express their views and compare them to others within the group. Focus groups succeed because the quality control of collection data is maintained by the participants who limit extreme or false opinions (Patton, 1987).

A focus group method employs a controlled group discussion facilitated by a moderator who interviews between 6 to 12 participants simultaneously by asking open-ended questions (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). For this study, a group of nine respondents, all regular readers of OSU Magazine, participated in a controlled discussion of the publication's design and layout in an effort to determine how the magazine's overall appearance can be improved.

The Questionnaire

The construction and development of the questions initially began with a review of the 1992 readership survey of OSU Magazine and from reviews of previous readership research studies of Oklahoma State University publications. Questions were then refined during discussions with the magazine's editor, OSU's assistant vice president, Communications Services and with the OSU Alumni Associations's director of communications and public relations. Questions were not limited to any specific

length; however, an attempt was made to make questions concise, clear and not overly long (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). Questions were pretested.

Data for the survey was collected via a self-administered questionnaire mailed to each individual selected from a random sample obtained from a subscription database of current alumni provided by the Oklahoma State University Alumni Association. Each questionnaire was preceded by an advance letter explaining the purpose of the study. The questionnaire included an introduction, the questions with instructions and a return envelope. Follow-up reminder cards followed each questionnaire. A second, smaller mailing of questionnaires was conducted.

Survey Questions

Using the questionnaire, this study was designed to answer the following questions about magazine usage:

- Do respondents currently receive the alumni magazine?
- How often do they typically read or look at it?
- Generally, how much of each issue do readers say they read or look at?
- What is done with the magazine when finished with it?

The questionnaire also was designed to ask the following questions about magazine content:

- If not a benefit of membership in the Alumni Association, how much would readers pay for an issue?
- If readers could make one change in the magazine, what would they suggest?
- What types of stories do they read?
- Which types of stories are generally read first and which stories are generally not read?
- With what frequency would readers want to see various kinds of stories?
- How is the overall content of OSU Magazine be rated?

Additionally, the questionnaire sought to answer these questions about readers' media use:

- Where do readers get information about Oklahoma State University?
- Do they use or access a personal computer? If so, do they access the Internet/World Wide Web? Would they prefer to read the magazine there? Why or why not?
- Do readers use e-mail? Would they like to see e-mail addresses listed in the Class Notes section of the magazine? Why or why not?

The following are questions were asked to find out more about the readers:

- What is your gender? What is your age group? What is your race/ethnic group classification?
- Where do you live? What is your estimated annual household income before taxes?
- For the highest level of academic degree obtained from Oklahoma State University, what was your major, college and what year of graduation?

Sampling

Random sampling is frequently used in mass media research to select a representation the population of subjects. This sampling method ensures representativeness of relevant variables, allows population comparisons and a reduction of sampling error (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Initially, a stratified random sample was desired to obtain a more homogeneous, representative sample, but was deemed too difficult after a consultation with the individual who maintains the Alumni Association's database. Therefore, a systematic random sampling method was chosen. While this type of sample is easier to draw, it also has a precision equivalent to a simple random sample (Fowler, 1984).

The OSU Alumni Association's mailing database list for the spring 2000 OSU Magazine was used to select respondents for the questionnaire. After a review of the list and after consulting with the magazine's editor, 334 names were removed from the

sample population for the same reasons as in the Moore (1992) study. To reduce postage costs, individuals identified as having an international mailing address (including those with APO and FPO addresses) were excluded from the potential sample population. Additionally, those individuals identified as “friends of the university” were also excluded from the sample population, since they did not graduate from OSU.

A systematic random sample of 600 respondents was drawn from a database of 20,352 individuals using a skip interval of 33 (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). This sample size allowed the researcher to obtain a confidence level of 95% (+/- 3% margin of error) (Fowler, 1984). The starting point for the skip interval was randomly selected.

Instrumentation

The survey portion of this research included three parts: the advance letter, the questionnaire and a reminder card. The preparation of the questionnaire incorporated many of the recommendations of the Tailored Design Method in conducting surveys (Dillman, 2000). According to Dillman, “Tailored Design is a set of procedures for conducting successful self-administered surveys that produce both high quality information and high response rates” (p. 29).

The advance letter emphasized the importance of this research study. Respondents were told that their participation was voluntary, but that their opinions represented the larger population of OSU Magazine readers and was vital to the success of the magazine. Respondents were told that their responses would be kept confidential and were provided contact information if they had questions regarding the research. A copy of the advance letter is found in Appendix A.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: introduction, questions and postscript. The introduction informed respondents that this was the questionnaire

they were told to expect in the advance letter, and it instructed respondents to complete and return the questionnaire. The question portion of the questionnaire was divided into sections of questions: how readers use the magazine; their preferences concerning the type of information published in the magazine; where readers get their information about Oklahoma State University; and questions concerning demographics. As a postscript to the questionnaire, some biographical information on the researcher was provided.

The questionnaire was printed on both sides of a single, large sheet of colored, recycled paper. When folded to 8.5" x 11", the questionnaire consisted of six letter-sized panels. It was additionally folded to fit in an enclosed pre-addressed return envelope. Scans of several recent magazine covers were included to remind readers of the magazine they were asked to evaluate. To track returning questionnaires, each included a space for a random alpha-numeric coding designation. A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix B.

Follow-up reminder cards were mailed to survey recipients, reminding respondents that their contribution was still needed and that it was voluntary and confidential. The reminder cards were printed on a colored card stock to attract attention. A copy of the reminder card is provided in Appendix C.

Addressing Response Rate

One of the principal weaknesses in conducting mail surveys is a low response rate. However, this technique is still useful when the sample is identified in advance as individuals, they are literate, and when they have a high degree of interest in the subject (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). Comstock and McCombs have noted that the four principal means to reduce nonresponse include facilitation, encouragement, strategic search and reopportunity. These elements are incorporated in the Tailored Design Method proposed by Dillman (2000).

Facilitation means making the participation as easy as possible; brevity and convenience are key (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). In this regard, questions were condensed to be as brief as possible and the questionnaire itself was designed not to be cumbersome; a pre-addressed return envelope was included.

Encouragement includes stressing the importance of the individual's participation, along with the use of credentials (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). Both the advance letter and the questionnaire's introduction emphasized the importance of the individual's participation in the research. The advance letter on university stationery was written by Natalea Watkins, OSU's assistant vice president of Communications Services. Contact information for the researcher and the office of the Institutional Review Board was provided. Subjects were notified that their responses will be kept confidential and were told that the results were a part of a thesis project and would be formally published and available in the university's library.

In a meta-analysis of numerous mail survey studies, Fox, Brask and Kim (1989) found that such factors as university sponsorship, written pre-notification of the questionnaire, post card follow-up, first class outgoing postage, questionnaire color, notification cut-off date all contributed to increased response rate. These methods were employed. Dillman (2000), however, has dismissed the contribution of colored paper to increasing the response rate. Unlike Dillman's Tailored Design Method, an incentive was not offered during the initial mailing of the questionnaires. However, an incentive was offered for the second mailing.

While a letter may not always be an effective way to convince respondents to participate, personalization and professionalism positively affects the response rate (Fowler, 1984). All printed materials were produced by the researcher, who is a graphic designer for the university. The questionnaire was designed to be aesthetically appealing and professional in appearance.

Strategic search means seeking out individuals when they are more likely to be available (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). The questionnaire was sent out in late July, a time when people might be away from home. How this situation may have contributed to the response rate is unknown. Reopportunity allows those who had not previously participated a second chance (Comstock & McCombs, 1981). Reminder cards and a second mailing of the questionnaire were used to encourage additional responses.

After the first mailing and reminder card, 468 respondents did not return a survey. For the second mailing, a separate cover letter was prepared asking those respondents who had not already done so, to please return their survey. As an incentive, these respondents were told they would be randomly selected to receive a poster celebrating the success of Oklahoma State University's "Bringing Dreams to Life" campaign.

Due to budget constraints, only 90 questionnaires could be sent out. A skip interval of five was used to randomly select those to receive the second questionnaire.

Pretesting

Before mailing the questionnaire, all materials, instructions and procedures for conducting the readership research were designed, prepared and tested.

Several tests of the questionnaire were conducted during the construction of the questions. Three individuals of mixed age, gender, various educational background and affiliation with Oklahoma State University were asked to critique the construction of the questions and the responses. Reviewers were asked to misinterpret questions and responses if at all possible. A sample of the finalized questionnaire was also tested by four individuals unfamiliar with the research.

Mailing

The undated advance letter was mailed on June 27, 2000. The questionnaire was mailed on July 20, 2000, and the completion date of July 28, 2000 was specified. As

the questionnaires were returned, tracking numbers were removed and kept separately. The names of the respondents were then crossed off the mailing list. A reminder card, emphasizing the importance of the study was mailed on August 23, 2000. To those who did not return the first survey, a second small mailing of 90 questionnaires took place on September 15, 2000, with a requested return date of October 6, 2000. No questionnaires were accepted after October 13, 2000.

Analysis

Data from returned surveys was coded and initially entered into an Excel spreadsheet. Data was then compiled and analyzed using SYSTAT statistical software.

Survey characteristics that are measured on a nominal scale do not have numerical values. Nominal survey data are analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the data in terms of measures of central tendency which describe the location of the center of distribution. Measures of central tendency are the mean, median and mode. Measures of dispersion are used to describe the spread of numerical data and include range, standard deviation and percentiles (Fink, 1995).

Descriptive statistic tests were utilized to analyze the responses and to report the description of the respondents. The results of these descriptive tests are presented in Chapter IV and discussed in Chapter V.

The Focus Group

The focus group for this study was conducted on the Oklahoma State University Stillwater campus assembled as a volunteer sample of nine individuals on October 11, 2000. The session took approximately 90 minutes to complete.

The group of participants was obtained by recruiting active alumni through the Alumni Association subscriber database and personal alumni connections. It was conducted in a closed, reasonably secure environment by the researcher who followed

a prioritized, written outline of questions. Data was collected using audiotape, which was later transcribed.

Before beginning the session, participants completed a short questionnaire consisting of demographic questions and one question gauging respondents' preferences for other magazines.

Participant Questions

Questions were developed from various sources. Subject areas for design-related questions were initially developed after reviewing several professional books and textbooks on magazine and publication design and advertising. Questions from previous readership studies of publications at OSU and other organizations were noted.

Interviews with three OSU graphic designers, including the art director for OSU Magazine, were conducted. These designers were asked what they, as a designer of a magazine, would like to know from the individuals who received it. Several interviews with the magazine's designer were held to refine and prioritize the questions. Questions were prepared with attention to clarity and brevity. Prior to the focus group, questions were written in narrative style, refined further and practiced by the moderator.

The focus group was designed to answer the following questions about magazine's design and layout:

- In general, how do the participants feel about picking up and looking at a new issue of OSU Magazine? Are there any particular magazine issues that stand out as attractive or particularly unappealing visually? What seems to attract their attention first?
- What kinds of adjectives would participants use to describe the look and feel of OSU Magazine?
- How does the magazine compare visually to other magazines they read?
- How would they feel if changing the look of OSU Magazine, and increased or decreased the costs to design and print it?

- How have participants felt about various magazine covers? Which covers have impressed them the most or the least, and which ones do they remember well? What impact does the back cover of the magazine have?
- Has the style of covers — a plain photograph, a manipulated photograph, or if the cover is an illustration made a difference?
- Do participants have any suggestions for improving magazine covers?
- Does color in the magazine make much difference? How do participants feel about the use of color overall? How do they feel about the use of background color and images?
- How do participants feel about the quality of photography? Have photos been appropriate, appealing, interesting, and of appropriate size and quantity?
- Should photographs concentrate mainly on people, or should there be a mix of them, like campus scenes or research-oriented photographs?
- Can participants suggest ways to improve the magazine's photography?
- Comparing art and photography, what mix of each do participants feel is appropriate for the magazine? Do they have any special concerns about the use of art?
- Do participants they think art in the magazine needs to be original or is stock art/clip art (or photography) acceptable?
- Can participants suggest ways to improve the magazine's use of artwork?
- Do they have any feelings about the use of typography in the magazine?
- How do participants view the layout practice of filling up the page with text and images?
- Do they have any feelings about the kind of paper used in the magazine?
- How do participants think OSU Magazine compares visually to the magazine to various OSU colleges?
- Do participants have any other comments or suggestions about look of OSU Magazine that they would like to express?

Before beginning the focus group, participants were asked to answer one survey question and answer some demographic questions similar to those asked on the questionnaire. These questions were:

- Of the magazines you enjoy, please indicate three that you find visually pleasing and why?
- What is your gender? What is your age group? What is your race/ethnic group classification?
- What is your estimated annual household income before taxes?
- What is the highest level of academic degree from Oklahoma State University? Include the college and year of graduation for this degree.

Sampling

A sample of nine individuals was obtained by recruiting active alumni through various means such as contacting those in the area who had responded to the questionnaire, the Alumni Association's subscriber database, and personal connections.

Since this sample consists of subjects who were readily accessible for study, the data may contain unknown quantities of error because they may not be representative of the larger population (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994).

Instrumentation

The focus group portion of this study was conducted in three parts: the preface, the session and the closing. Every attempt was made to make participants feel that the interview session was comfortable, non-confrontational and conversational.

The preface included introductions of the focus group facilitator, assistant and participants. It emphasized the importance of this research study. Participants were told that their participation was voluntary. That their opinions represented the larger population of OSU Magazine readers and it was vital to the success of the magazine. They were also told their responses would be kept confidential. Consent information

was offered both orally and in writing. Participants were told that every effort was made to not attribute them with their opinions, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality. Following this, participants were told what to expect during the focus group session.

Specific, generalized open-ended questions were used, but the moderator was given flexibility in phrasing and ordering of questions that had been prioritized. This form of questioning was constructed from a model developed by Krueger (1998). Before beginning the session, participants were asked to answer one survey question and answer some demographic questions similar to those asked on the questionnaire (reader characteristics) when they received their consent form. The focus group session was divided into six main question areas: Overall Appearance, Cover Design, Photography and Art; Use of Color; Suggestions for Improvement; and Other Issues.

Data was collected by tape recording in a closed environment conducted by a facilitator and an assistant. The facilitator followed a written outline of questions that were prioritized for time constraints. Issues of the magazine and samples illustrating ideas asked in various questions were provided for reference.

At the conclusion of the focus group session, participants were thanked and were told that the results of this research study would be made available in the university's library sometime in the future. They were also told that if they had any questions regarding this focus group or the research in general, they could contact the researcher or the Institutional Review Board. The consent form, questionnaire, and facilitator outline are provided in Appendices E, F and G, respectively. A transcription of the focus group session can be found in Appendix H.

Pre-Testing

Prior to initiating the focus group session, Krueger (1998b) recommends submitting a list of potential questions to experts. Before initiating this focus group, all

materials and instructions and procedures were designed, prepared and tested. Where valid concerns were raised, corrections were made with revisions processed through the thesis adviser. Adjustments were reported and were made as needed to modify this research approach. Assistants who participated in the session underwent training.

Analysis

Because the data could not be generalized to a larger population, there was no need for statistically reliable data for this qualitative research. The data collected from a recording of the proceedings were categorized and collated by similar responses, then identified, analyzed and summarized by common themes and differences. They were presented using the models prescribed by Kruegar (1998a). These models are the raw data model the question or idea followed by all participant comments, descriptive model (summary description followed by illustrative quotes) and interpretive model (following the summary and quotes with an interpretation).

Unlike the questionnaire, the questions asked before beginning the session (visually pleasing magazines, demographics) were not subjected to statistical analysis, but were tabulated and compared to that of the populations of the questionnaire sample and overall Alumni Association population.

Limitations and Assumptions

The major source difficulty in conducting this research was encouraging a sample of subjects to complete and return the questionnaire and to get individuals to participate in a focus group. Studying subjects during a particular time of the year may have yielded different results than if they were studied at another time of the year.

The sampling may be unrepresentative of Oklahoma State University's larger alumni population and may contain unknown quantities of error, and therefore, represent only a small segment of the larger Alumni Association membership population. Of course attitudes and opinions gathered through qualitative designs are

sometimes abstract and cannot always be precisely expressed or measured. Henerson et al (1978) said that preferences can only be inferred from the responses that are given. That there are no guarantees that respondents and participants participated long enough to make a one-time measurement reliable.

The questionnaire used few open-ended questions, possibly limiting elaboration and more in-depth analysis. Once questionnaires are placed in the mail, there is little control over those who respond. Errors may be present because the data is self-reported, i.e. the data relies on the truthfulness of the subjects. Surveys may have been answered by individuals other than those to whom the questionnaire was addressed.

The participants in the focus group may have been predisposed to certain responses, and conversely, may not have been an accurate representation of the magazine's readership since they were volunteer samples (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Participants may have responded to what they thought the moderator, or researchers, wanted to hear. Because they agreed to participate, focus group members may be more passionate about the subject matter than the larger populations. It is assumed that respondents and focus group participants honestly and objectively answered the questions in the phrasing and form in which they were offered. Comments by chosen participants represent only themselves. Since a focus group relies on controlled discussions, the skills of the moderator are important, the moderator must know when to direct the interview in certain directions, when to probe for additional information and to keep participants on topic.

While results from this study may be generalized to other publications produced by the university, they should not be generalized to publications from other universities or to the same audience at another time. Because this research was limited to studying OSU alumni, it is not intended to generalize this study to other institutions. Therefore, this study is limited to the sample and events analyzed and should not be applied outside this framework.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter includes the data analysis obtained from the readership survey and the results of the focus group of OSU Magazine. It also reports the findings with respect to furnishing evidence for the research questions asked. The survey was conducted to determine how readers use the magazine, their preference for its editorial content, and main sources of information about Oklahoma State University. Additionally, the questionnaire inquired about the readerships' opinions regarding issues of electronic publication. Demographic information was collected to learn more about the magazine's audience. The focus group examined other areas including readers' attitudes for format and physical appearance of the magazine.

The findings of this study helped meet the research objectives as outlines in Chapter I. Discussion and recommendations for use of these findings and a summary of conclusions are presented in Chapter V. Examples of the questionnaire and focus groups materials can be found in appendixes.

The questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What value do readers place on the content typically found in issues of OSU Magazine, and what changes would they suggest?
2. How do readers value the design of OSU Magazine, and what types of changes would they suggest?

Readership Survey

Overview

The readership survey was administered from July to October 2000. Initially, an advance letter and questionnaire package were sent to a sample of 600 readers. No questionnaires were returned because of an incorrect or lack of forwarding address. After the initial mailing, 123 questionnaires were completed and returned by the respondents. Reminder cards were sent to 477 members of the sample who did not return a survey. A second, small mailing of the survey with an additional cover letter was sent to 90 respondents. This mailing was small due to budget constraints set by OSU's assistant vice president, Communications Services. After two mailings, a total of 150 questionnaires were completed and returned which gave a 25% response rate overall.

The survey instrument was designed to answer the following questions:

Magazine Usage

- Do you currently receive the alumni magazine?
- How often do you typically read or look at the magazine?
- Generally, how much of each issue would you say you read or look at?
- When you finish reading it, what do you generally do with the magazine?

Magazine Content

- If it was not a membership benefit, how much would you pay for an issue of the magazine?
- If you could suggest one change in the magazine, what would it be?
- Which of the general types of stories do you generally read?
- Which types of these stories do you generally read first?
- What type of these stories do you generally not read?

- What changes in the number of these types of stories would you make?
- Overall, how would you rate the content of OSU Magazine?

Media Use

- Where do you get your information about Oklahoma State University?
- Do you use or have to access a personal computer?
- If so, do you access the World Wide Web?
- If you have access, and if the magazine were available this way, would you prefer to read the magazine there? Why or why not?
- Do you use e-mail?
- Would you like to see e-mail addresses listed in Class Notes? Why or why not?

Description of OSU Magazine Readers

In the demographic section, respondents were classified by the demographic variables of gender, age group, race/ethnic group classification, location of residence, estimated annual household income, highest degree obtained from OSU, and the academic college and graduation year for the degree received. These variables are nominal data. Graduation year was divided into decades, such as 1930–1939, 1940–1949, etc., and assigned a number for each decade range.

Gender of Respondents

Of the 147 respondents who answered this question, the total group was composed of 46.9% men (N = 69) and 53.1% women (N = 78) (Table I).

TABLE I
RESPONDENTS' GENDER

Gender	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Male	69	46.9
Female	78	53.1
Total	147	100

Age of Respondents

All respondents answered this question. Of these readers, 12.0% are 20 to 29 years of age (N = 18), 23.3% are 30 to 39 years of age (N = 35), 24.0% are 40 to 49 years of age (N = 36), 11.3% are 50 to 59 years of age (N = 17), and 29.3 are 60 years of age, or older (N = 44) (Table II).

TABLE II
RESPONDENTS' AGE

Age (years)	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
20-29	18	12.0
30-39	35	23.3
40-49	36	24.0
50-59	17	11.3
60 plus	44	29.3
Total	150	100

Race/Ethnic Group Classification of Respondents

Of the 149 respondents who answered this question, 2.0% of the subjects reported themselves as African American (N = 3), 3.4% as Asian/Pacific Islander (N = 5), 2.0% as Native American/Alaskan (N = 3), 90.6% as Caucasian/White (N = 135), and one subject disclosed he or she is Hispanic/Latino. No respondents reported themselves as Multiracial, one reported themselves as "American," and one individual preferred to not disclose this information (Table III).

TABLE III
RESPONDENTS' RACE/ETHNIC GROUP CLASSIFICATION

Race/Ethnic Group	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
African American	3	2.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	3.4
Native American/Alaskan	3	2.0
Caucasian/White	135	90.6
Hispanic/Latino	1	0.7
Multiracial	—	—
Prefer not to disclose	1	0.7
Other*	1	0.7
Total	149	100

*American (N = 1).

Residence Location of Respondents

All respondents answered this question. The subjects reported that they live inside the state of Oklahoma 49.3% (N = 74) of the time and 50.7% (N = 76) live outside the state, but within the United States (for the purpose of this study) (Table IV).

TABLE IV
RESPONDENTS' LOCATION

Residence Location	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Inside Oklahoma	74	49.3
Outside Oklahoma , but within the United States	76	50.7
Total	150	100

Annual Household Income of Respondents

Of the 147 respondents who answered this question, 1.4% (N = 2) of the subjects reported earning an estimated annual household income (before taxes) of less than \$20,000, 21.1% reported an income of between \$20,000 to \$49,999 (N = 31), 20.4% an income \$50,000 to \$74,999 (N = 30), 19.1% between \$75,000 and \$99,999 (N = 28), and 23.1% reported earning \$100,000 or more (N = 34). Income information was not disclosed by 15.0% of those who received the questionnaire (N = 22) (Table V).

TABLE V
RESPONDENTS' ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Annual Household Income Before Taxes (dollars)	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Less than \$20,000	2	1.4
\$20,000–\$49,999	31	21.1
\$50,000–\$74,999	30	20.4
\$75,000–\$99,999	28	19.1
\$100,000 or more	34	23.1
Prefer not to disclose	22	15.0
Total	147	100

Education Level of Respondents

The question about respondents' highest academic degree obtained from OSU was answered by 140 subjects. Of these, 70.7% had bachelor's degrees (N = 99), 22.1% had master's degrees (N = 31), 2.9% had obtained an Ed.D. (N = 4), one subject reported obtaining a Ph.D., 2.1% a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) (N = 3), and one subject had received a Doctor of Osteopathic degree (D.O.). Additionally, one individual reported not receiving a degree from the university (Table VI).

TABLE VI
RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION LEVEL

Highest Degree Obtained	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Bachelor's	99	70.7
Master's	31	22.1
Ed.D.	4	2.9
Ph.D.	1	0.7
DVM	3	2.1
D.O.	1	0.7
No degree	1	0.7
Total	140	100

Academic College of Respondents

These degrees were received at various colleges. Of the 139 respondents who answered this question, 14.4% of the degrees were received from the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources (N = 20), 21.6% were received from the College of Arts & Sciences (N = 30), 26.7% from the College of Business Administration (N = 37), 13.7% from the College of Education (N = 19), 14.4% from the College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology (N = 20), 6.5% from the College of Human Environmental Sciences (formerly Home Economics) (N = 9). Additionally, 2.2% of the degrees were received from the College of Veterinary Medicine (N = 3) and one individual graduated from the College of Osteopathic Medicine (Table VII).

TABLE VII
RESPONDENTS' ACADEMIC COLLEGE

College	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Agriculture & Natural Resources	20	14.4
Arts & Sciences	30	21.6
Business	37	26.7
Education	19	13.7
Engineering, Architecture & Tech.	20	14.4
Human Environmental Sciences	9	6.5
Veterinary Medicine	3	2.2
Osteopathic Medicine	1	0.7
Total	139	100

Year of Graduation of Respondents

For their highest OSU degree, a variety of graduation years was reported by 136 respondents. No respondents reported receiving their degree from between 1920 to 1929, 1.5% reported graduating between 1930 to 1939 (N = 2), 5.9% between 1940 and 1949 (N = 8), 14.0% between 1950 and 1959 (N = 19), 5.2% between 1960 and 1969 (N = 7), 22.8% between 1970 and 1979 (N = 31), and 19.1% from between 1980 and 1989 (N = 26). The largest group of subjects reported graduating with their highest degree between 1990 and 1999 (31.6%, N = 43) (Table VIII).

TABLE VIII
RESPONDENTS' YEAR OF GRADUATION

Year of Graduation (by decade)	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
1920–1929	—	—
1930–1939	2	1.5
1940–1949	8	5.9
1950–1959	19	14.0
1960–1969	7	5.2
1970–1979	31	22.8
1980–1989	26	19.1
1990–1999	43	31.6
Total	136	100

Magazine Usage

This portion of the questionnaire sought to understand what readers do with the magazine once they receive it, how much of each issue they read or look at, and what they do with the magazine once they have finished with it. To measure overall opinion, responses were tabulated.

With few exceptions, members of the Alumni Association get OSU Magazine. The largest group of readers said they read most of it (43.5%), with nearly equal percentages saying they read all of it (26.9%), or said they read about half of it (24.8%). Most, however, discard it after reading it (51.7%), though some share it with family members (29.9%). Tables IX through XII indicates the data for this portion of the questionnaire, with the most frequent response in the table indicated in boldface.

Magazine Received by Respondents

All respondents answered this question, with 96.7% indicating they currently receive it (N = 145), one individual said they did not, and 2.7% said they previously had received it (N = 4) (Table IX).

TABLE IX
RECEIVES THE MAGAZINE

Receives	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Yes	145	96.7
No	1	0.7
Previously received	4	2.7
Total	150	100

Number of Issues Typically Looked At or Read

Of the respondents surveyed, 144 respondents reported how many issues of the magazine are read or looked at, with 87.5% reporting they view every issue (N = 126), 9.7% said they view only some issues (N = 14), and 2.8% reported only rarely reading or looking at it (N = 4) (Table X).

TABLE X
NUMBER OF ISSUES TYPICALLY READ OR LOOKED AT

Number of Issues	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Every issue	126	87.5
Some issues	14	9.7
Rarely read or look at	4	2.8
Note sure	—	—
Total	144	100

Extent of Each Issue Read

Subjects indicated how much of each issue they read. Of the 145 subjects responding, 26.9% said they read all of it (N = 39), 43.5% said they read most of it (N = 63), 24.8% say they read about half of it (N = 36), and 4.1% say they read little of it (N = 6). One individual said he or she was not sure how much was read (Table XI).

TABLE XI
EXTENT OF EACH ISSUE READ

Extent Read	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
All of it	39	26.9
Most of it	63	43.5
About half of it	36	24.8
Little of it	6	4.1
Not sure	1	0.7
Total	145	100

Magazine Use After Reading

After reading the magazine, with 145 respondents responding, 8.3% said they keep it for themselves (N = 12), 29.9% said they share it with family members (N = 39), 6.9% said they share it with others (N = 10), and 51.7% said they discard the magazine after reading it (N = 75). Some other subjects reported recycling the magazine, sometimes keeping issues or discarding them, or keeping issues for a time and then discarding them (6.2%, N = 9) (Table XII).

TABLE XII
MAGAZINE USE AFTER READING

Magazine Use	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Keep it for myself	12	8.3
Share it with family	39	29.9
Share it with others	10	6.9
Discard it	75	51.7
Other*	9	6.2
Total	145	100

*Recycle (N = 4); Sometimes keep, sometimes discard (N = 2);
Keep for awhile, then discard (N = 3).

Magazine Content

This portion of the questionnaire sought to understand what value readers put on the magazine, the types of stories typically read. For certain types of articles, respondents were asked if they would like to see a change in the number of stories in

the magazine. Respondents also evaluated the writing and characteristics of stories in the magazine.

Additionally, this section asked readers what suggestions, in terms of content, topics for future issues or other types of changes they would like to make. To measure overall opinion, responses were counted or indicated by ratings using a Likert scale. Where applicable, the most frequent response in each table is highlighted in boldface.

While most respondents said they would pay nothing for the magazine (33.8%), at least an equal number of respondents said they would pay less than \$1.00 and an equal number would pay more than \$1.00.

When initially receiving the magazine, the respondents said they turn to the main feature story first (48.2%), the item readers also tended to read most often (18.4%). When asked what stories respondents do not read, the main feature was indicated as the story that they rarely missed (1.0%). "Class Notes" was also indicated as a story that respondents did not miss reading (2.9%). "Class Notes" was read first about half as often as the main story (25.5%); it was read nearly as often as the main story (17.8%). Stories about the college from which respondents graduated (3.4%) were also rarely missed, following the main feature and "Class Notes." Stories about the college from which respondents graduated from were read nearly as often as "Class Notes" (15.7%), followed by athletic/sports stories (13.8%).

Read least often were stories about colleges from which respondents did not graduate (6.0%), and gifts/campaign stories (5.8%). These two categories of stories also were rated as stories that were not read (22.9% and 26.8% respectively). As stories they read first, respondents were least likely to read stories about the college from which they graduated (5.7%), followed by research stories (2.8%), and stories about awards and recognition (0.7%). Stories about the college from which respondents did not graduate and stories about contributions were never read first.

The interest in seeing more stories was strongest for articles about nostalgic events in OSU history (Mean = 3.52; see Table XVII). Respondents reported desiring slightly more stories about campus events (Mean = 3.38) and successful alumni (Mean = 3.34). They also indicated they would like to see slightly fewer stories on gifts and contributions (Mean = 2.65) as well as stories about the branch campuses (Mean = 2.64).

Subjects rated the writing and characteristics of stories (timeliness, credibility, accuracy, diverse coverage, length, depth, interesting, well-written, informative) in the magazine as overall generally positive. Slightly higher opinions were given to their credibility (Mean = 4.19; see Table XVIII), that they are well-written (Mean = 4.14) and informative (Mean = 4.13). Respondents indicated they were less than certain about the diversity of coverage (Mean = 3.87) and a little more uncertain about the depth of articles (Mean = 3.64), with opinions varying somewhat for both. Opinions varied most concerning article length, somewhat disagreeing that they are too long (Mean = 2.55).

When respondents were asked to make a suggestion for change in the magazine's content, 52 subjects offered several different suggestions. There were many suggestions to increase the coverage of the types of stories already addressed in the magazine (N = 14); some suggestions focused on requests for new coverage of topics (N = 12), such as articles on historical subjects. Subjects also said that the magazine was "excellent," indicating they did not want to suggest any changes (N = 11). The complete list comments are provided in Appendix I.

Tables XIII through XVIII indicates the data for this portion of the questionnaire.

Magazine's Perceived Value

Of the 139 respondents answering this question, 33.8% (N = 47) said they would not pay for an issue of the magazine if it was not a benefit of their membership. Of the other respondents, 16.6% (N = 23) said they would pay less than \$1.00, 29.5% (N = 41) said they would pay between \$1.00–1.99, 12.2% (N = 17) would pay between \$2.00–2.99, 5.0% between \$3.00–3.99 (N = 7), and 2.9% (N = 4) valued an issue at more than \$4.00 (Table XIII).

TABLE XIII

MAGAZINE'S PERCEIVED VALUE

Dollar Value	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Nothing	47	33.8
Less than \$1.00	23	16.6
\$1.00–1.99	41	29.5
\$2.00–2.99	17	12.2
\$3.00–3.99	7	5.0
More than \$4.00	4	2.9
Total	139	100

(Mean = 2.5, SD = 1.34, Median = 2.00)

Types of Stories Read

Multiple responses to this question were allowed. The main story or feature story was read 18.4% of the time (N = 128), "Class Notes" and stories on fellow alumni 17.8% of the time (N = 124), stories about the college from which subjects graduated were read 15.7% of the time (N = 109), athletics/sports was read 13.8% (N = 96),

awards and recognition stories were read 11.9% of the time (N = 83), research stories 9.8% of the time (N = 68), stories about the college from which subjects did not graduate were read 6.0% of the time (N = 42), and gifts or campaign updates were read 5.8% of the time (N = 40). Other stories were read 0.9% (N = 6) of the time, including stories on general information, those regarding legacy tuition help, and OSU-Tulsa updates (Table XIV).

TABLE XIV
TYPES OF STORIES READ

Story Type	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Main/Feature story	128	18.4
Class Notes/Fellow alumni	124	17.8
Stories: College graduated from	109	15.7
Athletics/Sports	96	13.8
Awards & recognition	83	11.9
Research stories	68	9.8
Stories: College not graduated from	42	6.0
Gifts/Campaign updates	40	5.8
Other*	6	0.9
Total	696	100

*Read entire magazine (N = 3); General information (N = 1);
Information regarding grandchildren legacy for tuition help (N = 1);
OSU-Tulsa updates (N = 1).

Types of Stories Read First

Of the stories read first, with 141 respondents responding, the main story or feature story was read first 48.2% of the time (N = 68), "Class Notes" and stories on fellow alumni 25.5% of the time (N = 36), athletics/sports was read first 13.5% (N = 19), stories about the college from which subjects graduated were read first 5.7% of the time (N = 8), research stories 2.8% of the time (N = 4), and awards and recognition stories were read first 0.7% of the time (N = 1). Stories that were not read first included stories about the college from which subjects did not graduate and gifts or campaign updates. Respondents indicated that 3.6% of the time (N = 5), the entire magazine was read, or that another type of story was read first (Table XV).

TABLE XV
TYPES OF STORIES READ FIRST

Story Type	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Main/Feature story	68	48.2
Class Notes/Fellow alumni	36	25.5
Athletics/Sports	19	13.5
Stories: College graduated from	8	5.7
Research stories	4	2.8
Awards & recognition	1	0.7
Stories: College not graduated from	—	—
Gifts/Campaign updates	—	—
Other*	5	3.6
Total	141	100

*Read entire magazine (2.8 %, N = 4); Other stories (not specified) (N = 1).

Types of Stories Not Read

Multiple responses to this question were allowed. Stories about gifts or campaign updates were not read 26.8% of the time (N = 55), stories about the college from which subjects did not graduate were not read 22.9% of the time (N = 47), research stories were not read 18.5% of the time (N = 38), athletics/sports stories were not read 12.2% (N = 25), awards and recognition stories were not read 8.8% of the time (N = 18), stories about the college from which subjects graduated were not read 3.4% of the time (N = 7), "Class Notes" and stories on fellow alumni 2.9% of the time (N = 6), and the main or feature story was not read 1.0% of the time (N = 2). Other stories were not read 3.4% (N = 7) of the time because they read the entire magazine (Table XVI).

TABLE XVI
TYPES OF STORIES NOT READ

Story Type	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Gifts/Campaign updates	55	26.8
Stories: College not graduated from	47	22.9
Research stories	38	18.5
Athletics/Sports	25	12.2
Awards & recognition	18	8.8
Stories: College graduated from	7	3.4
Class Notes/Fellow alumni	6	2.9
Main/Feature story	2	1.0
Other*	7	3.4
Total	205	100

*Read entire magazine.

Desired Frequency of Stories

Respondents recommended the frequency of certain types of stories they wanted to see in the magazine, indicating whether they wanted to see more, the same number, fewer stories, or were uncertain of suggesting a change in the frequency of stories using the scale of "More," "Same," "Fewer," and "Not Sure" (Table XVII).

Nostalgic Events in OSU History. More = 56.6%, Same = 39.5%, Fewer = 3.1%, Not Sure = 0.8%. The mean was calculated as 3.52 (SD = 0.60, SEM = 0.05), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 129).

Campus Events. More = 48.4%, Same = 45.2%, Fewer = 2.4%, Not Sure = 4.0%. The mean was calculated as 3.38 (SD = 0.73, SEM = 0.07), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 126).

Successful Alumni. More = 40.8%, Same = 53.9%, Fewer = 3.9%, Not Sure = 1.5%. The mean was calculated as 3.34 (SD = 0.63, SEM = 0.06), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 130).

Athletics and Sports. More = 28.8%, Same = 57.6%, Fewer = 12.8%, Not Sure = 0.8%. The mean was calculated as 3.14 (SD = 0.66, SEM = 0.06), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 125).

Outstanding Current Students. More = 21.3%, Same = 69.7%, Fewer = 7.4%, Not Sure = 1.6%. The mean was calculated as 3.11 (SD = 0.59, SEM = 0.05), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 122).

Department Profiles. More = 24.0%, Same = 61.2%, Fewer = 9.1%, Not Sure = 5.8%. The mean was calculated as 3.03 (SD = 0.75, SEM = 0.07), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 121).

Scientific Research. More = 22.6%, Same = 57.3%, Fewer = 16.1%, Not Sure = 4.0%. The mean was calculated as 2.98 (SD = 0.74, SEM = 0.07), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 124).

President Halligan's Thoughts. More = 18.2%, Same = 62.0%, Fewer = 10.7%, Not Sure = 9.1%. The mean was calculated as 2.89 (SD = 0.80, SEM = 0.07), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 121).

Gifts and Contributions. More = 3.3%, Same = 66.7%, Fewer = 21.7%, Not Sure = 8.3%. The mean was calculated as 2.65 (SD = 0.68, SEM = 0.06), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 120).

OSU Branch Campuses¹. More = 11.7%, Same = 52.5%, Fewer = 24.2%, Not Sure = 11.7%. The mean was calculated as 2.64 (SD = 0.84, SEM = 0.08), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 120). ¹OSU-Tulsa, OSU-Oklahoma City, OSU-Okmulgee, College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa

Other. Other stories were suggested: Greek activities (N = 2), Branch campus alumni (N = 1), Ag college (N = 1).

TABLE XVII
DESIRED FREQUENCY OF STORIES (IN PERCENTAGES)

Story Type	More	Same	Fewer	Not Sure	Mean
Nostalgic events in OSU history	56.6	39.5	3.1	0.8	3.52
Campus events	48.4	45.2	2.4	4.0	3.38
Successful alumni	40.8	53.9	3.9	1.5	3.34
Athletics and sports	28.8	57.6	12.8	0.8	3.14
Outstanding current students	21.3	69.7	7.4	1.6	3.11
Department profiles	24.0	61.2	9.1	5.8	3.03
Scientific research	22.6	57.3	16.1	4.0	2.98
President Halligan's thoughts	18.2	62.0	10.7	9.1	2.89
Gifts and contributions	3.3	66.7	21.7	8.3	2.65
OSU branch campuses ¹	11.7	52.5	24.2	11.7	2.64
Other*	—	—	—	—	—

[Mean: 4.00 = More, 3.00 = Same, 2.00 = Fewer, 1.00 = Not sure]

*Greek activities (N = 2), Branch campus alumni (N = 1), Ag college (N = 1).

¹OSU-Tulsa, OSU-Oklahoma City, OSU-Okmulgee,
College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa

Rated Content of The Magazine

Respondents evaluated the writing and characteristics of stories in the magazine. Subjects were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with each evaluation statement. The scale used was "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Undecided," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree" (Table XVIII).

Timeliness of Articles. Strongly Agree = 12.4%, Agree = 76.6%, Undecided = 9.5%, Disagree = 1.5%, Strongly Disagree = 0.0%. The mean was calculated as 4.00 (SD = 0.53, SEM = 0.05), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 137).

Credibility of Articles. Strongly Agree = 6.3%, Agree = 66.4%, Undecided = 7.3%, Disagree = 0.0%, Strongly Disagree = 0.0%. The mean was calculated as 4.19 (SD = 0.55, SEM = 0.05), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 137).

Well-written Articles. Strongly Agree = 19.7%, Agree = 75.2%, Undecided = 4.4%, Disagree = 0.7%, Strongly Disagree = 0.0%. The mean was calculated as 4.14 (SD = 0.50, SEM = 0.04), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 137).

Informative Articles. Strongly Agree = 19.9%, Agree = 74.3%, Undecided = 5.2%, Disagree = 0.7%, Strongly Disagree = 0.0%. The mean was calculated as 4.13 (SD = 0.51, SEM = 0.04), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 136).

Accuracy of Articles. Strongly Agree = 18.7%, Agree = 68.7%, Undecided = 12.7%, Disagree = 0.0%, Strongly Disagree = 0.0%. The mean was calculated as 4.06 (SD = 0.56, SEM = 0.05), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 134).

Interesting articles. Strongly Agree = 15.4%, Agree = 74.3%, Undecided = 8.1%, Disagree = 1.5%, Strongly Disagree = 0.7%. The mean was calculated as 4.02 (SD = 0.60, SEM = 0.05), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 136).

Diversity of Coverage. Strongly Agree = 14.9%, Agree = 63.4%, Undecided = 15.7%, Disagree = 6.0%, Strongly Disagree = 0.0%. The mean was calculated as 3.87 (SD = 0.73, SEM = 0.06), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 134).

Depth of articles. Strongly Agree = 6.8%, Agree = 59.9%, Undecided = 25.0%, Disagree = 7.6%, Strongly Disagree = 0.8%. The mean was calculated as 3.64 (SD = 0.75, SEM = 0.07), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 132).

Length of Articles. Strongly Agree = 0.0%, Agree = 17.9%, Undecided = 23.9%, Disagree = 53.0%, Strongly Disagree = 5.2%. The mean was calculated as 2.55 (SD = 0.85, SEM = 0.07), the median was calculated as 2.00 (N = 134).

TABLE XVIII
RATED CONTENT OF MAGAZINE (IN PERCENTAGES)

Opinion of Articles	S. Agree	Agree	Undec	Disagree	S. Disagree	Mean
Timeliness of articles	12.4	76.6	9.5	1.5	—	4.00
Credibility of articles	26.3	66.4	7.3	—	—	4.19
Well-written articles	19.7	75.2	4.4	0.7	—	4.14
Informative articles	19.9	74.3	5.2	0.7	—	4.13
Accuracy of articles	18.7	68.7	12.7	—	—	4.06
Interesting articles	15.4	74.3	8.1	1.5	0.7	4.02
Diversity of coverage	14.9	63.4	15.7	6.0	—	3.87
Depth of articles	6.8	59.9	25.0	7.6	0.8	3.64
Articles too long	—	17.9	23.9	53.0	5.2	2.55

[Mean: 5.00 = Strongly Agree, 4.00 = Agree, 3.00 = Undecided, 2.00 = Disagree, 1.00 = Strongly Disagree]

Suggestions for Change

The questionnaire included an open-ended question asking subjects what suggestions, in terms of content, topics for future issue, or any other types of changes they would like to make; 52 subjects responded to this question. Subjects also said that the magazine was “excellent,” indicating they did not want to suggest any changes (N = 11). The complete listing of comments are provided in Appendix I.

Several suggestions to increase the coverage of the types of stories already addressed in the magazine (N = 14). Some said they wanted more college or departmentally specific, such as news specific to these areas, research/technical, department opinion pieces, personnel changes, club, calendar and event information.

Several suggestions focused on requests for new coverage of topics (N = 12). Some suggestions focused on diversifying coverage, such as: articles from the branch campus, information on the university's academic standing, stories on transferring or retiring faculty, and information on facilities improvements. Some requests were for diversity of coverage such as: general faculty and student profiles (not just award winners), minorities, international alumni and those not living in the area, "life members" of the Alumni Association, news from regional alumni associations, and successful alumni "that are not famous, rich, or in the news a lot." Several subjects requested for articles on historical subjects, to relate them to state history or current university efforts or to current university issues.

Two subjects requested more advertising of university-type clothing and memorabilia. One respondent requested an annual report and one individual indicated that he or she did not read enough of the magazine to make an informed decision.

Media Use

This portion of the questionnaire sought to understand subjects' sources of information about the university and how much they rely on each type of media. Additionally, this section inquired about the readerships' opinions regarding computer use, access to the Internet, and some questions about seeing the magazine published online or seeing e-mail addresses become part of "Class Notes." To measure overall opinion, responses were counted or indicated by ratings.

Opinions differed greatly about how much respondents rely on different types of media for information about OSU. OSU Magazine was relied on very often (Mean = 3.93; see Table XIX), followed by friends, family and acquaintances somewhat often (Mean = 3.26), followed by newspapers (Mean = 3.13). POSSE mailings was almost never relied upon for information about OSU (Mean = 1.96) and OSU Parents was relied on even less (Mean = 1.63).

The typical respondent has access to a personal computer (87.2%), with nearly equal numbers reporting access to the World Wide Web (80.6%) and use of e-mail (79.3%). Those with Internet access, however, say they would not prefer to access OSU Magazine online (63.3%) or are unsure if they would like to or not (23.1%). Those saying they preferred not to see the magazine online cited the pleasure of having a hard copy of the magazine in hand to read at their leisure and did not enjoy using a computer to read a magazine (58.9%). Some respondents cited lack of access and/or time (16.7%) as their primary reason for not wanting the magazine online. Those subjects with a preference for seeing the magazine online said they would prefer it because it would be more convenient and would contribute less waste and clutter (16.7%).

About half of the respondents preferred having e-mail addresses listed in "Class Notes" (48.3%), with equal numbers indicating "no" (26.5%) or not sure of their preference (25.2%). The primary reason for including e-mail addresses was the ability to contact old classmates and friends (56.1%).

Tables XIX through XXVI indicates the data for this portion of the questionnaire, with the typical response indicated in boldface.

Main Source of Information About OSU

Respondents indicated the importance of various types of media regarding information they receive about Oklahoma State University. Subjects were asked to rate how much they rely on each media type. The scale used was "Always," "Very Often," "Sometimes," "Almost Never," and "Never" (Table XIX).

OSU Magazine. Always = 33.8%, Very Often = 29.6%, Sometimes = 33.8%, Almost Never = 1.4%, and Never = 1.4%. The mean was calculated as 3.93 (SD = 0.93, SEM = 0.08), the median was calculated as 4.00 (N = 142).

Friends, Family, Acquaintances. Always = 12.7%, Very Often = 25.4%, Sometimes = 43.3%, Almost Never = 12.7%, and Never = 6.0%. The mean was calculated as 3.26 (SD = 1.03, SEM = 0.09), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 134).

Newspapers. Always = 12.8%, Very Often = 27.1%, Sometimes = 34.6%, Almost Never = 11.3%, and Never = 14.3%. The mean was calculated as 3.13 (SD = 1.21, SEM = 0.11), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 133).

College or Departmental Newsletter. Always = 9.2%, Very Often = 21.5%, Sometimes = 37.7%, Almost Never = 14.6%, and Never = 16.9%. The mean was calculated as 2.92 (SD = 1.19, SEM = 0.10), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 130).

Television. Always = 6.7%, Very Often = 22.4%, Sometimes = 33.6%, Almost Never = 21.6%, and Never = 15.7%. The mean was calculated as 2.83 (SD = 1.15, SEM = 0.10), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 134).

OSU Foundation Mailings. Always = 5.3%, Very Often = 14.4%, Sometimes = 43.2%, Almost Never = 21.2%, and Never = 15.9%. The mean was calculated as 2.72 (SD = 1.07, SEM = 0.93), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 132).

Internet¹. Always = 10.2%, Very Often = 19.7%, Sometimes = 27.6%, Almost Never = 14.2%, and Never = 28.4%. The mean was calculated as 2.69 (SD = 1.34, SEM = 0.12), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 127). ¹World Wide Web, e-mail

OSU Spirit. Always = 10.7%, Very Often = 15.6%, Sometimes = 32.8%, Almost Never = 9.0%, and Never = 32.0%. The mean was calculated as 2.64 (SD = 1.36, SEM = 0.12), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 122).

Alumni Chapter Mailings. Always = 8.4%, Very Often = 9.9%, Sometimes = 38.9%, Almost Never = 13.0%, and Never = 29.8%. The mean was calculated as 2.54 (SD = 1.25, SEM = 0.11), the median was calculated as 3.00 (N = 131).

Radio. Always = 4.7%, Very Often = 13.3%, Sometimes = 26.6%, Almost Never = 25.8%, and Never = 29.7%. The mean was calculated as 2.38 (SD = 1.18, SEM = 0.10), the median was calculated as 2.00 (N = 128).

POSSE Mailings. Always = 5.7%, Very Often = 8.2%, Sometimes = 19.7%, Almost Never = 9.0%, and Never = 57.4%. The mean was calculated as 1.96 (SD = 1.28, SEM = 0.12), the median was calculated as 1.00 (N = 122).

OSU Parents. Always = 1.71%, Very Often = 5.1%, Sometimes = 13.7%, Almost Never = 13.7%, and Never = 65.8%. The mean was calculated as 1.63 (SD = 1.01, SEM = 0.09), the median was calculated as 1.00 (N = 117).

Other. O-State Sports Magazine (N = 1), OSU Headline News (N = 1), "CC-Mail" on campus and mailbox postings for adjuncts (N = 1).

ORIGINAL STATE UNIVERSITY OF OHIO

TABLE XIX

MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT OSU (IN PERCENTAGES)

Media Type	Always	V. Often	Some	A. Never	Never	Mean
<u>OSU Magazine</u>	33.8	29.6	33.8	1.4	1.4	3.93
Friends, family, acq.	12.7	25.4	43.3	12.7	6.0	3.26
Newspapers	12.8	27.1	34.6	11.3	14.3	3.13
College or dept. newsltr	9.2	21.5	37.7	14.6	16.9	2.92
Television	6.7	22.4	33.6	21.6	15.7	2.83
OSU Foundation mail.	5.3	14.4	43.2	21.2	15.9	2.72
Internet	10.2	19.7	27.6	14.2	28.4	2.69
<u>OSU Spirit</u>	10.7	15.6	32.8	9.0	32.0	2.64
Alumni chapter mail.	8.4	9.9	38.9	13.0	29.8	2.54
Radio	4.7	13.3	26.6	25.8	29.7	2.38
POSSE mailings	5.7	8.2	19.7	9.0	57.4	1.96
<u>OSU Parents</u>	1.71	5.1	13.7	13.7	65.8	1.63
Other*	—	—	—	—	—	—

[Mean: 5.00 = Always, 4.00 = Very Often, 3.00 = Sometimes, 2.00 = Almost Never, 1.00 = Never]

*O-State Sports Magazine (N = 1), OSU Headline News (N = 1), "CC-Mail" on campus and mailbox postings for adjuncts (N = 1).

Personal Computer Access

Of the 148 respondents who answered this question, 87.2% said they did have access to the World Wide Web (N = 129), 12.2% said they did not (N = 18), and one individual was unsure if he or she had computer access or not (Table XX).

TABLE XX
PERSONAL COMPUTER ACCESS

Computer Access	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Yes	129	87.2
No	18	12.2
Not sure	1	0.7
Total	148	100

World Wide Web Access

Of the 139 subjects who answered this question, 80.6% said they did have access to the World Wide Web (N = 112), 18.0% said they did not (N = 25), and 1.4% were unsure if they had access or not (N = 2) (Table XXI).

TABLE XXI
WORLD WIDE WEB ACCESS

WWW Access	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Yes	112	80.6
No	25	18.0
Not sure	2	1.4
Total	139	100

Preference for Online Magazine Access

Of the 147 respondents who answered this question, 13.6% said they would prefer to see the magazine produced online (N = 20), 63.3% said they would not

(N = 93), and 23.1% were unsure of their preference for this alternative (N = 34) (Table XXII).

TABLE XXII
PREFERENCE FOR ONLINE MAGAZINE ACCESS

Prefer Access Online	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Yes	20	13.6
No	93	63.3
Not sure	34	23.1
Total	147	100

Reason for Online Magazine Access

Only 90 respondents answered this question. Those subjects with a preference for seeing the magazine online said they would prefer it because it would be more convenient, contribute less waste and clutter (16.7%, N = 15). Those subjects who said they do not want to see the magazine online said so because they wanted a hard copy in hand to read at their leisure, that it was more comfortable (58.9%, N = 53), lack of access and/or time was cited by 16.7% of subjects (N = 15).

A preference for either format was offered by 2.2% of the respondents (N = 2). Other reasons were disclosed by 5.5% of the subjects (N = 3) (Table XXIII).

TABLE XXIII

PREFERENCE FOR ONLINE MAGAZINE ACCESS, EXPLAINED

Positive Preference	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Convenient, less waste, less clutter	15	16.7
Other	2	2.2
Yes and No		
Both are fine	2	2.2
Negative Preference		
Hard copy, leisure, comfort	53	58.9
Lack of access and/or time	15	16.7
Other	3	3.3
Total	90	100

Use of E-mail

All respondents answered this question with 79.3% of subjects using e-mail (N = 119), while 20.7% did not (N = 31) (Table XXIV).

TABLE XXIV
USE OF E-MAIL

E-mail Usage	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Yes	119	79.3
No	31	20.7
Not sure	—	—
Total	150	100

Preference for E-mail Address in “Class Notes”

There were 147 responses to this question. A positive preference of including e-mail addresses in “Class Notes” was indicated by 48.3% of subjects (N = 71), a negative response was indicated by 26.5% of subjects (N = 39), 25.2% were unsure (N = 37) (Table XXVI).

TABLE XXV
PREFERENCE FOR E-MAIL ADDRESS IN CLASS NOTES

Class Notes E-mail Preference	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Yes	71	48.3
No	39	26.5
Not sure	37	25.2
Total	147	100

Reason for E-mail Addresses in "Class Notes"

Only 82 respondents answered this question. Those with a preference to include e-mail addresses in "Class Notes" said they would use them to contact friends or the university (56.1%, N = 46), 12.2% desired it because it would be fast, easy, and convenient (N = 10).

Of those subjects who did not prefer to include e-mail addresses in "Class Notes" said they not like to because of a lack of access and/or time (9.8%, N = 8), 3.7% thought it unnecessary (N = 3), 7.3% were worried about junk mail and information overload (N = 6), 4.9% had concerns about privacy (N = 4).

Other reasons for, or against, the inclusion of e-mail address were indicated by 6.1% of the subjects (N = 5) (Table XXV).

TABLE XXVI

PREFERENCE FOR E-MAIL ADDRESSES IN CLASS NOTES, EXPLAINED

Positive Preference	Frequency	Distribution Percent (%)
Contact friends, university	46	56.1
Fast, easy, convenient	10	12.2
Other	4	4.9
Negative Preference		
Lack of access and/or time	8	9.8
Unnecessary	3	3.7
Junk mail, information overload	6	7.3
Privacy	4	4.9
Other	1	1.2
Total	82	100

Focus Group

Overview

The focus group with nine participants was held Wednesday, October 11, 2000 from 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Prior to the actual focus group interviews, questions were reviewed and refined based on the recommendations of several OSU graphic designers, including the art director for the magazine. At the end of the session, participants were asked if they would be willing to participate in future similar focus groups on this issue.

The focus group was designed to answer the following questions about magazine's design and layout:

- In general, how do the participants feel about picking up and looking at a new issue of OSU Magazine? Are there any particular magazine issues that stand out as attractive or particularly unappealing visually? What seems to attract their attention first?
- What kinds of adjectives would participants use to describe the look and feel of OSU Magazine?
- How does the magazine compare visually to other magazines they read?
- How would they feel if changing the look of OSU Magazine increased or decreased the costs to design and print it?
- How have participants felt about various magazine covers? Which covers have impressed them most, least, or that they remember well? What impact does the back cover of the magazine have?
- Has the style of covers made a difference, whether they have been a plain photograph, a manipulated photograph, or if the cover is an illustration?
- Do participants have any suggestions for improving magazine covers?
- Does color in the magazine make much difference? How do participants feel about its use overall? How do they feel about the use of background color and images?
- How do participants feel about the quality of photography? Have it been appropriate, appealing, interesting, been of appropriate size and quantity?
- Should photographs concentrate mainly on people, or should there be a mix of them, like campus scenes or research-oriented photographs?
- Can participants suggest ways to improve the magazine's photography?
- Comparing art and photography, what mix of each do participants feel is appropriate for the magazine? Do you have any feelings about the use of art?
- Does they think art in the magazine needs to be original or is stock art/clip art (or photography) acceptable?
- Can participants suggest ways to improve the magazine's use of artwork?
- Do they have any feelings about the use of typography in the magazine?

- How important to participants to fill up the page with text and images?
- Do they have any feelings about the kind of paper used in the magazine?
- How do participants think OSU Magazine compares visually to the magazine to various OSU colleges?
- Do participants have any other comments or suggestions about look of OSU Magazine that they would like to express?

Before beginning the focus group, participants were asked to answer one survey question and answer some demographic questions similar to those asked on the questionnaire:

- Of the magazines you enjoy, please indicate three that you find visually pleasing and why.
- What is your gender? What is your age group? What is your race/ethnic group classification?
- What is your estimated annual household income before taxes?
- What is the highest level of academic degree from Oklahoma State University? Include the college and year of graduation for this degree.

Participant Profiles

A brief questionnaire provided to the nine subjects revealed descriptive data of those who participated in the focus group interview. Two of the participants indicated that they had also responded to the readership survey.

The group of participants was relatively homogenous with nearly equal numbers of males (N = 5) and females (N = 4) and of a wide range of ages: 20-29 (N = 1), 30-39 (N = 2), 40-49 (N = 2), 50-59 (N = 1), or 60 plus (N = 3). Participants, however, were not mixed along Race/ethnic group classification: Caucasian/White (N = 8), Native American/Alaskan (N = 1).

For highest academic degree received from Oklahoma State University: Bachelor's (N = 5), Master's (1), DVM (1), and one individual did not report this information. These degrees were received from the following colleges: Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (N = 1), and Sciences (N = 3), Engineering, Architecture, and Technology (N = 1), Human Environmental Sciences (N = 2), Veterinary Medicine (N = 1), and no report (N = 1). Graduation years were reported as: 1951, 1957, 1969, 1975, 1979, 1990, 1995, and one panelist was a current student. One subject did not provide this data.

Participants were asked to disclose their annual household income (before taxes): Less than \$20,000 (N = 1), \$20,000–\$49,999 (N = 1), \$50,000–\$74,999 (N = 3), \$75,000–\$99,999 (N = 2), \$100,000 or more (N = 1), or preferred not to disclose (N = 1).

Subjects were also asked about what other visually pleasing magazines they enjoy (other than OSU Magazine), and why they are enjoyed.

Focus Group Analysis And Summary

Three of the participants are currently working in graphic design or production, or previously had experience in this area and more easily articulated their opinions than did other members of the group.

From the onset of the discussion, participants were consistently vocal in their appreciation for the design of the magazine and the work that went into its production. When asked for initial impressions, several participants said that they did not think any changes in the design were needed. One participant remarked that the quality (in design) has been maintained over its years of publication.

Two of the members commented that OSU Magazine is an added bonus for being a member of the Alumni Association. One participant thought, primarily for this reason, that the magazine should look expensive, "like you should be proud of it, and proud of

Oklahoma State University

where you went to school.” Another member suggested that association membership should be used to deny non-members access to the magazine, particularly online.

A few participants noted that the OSU Magazine stood out among similar publications from other universities and one noted how much better OSU magazine looked compared to the magazine produced by the agriculture college.

Near the conclusion of the session, this sentiment was repeated when one subject remarked that, “We could nit-pick all day. I think it’s a fine piece of work as it is right now. There’s not that much wrong with it.”

There was considerable agreement that photography is the first thing that attracts their attention to a magazine issue, and it is the photography that provides the magazine with its most visually pleasing aspect.

Group members said the cover generally draws them to read the issue since it alerts readers that there is “going to be something interesting on the inside It’s so refreshing to see a magazine that somebody’s put some effort and time into to draw somebody in.”

Some felt the magazine covers were not consistent or dramatic enough. Criticism of consistency included the size, colors and placement of the masthead, with some saying they wanted to see the masthead and cover look more consistent and similar to newsstand magazines. Other participants, however, said they did not mind different treatments of the masthead (and cover) because this alteration usually offered visual interest and seemed appropriate to what the cover depicted. One member said he thought covers sometimes got too busy “... and you almost lose interest because there is so much there. Your eye loses coordination.”

Because of the cover’s importance as an initial impression, several members requested some consideration to indicating on the cover what will be found inside. But, as one participant noted, this “sidebar” has to compliment, not detract, from the cover. The wording, one member said, should not draw more attention than the

William E. Glass
University of Oregon
1988

masthead. One participant also suggested including that the magazine is a publication of the Oklahoma State University Alumni Association. One individual suggested that the title of the publication is not descriptive enough, but group members were unable to suggest an alternate name.

The design of the back cover was regarded with nearly as much importance as the image on the front cover, possibly because the back cover also contains the reader's mailing address. For one member, back cover images seemed more memorable than those on the front of the magazine.

Participants seemed to demand the frequent use of "glossy," full color photography inside the magazine because they attracted the most attention, seemed to entice reading the associated stories and made the articles more interesting overall.

There was a consensus that photographs of people are highly desirable, readers might identify with them. Participants were particularly drawn to photographs to people they know. Several felt that the photographs needed to consistently portray Oklahoma State University at all times.

While most participants said that photographs should always include human subjects, one participant said that photos of new facilities (such as the Gallagher-Iba Arena or the new turf on the football field), do not need to include people to be interesting or informative, especially for alumni who are not able to regularly visit the university.

Photography was deemed sufficient in quantity and appropriate to the stories they accompanied. Participants did not indicate any preferences for sizes of photographs; there was more criticism of the content and the background. Some participants criticized the cropping of photographs, desiring more drama and contrast, particularly on the magazine's cover.

Some treatments of photographs drew criticism. One participant said she did not like photos of people when the background had been eliminated. Her opinion was

Oklahoma State University

based on how well the background was removed or if the photograph treatment seemed appropriate. Members commented that a photograph treated this way needs to look natural, without “funny-looking heads” or “cotton candy hair.” Other members of the group disagreed, saying they enjoyed photographs with backgrounds removed because it is more interesting to the eye than rectangular shapes typically used, allowing more opportunities for varying the design and visual interest on the page.

The use of color boxes to highlight stories is appreciated because this helps in separating and organizing separate stories on a page. Other comments on the organization of the magazine included an appreciation for the various section indicators, and group members suggested that this design element should be used with more emphasis for finding sections of interest. Because some pages contain multiple articles, several participants requested a story “ender” be used so indicate when a story is finished. The group unanimously believed that this “ender” should be the university’s triangle used in the OSU logo and seal. Participants requested using more orange and black in the design of the magazine. Participants said they liked the use of white space so that their eyes could rest while reading and did not want pages crammed with text and photographs. One remarked, “... without white space, you just toss it.”

One participant appreciated the readability of the typography. But generally, participants had very little to say about the magazine’s choice of typefaces. Most thought the text was appropriately sized, that the line length was not too long and that headlines were also sized appropriately. One individual said she would like to see more pull quotes used. One member remarked that he did not appreciate seeing type used over someone’s face, and suggested that the same artistic treatment to all parts of a photo collage be consistently applied.

Some participants thought that text over graphics or colored backgrounds or photographs sometimes made it difficult to read the text. Several times during the

session, some of the older participants were concerned about having enough contrast to read the text so that stories would be readable. Several examples in magazine issues that were provided to the group were shown to be too low in contrast. These participants said they would not read stories treated in this manner. One participant thought the point size should be increased for this reason.

Group members were unaware that most of the art used in the magazine was commercially provided. One member thought some art should be used, but regarded it as a "major effort." Members generally thought the magazine staff should include an artist to create original art, or, at least, students might be found to produce art for a given publication. Members did not want to leave a story out because artwork (or photography) was not available.

Most participants were mixed about advertising in the magazine. A few of the participants thought the ads should look more like "sponsors" because they seem university related. They preferred not to see commercial ads.

Some participants suggested that a gatefold or centerfold should occasionally be included to highlight major events, such as homecoming.

While the discussion was steered toward design issues, occasionally content issues were raised by group members. "Class Notes," particularly among older participants, was a favorite feature. Several participants preferred the difference in the paper used in "Class Notes" to the paper used in the rest of the magazine. There were multiple requests for a "Class Notes" update form in each issue. One life member said he has never had the opportunity to update his information.

When the idea of providing the magazine on the Web was raised by one participant, several participants said they preferred to have a hard copy to read at their convenience. Some of these suggested that a "teaser" advertising the stories of upcoming publications could be provided on the Web, while one member suggested using the Web as a place to offer more in-depth information on a story.

Michigan State University Library

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The process of redesign starts with an examination of content. What should stay, what should go, and what should be added? The designer does not answer those questions alone; answers should come from management, staff, and readers. Thus a redesign should start with the formation of a committee representing all segments of the newspaper. (Moen, 1989, p. 233)

While the available research on publication design is mostly oriented toward newspapers, Moen's suggestions could still be applied to magazines.

Changes in magazine design cannot be accomplished overnight, but must be carefully manipulated by altering various elements. While changes can often be accomplished very quickly, alterations should not be undertaken without first taking readers preferences into account. Since the first Oklahoma State University alumni publication was issued, the needs of its readership have only been critically investigated three times. The last inquiry took place eight years ago.

The primary goal of this two-part research approach centered about discovering what value readers placed on the content typically found in issues of OSU Magazine and what changes they would suggest. It also sought to understand how readers valued the design of the magazine and the types of changes they would suggest. This chapter will discuss the findings gleaned from the readership survey and focus group conducted for this study.

Summary of Findings

This research effort sought to understand whether OSU Magazine is meeting its goal of keeping its alumni informed and maintaining a relationship that produces an attitude among readers that is both favorable and supportive of the university. With the information gathered from this study, the editor and art director for OSU's alumni magazine will be able to evaluate and modify their goals in meeting both the needs of the magazine's readership and the needs of the university.

A mail survey was conducted to determine how readers use the magazine, their preference for its editorial content, and sources of information about Oklahoma State University. Additionally, the questionnaire inquired about the readerships' opinions regarding issues of electronic publication. Demographic information was collected to learn more about the magazine's audience. A focus group examined readers' attitudes for the magazine's format and physical appearance.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

The major weakness of this study was the questionnaire's low response rate. While not entirely adequate, the data reported can be taken as generally indicating the opinions of those responding. The results from this survey also corresponded well with findings of Dollar (1974) and Moore (1992).

Traditionally, the return rates for unsolicited mail surveys have never been high and typically receive the lowest percentage of responses (Weisberh & Bowen, 1996). And while a 20% response for a first mailing is not uncommon (Fink, 1995), the returns for mail questionnaire surveys can generally range between 10% and 50% (Weisberh & Bowen, 1996).

Fowler (1984) states that there is no established minimum standard for an acceptable response rate. He does however, suggest that survey responses with less than 20% return are unlikely to provide statistics about the population as a whole.

From this comment, one may presume that surveys with response rates above 20% can provide reliable data that relates to the overall population.

A strength of this study is its use of combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to more accurately describe the readership's opinions regarding the content and design of OSU Magazine. Both the questionnaire and focus group reveal a more complete overall picture by those who read it. Subjects offered their opinions in terms of how the magazine is used as an information vehicle compared to other sources of information about OSU, how the subjects interact with the magazine's content and how about its packaging to deliver this information. Answers to these questions suggest whether or not OSU Magazine has adequately fulfilled its mission. But overall, there are some areas for improvement.

Readership Survey

Description of OSU Magazine Readers

As the findings presented in Chapter IV indicate, the readership of OSU Magazine's is typically made up of alumni who have received a bachelor's degree from OSU's College of Business between 1990 and 1999, is female, Caucasian, and is 60 or more years of age. The sample of respondents live, both equally within the state of Oklahoma and outside the state, but are located in the United States, and have an income range between \$20,000 to more than \$100,000.

Magazine Usage

The majority of subjects said they read most of each issue of OSU Magazine, with nearly equal percentages saying they read all of it, or at least about half of a given issue. Most, however, discard the publication after reading it, though some share it with family members. While most respondents said they would pay nothing for the

William's State University

magazine, at least an equal number of respondents said would pay less than \$1.00-\$1.99 and an equal number would pay more than this range.

Magazine Content

When initially receiving the magazine, the respondents said they turn to the main feature story first, the item readers also tended to read most often. When asked what stories respondents do not read, the main feature was indicated as the story that they rarely missed. "Class Notes" was also indicated as a story that respondents do not miss reading. "Class Notes" is read first about half as often as the main story; it is read nearly as often as the main story. Stories about the college from which respondents graduated are also rarely missed, following the main feature and "Class Notes." Stories about the college from which respondents graduated are read nearly as often as "Class Notes," followed by athletics/sports stories.

Read least often are stories about colleges from which given respondents did not graduate, and gifts/campaign stories. Respondents also rated these two story categories as stories they do not read. When asked which stories they read first, subjects indicated two categories stories are never read first: stories about the college from which they did not graduate and stories about gift giving. Stories about awards and recognition are almost never read first. Stories least often read first include stories about their college, followed by research stories.

The interest in seeing more stories was strongest for articles about nostalgic events in OSU history. Respondents reported desiring slightly more stories about campus events and successful alumni. They also indicated they would like to see slightly fewer stories on gifts and contributions, as well as stories about the branch campuses.

Subjects rated the writing and characteristics of stories (timeliness, credibility, accuracy, diverse coverage, length, depth, interesting, well-written, informative) in the magazine as generally positive. Respondents rated stories slightly higher in terms of

Alabama State University

credibility, writing and the overall information value. Respondents indicated they were less than certain about the diversity of coverage and were a little more uncertain about the depth of articles, with opinions varying somewhat for both. Opinions varied most concerning article length since some subjects felt that stories are too long, while other believe that story length is adequate.

When respondents were asked to make a suggestion for change in the magazine's content, several different types of responses were given. Some respondents indicated that they did not want to suggest changes indicating the magazine was "excellent."

Respondents would like to see an increase in the coverage of the types of stories already addressed in the magazine. Some said they wanted more college or departmentally specific news items, including research/technical, department opinion pieces, personnel changes, club, calendar and event information. Some suggestions focused on diversifying coverage, such as articles from the branch campuses, information on the university's academic standing, stories on transferring or retiring faculty, and information on facilities improvements. Other ideas offered include: general faculty and student profiles (not just award winners), more news about minorities, international alumni and those not living in the area, "life members" of the Alumni Association, news from regional alumni associations, and successful alumni "that are not famous, rich, or in the news a lot."

Several subjects requested articles on historical subjects, relating them to state history or current university efforts or to current university issues. A few subjects requested more advertising of university-type clothing and memorabilia.

Media Use

Respondents differed greatly in terms of types of media they prefer for receiving information about OSU. OSU Magazine was relied on very often, followed by

William David Harrison, Jr.

friends, family and acquaintances somewhat often, followed by newspapers. POSSE mailings were almost never relied upon for information about OSU and OSU Parents was relied on even less.

The typical respondent has access to a personal computer, with nearly equal numbers reporting access to the World Wide Web and use of e-mail. Those with Internet access, however, say they would not prefer to access OSU Magazine online or at least, they are unsure if they would like to or not. Those saying they preferred not to see the magazine online cited the pleasure of having a hard copy of the magazine in hand to read at their leisure and did not enjoy reading online magazines. Some respondents cited lack of access and/or time as their primary reason for not wanting the magazine online. Those subjects with a preference for seeing the magazine online said they would find online publication to be more convenient and would contribute less waste.

About half of the respondents disclosed a preference for having e-mail addresses listed in "Class Notes," with equal numbers indicating "no" or not sure of their preference. The primary reason for including e-mail addresses was the ability to contact old classmates and friends.

Focus Group

From the onset of the discussion, participants were consistently vocal in their appreciation for the design of the magazine and the work that went into its production. When asked for initial impressions, several participants said that they did not think any changes in the design are warranted. One participant remarked that the quality (in design) has been maintained over its years of publication. The participants in the focus group contributed the following findings:

- The magazine is a benefit of membership in the OSU Alumni Association.

Therefore, it should look like a quality publication. While there is little support for

putting the magazine online, the World Wide Web could be used to promote stories in upcoming issues or, perhaps, to add depth to a story.

- OSU Magazine compares favorably to similar publications at other universities and to OSU college magazines.
- The cover draws readers to the magazine and motivates readers to look through a given issue. Sometimes the magazine's covers are not consistent or dramatic enough, and sometimes they are too busy. Publication designers should pay almost as much attention to the image on the back of the magazine as on the front.
- Designers should consider indicating on the cover what will be found inside, such information should compliment, not detract, from the cover. The typeface used to highlight features should not draw more attention than the masthead. The moniker, "OSU Magazine," is not descriptive enough, and perhaps a new name should be considered. The cover should more clearly state that the magazine is a publication of the Oklahoma State University Alumni Association. The masthead needs to be consistently sized and placed. Generally designers should use consistent colors, unless it offers visual interest and is appropriate to what the cover depicts.
- Full color should be used, particularly with photographs because they tend to attract and maintain attention. Some photographs need more drama and contrast. There are enough photographs and they are appropriate to the stories they accompany.
- Photographs should include people as much as possible. They should also consistently portray Oklahoma State University in them at all times. Readers find photographs without human subjects permissible if the photos are informative about new additions to the campus.
- Sometimes photos with the backgrounds removed do not seem well done or appropriate. Sometimes they are acceptable because they provide more visual interest than rectangular shapes. Designers need to ensure that the same artistic treatment is consistently applied to all parts of a photo collage.

- Continue using color or graduated color boxes in organizing stories. Readers find this technique especially helpful, as they do section and news department indicators. Stories need a more obvious conclusion, a solution made possible by the use of a small graphic at the end of the article, commonly called a story “ender.” This is particularly helpful when there are multiple stories on a page. Readers like greater use of orange and black ink in the layout.
- Designers should continue using a sufficient amount of white space. The typography is well done, appropriately sized, and text line lengths are adequate. Text over graphics or colored backgrounds or photographs must have sufficient contrast in order to be more easily read and should not appear over people’s faces. Typography issues may affect readability for older readers. “Pull quotes” make reading stories easier.
- Do not leave a story out because artwork or photography is not available. The use of commercial art is fine if it is not overused. Some original art should be used in the magazine, possibly works submitted by students.
- Advertising is OK if it is university related or appears to be a sponsor of the magazine.
- “Class Notes” should be printed on stock different paper from the rest of the magazine, and a member update form should always be provided.
- Special events coverage can be enhanced through the use of a gatefold, or centerfold.

Implications

Content and Media

The importance of the magazine is recognized by its readers. The sample of respondents indicated that they nearly always rely on OSU Magazine as their source of information about Oklahoma State University. This duplicates the finding by Moore (1992). The typical reader also reads every issue, with most subjects reading the majority of each issue they get. Nearly all of those who get an issue read at least half of

it. However, most respondents said they discard the issue after reading it.

Although alumni receive the magazine as part of their paid dues in the association, Moore's study (1992) found that most respondents would be willing to pay between \$1.00 and \$1.99. The current study found nearly an equal number of respondents would pay the same; however, most of them indicated they would pay nothing for it if it was not a benefit of membership. This may indicate a decrease in the perceived value of the magazine. However, a significant number of subjects indicated that they share the magazine with family, which may suggest a value to the magazine other than monetary. Those who pass it on may deem the information of value, perhaps to other alumni that are not members of the association, or perhaps to family members who may become alumni in the near future.

The characteristics of the typical magazine reader seem to have shifted since Moore's study. The gender of respondents has slightly in favor of females, compared to the 1992 study when they made up slightly more than a quarter of the readership. Both studies reported nearly equal findings that the typical respondent received a bachelor's degree from OSU's College of Business. The greater number of business graduates may have influenced the request by respondents for slightly more stories on successful alumni.

Moore's study reported that the typical reader graduated between the years of 1980 and 1989. The current study reported nearly the same percentage of graduates for the following decade, 1990–1999. Comparing the subjects' age and graduation decade might suggest that the greatest numbers of readers are from the decade immediately following their most recent degree from the university. For this study, nearly three quarters of the respondents reported obtaining their degree within the last 30 years; nearly the same number reported their age as less than 60 years old.

The current study reports that the greatest percentage of readers is 60 or more years of age, but closely followed by those who are 40–49 and 30–39 years of age.

Gender and age may also become important issues in deciding changes in content and design for the magazine. This group of older readers may have influenced the request to see more stories on nostalgic events in OSU history.

Because Moore did not question respondents on age or race/ethnic group classification, there is no way of knowing how these demographic variables have changed in the intervening years.

When respondents were asked about sources they relied on for information about the university, they rated friends, family and acquaintances after OSU Magazine. This appears to be a stronger finding than what Moore (1992) discovered. While little is understood about how much influence friends, family and acquaintances wield, this finding may suggest that these individuals are an untapped source of information about the university.

After personal contacts, subjects indicated that they rely on newspapers, followed by college or departmental newsletters and television. In order of importance, the following media types were more than sometimes relied on: OSU Foundation mailings, the Internet, OSU Spirit, alumni chapter mailings, and the radio. POSSE mailings and OSU Parents are rarely used for OSU information.

It was surprising to note that of the traditional media, newspapers were more relied on than either broadcast medium. It was also surprising that print publications are generally relied on more often than traditional broadcast media or the Internet.

While the Moore (1992) study did not show a significant difference in the type of stories preferred by readers, there was varied interest in news from various departments featured in the magazine. Both studies found that the main/feature story is read first, followed by "Class Notes." The Moore study found that stories on sports/athletics ranked third in being read first, but the respondents in the current study placed stories about the college from which they graduated ahead of sports-related stories. Moore's study initially indicated that the subjects recommended, to some

degree, that the magazine should include stories about specific academic colleges. These findings may suggest that readers of OSU Magazine have developed a preference for human-interest stories, followed by stories on sports/athletics. Stories of least interest seem to be academically-related stories, such as those on research, and those regarding contributions to the university.

“Class Notes” remains important section of the magazine to its readers. Since the Moore (1992) study, however, its importance seems to have moved up to second place behind the main/feature story. College stories seem to also be important to readers, as are athletics/sports stories, but opinions by respondents on the importance of the latter seem to be inconsistent.

While the respondents seemed to be generally pleased with the current coverage in the magazine, they did indicate a strong interest for articles about nostalgic events in OSU’s history. Respondents would also prefer more stories about campus events and successful alumni. But they would like to see slightly fewer stories on *gifts and contributions* as well as stories about the branch campuses. The writing in the magazine was highly regarded. Subjects agreed that the content was credible, well written, informative, accurate, interesting and timely. However, the diversity and depth of coverage was found to be slightly less regarded, and may need to be improved. The opinions regarding diversity and depth of coverage may be a result of the increase in women readers.

Moore’s (1992) recommendations included cutting the length of articles and increasing the number of stories. However, the subjects in this study indicated that they might be somewhat shorter than they would like.

The current research is the first time the Internet has been studied as a source of information for the subjects. This medium may become a more important channel of information due to the number of respondents who reported living outside the state, and as the majority of subjects reported access to a personal computer. Nearly

equal percentages reported use of e-mail and access to the World Wide Web. But, when asked if they would like to see OSU Magazine published online, it was interesting to find that a majority of respondents did not, with a significant percentage unsure of their preference. Those that desired online publication cited convenience, less waste and less clutter, while those with preference against it listed the pleasure and comfort of reading a hard copy of the magazine at their convenience. The question of including e-mail addresses as a part of "Class Notes" brought a generally positive response since this feature could be used to contact old classmates and friends. But those against this option cited lack of access or time to contact others, as well as junk mail and privacy concerns.

The answers to the questions concerning preferences for online publication of the magazine and for publishing e-mail addresses is surprising given the obvious advantages associated with Web publication. The Alumni Association currently includes an option for members to provide their e-mail address, but members are not offered an opportunity to request that it be published in "Class Notes." (J. K. Varnum, personal communication, October 23, 2000). While most of the subjects indicate they are connected to the "information superhighway," they seem to indicate a reluctance to take advantage of its benefits. This may indicate that readers enjoy getting mail from friends and family that is electronic, but when they get a piece of mail they will enjoy spending time reading longer, they prefer getting a physical copy over an electronic equivalent. The opinions regarding online publication of OSU Magazine may affect the consideration of electronically producing other OSU publications.

Design

All members of the focus group agreed that OSU Magazine is a well-designed publication that looks professional and compares favorably to similar magazines they receive. While most of the subjects do not think the magazine needs to be changed, they

did suggest some improvements. Moore (1992) made a recommendation to make the magazine more appealing, not only through graphics and design, but also by adding more photography. The current study does not seem to warrant this change. However, those responsible for the visual appeal of the magazine should be strive to keep it up to date to enable it to maintain its present readership and also to attract new readers.

The participants said the magazine should reflect that it is from Oklahoma State University, from the front cover, through the inside pages, to the back cover. The photography, both inside and outside needs to reflect this, even in the background.

The cover, its image and typography is important to the readers. They say it attracts their attention and influences them to look at the magazine. From the image to the typography, the participants indicated the cover should tell them what they are going to find inside. They suggested using a sidebar on the cover to alert readers to inside content.

Participants felt the cover photography should be more dramatic. They thought the image on the back of the magazine should be selected with almost as much care as the image on the front cover.

Group members emphasized that the magazine cover needed to look more consistent, similar to magazines found on the newsstand. Their criticisms were directed particularly at the size, color and placement of the masthead.

Since the respondents indicated that the main/feature story is important, it is recommended that more time be spent on developing its design than for other magazine sections. Based on subjects' general remarks, other parts of the magazine should have a more generalized, consistent design.

In fact, consistency seemed to be a common theme in the focus group members' remarks. They wanted to see more apparent organization of stories and sections, and they recommended continuing the use of color or graduated color boxes

in organizing stories and requested better indication of the end of each article. A desire for consistency was also reflected in the group's general comments on photography. They preferred as much full color in photographs and art as possible because, to them, photography is the magazine's most visually pleasing aspect. Like the cover image, they requested more drama and contrast in the inside photographs. They were satisfied with the quantity and appropriateness of the images used. Group members stressed the importance of including people in photographs as much as possible. While some members thought that photographs with the backgrounds removed provided more visual interest than rectangular shapes, some members did not like them. Their criticism was more pronounced based on how well this treatment was accomplished. There was also a request that designers consistently apply the same artistic treatment to all parts of a photo collage.

The group emphasized the continued use of white space. They said they did not want to see images and type filling up a page. They believed that the typography is well done, appropriately sized, with adequate line lengths, but some members warned that some uses of typography over images or color affected their ability to read the story. Additional pull quotes were requested.

The participants agreed with using commercial art if it is appropriate to a given story and of good quality. However, they did not want a story left out because artwork or photography was not available. They said they would like to see some original art if possible and if someone on staff was incapable of producing it, they suggested using student art.

Advertising, like other images in the magazine, should have a connection with the university. Group members said it was best if advertising appeared as sponsorship or related to the focus and mission of the university.

Recommendations

Recommendations to the Editor

Even though OSU Magazine may be the alumni's most important source of information about the university for many readers, this publication is generally discarded after reading. Therefore, it is not recommended that additional resources, be expended on its production.

Moore (1992) recommended that the magazine continue to be provided at no cost to association members, but if it was provided at cost, a range of \$1.00–\$1.99 was suggested. This recommendation seems to be warranted by this study's findings. It is recommended that the Alumni Association investigate offering alumni the opportunity to subscribe to OSU Magazine without joining the association. They should also investigate selling the magazine along side other commercially available magazines to expand the usefulness of the magazine as a news vehicle.

The connection with older readers, and those readers who left the university more than a decade ago, needs to be addressed. Since respondents indicated a strong interest in articles of a historical nature, this may be the means to connect with these readers. Stories about the college from which respondents graduated rated high in interest. Current stories from the colleges as well as historically related articles may fulfill both needs.

Maintaining a connection with readers outside the state may be possible by slightly increasing the number of stories concerning campus events, successful alumni, athletics and sports, outstanding current students and alumni association chapter news. This might be accomplished by reducing the number of stories on gifts and contributions and coverage of news from the branch campuses. Since stories on contributions to the university ranked lowest in interest, it is recommended that the editor investigate ways to combine this section with interest in other types of stories to

make that section more valuable to the reader. Since "Class Notes" continues to be popular, no changes are suggested other than including a member update form with each issue. Association members should be given to opportunity to have their e-mail address published in "Class Notes." The quantity of athletics/sports stories should probably remain unchanged.

Respondents provided a number of story suggestions that should be explored as possible future articles. The editor should regularly seek out content that appeals to most readers and include more stories on those topics. To improve diversity in coverage, the editorial staff may wish to confer with faculty, staff and administrators while taking into consideration the interests of the magazine's readers. These stories could be oriented toward a human-interest angle. In general, stories that were rated lower in interest, gifts/contributions and research stories, should utilize this writing approach.

The quality of the writing in the magazine overall was rated favorable. However, depth of coverage was found somewhat lacking. The editor should keep the quality of writing as it is, but the length of articles should be increased somewhat, even whether or not accompanying photography or art are unavailable.

It may be premature to publish the magazine online at this time, since a majority of subjects did not want to see the magazine published online. It is suggested that the editor investigate using the Internet to offer a preview, or a "teaser," of an upcoming magazine issue, or to possibly add depth to a story. The editor should investigate other online alumni publications for similar concerns by their readerships. Minimal online publication of the magazine may encourage a connection with alumni. It may encourage those individuals who are not currently association members to join when they can see what the magazine offers them. It may encourage recent graduates to maintain their initial, free membership, and it may provide a better connection to those alumni living outside the state.

If advertising is accepted for the magazine, it should have a connection with the university or should appear as a sponsorship of the magazine. Some of the advertising should include the variety of university-type clothing and memorabilia desired by visiting alumni.

Finally, based on the results here, the Alumni Association should investigate the possibility of using another name for the magazine that is more descriptive.

Recommendations to the Art Director

The members of the focus group suggested little change, beyond issues of consistency and photography. Specifically, the art director should take more care in the treatment of the cover image or photograph. The cover image should be dramatic and have contrast, but not be too busy. The masthead needs to be consistently sized and placed. The color and treatment of it may change if it is appropriate to the cover image, and would make the cover more interesting or appealing. Otherwise, the masthead color should remain consistent.

The cover should also indicate, in some way, what the reader will be finding on the inside. Designers should use the covers of national magazines as an example to achieve this, and as a guide to maintain consistency in other parts of the cover. Above all, the staff should find some way to indicate on the cover, that the magazine is a product of Oklahoma State University and is for members of the OSU Alumni Association.

All photography is important, even the photograph on the back cover. Whenever possible, people should be featured in photography. When this is not possible, the photos should still let the viewer know that they are featuring subjects relating to OSU. The backgrounds of most photographs should reflect this as well. Photography should be more dramatic and more tightly cropped. While photographs with the backgrounds removed provide more visual interest than rectangular shapes,

designers should take more care in using this treatment of photos, just as photo collages should have a consistent artistic treatment applied to them. There is no need to change the quantity of photographs used, but when a photo is not available, it is acceptable to use art. This art, though, should be appropriate and of good quality. If possible, have original art produced for the magazine. If this is not possible, consider using student art for this purpose.

Editors should work with designers to find a consistent and more apparent way to organize stories with the magazine, such as using pages devoted to various departments and colleges. The continued use of color or graduated color boxes in organizing stories on a page is helpful, but editors should be more obvious in indicating the end of a story. They should consider using the triangle from the university logotype and seal.

Designers should use as much full color as possible, but continue to effectively use white space, and using pull quotes more often.

Some of the readers mentioned difficulty in reading type over color boxes or images. To improve readability, designers should ensure there is enough contrast between the background and the type. Overall, it is suggested that designers take a look at the characteristics of how typography is used and investigate ways to improve it for aging readers.

Finally, "Class Notes" should remain on a different stock than that used for the rest of the magazine. Occasionally big events should be covered with a gatefold or centerfold photo spread.

Recommendations for Future Research

Stratton and Angerosa (1995) suggest that conducting a readership research every two years is generally enough to measure shifts in demographics and information needs. Moore (1992) suggested that readers of the alumni magazine

should be surveyed on a regular basis, such as every five years, to allow editors to keep in touch with a changing readership. In the eight years since Moore's study, there has been a slight shift in the demographics and in the information needs of the readership; therefore, a follow-up study of this magazine is recommended on a regular periodic basis, at least every five to eight years, because reader opinions and demographics may once again change.

In 1978, Dillman (2000) proposed a Total Design Method, aimed at achieving higher survey response rates. Since this method was developed, Dillman and Tarni (1988) noted that researchers have realized that mixed-mode surveys, in which some respondents are surveyed by interview and others receive mail questionnaires, can help overcome the limitations of an adequate response rate achieved from using only a single method (as cited in Dillman, 2000). Dillman's Tailored Design Method is a response to the changes in technology and research methods that have transpired since 1978, and describes a new method that is established on a standard set of principles and procedures generally applicable to all surveys. "It is a set of procedures for conducting successful self-administered surveys that produce both high quality information and high response rates" (Dillman, 2000, p. 29). Future self-administered mail surveys of OSU Magazine should more carefully follow Dillman's Tailored Design Method.

By using better sample selection methods and mail survey procedures, reliable information from a smaller sample might be obtained allowing for more frequent and reliable studies of this kind. This would allow higher response rates for smaller samples. Since members would not be surveyed as often, errors due to non-response could possibly diminish. This would lend more credibility of the results and allow better generalization to the larger readership population. Stratified random sampling techniques may be most effective in selecting the appropriate number and type of participants for this research approach. Initial findings suggest that future research

should investigate a stratified random sample that would focus on the relationship between sources of news and computer use with respect to in-state and out of state readers and with respect to age. The capabilities of the Alumni Association's database would simplify this task.

Current students, who are also members of the Alumni Association, should be included in future research. This may give the additional insight and opportunity to satisfy the needs of the readership prior to graduation, potentially improving the effectiveness of the publication before its audience leaves the university.

It is also recommended that the Alumni Association consider adding a item on its membership information form asking if readers would be willing to be contacted concerning participating in future magazine research. The potential of an online survey, as well as combining online surveys with other methods, should be should be investigated.

Prior to this investigation, focus groups have not been used to study any aspect of OSU Magazine. The focus group conducted as part of this investigation broke new ground in uncovering opinions on the magazine's design from its readership. The findings from this effort should not be used as the only inquiry into this area, but should be considered as a pilot study for future investigations into design issues. Since the relevant literature on magazine design research is relatively nonexistent, this recommendation seems more compelling. As Dillman and Tarni (1988) have noted, mixing research methods can help overcome the limitations of a single research approach (as cited in Dillman, 2000). In-depth interviews should also be used to investigate research questions other than solely design-related issues.

Moore (1992) recommended that future research have more direct and less open-ended, questions. Investigation into content issues should also consider gathering information from a sample of respondents through one-on-one interviews. Additionally, research into aspects of the magazine's design should expand with further investigations utilizing a mixed-mode approach of both questionnaires and focus groups.

The unanticipated finding that the magazine's respondents relied on friends, family and acquaintances somewhat often as a source of information about OSU suggests that the two-step flow theory introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld may be applicable to flow of information from the university to its alumni audience. In a study of the 1940 presidential campaign, researchers found that most people received their knowledge about the campaign through personal contacts, rather than from the media (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Research showed that social relationships influenced the way in which individuals selected media content and were influenced by that content (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). This interdependent influential relationship between individuals and media content is also a characteristic of Media System Dependency Theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

The media system dependency approach recognizes that individual needs may be satisfied through sociological factors. The theory suggests that when media content is linked to individual goals, a dependent effect is created with the content. Individuals who become dependent on a medium selectively expose themselves to its content and pay more attention to its messages to meet their goals, increasing the chance for messages to have effects (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

It suggests that the readers will have a need for information which will be satisfied by the media as their primary information system. The impact of messages on a particular audience is related to how the audience perceives it is dependent on the media as a source of satisfaction for information to help them to meet their interests. The audience also perceives that certain media are an efficient means of to acquire the information necessary to meet their perceived need (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989).

When individuals perceive media messages as relevant to a particular group identity and group norms, these messages may influence group behavior (Price, 1989). Applied to this study, it appears that the two-step flow of communication also serves as

a conduit for information about Oklahoma State University to the members of its alumni association. This finding should be investigated further.

Several subjects in the focus group mentioned age in relation to the design of the magazine, particularly typography. Since some books and magazines are published with larger print, there may be applicable research in the field of typography in other media types as it relates to aging adults. Some typography research in this area has been conducted as it relates to reading consumer product instruction labels (Metz, 1999). Some inquiry into the available literature may improve the readability of the magazine for its older readers.

Moore recommendations included broadening the scope of articles to more closely reflect the diversity of the magazine's audience. However, before making this change, it would be prudent to consider a content analysis of various issues to see how space has been actually devoted to addressing this issue. A content analysis would also help uncover other specific areas that cannot be asked in a questionnaire or focus group. Moore also asked a question asking respondents to rate future stories. This might be asked again to get more additional ideas on diversifying coverage and for potential story subject matter. This question is also appropriate for a focus group.

Since most readers end up discarding the magazine, it might be beneficial to find out exactly how long readers hold on to an issue and their reasons for doing so. Since some respondents indicated they pass issues on to family or others, it might be useful to get a better description of the recipients and why the magazine is passed on.

Currently, the University College Designers Association lists 219 online alumni magazines (UCDA). Additionally, the OSU Alumni Association provides an e-mail news service to keep members up-to-date with news of OSU and the association. Membership benefits also include listing a personal Web page (OSU Alumni Association). A more intense, exploratory study is needed to determine online access by readers. Since considerable resources would be devoted to producing an online

version of the magazine, future research should continue to explore computer issues with the readership, particularly exploring the readers' usage, awareness, reading frequency and quality of online publications.

Conclusion

The significance of magazines among contemporary media is often underestimated because of the dominance of other media forms. Often, magazine influence is never adequately measured (Tebbel, 1999). This research offered the readers an opportunity to evaluate OSU Magazine on two levels: content and design.

With the popularity and importance of OSU Magazine continuing to thrive, further exploration must be pursued to gain a better understanding of the magazine's audience, particularly its content and its design. In the latter, there is a considerable amount of uncharted territory waiting to be explored.

For this magazine to succeed as an information tool of the university it is important that it be read and understood by the majority of the readers it intends to reach. It is also important for the editor and designer to know what readers want in the publication. Since the readers are directly, or indirectly connected to the goals and objectives of OSU Magazine, the readership must be surveyed periodically to understand the changing trends in the readership's demographics and its needs.

Prior to this study, current information for realistically evaluating the effectiveness of OSU Magazine and making generalizations about potential changes in its content and design was unavailable. It had been assumed that the magazine's goals were continuing to be met without fresh knowledge of the audience's needs. Results of this study fill this gap.

Writing and designing a magazine would be a simple, consistent task if all the readers shared the same interests and tastes. However, when an audience is diverse, even an audience whose members have attended the same university, the production of a magazine becomes more complicated.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY ADVANCE LETTER



OSU Magazine
Communications Services
219 Public Information Building
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-6044
405-744-6260
Fax 405-744-9073

Dear Alumnus and Alumna,

The Oklahoma State University in cooperation with the Alumni Association and Communications Services publishes a quarterly magazine in an effort to keep in touch with our alumni. Soon you will be receiving an important readership survey concerning *OSU Magazine*.

You are one in a small, random sample of readers selected to represent the thousands of readers of your magazine, therefore, your responses to this questionnaire will greatly impact the magazine. By participating in this survey, you will be playing a key role in determining potential changes in the magazine. Only by asking people like yourself will we be able to collect useful information about our readers' opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Your honest opinion is ultimately vital to the success of the magazine.

Although your participation is strictly voluntary, we would appreciate your cooperation. Your anonymity will be strictly observed and your responses will be kept confidential. When your survey arrives, please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it in the envelope that will be provided.

This research study is being conducted by a graduate student in mass communications as a thesis requirement for a master's degree which will be formally published and available in the OSU Edmon Low Library.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the graduate student researcher, Paul V. Fleming, or the Institutional Review Board Executive Secretary at 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-1020; or at (405) 744-5700.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natalea Watkins'.

Natalea Watkins,
Assistant Vice President, Communications Services

Paul V. Fleming
121 Cordell North / Oklahoma State University / Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-8031
(405) 744-6587 / (405) 744-8445 fax / pvfavc@okstate.edu

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

A Readership Survey of *OSU Magazine*: The Alumni Magazine for Oklahoma State University

Here is the survey for *OSU Magazine*. It takes just a few minutes of your time to complete.

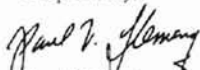
To ensure *OSU Magazine* is the best possible publication we can produce, we must first collect and analyze a representative sample of our readership's honest opinions about the magazine. Your responses to this survey represent thousands of other magazine readers. By participating in this survey, you will be playing a key role in determining potential changes in the magazine.

Although your participation is strictly voluntary, we would appreciate your cooperation. There are no right or wrong answers. Your honest opinion is what is most valuable to this research study.

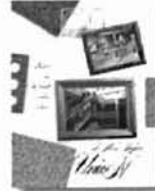
Your anonymity in completing this survey will be strictly observed to keep your responses confidential. The number at the upper right corner of this page will be used to track who has, and has not, returned a survey. When your survey is returned, the tracking number will be removed and your name will be removed from the survey mailing list. Tracking numbers, contact information and identification sheets will be kept under lock and key and will be destroyed one year after the completion of this study.

This study is being conducted by a graduate student in mass communications as a part of a thesis for a master's degree which will be formally published and available in the OSU Edmon Low Library. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at your convenience or the Institutional Review Board Executive Secretary at 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-1020; or at (405) 744-5700. **Please complete this survey by July 28 and return it in the enclosed, pre-addressed envelope. Thank you for your help!**

Respectfully,


Paul V. Fleming

121 Cordell North / Oklahoma State University / Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-8031
(405) 744-6587 / (405) 744-8445 fax / pvfavc@okstate.edu



[next page please]

Section A :: Magazine Usage

Oklahoma State University currently publishes a quarterly news magazine called the *OSU Magazine*. This publication is a benefit of membership in the OSU Alumni Association and serves to inform its former students and friends about the institution's successes, accomplishments and plans. It also gives alumni information about their classmates.

A1. Do you currently receive the alumni magazine, *OSU Magazine*?

Yes No Previously received

(if you checked "NO," or "Previously received," please complete Sections C and D)

If you do not receive *OSU Magazine* and would like to, please contact the OSU Alumni Association, 212 Student Union, Stillwater, OK 74078. Membership cost is \$35.

A2. If you answered "YES" to question A1, how often do you typically read or look at *OSU Magazine*? (please circle only one answer)

Every issue Some issues Rarely read or look at it Not sure

A3. Of the issues you receive, generally, how much of each issue would you say you read or look at? (please circle only one answer)

All of it Most of it About half of it Little of it Not sure

A4. When you finish reading *OSU Magazine*, what do you generally do with the magazine? (please circle only one answer)

Keep it for myself Share it with family Share it with others Discard it

Other: (please specify) _____



If you do not currently receive *OSU Magazine*, please skip to Section C and Section D.

Section B :: Magazine Content

Complete this section only if you are currently receiving *OSU Magazine*.

B1. If it was not a benefit of membership in the OSU Alumni Association, how much would you pay for an issue of *OSU Magazine*? (please circle only one answer)

Nothing Less than \$1.00 \$1.00-\$1.99 \$2.00-\$2.99 \$3.00-\$3.99 More than \$4.00

B2. If you could suggest one change in *OSU Magazine*, (in terms of content, topics for future issues, or any other types of changes), what would you like to suggest?

[next panel please]

B3. The articles in the magazine can be categorized under the following general types of stories.
Which of these type of stories do you generally read? (check as many stories as apply)

- Main/Feature story
- Athletics/Sports
- Research stories
- Classnotes/Fellow alumni
- Stories about the college from which you DID graduate
- Stories about colleges from which you DID NOT graduate
- Awards & Recognition
- Gifts/Campaign updates
- Other: _____

B4. Which types of these stories do you generally read FIRST? (please check only one type)

- Main/Feature story
- Athletics/Sports
- Research stories
- Classnotes/Fellow alumni
- Stories about the college from which you DID graduate
- Stories about colleges from which you DID NOT graduate
- Awards & Recognition
- Gifts/Campaign updates
- Other: _____

B5. What type of the following stories do you generally NOT read in OSU Magazine.
(check as many types that apply)

- Main/Feature Story
- Athletics/Sports
- Research stories
- Classnotes/Fellow alumni
- Stories about the college from which you DID graduate
- Stories about colleges from which you DID NOT graduate
- Awards & Recognition
- Gifts/Campaign updates
- Other: _____

B6. Would you like to see more, the same amount or fewer of the following kinds of stories in OSU Magazine? (please check only one response for each kind of story)

- | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Campus events | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Scientific research | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Athletics and sports | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Gifts and contributions | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Successful alumni | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Outstanding current students | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Department profiles | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • OSU branch campuses* | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Nostalgic events in OSU history | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • President Halligan's thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| • Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> More | <input type="checkbox"/> Same | <input type="checkbox"/> Fewer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |

*OSU-Tulsa, OSU-Oklahoma City, OSU-Okmulgee,
College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa

[next panel please]

B7. Overall, how would you rate the content of *OSU Magazine*? For the following statements, please indicate the extent of your agreement with each statement by circling one abbreviation for: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD). (please circle only one abbreviation for each statement)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I find the articles in the magazine timely.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine credible.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine accurate.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine diverse in coverage.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine too long.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine in-depth.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine interesting.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine to be well-written.	SA	A	U	D	SD
I find the articles in the magazine informative.	SA	A	U	D	SD



Everyone should complete this section.

Section C :: Media Use

C1. Where do you get your information about Oklahoma State University? For each media item listed below please indicate how much you rely on it by circling one abbreviation for: Always (A), Very Often (VO), Sometimes (S), Almost Never (AN), or Never (N). (please circle only one abbreviation for each type of media)

	Always	Very Often	Sometimes	Almost Never	Never
<i>OSU Magazine</i>	A	VO	S	AN	N
<i>OSU Parents</i>	A	VO	S	AN	N
<i>OSU Spirit</i>	A	VO	S	AN	N
Alumni chapter mailings	A	VO	S	AN	N
OSU Foundation mailings	A	VO	S	AN	N
POSSE mailings	A	VO	S	AN	N
College or department newsletter	A	VO	S	AN	N
Newspapers	A	VO	S	AN	N
Television	A	VO	S	AN	N
Radio	A	VO	S	AN	N
Friends, family, acquaintances	A	VO	S	AN	N
Internet (World Wide Web, email)	A	VO	S	AN	N
Other:	A	VO	S	AN	N

C2. Do you use or have to access a personal computer? (please check only one)

Yes No Not sure

C3. If you use or have access a personal computer, do you access the World Wide Web (using a browser such as Netscape™ or Internet Explorer™)? (please check only one)

Yes No Not sure

[next page please]

C4. If you had access to the World Wide Web, and if *OSU Magazine* were available this way, would you prefer to read the magazine there? (please check only one)

Yes No Not sure

C5. If you answered either "YES" or "NO" to question C4 above, please tell us why you would.

C6. Do you use email? (please check only one)

Yes No Not sure

C7. Would you like to see email addresses listed in the Classnotes section? (check only one)

Yes No Not sure

C8. If you answered either "YES" or "NO" to question C7 above, why would you?



Everyone should complete this section.

Section D :: Please Tell Us Something about Yourself

D1. What is your gender?

Male Female

D2. What is your age group?

20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 plus

D3. Please indicate your race/ethnic group classification. (please circle only one answer)

<input type="checkbox"/> African-American	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan
<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian/White	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose

D4. Where do you live? (please check only one answer)

Inside the state of Oklahoma Outside Oklahoma, but within the United States

D5. Please estimate your annual household income before taxes. (please circle only one answer)

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-\$49,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$74,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-\$99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose

[next panel please]

D6. Do you have an academic degree from Oklahoma State? If so, what is the highest level of degree you received? Please indicate your college, major and the year you graduated.

DEGREE	COLLEGE	MAJOR	YEAR
Bachelor's	_____	_____	_____
Master's	_____	_____	_____
Ed.D.	_____	_____	_____
Ph.D.	_____	_____	_____
DVM	_____	_____	_____
D.O.	_____	_____	_____

[You are finished!]

*Thank you for your time in completing this survey.
Your answers are very important to the success of this research project.
Please return this survey in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.*



ABOUT THE SURVEY AUTHOR ...

- Pursuing a master's degree in mass communications;
- Award-winning graphic designer for Oklahoma State University (nearly ten years);
- Son of a retired Marine Corps officer, OSU professor and my graduate advisor;
- Graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Civil Engineering);
- Spent six years as a naval officer (mostly aboard the U.S.S. Carl Vinson);
- Attended OSU to pursue a degree in graphic design (advertising minor);
- Fan and collector of Who memorabilia;
- Future goals include teaching visual communications and teaching my cat, Punkin, new tricks.

[that's it, you're finished]

APPENDIX C

SURVEY REMINDER CARD



OSU Magazine Readership Survey

This is just a reminder that we have not yet received your readership survey. We are counting on your help to make *OSU Magazine* a better publication. Your participation is strictly voluntary and confidential.

Would you please return your questionnaire today?

If you have already sent back your survey, **THANK YOU!**

If you need an additional survey, please contact:

Paul V. Fleming

121 Cordell North
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-8031

(405) 744-6587 / (405) 744-8445 fax / pvfavc@okstate.edu

APPENDIX D

SECOND MAILING SURVEY LETTER



OSU Magazine
Communications Services
219 Public Information Building
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-6044
405-744-6260
Fax 405-744-9073

Hello,

How would you like to receive a special Oklahoma State University poster celebrating the success of the "Bringing Dreams to Life" Campaign?

To encourage you to complete and return this survey of *OSU Magazine*, we will be randomly selecting several of you to receive one of these large, four-color posters. To get one of these fine posters, please send in your responses to this questionnaire today!

Only by asking readers like yourself will we be able to understand what our readers think about *OSU Magazine*. There are no right or wrong answers here, it's your honest opinions that we need most. By doing so, you will be playing a key role in determining potential changes in the magazine.

It will only take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey and send it back to us in the return envelope we've provided by **October 6, 2000**.

Thank you for your help, the Alumni Association is counting on you!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul W. Fleming".

121 Cordell North / Oklahoma State University / Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-8031
(405) 744-6587 / (405) 744-8445 fax / pvfave@okstate.edu

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

Focus Group Consent Form

"I, (_____), hereby authorize or direct Paul V. Fleming, or associates and/or assistants of his choosing, to conduct a focus group to investigate publication design considerations of *OSU Magazine*, the Oklahoma State University alumni magazine. This is done as part of an investigation entitled: *A Readership Survey of OSU Magazine: The Oklahoma State University Alumni Magazine*.

This study is being conducted by a graduate student in mass communications as a thesis requirement for a master's degree which will be formally published and available in the OSU Edmon Low Library. This research will observe and collect opinions concerning publication design about previous issues of the magazine. For those who produce this publication, this research will provide a more accurate and objective look at various design and layout issues as they relate to the format of the magazine.

Research data for this focus group will be collected by observing group participants in a closed, reasonably secure environment. The group will be conducted by a facilitator who will follow a written outline of questions. Observers will collect participant comments through written notes and by audiotape. Audio and written notes will be kept under lock and key for one year after the study is published, then will be destroyed.

The only discomfort you might incur during this focus group is the time you volunteer to participate, which is anticipated to last about an ninety minutes. This signed consent form will be the only record of your attendance at this focus group. There will be no attempt to connect opinions or responses with any individual. At the end of the focus group, you will be asked to complete a short, anonymous, questionnaire.

I understand that participation is strictly voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director.

I may contact Paul V. Fleming at (405) 744-6587 or at 121 Cordell North, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-8031; (405) 744-8445 fax; pvfavc@okstate.edu. I may also contact the Institutional Review Board Executive Secretary at 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078-1020; (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand this form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been provided.

Signature of Subject

Date and Time

Person authorized to sign for subject, if required

Witness(es):

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it.

Project Director or authorized representative

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Please Tell Us Something About Yourself

We would like to know a little more about you for our data reporting.

Although your participation is strictly voluntary, we would appreciate your cooperation.

Your anonymity in completing this form will be strictly observed. Please **DO NOT** include your name.



D1. Of the magazines you enjoy (other than the *OSU Magazine*), please indicate three that you find visually pleasing and why.

MAGAZINE	REASON
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

D2. Did you also respond to the readership survey?

Yes No

D3. What is your gender?

Male Female

D4. What is your age group?

20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 plus

D5. Please indicate your race/ethnic group classification. (*please circle only one answer*)

African-American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American/Alaskan
Caucasian/White	Hispanic/Latino	Multiracial
Other: _____		Prefer not to disclose

D6. Please estimate your annual household income before taxes. (*please circle only one answer*)

Less than \$20,000	\$20,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999
\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 or more	Prefer not to disclose

D7. Do you have an academic degree from Oklahoma State? If so, what is the highest level of degree (Bachelor's, Master's, Ed.D., Ph.D., DVM, D.O.) you received? Please indicate your college, major and the year you graduated.

DEGREE	COLLEGE	MAJOR	YEAR
_____	_____	_____	_____

Thank you for your time! Please return this form to the focus group facilitator.

APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUP FACILITATOR OUTLINE

Focus Group Facilitator Outline

Hello,

Thank you for volunteering your time to join our discussion about improving the look of *OSU Magazine*.

My name is Paul Fleming, and this is Steve Smethers.

We will be gathering your impressions on the visual aesthetics of the *OSU Magazine*. This focus group will not address stories in the magazine or the Class Notes section.

This focus group is being conducted as part of a graduate thesis. To collect data, we will use written notes and tape recording the session so no comments are missed.

We will be on a first name basis here today, but in the formal report of our session, your names will not be associated with your individual comments.

Before we begin you will be asked to read and sign a consent form to let you know that your comments are completely confidential. I will also explain it to you.

This session will be limited to about an hour to an hour and a half. Now would be a good time to use the restroom or get a drink of water. We will not be taking a break, but feel free to leave the room if necessary. You may also leave the session at any time if you are uncomfortable about participating.

During our discussion you should know that there are not any right or wrong answers, but there may be different points of view between participants.
That's fine.

Please feel free to share your point of view, even if it differs from what others express. Also, please remember that we are just as interested in negative comments as we are positive comments.

Your honest opinion is what's important.

Please let's not interrupt one another. But the facilitators may interject from time to time to direct the conversation.

As questions are asked, please feel free to take a moment to formulate your thoughts and then respond one at a time.

In case we run out of time, I am going to ask questions in an order that we think is most important to us. So, some of questions on similar subject matter might be asked out of sequence.

- First we'd like to get some of your feelings about the magazine in general.

In general, how do you feel about picking up and looking at a new issue? What seems to attract your attention first as you thumb through it?

Are there any particular magazine issues that stand out in your mind as attractive or particularly unappealing visually? Or some you're ambivalent about?

What kinds of adjectives would you use to describe the look and feel of OSU Magazine?

How does the magazine compare visually to other magazines you read?

- Now, we'd like to ask you some questions about the images in the magazine, the photography and the use of art. First some questions about the magazine's covers.

How have you felt about various covers for the magazine? Which covers have impressed you most, least, or that you remember the most?

Has the style of covers made a difference to you, whether they have been a straight photograph, or manipulated somewhat, maybe as a collage, or if the cover is an illustration?

Do you have any suggestions for improving magazine covers?

- Next, are some questions about color and photography.

Does color in the magazine make that much difference? How do you feel about the use of color overall in the magazine? Is there too much of it, too little?

How do you feel about using color on the backgrounds of various pages? Do you have any opinions about pages that use a background color, or are varied in some way, such as an image or illustration in the background?

How do you feel about the quality of photography in the magazine? Have they been appropriate to the story? Do you find them appealing, interesting? Have the photographs been of appropriate size and quantity?

How do you feel about the size and quantity of mug shots in the magazine?

Too big, too little, too many, too few?

Should photographs concentrate mainly on people, or should there be a mix of those that might not include people, like campus scenes or research-oriented photographs?

Can you suggest ways to improve the magazine's photography?

Comparing art and photography, what mix of each do you feel is appropriate for the magazine?

- Sometimes art is used to illustrate or accompany a story when a photograph is unavailable or not possible.

Do you have any feelings about its use? Has it been used too often or not enough? Has it been used appropriately?

Do you think art in the magazine needs to be original or is stock art/clip art (or photography) acceptable? Can you tell the difference?

Can you suggest ways to improve the magazine's use of artwork?

Do you have any feelings about the use of type in the magazine?

How important to you is it to fill up the page with text and images?

- We're almost finished and just have a few more questions to ask.

Do you have any feelings about the kind of paper used in the magazine?

If you receive or see magazines from some of the OSU colleges, how do you think OSU Magazine compares visually? Which college magazines, if any, stand out in your mind, either positively or negatively?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the look of the OSU Magazine that you'd like for us to know?

We are finished with the focus group.

Once again, let me thank you for your time and your comments during this focus group. Once completed and approved the results of this research study will be formally published and available in the OSU Edmon Low Library.

If you have any questions regarding this focus group or this research in general, you may speak with me after this session is ended or later you can contact me or the Institutional Review Board from the information included on your copy of the focus group consent form. So, don't forget to pick up your copy as you leave. The signed form and the questionnaire stay with us.

If you are interested in possibly attending future focus groups, please sign up on the sheet provided.

Thank you and have a good evening.

APPENDIX H

FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTION

FIRST: SOME OF YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THE MAGAZINE IN GENERAL:
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT PICKING UP AND LOOKING AT A NEW
ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE? WHAT SEEMS TO ATTRACT YOUR ATTENTION
FIRST AS YOU'RE THUMBING THROUGH IT?

It does have some of what's going on (at OSU) in it. That's typically what I pick up on when I look at it.

I think it's a very quality publication. I don't have any problem with what it looks like right now. I love the color; I think the design is very nice. Content is always of interest, too. I think it has a broad readership. I'd like to see more people participate in Class Notes so you could know a little bit more about people you went to school with. ... I think the magazine is excellent.

Since I'm currently a student I think it's really neat because I'll see the awards that fellow students are getting and I'll see their picture there. And I'll see them on campus ... and I might know them. And I just think that's really neat.

ANYTHING ABOUT THE PICTURES IN GENERAL?

Well, they're really clear and they usually have their name underneath them, so you know who they are and their major. I think it's neat there are plenty of pictures in there.

ANYBODY ELSE ABOUT GENERAL IMPRESSIONS?

I'm very pleased with the magazine overall. I think it has a fairly good blend of focusing on success stories and personal interest stories as well as activities going on at OSU that inform the readership. So overall I think it does a pretty good job on everything.

WE'RE FOCUSING ON THE VISUAL CONCERNS.

I think it's very professionally done. I enjoy it. I read it almost cover to cover, which is rare for me and a magazine ... But ...

The photographs are always ...

The photographs are the first thing that attracts me. When I see it the cover is what draws me in ... I know there is going to be something interesting on the inside whether it be a multitude of pictures all blending into one I know it'll be something really big on the inside or the one with the guy and all the peanuts, or whatever they all were, and you wonder what is all that about, you know it makes you want to go in and read it. So I think that's very interesting after seeing lots of magazines come my way — university-related — and most of the time they're always the standard guy in the laboratory, It's so refreshing to see a magazine that somebody's put some effort and time into to draw somebody in. I think they do a real good job with that. That's what really draws me in is that front cover. That's what draws anybody in. That's why all the pretty chicks are on the front of all those other magazines ...

I think as I reflect on the magazine for a number of years that it's maintained its quality. To me it's been a quality magazine for a long time. There's been some good people involved. A lot of pride. If you're looking for a change, I think there might be some consideration to indicating on the cover what's on the inside. A border, for example, that might list the three or four major points that you're emphasizing in this particular issue. If it were on the newsstand that would be extremely important and I don't know that much about your distribution. How is the magazine distributed, other than to alumni?

IT'S JUST TO ANYONE WHO IS A REGISTERED ALUMNI. AND THEN THERE ARE STATE REPS., THE GOVERNOR, FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY.

It's funded through the university with an allocation of funds?

UH HUH.

Well, in a sense, what I'm saying is this is a way to encourage leadership and positive response. I'd like to emphasize what [NAME] said about Class Notes. In some ways that could be one of the most important parts of the magazine. It can be even a part of the visual element. Class Notes really do embellish the life of the ...

Good effort ...

I think it has a good mix of something you can spend time reading or something for flipping through if you're just on hold on the phone and killing a couple of minutes' time. You can focus in on — the way sometimes you'll have a part of a story pulled out in large caps ... almost like a cutline by a photo and it has different ways of being read depending on how much time you have at the moment or how long your attention span is, or what time of the day it is. So it has a variety of ways to read it.

Have you ever had a centerfold?

WE HAD A GATEFOLD ON THE PRESIDENT'S ISSUE, BUT NOT A CENTERFOLD TO MY KNOWLEDGE. HAVE YOU GOT SOMEBODY IN MIND?

Of course, I'm thinking of activities. The thing that's most important in the lead story, would be the pictures and the story Montage. Like Homecoming, so the centerfold would be a montage of legends.

OK. ANYONE ELSE WANT TO ADD TO THAT?

I think alumni want to see all the different activities that go on campus, if you couldn't be there. Walk-around, etc.,

I think you could take that and do a gatefold and fold it out. And even double size. It might be something that someone might even want to frame, or children might want to hang in their rooms — high school kids — they would be looking forward to taking part in those kinds of activities.

Many posters are a draw in many kinds of magazines, whether a pull out section ... short-term or long-term.

We always had a picture in Oklahoma Today that you could frame — that you would WANT to frame. We thought we had very quality photography. ...

ANY PARTICULAR COVERS THAT STAND OUT AS ATTRACTIVE OR UNAPPEALING?

There was one with three kids and a snowman or something? They built snowmen at their grandma's house. That was neat, I thought, it kind of brought in all generations of alumni.

For me, the two that stick out: One the guy with the computer with wind blowing on him and he's sitting there on nothing with the computer screen there. ...

And the montage of all the different scholars (the Udall, etc.) ... with all the different scholars.

ANYONE ELSE? COVERS THAT STAND OUT, OR THAT YOU DISLIKED?

WHAT ABOUT OSU MAGAZINE COMPARED TO OTHER MAGAZINES?

Since I see so many other university magazines that come across my desk, I'm tickled pink that stories are shorter, and yet in-depth enough that you can get what you want out of it, ... flows nicely. My pet peeve is to get something that looks really interesting and then the article is four pages long. I don't have that long. I've got 10 minutes, and the phone is ringing.

And the type is too small.

You guys do a good job with the type face, it's easy to read. It stands out very nice on the white space.

... I'm finding I need glasses, and the type needs to get bigger and bigger ... needs larger type the older you get ... When you're picking type keep in mind who you're audience is. At your age, it doesn't matter. You can read it right here in the dim light or whatever, but if you're also marketing to alumni of all ages that's something that you need to really keep in mind. That and contrast and value cause I find sometimes it's hard to see when you have 30 percent screen of black right next to 30 percent screen in green, sometimes that's hard to pick out ...

Do you have any kind of breakdown on your age brackets of the audience?

I CAN'T TELL.

If more are 50 and older, that's a very valid point. You might want to go up in your point size.

... Most of my friends haven't seen the magazine. They do look at it ...

This example is fine to read. There's good leading. Plenty of leading. It's not all running together. The line length isn't too long or too wide. ...

ADJECTIVES TO DESCRIBE THE MAGAZINE IN GENERAL?

It's a quality magazine. It reflects professional effort. I'm very proud of it. I've seen several other campus magazines and I don't know of one that can stand up ...

MAGAZINE COVERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ILLUSTRATIONS,
MANIPULATIONS?

Is this Tim Jessel?

IT COULD BE TIM JESSEL OR THERE'S ANOTHER GUY WE'VE USED A LOT.

I much prefer a full bleed like this, as opposed to something like that incorporates smaller photographs. Even this is not as impacting to me as something like that. A you need to make the subject large enough to where it'll really grab you.

Yeah.

Yeah.

This reminds me of a catalog. I'd say the content is good, but yet I didn't even remember this until I opened it up cause I saw the little kids here with the diaper and I went, Oh yeah, I've read that.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And ... Oh, yeah, Madrigal. I've read that.

... you want a big picture of the new Student Union. I guess there's an old picture and a new picture, but ...

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE COVERS?

This is lovely artwork, but you don't know until you read the story what the tie in with OSU might be. I don't see anything that ties in to OSU, except the logo. But I'm sure the article must have something about it. So it probably needs, each one needs to be, more identifiable with the university.

Maybe in a subhead that would tell you what ...

That it's a research project or whatever it might be.

SOMETHING IN THE TEXT PERHAPS?

Like they did on this one ... Aviation ... la da da da da ...

I like your suggestion Maybe featuring one or two of the other ...

Yeah, or the same number each time ...

But if you have another story that's of equal importance, or something else to draw them in, having just an extra small head, ... whether it's a sidebar or something is ...

See, I disagree. Because working at the university, I know that who's going to make that decision ... is more important, without stepping on someone's important toes.

But the ... has to be chosen ...

Right, but who's going to say ... and who's going to chose the next one. There are several things of equal importance in here.

It might make it look busy. I think it depends, especially if it's a really pretty picture.

Maybe a way of doing it so that's subtle for someone who wants to know. I understand what you're saying. For example if you have three main articles, it would be easy — easy in a relative sort of way to ...

SO A COVER SHOULD ACT SOMEWHAT LIKE A TABLE OF CONTENTS?

Well, not so much a table of contents, but just maybe a glance. I keep a lot of journals and trade publications, and I go back and back and refer to. The ones that

have at least some highlights on the front are the most helpful to me. It depends on what people intend to do with them. If they want to hang onto it and refer to it in the future, then something like that would be very helpful to find that issue they're looking for. If it's strictly read it for that month and throw it away, then it's probably not so important. It's probably more important to have an editorial picture or an illustration that just draws you in ...

It can't detract from the cover. It has to complement the cover. And many magazines do offer some kind of sidebar or some info on the cover, that causes you to want to pick that magazine up and read it. And just cover photo alone may do that, but if you're looking for something other than the picture, then you need to offer some information.

Well, for instance if this photo fit into the cover in some way, you probably would want to know what that story is about because it has some emotional appeal. I'm not sure that one would do the same thing as this one does.

The logo that's used is not consistent. And it doesn't really ...

THIS IS THE PRE-OSU-LOGO DAYS.

... The color varies and the size varies. It tends to be this rectangular shape. The colors don't necessarily reflect the OSU colors. I don't know that doesn't work well with some of the other colors designs of the photographs that are selected. I'm not a graphic artist, but it seems to me that the shape of the logo makes it difficult to work other things around it without getting in the way. ... modified the shape or size or location. I think it would be nice for me if it were a consistent logo, so that's it was always recognizable, because it changes from issue to issue so there's not that identity.

SO WHAT WOULD MAKE IT MORE CONSISTENT IN YOUR OPINION?

I think maybe changing the shape, so you could maintain a position that wouldn't be covered up or impose on a picture and try if possible to work in with the school colors to use orange and white or orange and black or some combination of

those ... OSU colors. 'Cause if I'm not an OSU alumni, I would think our colors are blue and gold.

I think that's a good point.

Of course I can see part of why you don't go with orange-orange. Because from a design standpoint, while it's one of the most visible colors is orange, but it's a difficult color to work with Here's one that's orange.

So it's a tough color to work with.

I don't like that the way that color arrangement looks.

Well, it's really not the OSU orange. It's more of a Texas orange, a burnt orange. Anyway ...

To me it would be nice if they could accomplish some of this ...

But it is for the alumni.

Well, it's not like any of the other logos on campus that are used for other things like athletics. And I think it's almost an opposite. I'd almost like to see that ... logo played up more, I mean I love this one where the magnifying glass is playing up on it. That makes me want to look at that name more than most of them. This is the kind of design I like to see. But that may be ...

SOME OF THE MASTHEADS HAVE HAD DIFFERENT TREATMENTS. ON THE PEANUTS ONE IT'S TRANSPARENT AND YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE THROUGH TO THE PEANUT.

This treatment downplays the logo, though. I do not care for that. This looks more important on the front page than that. So I think they need to watch how they violate the logo. I think both of these have violated it. That's not bad but I would rather see it just simply used in its entirety without trying to combine it with something else.

I like it when it's involved in it, when it becomes part of the illustration. I know you can't do that every month, but I like playful graphics. Things that make you look a second

time, or make you chuckle, or have some twist to them. So that may be my own personal preference, but it makes me think about that name when it's a part of it like that.

[NAME], DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING? YOU'RE BEING QUIET DOWN THERE?

... Well, on the logo, like I said, just reading it, if you don't know any better, you don't know it's an Oklahoma State publication, it could be an Ohio State or an Oregon State.

But we do have some buy-in anyway because the only people getting this are alumni, so therefore we have a little more liberty in our logo colors and that type of thing.

That was something I wanted to add before we got started ... what are the goals or objectives of this publication? What is the purpose?

IT'S A NEWS VEHICLE FOR OSU ALUMNI, TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S TAKING PLACE. TO MAINTAIN A CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE WHO USED TO BE HERE.

To keep them up to date, especially if not on campus.

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ALUMNI LIVE OUT OF STATE.

My thoughts: probably the farther away you live from Stillwater, the more interested you are. I mean I live in Stillwater, and most of these stories I've already heard of by the time I get the magazine.

Is the title sacred? OSU Magazine? Is that a time-honored tradition ...

NOT TIME-HONORED. USED TO BE CALLED OUTREACH. HAVE HAD SIX TO SEVEN DIFFERENT NAMES.

I mean, it's OK. It doesn't reflect very much creativity or excitement. I was trying to think of any other publication that is even called "magazine" in its title. Maybe they think it's unique; I think it's kind of bland, myself.

USE OF COLOR OVERALL? IN GENERAL? FULL-COLOR, AS OPPOSED TO ...

I definitely like full color. Has two sections.

... contents ...

It does help define a section easily if that's what you're looking for ...

I think the color is good, and the use of color in this day and age. Everybody's doing it. And you need to do it to draw your eye to the articles, make them interesting, hold your interest. You need the color. I'm a little bit like [NAME] down here, I think sometimes the covers get too busy and you almost lose interest because there is so much there. Your eye loses coordination.

ANYBODY DISAGREE?

I don't disagree, but I have different comment. With the number of stories that we put in, I think color is definitely needed because there's so much going on one page that you need single out stories with blocks. ... If there were going to be a simpler layout, you could almost go to a duotone if you want it or big pictures that take up one page, that kind of thing. ... with all the information we have in ours, I think it does a good job with the color, drawing your eye through the pages.

I like *the* — I wish it were bigger — but there's a different color here, with a color bar. This is for This is for designating ...

... A DIFFERENT COLLEGE. THE COLLEGE INDICATORS.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine. I'd like to see that continue through. If that were consistent from issue to issue, then if I wanted to know about Arts & Sciences, I could just sort of flip through and "Oh, there's Arts and Sciences" and be able to see that very quickly. And color is a good way to sort a lot of information and help you identify different sections. But it has to be used consistently and I'm not saying it is or isn't, but in order for it to work that way, you have to use it.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE COLOR SHOULD BE USED? (pointing out some examples of headlines with color behind them, and some with photos)

Like [NAME] was pointing out, you have to be careful with background colors when you're putting type on top of it because then it can be difficult to read. If it's

going to be difficult to read, you're not going to read it. You're going to skim it and move on.

So it can also work real well. And I'm not sure there is a formula that would work for all. (talking with [NAME] about the color-coding on topics) It just depends on what the article is.

There are colors you can read, and colors you can't read. I think you should steer clear of those that are difficult to read. You only have one here you can read. Those two you can't read.

I know, but most of the time. ... You're not looking at it from across the table either. So I think it still works, but you wouldn't want to have 10 pages of an article this way. But I think you can do several, maybe two pages and then ...

Maybe an eighth of a page ...

Or a couple, would be as many as you could do.

That would work with white type.

Yeah, with reverse type.

This one would have worked had the whole text been done in the skyline there.

Yeah, un huh.

I think you have to be careful with the type of paper that it's not too glossy. Because then you have these more difficulty picking out the type, especially if you have color mixed in with it.

(mumbling) ...

You know, everyone doesn't sit in the ideal lighting situation whenever they're reading. So if you get a glare, you have to hold it at a certain angle, ... print, you're probably not going to read it.

OK. HOW FEEL ABOUT QUALITY OF PHOTOGRAPHY OVERALL?
APPEALING, INTERESTING. APPROPRIATELY SIZED?

Like I said, I really like the pictures, but I've noticed quite a few times they've used them where they've cut them out. I hate that. It makes their heads look funny. They stand there and look weird, kind of popping out of the page.

See I like that.

I don't mind that at all.

(mumbling) ...

A regular picture, to me, with some kind of backdrop that ties you to the school.

Occasionally, they try to put too many people in a picture. A small picture with 8 or 10 people in it, you can hardly recognize them. Not a very large picture, a small picture ... you can hardly recognize them.

OK.

It's not often, but occasionally you see it.

On this picture, for example, it seems like everything does pretty well together except for this one individual's picture here. It's a different treatment. And these all blend together. But this one kind of sticks out. It seems to not fit very well. It also, like you said, because it's more directly cropped, it seems to be out of place a little bit. A little bit misshapen.

So it's ...?

(laughing, lots of talking)

No, I like ... this is fine, but it doesn't seem to go well. ... inconsistent.

See, I like how they're using these little photos on the side. Kind of sidebar.

I would put this size bigger.

Oh yes, but see like here where you have a nice photo over to the side and a caption.

Some of these pictures ...

Yes, those are kind of small.

They're pretty small.

And I suspect sometimes its tough, with the photography, sometimes they get cut out because in the background there's half a car or it looks like a banana sticking out of someone's ear.

RIGHT. RIGHT.

So sometimes it there's probably not a choice on that. But you're right; you don't want it to look like someone has cotton-candy hair.

This is an example of ... I don't think there should be type over a face. If you've got a well-defined portrait or picture of a person, I don't think you should but type over their face. This is kind of neat. So that one doesn't bother me. But this one I don't like type over the face. It could be over other areas of the picture but I don't think it should be obscuring the face if you have a clear picture. I think it's appropriate over areas of the picture, though.

OK.

I like it when we don't have your standard It goes against her having people cut out kind of thing. But I would tired of looking at the whole magazine with just plain squares and rectangles and centered, and all that all the time. I think that's really boring. So I really like, so you know, I think this is really interesting, it's a single, he's making use of every little shot he's making the free-throw. I think that's pretty interesting. I like to see a little ... I get so tired of just plain squares.

ANYBODY ELSE? APPROPRIATE? A FEELING THAT PHOTOS JUST HAVEN'T MATCHED THE STORY? TOO SMALL TOO BIG?

I think since it's an alumni magazine, I think it's neat to have a background that has something to do with the college.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BACKGROUND?

Since it's an alumni magazine I think it's neat to have a background that has to do with campus — like ... campus pictures, or someone in their setting. Things like that.

Couldn't they stand in front of something on campus?

However, occasionally they are trying to reflect on some type of achievement.
RIGHT. SOMETIMES, LIKE IN THAT PICTURE, WE DON'T KNOW, IT
MIGHT HAVE HAD A REALLY BAD BACKGROUND.

Right.

A good point. But I wouldn't want to mimic it too much (??) ...

Right, right.

But this is neat with the building in the background. I can recognize as being
on campus.

...

Well, the steeple didn't bother me that much cause I recognized it right off as
the library, and I went, Whew! ... but the big old 10 didn't seem to match any other
color on the page. I guess I expected for it to be blue, or gold color, or some that would
match this. But I really like, if you're going to do a treatment, I really like this kind of
thing, cause I think it fits the story. But it's still in the same kind of square, but yet ...

It's a western story and it kind of has a western edge (lots of voices) ...

Yeah, and I just think it's a different look for it — kind of weathered looking.

The one where they're showing the older couples, where they ... I think that's
neat how they have them popped out in front. I really love that. The 50-year wedding
thing. And they're cut out, like I said I don't like, but it's against a white background.

WE TALKED ABOUT BACKGROUNDS. SHOULD PHOTOS BE A MIX OF
SOME THAT ARE OF CAMPUS AND SOME OF PEOPLE?

I think it will bring it to life. Otherwise, for me, it's just equipment or a
building unless someone's walking in front of it or doing something with it.

Yeah, to me, this ...

Yeah, but if you have people,

They're in context,

And you wonder if you see someone, and you start looking. I just think it seems more interesting that way.

This ... the whole building, but it's the people inside it that make it happen.

ANYONE ELSE?

In terms of buildings, say Gallagher-Iba Arena. If I didn't live here or know what the construction looked like, I would want to see pictures and I wouldn't care if there were people in the picture or not. I'd just want to see the building. Or like the new turf on the football field. I don't care if there's anyone on the turf; I just want to see the turf. The things like that are brand new

But I think it would be cool too to see Gallagher full too like at a basketball game, to see the facility full of people and the crowd cheering. I think that's a lot more interesting to me than just an empty building. 'Cause I've traveled around, and every time we've gone somewhere like the United Nations, they'd be like were they in session. ...

(lots of voices) ...

But like the outside Food Technology Center, probably wouldn't have the same kind of draw except for the food tech people. There's nothing on the outside that makes it ... But like you see the basketball floor - that's a whole different thing.

OK? ARTWORK? WHAT IF THERE'S STORY WITH NO ART? WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE IT BLANK OR PUT SOMETHING IN?

I'd like to see some piece of art, but ... Major effort ... every issue.

I wouldn't leave out a good story just because you don't have any artwork to go with it. 'Cause you can do things with color blocks and graphically to color enhance the visual.

TINY STORY OVER HERE WITH NO ART.

That OK. But if they were all without that, it wouldn't be very interesting. That works because ... I think use whatever best tells the story. Even if it's a kid's scribble that best tells the story, that's what you should use.

I think it does do a good job of ...

To me, I can't think of any art that jumps out as I really hated that ...

Sometimes, the good ones are the one's you don't notice.

That's right.

DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHETHER HAND DONE BY AN ILLUSTRATOR OR A PIECE OF CLIP ART THAT'S BEEN MODIFIED. CAN YOU TELL A DIFFERENCE?

Some, but ...

... I think you ought to have people on staff that can do that.

Students.

MOST OF THE ART IN THE MAGAZINE IS CLIP ART. PURCHASED FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS.

SO COLOR AND ILLUSTRATIONS ARE WHAT'S GOING TO GRAB YOUR ATTENTION?

ANYONE ELSE?

Staff or students who can do artwork.

I think you've got a good mix right now. I just think you need to be careful that you don't cut back or let it get to be too much. I think you may need to tie the illustration to the page or what's going on in the magazine in general.

To your major topic. It kind of keeps the readers' interest.

TYPOGRAPHY? OPINIONS ON SIZE, KINDS OF TYPE? CONSISTENT, BUT OK TO ALTER IT?

I think if you change it a couple of times on a page, that's great because it differentiates one story from another. If you have too many type settings on one page, then it gets jumbled up. I know that's probably a rule. I'm a journalism major and I haven't learned that yet. But or how many are on a page. But I think little words that come out bigger size are really neat cause they catch your attention. Or if the title is larger.

I like to see quotes pulled out. This right here grabs my eye on this page more than anything else on here. I think because of the color, the white space around it, and it's a quote. It's short and easy to read. And it makes you want to know more about the subject.

OK.

I would like to ... I don't know if there's a way to do it because I haven't read enough of them to see a pattern, but it's just a little difficult sometimes to maneuver through. It's easy for the two-page articles, that are two-page spreads, because that's very obviously it's own thing. ... same colored background. ... You can tell it's all one article. Same here. When you have smaller ones, though, it's harder; especially when the headlines are all the same typeface, then it's hard to know at first that these are all related because they have the same headline type. As I read, I find they're all separate ... so it's a little confusing in that way. And then again with the sections on the schools, I'd just like to see the names on the schools or the colleges played up a little bit more as at least from an alumni's point of view if that's what I'm looking for I have to really look to find that that's the section for the college I went to. And there may be some reason. I mean I like it that from month to month it's consistent, but I still have to kind of work. And I guess if I knew that that's what I knew I was looking for then it would be easy to find. But I'd almost like to see that played up more too like a banner for each college. And you could do that with type. You could almost give them their own headline for the page, just to make it easier to maneuver through there.

ANYONE ELSE?

I have a little bit of a problem with the changing cover. It's a different cover every time. I don't know but would I be more supportive of a more uniform cover, as well as the logo. That plus a section — I go to the Class Notes first

I do, too.

Ha ha. That's age I'm sure.

Ha ha. I never read 'em. (same person who said "I do, too")

I'm wondering is there a section of just history, historic OSU. One story, one page, A picture on the page. Those things are important to alumni. Of course, I know alumni are more supportive as they get older.

I HOPE YOU PUT THAT ON YOUR SURVEY.

And they ... you can tell by the class reunions — the older they get, the more they return. And your readership survey will indicate the same thing. In any event, what I'm saying is when that magazine is in my box or delivered to my home, I like to immediately recognize it. If you look around the table here at the different covers, it's all different.

SO YOU'RE SAYING A STRONGER MASTHEAD OF SOME SORT?

Well, I'll give you some examples. I don't know how or when National Geographic changed their covers. I don't know when Oklahoma Today did. I don't know when Arizona Magazine did. The covers all look the same. And the reason is because they wanted people to recognize them. And of course you say we send them to the alumni and we don't have the same marketing problem they might have. But it might have some other reasons for ... When you get back to this logo plus the cover and maybe a complete redesign is intended to carry on for several years of the cover.

When I received my first magazine, I joined the student alumni to get it and I told my dad I received it, and he was like I've always gotten one. I didn't know. I'd always seen it but I didn't know it was the same magazine. Because it's not the same look every time. I had no idea I'd read it before.

Well, another example of that is Southern Living. That's one of my favorites. And it's got the same look time after time after time. Different photographs, different words on the cover, but that logo is in the same place, the treatment is the same every time. And that's the identification, I think, that you want.

ANYONE DISAGREE? OK.

IMPORTANCE OF USE OF WHITE SPACE?

I think it's important.

I think it just gives your eye a break.

It leads your eye to where you want it to go. I know you consider this ... this is still white space, too, even though it's got color on it. I still think it's nice. You can tell the extent of the article. You know it's all contained on this one page. Just like these, all you can tell is they're contained. You can read as much as you want, when you want. You can take a break, visually, because of the white space.

RIGHT.

The only other place I've noticed a lot of white space is on the back. Is that because of mailing labels?

UH HUH.

I've always noticed that.

Yeah, I think without white space you just toss it. You don't even look at it cause it's just too busy. You're eye can't focus on it.

It's important to have good balance, though, on ... space within a page or a photograph. Like that ... down there, there's too much wasted space with empty sky. If it were closer to the ground — and you could accomplish that with Photoshop or whatever, in order to bring that down to where the runway is closer to the tail of the plane.

Yeah, there's a lot of wasted space and it covers up the ...

As I look at the magazine in general, not only the white space, but the different colors and the number of pictures, you must have an ... Budget. It's a very expensive magazine.

I'M NOT ALLOWED TO SAY. (laughter)

Color ... doesn't cost ...

I understand that.

(lots of talking at once) ...

Pages different colors ...

Well, if you're going to print it four-color, process color anyway, ... you're still using a lot of ink. I'll agree with that.

I also like it when you graduate the colors. I think that's really nice. I think that lends the eye ... very soothing treatment for the pages.

This is an added bonus to being a member of the Alumni Association. You want it to be top-quality. To look expensive — like you should be proud of it, and proud of where you went to school. I think you guys achieve that, definitely. With all the colors and graphics.

You know, without looking like, you ...

Right.

Or like money's just thrown at it

I would like to see a little, I don't what the term is for it ...

LIKE A STORY ENDER, A LITTLE DO-DAD

Yeah, it ends the stories. 'Cause I find subliminally that's what tells me that you're at the end of the story. And particularly when you sometimes start one article and end another one on the same page. That would help me and would be a good way to do it. I see the author's name as the ender, but I don't know, I'd just like to see a little ender.

ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Probably a little black and white of Pistol Pete. Or new logo. Or maybe this little triangle. Something that ties back into the logo.

When I think of OSU, I think of Pistol Pete, just as a visual image because he's so colorful and recognizable. And even his gun, or his spurs. Or even something as simple as that little triangle from the OSU.

I think the triangle would be good. Or a small image of Pistol Pete. An image might get a little too redundant, but a triangle might be a visual clue.

I think the triangle better reflects the mission of the university.

That's right.

[NAME], YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT THE PAPER. DO YOU THINK IT'S TOO GLOSSY?

No, it's not too glossy. I think the quality of the paper ... to tear, or to wrinkle, or deteriorate, or rub off on your hand. So I think the paper's OK. All I'm saying is that there are times when you mix the photographs, the colors and the print, and put it with the paper, and because not everyone has the best reading light, you get a glare on it and it's difficult to read. And so you end up having to move that magazine around in order to read the articles. I think you need to watch that mix in order to ensure that you don't get something like that going. You want to catch the eye, but you don't want to blind the eye.

I like the glossy. ... makes it look like you're spending money without spending money (??).

I think it's neat how they change the paper too for Class Notes.

Yeah.

It makes it really easy to find.

I highly recommend that you don't laminate the cover (some alum who doesn't like it, a Boulder resident environmentalist).

COMPARISONS OF OTHER COLLEGE MAGAZINES?

I get the Ag magazine. I always think of this being a little more professionally done than the College of Ag. Use of colors, fancy layout, everything that goes into it. Looks like it doesn't take as much time as the OSU Magazine to produce. I guess you might say complex as compared to simple.

DOES ANYONE ELSE GET A COLLEGE MAGAZINE?

I get the HES Magazine.

It's a good one. It's a very fine magazine. I don't think it has as many pages.

NO.

And it has a very slick cover. It's a different weight than this.

It doesn't offer the variety, content or the pictures. But I think it's a good magazine. This is far superior.

OK. ANYONE ELSE?

I get College of Vet. Med. I guess in my mind as I think back they're very similar in quality and layout and style and design. I think they're high quality overall. ... They blur in my mind cause there's not that identify associated with this one that I can picture in my mind. But I know right away this is the OSU Magazine. The other one's the college, 'cause they're so similar. (??)

I by chance get to see the Arts & Sciences, but I don't know why I don't get one I have no idea what their solicitation, their mailing list is But I don't spend much time reading it cause the articles are long. I think they spend too much time to expound on their words. I look at the photographs, the photographs are nice. It has the same kind of appeal, except that the articles are a lot longer. It takes more of a time investment to read it. And this doesn't. I can read it at my leisure, Pick it up and go, "Oh yeah, I've read that page."

VISUAL COMPARISON?

This is better, just because of the length of the articles, the diversity of the photos, the more choices you have to pick from.

KALEIDOSCOPE?

I always look back there. I noticed that snowman and, I like it because it's a snapshot. Just like an interesting ...

Like a photo album.

Yeah.

I always enjoy it. I read it first.

It's easily identifiable Because often times your magazine is laying on its face, and

Yeah, the logo again, here on the back. That would be good.

OK. LAST MINUTE COMMENTS, CRITICISM, INSIGHT?

I think it's a fine piece of work as it is right now. There's not that much wrong with it. We could nit-pick all day.

Oh, yes, tweaking, tweaking is all that is.

It's so much better than anything else I've seen along that line.

It might be nice to have a little place for people who want to subscribe. It's not clear until you read the fine print that this co-printed by the Alumni Association and that it's for members of that. So some little action place where people can, not a response card,

How come the only time you get a request for information for the Class Notes is with the renewal form? What about life members? They never get asked, and may have info they want to add to Class Notes.

This is a really quality thing you put out.

It's a quality piece. It gets their attention.

ADS IN THE MAGAZINE?

I don't like it all. I fought with them about it with Oklahoma Today and lost.

Farm Bureau, is almost always in there. And I think that's neat because I'm from an agriculture background, but if you started doing a lot of that, I probably wouldn't probably read it.

Farm Bureau is more like a sponsorship, than an ad.

Yeah.

University-related ads, I don't have a problem with that. But I just don't want any commercial ads in the magazine.

ANOTHER OTHER LAST SUGGESTIONS?

Website. Maybe some of these stories could be on the web site, with links to other related sites.

I wouldn't read the whole magazine on the web. I might read a couple of stories. But you put a lot of time and effort into this, and I like to feel it and hold in my hand. At home I don't have the Internet, so I couldn't read it at home on the Web. But this I can take with me, and I can take it on the plane with me, in the car. It can travel with me.

I feel like it's a benefit of my membership with the Alumni Association. I wouldn't be happy if someone could just get on the Internet and look at it.

Or a little story here and there, or a teaser saying "if you want to learn more ..."
Join the Alumni Association and get the magazine. But I wouldn't put the whole thing on there.

[END OF FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS]

None.

Nothing.

Nothing. I enjoy reading the articles and viewing the pictures.

It's fine.

No change.

Love it.

Excellent.

I don't read it enough to make an informed suggestion.

Information on academic standing, student successes and growth plans.

Articles on the different schools with the teachers still at the school.

Update information on professors — ones retiring, moving to new job, promoted, etc.

Never print dark print on dark background or even on medium background. How about a philosophical article now and then, something from the history dept., or sociology, or something like that.

More information on campus improvements.

Each issue have a devoted section to each of the different colleges. Current and upcoming events, clubs, etc.

Annual report once a year. I graduated so long ago I can't relate to what is happening at present. I have enjoyed stories and profiles of alums I was in school with (1950–1953). I would like to read up-to-date alum news and obituaries.

More technical and agriculture.

Available on-line.

Faculty and student profiles (not just award winners).

More nostalgic events in OSU history.

More success stories.

Increase history of graduates.

To be able to purchase OSU/Oklahoma A&M clothes (a catalog page) and phone number (800) to order and delivery — out of state to Mississippi. Sweats — tunics, like the off-campus store.

More OSU items for sale.

More sports and happenings of what we are doing to improve OSU facilities.

Content, the full diverse picture/scope of minorities on campus.

There are lots of successful alumni out there that are not famous, rich, or in

the news a lot.

More information on alumni by class year.

More Class Notes.

Life members are “treated” lower than annual members (i.e. little/no recognition in magazine, now “updates” requested for inclusion in Class Notes, etc. — recognize us!).

Would like to see articles on graduates from all around the world. OSU Magazine does some of this already, but need to continue to do more. Great magazine — keeps me up on OSU and Stillwater.

More info on sports team records throughout the season.

Provide an OSU or appropriate state history article along with article about current school accomplishments.

Need an e-mail communication page(s). Keeping alums, colleges within university communicating. Also have calendar of events with e-mail links for contact.

Keep improving it — you are doing just fine. A wealth of history on OSU — should have a column on “Remember” — example: You could fill a taxi - 10¢ from Murray Hall to downtown.

It is fine as is. I just don't read as much as I used to.

More information about how to stay involved — possibly events from regional alumni associations.

Current issues such as use of Residence Halls, new apartments — need for new facilities — programs vs. bricks and mortar. Status of academic excellence. Encouragement of Master Teachers. Loyalty to university and Oklahoma.

More alumni stories.

Include some sort of section on “happenings” by department (i.e. latest research focus; people leaving or getting hired; investments in technology, etc.

A few more articles pertaining to research, college programs, etc. And cut out the pages listing alumni — when graduated and what they do. Leave that for maybe annually, semi-annually.

Less emphasis on fund-raising campaigns and more OSU news.

Design.

Have a small form in each issue readers could complete to update their information (class news section) more readily.

More emphasis on alumni who don't live in Stillwater.

I would like to see more information on club events. Like the rodeo team, ag clubs and all the other clubs on campus of upcoming events.

I would take out what graduates are doing (Class Notes by year of graduation). It's interesting when you actually know someone, but that is about once every 4-5 issues. I would rather hear about programs, athletics, people in the "news", etc.

More information about branch campuses — our daughter attended OSU-Okmulgee (photo. tech.) and it may as well be on the MOON in terms of what you hear about it! Have to get on the Web page to locate any news regarding it.

More photos of college day-to-day activities.

History of building and why they are names with names they currently have. Current activities on campus, work with O'Collegian.

APPENDIX J

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires:

Date Wednesday, April 26, 2000

IRB Application No: AS00126

Proposal Title: A READERSHIP SURVEY OF OSU MAGAZINE: THE OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Principal
Investigator(s):

Paul V. Fleming
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Stillwater, OK 74078

Dr. Steven Smethers
313 Paul Miller
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Paul Victor Fleming II

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A READERSHIP SURVEY OF OSU MAGAZINE:
THE OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Alice, Texas, on July 29, 1958, the son of Dr. Charles Arthur Fleming and Kathryn Marie Fleming.

Education: Attended Quantico High School at Quantico, Virginia, 1976. Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, 1980. Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma; Advertising minor. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2000.

Experience: Officer, United States Navy, 1980– 1986 (assignments included: Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor, Assistant Anti-Surface Warfare Commander, Acting First Lieutenant). Oklahoma State University, Audio Visual Center August 1990 to present, currently as Coordinator, Graphic Design Services. Graphic Designer, Journal of Film & History, Popular Culture Center, 1995 to present.

Honors: Phi Kappa Pi, Kappa Tau Alpha, Golden Key. Oklahoma State University: Celebrate State Certificates, 2000. CASE, District IV: Grand Award, 2000; Special Award, 1996. Oklahoma College Public Relations Association: Grand Award, 1999, 1995; Awards of Excellence, 1996; Achievement Awards, 1998; Honorable Mention, 1995. Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition: Merchant Awards 1987–1990. Letter of Commendation, U.S.S. Carl Vinson (CVN-70).