



Magazine Retail Advisory Council (MRAC) Retreat Summary from Bill Bishop, President, Bishop Consulting

The MRAC Retreat, held September 24 and 25, 2003, helped usher in a new era of better communications between magazines and the retail community. There was early consensus that the time had come to approach our retail customers with a more positive and consistent message.

Magazines are more complex to manage than many categories in the supermarket. But, they're also more vital and a better profit-contributor. For too long, the magazine business has been in a defensive posture as a result of complexity. The selling presentation coming out of the MRAC Retreat puts the magazine category on the offense, with a strong story about category performance, combined with how magazines help improve the overall shopping experience and sell more products.

The two-day retreat in the New Jersey countryside was intense. On the first day, the committee heard about what consumer package goods (CPG) companies are doing to strengthen relationships with retailers from an expert doing exciting work in that area. The committee also reviewed their recent experiences to identify what was working and what was not.

On the second day, we inventoried all the retailer concerns that we have heard concerning magazines so that we'd know all the areas where we had to prepare responses.

The majority of the day, then, was devoted to working first in small groups and then together to:

- ✓ Define our proactive message.
- ✓ Document our case.
- ✓ Plan for telling the story

The committee is working with the goal of delivering our first presentation in January 2004.

This message will be delivered with the confidence that our category is more vital than many other categories in the supermarket, and that retailers are looking for

our help to better understand what's happening in the business and to develop constructive responses.

October 2003