



Readership Institute Adopts Lee Enterprises Toolkit

March 15, 2002

EVANSTON, Ill., Mar 15, 2002 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- The Readership Institute at Northwestern University has adopted an in-paper promotion toolkit developed by Lee Enterprises (NYSE:LEE) as a resource for the newspaper industry. The toolkit is available at www.readership.org, and the institute has begun developing an online seminar to accompany it.

The toolkit is based on groundbreaking research released by the institute last year showing that strong in-paper promotion, along with seven other factors, is one of the biggest drivers of newspaper readership.

In announcing the toolkit, Mary Nesbitt, managing director of the Readership Institute, said:

"Lee Enterprises newspapers decided that the in-paper content promotion finding in the Impact study was something the newspaper group could embrace quickly. Lee created a broad-based task force to work out the operational kinks and provide guidelines for the kinds of promotions newspapers should use. Three of the Lee newspapers tested concepts for a few months, and the Readership Institute helped with focus groups to get a sense of whether the promotions were being noticed and what seemed to be working. The task force modified the guidelines based on the tests and focus-group feedback, and created the toolkit -- 'Building Readership: How effective advertising keeps readers coming back for more' -- for use at all of its newspapers."

She added: "Lee has generously allowed us to share the toolkit with the industry. We commend it to you. We couldn't have said it better ourselves."

The Readership Institute, directed by John Lavine, is a division of the Media Management Center at Northwestern University. It focuses on actionable research, field-testing of readership-building ideas and measurement of their success.

The institute was formed after newspaper publishers and CEOs, meeting at a special readership summit convened by the Newspaper Association of America in February 1999, agreed to make a five-year commitment to a Readership Initiative and asked the Media Management Center to lead and coordinate it. The initiative also has strong support and involvement from the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Preliminary research that led to the readership summit was made possible by a grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation of Chicago.

In 2001, the institute released a major, multipart "Impact" study of 100 daily U.S. newspapers, scientifically chosen to represent the newspaper industry as a whole. Using the insights garnered from that study, the institute is working with newspapers to develop experimental readership-building projects in their markets and to measure and assess the results.

Mary Junck, chairman and chief executive officer of Lee Enterprises, said work at the Readership Institute is paying off for the newspaper industry.

"John Lavine, Mary Nesbitt and others at the Readership Institute have helped us increase readership and build circulation," she said, "and I know they've helped others as well. We're glad to be able to give something back."

Lee Enterprises currently owns 23 daily newspapers and a joint interest in five others. In addition, Lee is in the process of acquiring 16 daily newspapers from Howard Publications, with closing expected in April. Lee also owns more than 100 weekly newspapers, shoppers and classified and specialty publications, along with associated online services. Its stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol LEE. More information about Lee Enterprises is available at www.lee.net.

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