

REPTILES...Helping Companies Help Themselves

Marketers know reptiles are attention-grabbers.

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What do you think of this advertisement that appeared in TIME magazine? Any of you get TIME magazine? If you were thumbing through the September 14 issue with Jay Leno on the cover you may have noticed the real attention-getter in that issue: an ad that featured REPTILES magazine prominently. We made TIME, and not because of any horrible international incident that originated in our editorial offices (the reason I always figured we might make headlines someday).

The magazine was used in an ad for Maghound, an online magazine retailer. The headline of the ad reads, "Multi-Million Dollar Homes Come With Snakes," and features copies of Vacation Homes and Metropolitan Home alongside a copy of REPTILES magazine. I must admit using these titles in this way does advertise the diversity of the titles Maghound offers. The issue of REPTILES that they used was the special venomous issue from August 2008, with the Tamaulipan rock rattlesnake on the cover. I guess Maghound wanted to go for a little shock value by including a rattler in their ad.

Here again is proof of the public's fascination with reptiles, and the media's knowledge of that. Want somebody to look at your ad? Throw a reptile on it. That's a good lesson companies should learn. And this helps keep reptiles in the forefront of people's thoughts. While I'm often against the media reporting on reptiles, since when that happens it's usually meant to scare people and rack up ratings at the same time, I'm all for reptiles and amphibians being used in marketing campaigns. Such efforts usually cast them in a positive, or at least interesting, light. They are used in correlation with products marketers want people to enjoy and take advantage of, whether we're talking about beer or affordable insurance. That's OK with me.

The only possible downside that comes to my mind is that perhaps when a reptile is used in a national campaign this could lead to a rash of impulse purchases (such as what happened with clownfish when Finding Nemo was released, and Dalmation puppies in the wake of the 101 Dalmations remake in 1996). That could in turn lead to animals dying when they receive poor care from impulse buyers who haven't done their research. I personally have not heard, however, of a rash of day gecko deaths as the result of the Geico commercials over the years. And I hope I never do.

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