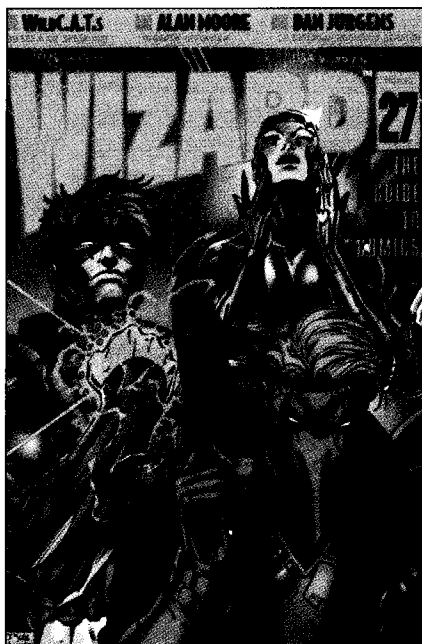


Comics Reemerge As Newsstand Heroes



Wizard: a "trade mag" for comics fans.

While other titles struggle to hold their own on the newsstand, comics are experiencing superhero-size circulation gains. Marvel and the DC Comics Group, which together control approximately 55 percent of the market, posted an average circulation gain of 58 percent during the first half of 1993, and smaller publishers also saw impressive increases.

Demographic trends have done much to supply the industry with a steady stream of new readers. The eight-to-18-year-old age group, the main audience for comics, is one of the fastest-growing population segments.

Publishers have been making the most of this golden opportunity, with sensational story lines that have brought back old fans, as well as attracted new readers.

"When DC killed Superman, it was like Coke changing its formula," says DC Comics Group director of circulation and new business Arthur McKinley. "It caught national attention." The result: Newsstand sales for Superman/Batman, the DC Comics division that publishes Superman, leapt by 148 percent in this year's first half.

Rapidly-expanding retail exposure is accelerating the boom. All-comics retail outlets "are jumping up all across the country, and collecting comic books has become practically a national obsession," notes Jon Warren, price guide editor for *Wizard*, a comics news and trends magazine whose sales have jumped five-fold in the past three years.

According to Diamond Comics Distributors, Inc., there are approximately 6,000 specialty comics outlets in North America, with annual sales of \$650 million.

Comics publishers are also stocking their products in the major book chains and in nontraditional outlets, and using both premiums and other promotions to out-draw competitors. (Also see update on newsstand premiums, page 19.)

For instance, Marvel recently struck a promotional deal with Pizza Hut. "Comic books are becoming more and more common in the mass market," says *Wizard* publisher Gareb Shamus. "You would never have seen that deal two years ago," he observes.

Also helping boost sales is the rapidly-growing comic-book collector's market. These days, a typical comic book sells for approximately \$1.25. But just a few years from now that same comic may fetch as much as \$10, notes Todd Scott, marketing representative with Diamond Comics Distributors. And some collectors' editions are worth up to \$125.

"There's been a speculator boom, with some people buying five to six copies of each issue," says Scott. "It's sort of like the stock market." ♦

Quick Fill

"The Publisher's Choice"

ADVANCED SUBSCRIPTION FULFILLMENT ON YOUR PC

"QuickFill, from CWC Software, is very slick, very robust, and beautifully documented."

Jeff Duntemann, Publisher
Coriolis Group

"Buying QuickFill is one of the best decisions we ever made."

Fraser A. Lang, Publisher
Manisses Communications Group

"Conversion from our old system was very smooth and using QuickFill has been natural."

Joel Whitaker, Publisher
Whitaker Newsletters, Inc.

"In short, it's everything a sophisticated publisher would want in a fulfillment system."

James Sinkinson, Publisher
InterCom Group

Available for sale or annual lease in both single and multiuser versions.

Free Preview Package available.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lookup by company, name or location | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible billing and renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Credit cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple publications | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift subscriptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple sales tax rates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group subscriptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Agency subscriptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Premiums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting audit trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Mail merge | <input type="checkbox"/> List rental |

Call 800-762-7702

Voice 617-843-2010 • Fax 617-843-8365

CWC Software, Inc.
150 Grossman Drive, Suite 201
Braintree, MA 02184