



# Which newspapers do people read?

**TN9** Training Notes series: Communication

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**If churches and Christian groups are to communicate effectively to the world today, it helps to be taught by professionals. There is much to learn from the secular press on how to catch people's attention and hold it, on the kind of news people want to read, and on how to present it well.**

Each national newspaper knows exactly what kind of readership it is aiming for. But do you have any idea of how many people read each title? The results may surprise you. Try this light-hearted quiz to see how well you are aware of the readership figures for both daily and Sunday national newspapers. Then buy a selection of the papers named to see what marks each of them out.

Here are two lists. The first gives seven titles. They are the seven top-selling Sundays in alphabetical order (by main word). Alongside you will find the equivalent list of circulations but in descending order of size. All you have to do is to match each title with its correct circulation.

## **Seven Sunday titles in alphabetical order**

## **and their circulations in descending order**

Sunday Express	3,351,827
The Mail on Sunday	2,378,916
Sunday Mirror	1,393,184
News of the World	1,274,400
The People	716,656
The Sunday Telegraph	696,091
The Sunday Times	651,499

The second list is a little harder as there are ten titles this time, all of them dailies. As before, their circulations are printed alongside them but not in the same order. Again, match the titles to their correct circulations.

<b>Ten daily titles in alphabetical order</b>	<b>and their circulations in descending order</b>
Daily Express	3,126,866
Financial Times	2,353,807
The Guardian	1,525,477
The Independent	882,413
The Daily Mail	789,867
Daily Mirror	771,197
Daily Star	642,895
The Sun	449,385
The Daily Telegraph	364,513
The Times	240,134

The seven Sundays listed are in fact the seven largest Sunday circulations (followed by The Sunday Mail (for Scotland), The Observer, and the Daily Star – Sunday). The ten dailies shown include the eight largest circulations but omit the ninth (The Daily Record – for Scotland), and the eleventh (The Evening Standard – for London). Free distribution papers are not included.

Circulations shown are Average Net Circulations (Total) for October 2007. If you use the UK-only figures instead, circulations for most are about 5-10% lower, but 14-21% for The Sunday Times, Daily Star, Guardian and Independent, and no different at all for the Evening Standard. The orders are unchanged except for the Financial Times where the clear majority of its copies are sold outside the UK, so on UK sales alone it is well below all the rest.

All circulations taken from ABC Data dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

**Only read on if you have now tried the exercise above.**

To find the correct answers, click [here](#) (no cheating, please!).

## **Exercise**

Ask your local newsagent how many copies of each of these titles he or she orders each day or week and see if there are any major differences in order from the national figures.

Then try an anonymous questionnaire on your congregation to discover how many regularly read each title, and compare with the comparative figures in these notes and sales from your local shop. Any surprises?

Study different kinds of daily newspapers (by the market they are aimed at) to look in particular at how each communicates a story. Look at how many sentences per paragraph they average, the use of powerful adjectives and verbs in the so-called tabloids, the visuals used, etc.

## Questions

- 1 Consider those in your church who write or produce materials for those outside the church. Which newspapers do your writers read? How does this compare with the figures studied here? Anything to learn?
- 2 Which of the above national newspapers most closely match the style and content of any literature that your church produces for people who do not necessarily belong to any church?
- 3 What are the main differences in style of writing? How do the top-selling papers tell a story? What can we learn from them (even if we don't want to tell the same stories!)?
- 4 Similarly, what are the main differences in presentation? What can we learn?
- 5 Should Christians read newspapers? If so, which ones should they read?

These notes are available at [www.john-truscott.co.uk/resources/training/tn9.pdf](http://www.john-truscott.co.uk/resources/training/tn9.pdf). They cover one aspect of a possible training event on the media or on preparing materials for those who are not church members. See also Training Notes TN22 *Appoint a church photographer!* and Article A2 *Watch your image!*. For indexes of all items available on the site, visit the [resources page](#).

Contact John if you would like to enquire about the possibility of his running an event for you on any aspect of communication in churches.

Cartoons are by Micki Hounslow for filing categories of Leadership, Management, Structures, Planning, Communication, Administration. File TN9 under Communication.

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