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A bulletin from the world
of global media distribution

Edited by DistriPress, Zurich



DistriPress News



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MAGAZINES / Innovation / Ukraine

ELLE-Ukraine: adapting to war

ELLE-Ukraine's editor Sonya Zabouga explains how the brand has adapted to the ongoing conflict in the country.

Before the war we were full of plans: 10 printed issues per year of *ELLE-Ukraine*, four of *ELLE Decoration Ukraine*, including those dedicated to the 5th anniversary of the Ukraine edition. We wanted to build a new strategy for our YouTube channel and we were planning to enrich our editorial portfolio with the new project.

Priorities once the war began

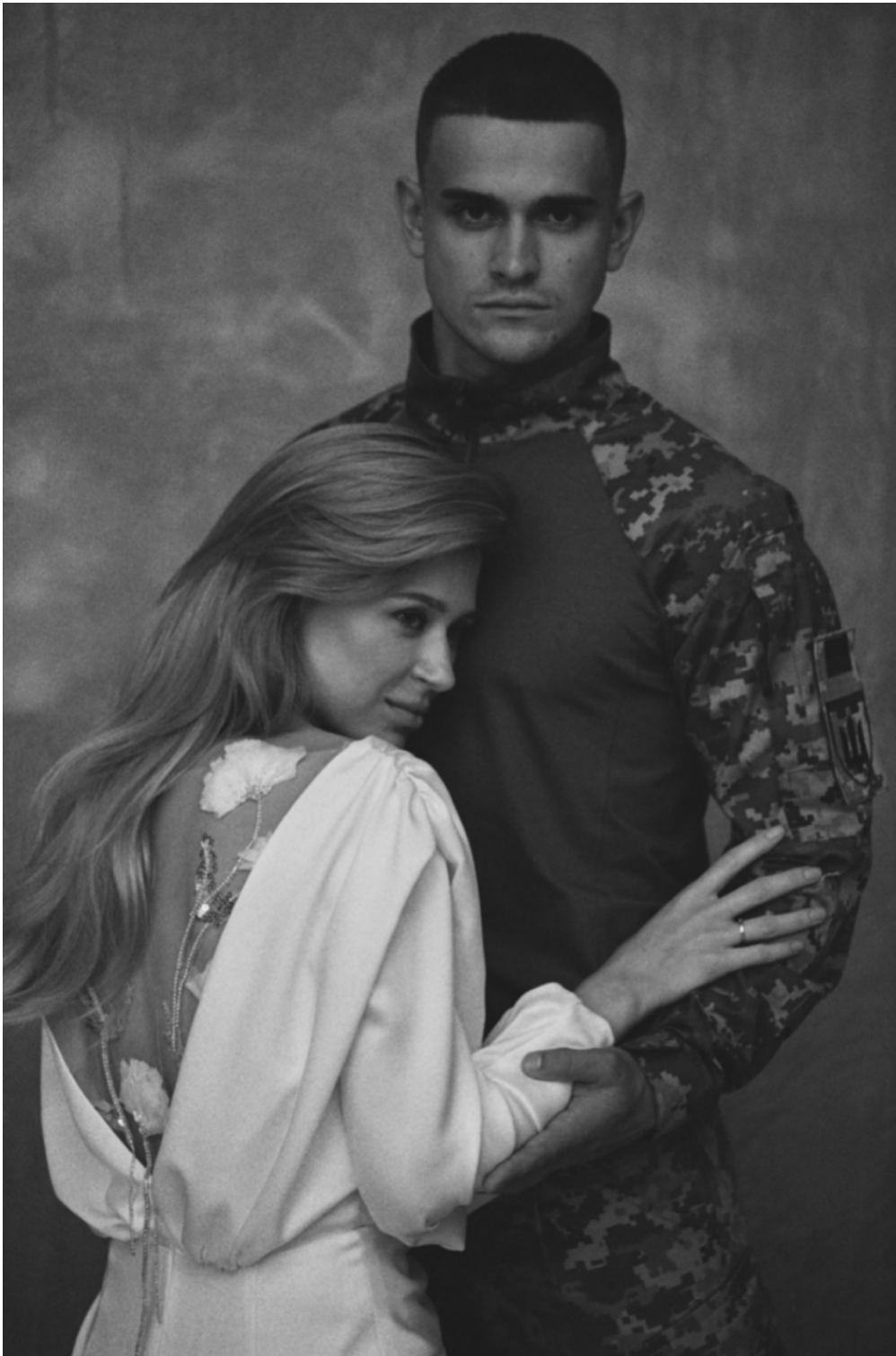
We found ourselves in a very unusual role: we turned from a lifestyle & fashion media brand into a wartime one. Since the beginning of the Russian military aggression in Ukraine, the publication of printed versions of *ELLE* has become impossible due to military operations.

However, despite the circumstances, the editorial office continued its work and decided to do issues in digital format. Work on the publication in a new format began already in the first days of the war, and in just three weeks the first digital

issue was already available for free download on the Elle.ua website. It was named *HOPE* and, unlike the previous ones, was dedicated to topics not typical for the publication. As well as the second number, which came out a little later. Both issues became a kind of military journal, which records Ukrainian modernity.

Logistical challenges

Today Ukraine is facing hard challenges. We are constantly dealing with blackouts. We can be cut off with no mobile connection for hours or even days, we are searching for options to get some electrical power. Because of attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure there is no light, water and heating in many residential buildings now. Sometimes the only possible way to charge electrical essentials is to go to the Points of Invincibility arranged by government authorities now in Ukraine. They work 24/7, regardless of power outages. The war obliges us to look for new logistical opportunities that will help us to continue our work. A Starlink Station for the office would probably be a good solution.



Protecting the team

It's impossible to get used to the war. There are ELLE editors that can't come back to Kyiv because they are still suffering from panic attacks. So they work online. There are ELLE editors who volunteer to help hospitals and construction

companies to restore buildings damaged due to war activity. Despite everything, we are trying to meet in the office at least several days per week. That helps us to keep things going.

Projects to be proud of

This war created opportunities to meet new heroes – ordinary Ukrainians who donated their last money for the army, choose volunteering as the new way of life, go to the frontline because they can't do nothing when the lives of their families are in danger.

We did a series of projects such as 'War Diaries', telling the stories of the people who escaped from the hard war activity zones. They saw everything with their own eyes and the way they talk about their lives during wartime is deeply touching.

One more project we are very proud of is 'Love Stories'. Even in the most difficult times, people build relationships, register marriages, and give birth to children. That project was planned to support Ukrainian military personnel who got married during the war. It involved a beautiful wedding photoshoot for three couples. It was a truly magical day, full of tears of happiness, exchange of vows and the strongest hugs. The lovers, who are now protecting our country, have not seen their dearest people for several months, so this romantic event has become a good reason for spending time together.

ELLE-Ukraine in 2023 and beyond

We have received many questions from readers: will the world see printed versions of the magazines released in digital format? That is why it was decided that these issues must also appear in print.

We are currently preparing a special collection issue dedicated to current events in Ukraine, which will also include digital issues created by the editorial staff of *ELLE Ukraine*. It is going to be called *Ukraine 2022* and will be dedicated to what this year has become for our country. In addition to the materials that have already been published, the issue will also include a series of new iconic interviews and materials dedicated to the new Ukrainian reality.

The war still goes on, but so do our lives. We are more than ever concentrated on work; on creating projects to support and inspire our readers.



STRATEGY / Distribution / Betapress

Growing market share post-COVID

After a number of Covid-related lockdowns, magazine sales were dropping in the Netherlands.

Supermarkets, that were able to continue trading through the period, had seen an increase in magazine sales. But once the lockdowns eased, buyers were not returning to specialist stores.

Distributor Betapress came up with a solution to try and claw back market share in the form of a nationwide magazine campaign across retailers and publishers.

When the idea was first floated in May 2021, retailers were initially hesitant, says managing director of Betapress,

Norbert ter Punt. But, after another lockdown that winter, specialist magazine sales took another hit.

“History repeated itself,” says Norbert. “So everyone was all of a sudden open to the idea.”

It was important to Betapress that the campaign covered as many publishers and retailers as possible, so they also invited their competitor distributor Aldipress to take part.

In total, the campaign covered all the publishers in the Netherlands and all retail chain related magazine specialist stores such as Bruna and Primera.

The campaign used the tagline “however specific your topic, we have a magazine on it”. It ran from 12 September 2022 for three weeks, with magazines published in this period advertising it on page. There was also a radio ad and an in-store competition where customers could win €50 or a full-year subscription to their favourite magazine.

Around 95% of stores saw participation in the competition, with nearly 15,000 entries overall.

“Obviously the intention was to highlight the specialist magazine category, but we were afraid that general magazines would benefit the most,” says Norbert. “But 765 titles were chosen as a preferred magazine, which we were quite stunned by. A lot of these titles were international or Dutch specialist magazines.”

Over 40% of retailers said they had new customers for magazines during the campaign, and their market share increased by 4%.

Sales from existing clients also increased, as well as non-food items such as gift cards. Norbert says thanks to this success, that was given a great 7.5 evaluation-rating by retail, there is talk of possibly repeating the campaign.

For now, to keep up the momentum, Betapress is considering giving selected retailers a special discount on international magazine titles.

“We want to maintain the attention that we’ve gathered,” says Norbert. “And it will not be charged back to the publishers. This is something Betapress feels we need to do.”

If anyone wants to have further information on this campaign, to see if it is suitable for your country, please reach out to Norbert ter Punt at Betapress in The Netherlands.



TRENDS / Printing / Belgium

Standing tall in a shrinking market

Amid a declining publishing market in Belgium, printer Roularta is looking towards building longer-term sustainability.

“We are optimistic,” says Steven Renders, General Manager at Belgian printer, Roularta Printing.

The market is set to decline between 10-25% next year, according to Steven, which is higher than in previous years where decline has been around 6-7%.

This is due to the ongoing trend towards digital media, but sped up by the impact of Covid and the war in Ukraine which has pushed up energy prices and general costs due to inflation, alongside minimising disposable income.

To mitigate these challenging circumstances, Roularta has expanded its number of titles by 25 this year and is looking for more acquisitions in the Netherlands and Germany in the near future.

“Of course, part of that additional volume is offset by lower volumes of existing products. But we are still going to see an increase for 2023, which is good,” adds Steven.

The magazines that have been added have mostly been fashion, decoration and housing magazines, often using high quality paper so they “feel exclusive” compared to the digital alternative.

However, due to the consequences of the declining market, the business is also facing the challenge of fewer suppliers, both for paper and machines. To combat this, Roularta has trained some of their own technicians to work on their machines.

Steven believes the company is well placed to develop its supplier relationships due to its unique position as a division of a wider publishing company, Roularta Media Group. This means it prints 50% its own magazines and 50% third party publications.

“That is a reassurance for third party companies in a market where printers are declining,” says Steven. “It shows that we will still be here in five, 10 or 15 years because we have a guaranteed customer in-house.”

He says that reliability is currently strongly valued in the market, given the volatility and the decline. But another trend at the forefront of conversations is sustainability values.

“A question we’re seeing more and more from our customers is ‘what is the footprint of our printing job’, because they want to compensate for it,” says Steven. “Sustainability is a very

important thing that we are working on now and will continue working on in the future.”

INSIGHT / Subscriptions / TMG

TMG's subscription-first strategy

Over 165 years old, *The Telegraph* is one of a handful of broadsheet newspapers in the UK. The Telegraph Media Group (TMG) operates a subscriber-first business across both digital and print.

As part of the pivot to a subscription-first strategy, TMG has been running a transformation programme, including ongoing investments in journalism, data, digital products and the subscriber experience. “This strategy has established a much deeper connection with our engaged subscribers over a casual readership and enables a sustainable long term profitable business,” says Richard Pickard, TMG's director of operations.

The transformation programme aims to help drive growth in subscriptions. These changes have allowed the business to adapt to market trends and better align with its subscription-first strategy.

The printed newspaper continues to be the daily showcase of *The Telegraph* at the newsstand. Recently, extensive coverage of the reign of HM Queen Elizabeth II, including a commemorative special print edition, has sold well. TMG has built a total print and digital subscriber base of around 740k as more readers continue to engage with its journalism.

Pickard describes how, in countries outside the United Kingdom & Ireland, *The Telegraph* has moved to a royalty model. This has allowed overseas readers, including tourists and expats, to continue to buy printed copies of *The Telegraph* across parts of Europe, such as in France, Portugal and Malta.

“This simple operating model works well for both us as a publisher and our local distributor, and has allowed TMG to have a continued presence in select territories,” Pickard says. “We plan to continue to offer this service to markets where there is a reader need, working with our valued local partners.”

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Registration open early April



John Morthanos

US newsstand consultant and DistriPress member John Morthanos passed away on 30th November, after a long period of illness.

Our thoughts are with his family, friends and colleagues.



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