Industry

BACKGROUND

Attitude magazine was **originally published by "Northern & Shell"**

Northern & Shell **used to publish a range of magazines and newspapers but they were quite tabloid and gossip-based.**

They also **owned a few TV channels including Channel 5, and some adult TV channels and magazines.**

Bit-by-bit, **N&S started to suffer financially- starting to sell off their assets** like their TV channels and magazines, and then they started selling off their newspapers. *This potentially reflects the very difficult nature of magazines & print-publishing- decline in readership.*

Stream Publishing bought Attitude from N&S, they're **independent** but do *have a range of other magazine titles to their names ("Flight Time"). They're quite small, they're based in Surrey and have less than 30 employees as of 2021.*

They do have an **owner called Darren Styles, currently the Managing Publisher for Steam Publishing. He's gay and said he bought Attitude as he felt offering niche LGBTQ magazines was important as there were so few out there at the time.**

He **previously bought the title "Winq" which is a Netherlands-based gay magazine- it was doing quite well.** Attitude magazine and website was one of the main competitors for Winq. So **stream decided to purchase it (horizontal integration) to absorb the competition into their own company. They then owned both leading gay magazines in Britain & Europe.**

They can **write, edit, design, print and distribute their own products due to vertical integration- they aren't owned by a conglomerate. They still have the power to be creative because they're small and independent (against Curran & Seaton's power industries theory).**

Industry (cont)

There are a **variety of other global print editions for Attitude that all include their own websites**- for example, a Thai edition, Belgian, Netherlands, Vietnam, etc. This **reflects Hesmondhalgh's ideas about minimising risk by creating global editions of the magazine. It was already an existing successful format so copied it to other countries.**

It's important to remember that **the focus of this exam question is the website for Attitude rather than the print version.** But it is still essential to know the background.

The Attitude website, and the existence of the digital editions for phones & tablets, **targets a modern audience who are spending more time on converged technology.**

Stream uses a **variety of digital platforms and sites to distribute Attitude's digital versions to readers.**

The website attracts roughly **1.7 million users a month** and has **1.2+ million followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.**

The **digital copies sell over 11,000 copies a month**. With the print magazine, they were earning a large chunk of revenue from advertising. **So they have to offer brands advertising opportunities online too. They sell banner adverts, sidebar adverts, companies can sensor sections of the website, they can take over a page, create advertorials that look like articles but are actually adverts. They can run competitions and promos on the website, and they can even advertise via their social media pages. A whole load of advertising opportunities that creates Steam Publishing more revenue.**.

Industry (cont)

Being a website with **digital editions means that they are able to distribute their product globally, it's no longer limited to a British target audience,** which is something the print editions surpassed somewhat. Articles offer stories about **global travel, other cultures and global LGBTQ issues.**

There's a **high focus on celebrities + star-appeal on the digital & print editions**, every page is **plastered with names that would be familiar with the audiences- this makes the website more attractive.** They are **famous for securing huge exclusive interviews with people that may not have been reachable by other companies before, like the Royal Family (Prince William) and Prime Ministers.** This was the first time a Royal had done an interview with a magazine. **High-profile celebrities have helped maintain a brand-identity and unique selling point.**

They **use social media to target a reasonably modern audience, and a global one too.** Lots of **social media posts about things happening in other countries, tagging people in other countries- broadens out audience so it's not just British readers**.

There are several countries around the world where being apart of the **LGBTQ community is illegal and Attitude is not allowed to be sold in its print version. Having an online website means they can offer this content to people in those countries even if LGBTQ communities are illegal by law-** those communities can still access the website in most of those countries (but not necessarily all, unfortunately).. **This demonstrates how online technology can be used to bypass traditional forms of regulation and censorship.**

**Every social media post redirects the viewer back to Attitude's website.

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Industry (cont)

It's all about driving traffic to the website, to increase their revenue by advertising. **Most of their content includes "scantily clad" male models but** some of the more adult content use Twitter or Facebook algorithms to censor the content so that they are at least trying to keep it away from much younger audiences.** That way people have to sign-in with accounts to try and "prove" (in theory) they are over 18. But obviously, **there are no real checks done on social media so regulation is extremely difficult. **. Attitude also have an **issue that not everyone who comments or looks at their social media posts is actually supporting of LGBTQ communities- there are several comments that may be seen as hateful, offensive and discriminatory**. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc, are supposed to be helping to tackle this but don't do a good job. This is **perhaps why Attitude has very little options for audiences to share/engage with particular images/articles online.** It could be that they're **concerned about reactions they might get from people who are homophobic or transphobic. This could be Stream attempting to protect their readers and the people in their articles from online hate, perhaps creating a more safe online space for LGBTQ audiences.**. **Stream Publishing has set out their own ethics policy, where you can see their rules and regulations that they say they will abide by- reflecting this idea that some companies now are trying to self-regulate in an attempt to avoid controversy and offence.**

**Stream Publishing run events such as the Attitude Award to build the brand identity amongst audiences and industry professionals.

Industry (cont)

They've also set up something called the Attitude Magazine Foundation **which is a registered charity that** raises money and funds to distribute to LGBTQ communities and charities around the company- running youth/support groups, events, donations towards pride festivals, etc. This challenges Curran & Seaton's theory that companies are all about profit and power. Attitude seems to be about giving back to LGBTQ communities too. **. During the COVID pandemic **in 2020, Stream Publishing ran an "Attitude Pride at Home" festival** because there wasn't able to be a pride festival irl, so they ran their own 9-day digital pride festival. This **uses technology to reflect current social and cultural contexts of what's going on in the country to try and keep their readers engaged and offer something different surrounding the Attitude brand.**

Attitude Cover Example

Audience

- Gender, male -

A lot of the content online is quite factual and avoids deep emotional responses, which may target its primarily male audience. This is because of the stereotype that men aren't very emotional. Even when they do interviews, it's about the history or opinions on that person and not anything emotional.

There's many clickbait article headlines to highlight any salacious/risky content, designed specifically for audiences to click further into the website (cost-per-click, advertisements, etc).

Another stereotype used to target the male audience is the idea that men are less likely to read as much as women, so **Attitude's website is simple, easy to read, with small chunks of text, large images and lots of white space.**

Men are targeted through the number of stories about men and male issues.

- Age, 25-55 -

Images convey this age group- recognisable figures. Also a big focus on retro 90s fashion, music, film, pop-culture, etc. A lot of that age range lived through the 90s period or are quite familiar with it, it gives them a feeling of nostalgia and engage them in a way other magazines might not.

We tend to assume that**very young audiences might not be interested in political content, so the amount of political content on the Attitude website appeal to an older audience.**

There is **very little "interactive" content on the website, which might reflect the slightly older target audience too.**

They **promote the print magazine on the website a lot**, lots of pictures and references, links to subscribe- **another indication that the target audience is older, who still consume print products, whereas young audience might've left print magazines behind them.**

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Audience (cont)

- How their social media does it -
Choice of Facebook/Twitter and not Snapchat/TikTok does suggest that the target audience is within the 25-55 age range.
- Socio economic, ABC1 -
Reasonably middle-class. Adverts are for high-end brands like Gucci, an indication the target audience must have enough money to perhaps buy those brands and designers. The use of adverts to target particular audiences associated with wealth.
- Demographics -
Lots of **focus on looking good, building muscle, etc. This appeals to a metrosexual audience of "aspirers".**
There's also a lot of social justice stories which target **"reformers" who want to change the world.**
Lots of emphasis on political stories, issues with racism, homophobia, transphobia, etc, all appealing to "reformers".
Lots of **formal, complex language- not a lot of slang or colloquialisms.** Might indicate that ABC1 demographic- we tend to **assume (stereotype) those people in that demographic are perhaps more educated and more likely to use that formal language.**
Obviously, the target audience for Attitude are primarily those who are gay, so there's lots of stories about the LGBTQ communities, particularly gay men, but there are more representations now. **There are lots of stories about gay celebrities in order to target this gay male audiences, such as Elton John and Dan Howell.**
There's a **lack of stories about families or having kids, which implies the audience are single or child-free.** The entertainment is all about having fun and holidays, so indicative that the readers of the Attitude magazine are carefree.

Audience (cont)

They've made an **attempt to appeal to global audiences because they've got a lot of global content, which they've syndicated from other websites online.** There's stories from around the world which help branch out.
The **website provides audiences with a lot of informative and educational content, and it also provides audiences with a lot of entertaining content.** There's very **little on the market in terms of online magazines that are targeted particularly at LGBTQ audiences, so Attitude fills this niche gap in the market.** Audiences may fill that **sense of identity with Attitude, it may be comforting to feel that others are going through the same thing as them.**
Some may feel that the magazine doesn't represent them at all. Whilst it markets itself as a gay magazine, **some audiences may feel that the focus is on gay men and that neglects the focus on other members of the LGBTQ community, such as Lesbians being featured rarely on the website.**

Attitude Cover Example

Representation

Attitude is clearly a magazine that's **aimed at a male target audience so the representations of men are fairly typical and they are created in a way to target that male target audience- so men are presented as powerful, successful and wealthy, in a celebrity or political way.**
Physically, there's a lot of images of men looking strong, muscular, broad, etc.
There's a lot of **topless photos of men that show that hyperbolic shape of men that we're often shown in the media.**
A lot of the articles talk about **factual things rather than hold any emotional values** which is fairly typical of content aimed at a male target audience- **representing men as emotionless and assuming men don't have feelings which is something we see a lot in the media.**
However, **some articles like Gok Wan or Ranj Singh's actually do explore the emotional impacts of coming out and how it can affect relationships in your life.**
These articles may also **represent men in a victimised way and this challenges dominant ideologies of gender, and would be identifiable for gay men who may have been through homophobic abuse.**
We're used to seeing men represented in a masculine way, but Attitude has articles about men who behave in a more effeminate way, such as men who use makeup, talk in a softer way, men in drag, etc. This does argue that Attitude does represent men in a broader way than just masculine.
Men are sexualised on this website, which is unusual for media as women are more often sexualised, and the audience is almost pushed to view men in a sexual way.

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Representation (cont)

The **representation of sexuality is very focused on gay men rather than the whole LGBTQ community- people who are lesbian, transgender, bisexual, etc are often left out**- there are a **few examples featured but there is much, much more for gay men specifically**. There's lots of **representation of LGBTQ issues and events on the website, lots of rainbow imagery.**

The **representation of gay men in a regular, positive, powerful and normalised way, fills a niche gap in the market, where gay men are often under or misrepresented in other media products.**

The website includes a **range of ethnicities, perhaps reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of modern Britain**. However, **many of the stories about other cultures and countries are quite negative, representing them as homophobic, discriminatory, and places to be avoided**. This is specifically centred around **African countries.** We're encouraged to see these countries as "backwards", **reflecting the fact that the target audience is primarily British and also reflects the cultural and political contexts of gay rights in some of the countries. **. The **staff that work at Attitude are almost all part of the LGBTQ community themselves, which might explain why the representations of sexuality are sympathetic and diverse. Having people who work for them who come from those backgrounds means they're able to represent themselves in a more positive way**. *Most of the staff is male, further suggesting why gay men are represented more than other members of the LGBTQ community.*

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