Is There A Market For A Multicultural Bridal Magazine In The U.S.?

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Is There A Market for A Multicultural Bridal Magazine in the U.S?

By

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

From Whence It Came – History On The Cover

During the months prior to my wedding I was much excited about the preparation for the “perfect wedding.” And for me the perfect wedding was making sure everything was in place; the perfect church ceremony, the perfect flowers, the perfect reception, the perfect cake and last but not least the perfect wedding gown. Having less than eight months to prepare this “perfect wedding,” I had to set out a game plan to achieve the extraordinary results. To get my plan on the way I set out to the bookstore to buy the bridal bible; Bride’s magazine, and all the other bridal magazines that dominate the bridal media industry. After getting my hands on every bridal magazine there was, I realized that something remained constant for every issue: all the women on the cover looked alike! They were all distinctively Caucasian women.

I was really curious then and now about what these magazines encompassed to make all brides of all cultures so submissive to their marketing power. I figured they were the omniscient bridal authority and knew very well what all brides needed to have for that picture perfect wedding day. After going through all the magazines I recognized a pattern in their schema. These magazines marketed goods and services that conditioned brides into following a trend; a trend that lasted for almost seventy years; and that trend does not deviate from the white wedding / white bride phenomena that we still see today. It goes as far back as the 19th century where it all began with Queen Victoria of England.
“Bride’s delivers 6.5 million readers who are madly in love and spending like mad…. And while these guaranteed consumers are ringing up $175 billion annually on purchases for their new lives, over 90% are reading one magazine,” (SRDS, 2003). This statement made by the bridal autocracy from Bride’s magazine suggests that the products and services that Bride’s advertise are a promise and a commitment to wedding splendor. This is basically the setup that businesses in the bridal industry use to cause women to spend beyond their budget for a commercialized and consumerist one-day event.

The majority of the U.S. population today is a mixture of cultures, ethnic groups, and an equal mix of several races and varied marital social customs. With these elements, come periods of immigration to the U.S. from all over the world causing the migration of marital customs and cultures to be easily blended through generations, and when this happens a piece of that culture is gone and is replaced with a prototype of the “white bride”/ “white wedding.”

It seemed that many brides were white-washed into accepting this standard as appropriate since it has been so repetitive for years and since most people migrating into western culture forgot about customs or practice most then turned to popularity. Now more than ever, research has shown that a lot more cultures are seeking to retain wedding customs and traditions to keep the connection with their homeland. So why are there still exclusively white faces on the cover of contemporary and nationwide bridal magazines; when it is evident that there are a lot more interracial-intercultural, and financial factors affecting the genre of weddings?
Research Question

The expanded immigration of the last several decades into the United States has changed the statistics of the bridal industry over the years and with the influx of different races, ethnic groups and customs, a question that needs answering is: Is there a market for the creation and the survival of a mainstream, multicultural, bridal magazine?

Subsidiary Questions

In the effort to understand the implications of this unknown yet practical market, the study will dedicate time to answering the following questions:

1. Why have white brides and weddings dominated the market for so long?
2. When did white weddings become the blueprint for all weddings?
3. What will be the most likely new publications for the brides-of-color?
4. What are some of the factors for producing a successful bridal magazine?
5. Is society ready for a multicultural bridal magazine?

Purpose of Study

This study will discuss the history and the profile for success of current bridal magazines – specifically Bride’s magazine that continue to dominate the market, their marketing strategies, the facts and figures for their overwhelming success. Other topics jointly researched are: the reasons why most women have accepted the
“white bride”/ “white wedding” standards and the economics of westernized weddings; the Victorian era and its contribution to today’s predominance with European style weddings; and the economics of this wedding phenomenon.

In addition, the research will look into reasons why there hasn’t been a different face on the cover of the most popular bridal magazines that dominate the bookstores, drug stores and newsstands. It will take a look at the elements that stunted the growth of other struggling bride-of-color magazines, and why multicultural bridal magazines are almost absent in multi-racial and diverse markets and communities. The research will then proceed into deconstructing the issues and reasons why they have to work harder to survive amongst its bridal magazine counterparts.

Furthermore, it will look at marketing approaches this type of magazine should take to attract the market it strives to reach, and the elements that are found in the country’s leading bridal magazines that may be transferable to this aspiring publication. It will also look at marketing obstacles and the development and creativity initiatives that will sustain commitment and endurance for both the magazine and the consumers. Demographics and migration statistics would be the key factors that will suggest where this type magazine would be sold, who should be represented in it and why ethnic brides should accept a new standard for their own weddings.

This research incorporates interview responses from professionals that have helped shape the bridal industry. It will also focus on the individuals that are or have been directly affected – “brides and brides-to-be” and their personal memoirs of why they chose to marry the way they did. Other sections of this study will be comprised of the
ventures taken; interviews, surveys, questionnaires, trips to bridal expos and actual
wedding attendance as sources for information.

Objectives

The author’s recent nuptial and personal experience of an intercultural marriage
reinforced the vision of a need for a multicultural bridal publication, a publication that
will emphasize meaning in the most special day of a bride’s life. The objective that the
author, therefore, holds pertinent is: propagating knowledge to other brides that the
possibility of combining or creating the “perfect” wedding day is possible through the
birth of this medium. Also, producing this publication would prove the existence of
markets that are able to be exploited and the commitment to preserving marital customs
that can be handed down through generations.
Definition of Terms

African-American – of, or relating to, Americans of African ancestry or to their history or culture.

Asian-American – people who belong to at least 15 distinct ethnic groups and national origin including: Bangladesh, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotians, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai and Vietnamese. The term “Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander” refers to people tracing their ancestry to any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.

Black – when Black is used to refer to race, the term encompasses African-Americans. However, the two terms are not necessarily interchangeable, as “Black” applies to a myriad of geographic sources including, but not limited to, Africa or the Americas. Some members of Black immigrant communities identify themselves more closely with their country of origin such as Senegalese, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian or Dominican than as “Black or African American”.

Brocade(s) - a rich, woven cloth with raised designs, as of silk, velvet, gold, or silver.

Caucasian - being a major human racial classification traditionally distinguished by physical characteristics such as very light to brown skin pigmentation and straight to wavy or curly hair, and including peoples indigenous to Europe, northern Africa, western Asia, and India.

Ethnic- relating to a sizable group of people sharing a common and distinctive racial, national, religious, linguistic, or cultural heritage.

Hispanic – relating to or derived from the people, speech or culture of Spain or Portugal.
Note: widespread usage of the term “Hispanic” dates back to the ‘70s, when the Census asked Hispanics to self-identify as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central/South American or “other Hispanic”.

**Intercultural** - between or among people of different cultures, representing, relating to or involving different cultures.

**Interracial** - between, among or involving people of different races.

**Latino** – people of “Latin American” descent.

**Lengha** – women’s garment consisting of a top, skirt and matching scarf; usually worn by women in India as formal or party wear.

**Multicultural** - relating to, or including several cultures. Also, relating to social or educational theory that encourages interest in many cultures within a society rather than in only a mainstream culture.

**Multiracial** - made up of, involving, or acting on behalf of various races. Also having ancestors of various races.

**Northeast Asian** - people coming from countries such as China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Vietnam, who share linguistic and religious similarities.

**Pass-along rate** - number of times a copy of a magazine is read and passed to another reader.
**Sari (saree)** – national dress of India; made of 6 to 9 yards of fabric draped around the body with precise pleats and available in a range of fabrics, it is worn with blouse or over a petticoat.

**Schema** - an outline or model.

**South Asians** - people coming from countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, who are either Hindu or Muslim but share a strong British influence.

**Southeast Asians** - people coming from countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Cambodia, who share a strong influence from the Portuguese, Spanish and/or French.

**Tassa** - a drum that is made by stretching goat’s skin covers over clay shells. Before being played, they must be heated to tighten their skins which raise their tone to an optimal pitch.

**Thaka** – an East Indian tradition where the bride and groom dedicate themselves to each other in front of witnesses validating their commitment to the rights of marriage.

**White-wedding** – elements of a wedding that signifies or incorporates purity, privilege, and wealth for example; the white wedding gown - an image influenced by the Victorian era and enforced by white American culture.
White Bride, White Weddings, Why For So Many Years? When did White Weddings Become the Blueprint of All Weddings?

There has been one unvarying look of brides and weddings on the cover and in the content of bridal magazines in the United States. A trend that still maintains its full momentum although there have been massive changes in culture and traditions, several periods of migration and the fluctuating demographics of the documented and undocumented marital statistics in the U.S. population, it is amazing how this trend continues. It started indirectly with Queen Victoria of England and her marriage in 1840, which was dubbed as the first media bride and wedding to start such a tradition that still holds true today.

The first record of white wedding dress being worn was in 1499 by Queen Anne of Brittany, before this time European women wore their finest dresses to marry in. Following this era, the seventeenth and eighteenth century brides often wore brocades of silver and gold and some grey, but it was not until Queen Victoria wore white and associated meaning to all that her wedding had entailed did other women of royal influence follow. The choice of the white dress as in that era meant purity, wealth, virginity and privilege (Geller, 2001, pp. 226). Japanese and Chinese tradition brides have traditionally worn white also. White in Asian customs symbolizes mourning, which is thought to be appropriate as the bride leaves her family of birth to join that of her
husband, thereby undergoing a symbolic death (http://www.romance.com/dictionary).

Associated with color are the customs and superstitions developed in the Victorian era that goes along with being married which still live today. A few of these were choosing the day, the month and the season. During this period, brides were reminded of the best choices to make before getting married. The abbreviated excerpts below are examples of such customs:

*Monday for wealth*
*Tuesday for health*
*Wednesday the best day of all*
*Thursday for losses*
*Friday for crosses*
*Saturday for no luck at all*

Married when the year is new, he’ll be loving, kind and true.
When February birds do mate, you wed nor dread your fate.
If you wed when March winds blow, Joy and sorrow both you’ll know.
Marry in April when you can, Joy for Maiden and for Man.
Marry in the month of May, and you’ll surely rue the day.
Marry when June roses grow, over land and sea you’ll go.
Those who in July do wed, must labour for their daily bred.
Whoever wed in August be, many a change is sure to see
Marry in September’s shrine, your living will be rich and fine.
If in October you do marry, love will come but riches tarry.
If you wed in bleak November, only joys will come, remember.
When December snows fall fast, marry and true love will last.

Marry in May and you’ll live to rue the day¹
Marry in Lent, live to repent

---

¹ May has been considered an unlucky month to marry in for a number of reasons. In Pagan times the start of summer was when the festival of Beltane was celebrated with outdoor orgies. This was therefore thought to be an unsuitable time to start married life. In Roman times the Feast of the Dead and the festival of the goddess of chastity both occurred in May. The advice was taken more seriously in Victorian times than it is today. In most Churches the end of April was a busy time for weddings as couples wanted to avoid being married in May. Queen Victoria is thought to have forbidden her children from marrying in May. [www.weddings.co.uk](http://www.weddings.co.uk)
The color white worn in western weddings, however, has dominated those of all other cultures and it set the foundation for weddings that are etched in history.

“Wedding primers still present white dress as the focal point of the event and understands that the bride’s fashion choices as those that determines her trousseau. Since the white dress and wedding signals the transformation that a bride has dreamed of since childhood, the bride’s dress is then a garment of talismanic power, created to provoke an intense emotional response in her audience….women have devoted weeks, months and even entire childhoods to the contemplation of this utterly romantic garment. The wedding gown is the dress of a lifetime – and will set the style for the entire wedding ” (Geller 2001, pp 214-215)

The wedding dress is most likely to be one of the most extravagant purchases a bride will make, and although this dress is only worn once it will still maintain its magical aura and continue to mesmerize brides. Brides continue to get caught up in fairytale-ness of being married that they don’t (most of the time) care about how much is spent on wedding dresses no matter how cumbersome and uncomfortable this gown may be. According to Geller, other weddings that helped to reinforce and put the stamp of approval to the trend of the white wedding’s images were the extravagance and elegance of the fairytale weddings of Jacquelyn Bouvier to John F. Kennedy, Grace Kelly to Prince Rainier of Monaco, and Diana Spencer to Prince Charles. These media displays of weddings further influenced brides into accepting these traditions as just and appropriate.

The Economics and Success of the White Contemporary Bridal Magazine

Eva Illouz says it best when she explains that courtship and marriage, romance and love became increasingly tied to new market industries for the mutual dependency for survival (Illouz, 1997). The traditions of the western wedding and its magnet to brides and commercialized power are still in effect today. Vicki Jo Howard, states that
businesses use their authority to mold and shape “tradition” into wedding practice eventually setting the platform for wedding consumption. Howard goes into saying that:

“The bridal market had to be invented. Commerce and romance were supposed to be cultural opposites. When they came together, as in marriages for money, they were widely condemned by social critics. Businesses had long sold goods and services for the preparations and celebration changed. Consumer capitalism had transformed the more communal, face-to-face wedding of the past. Around the turn of the century, as the last chapter demonstrated, businesses expressed concern over the propriety of directing their selling efforts specifically at brides. This ambivalence fell away, however, as cultural producers turned the idea of tradition to their own interests. The traditional wedding constructed by retailers, manufacturers, publications, and institutions was a consumer rite. These consumer rites invented by the wedding industry gained legitimacy by allying with tradition and history. Businesses used notions of correct social form to increase wedding consumption and to uphold their cultural authority. The bridal market came to include the market for gifts, ritual clothing, the personal trousseau, the household trousseau, commercial services for the reception, and other gifts and services that was naturalized as part of the traditional wedding.”
(Howard, 2000)

In the excerpt above all this is evidently true if one were to visit a bridal expo or pick up the latest edition of Bride’s magazine. Every last page of this particular bridal magazine has businesses that for the past 70 years have channeled all their services and invention of new services to the brides and their preparation for the perfect wedding day.

In 1934, Bride’s magazine first issue (and the oldest published bridal magazine in the world), then called So You’re Going To Be Married, basically had all the services that a bride needed for the preparation of the wedding which still holds similar to the services that they provide today (see Model 1.1). In the first issue of Bride’s magazine sections were as follows: “What the Bride Will Wear,” “The Wedding,” “The Bride Gives and Hopes to Receive,” “The Bride Creates a Home”; “The First Year and Special Articles”

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2 For example, see the novels of Edith Wharton and Theodore Dreiser. On a similar note, in the 19th century Henry Ward Beecher condemned wedding gifts practices, and with the editors of Godey’s, criticized the concern for the status among gift-givers, and those who displayed there gifts. See also Harvey Green, Light of the Home, 23-24.
(Bride’s Magazine, 1934). Today Bride’s magazine has everything of the past and fairly new exposed issues relating to today, from weight watching to maintaining and sustaining sexual appetite and erotica in a marriage.

Model 1.1 – So You’re Going to be Married – first issue spring 1934

Although some of the trends have changed the manufacturers and retailers have more than quadrupled its number since the first 86-page issue to today’s 615 plus pages of marketing invasion. Since Bride’s magazine was available to, and purchased by the most privileged young women; middle upper class and upper class, the advertisers aimed most of their marketing to attract young girls and their mothers of these social classes and was very successful at doing so. Bride’s magazine is recorded as one of the surviving magazines that made it through the great depression years as women were still getting married and still spending lots of money (Howard, 2000). The wedding industry found comfort and looked to brides for a dependable market and financial stability during
America’s period of economic crisis. Model 1.2 displays Bride’s magazine in that period.

*Model 1.2 - Bride’s Magazine in the period of The Great Depression (1939-1940)*

*Bride’s* magazine today remains a dependable source for brides because almost all of their customers are brand loyal. In addition their cause-related marketing efforts with non-traditional advertisers have reinforced the marketing stability of the magazine. The retailers and manufacturers of the bridal industry realized that if they introduce new or reintroduce old products and associate their name with causes that reach out to women like the Breast Cancer Foundation or child adoption agencies through this popular bridal source, they will undoubtedly be able to remain marketable entities in the bridal world (Steckel, 2001).
Conde Nast’s Bride’s continued success made way for a modern upbeat magazine for working class brides with a contemporary twist, that magazine is known today as Modern Bride, which focused on bridal fashions, home furnishings and honeymoon and travel. The 2001 Standard Periodical Directory lists that Bride’s magazine maintains a circulation of 412,017, which includes newsstand sales of 330,055 and subscription 81,962 an individual yearly subscription of $18, and an average of $5, for a single issue. They also earn $35,750 in advertisement fees which only count for 7% not including the internet and other advertising alternatives. Modern Bride which was owned by the same company, Conde Nast, was just recently purchased by Primedia Communications and now Modern Bride’s circulation per year ranks a little below that of Bride’s with 377, 912, Newsstand 251,453, subscriptions 126,459 and advertisements $29,850 7% of the total advertising fees (Standard Periodical Directory, 2001).

In the 1930s and 1940s it was clear who had the buying power in America in the bridal industry, and it was Caucasian women between the ages 19-27 (Howard, 2000). During the research for this thesis it was hard to find information that documented different cultures of women that purchased the magazine as a wedding guide. The faces on the cover of the magazines made it evident to the bridal community that white brides held the financial and economic power to sustain the magazine. Searching through mountains and mountains of the two most powerful bridal magazines it was clear that they wanted to preserve a trend and maintain that fidelity to their affluent consumers.

America is one of the most multi-culturally diverse, if not the most diverse country in the world. With so many people from all over the world emigrating to the U.S. almost everyday through documented and undocumented channels, it is hard to think that with
all the customs and traditions of a migrating people, culture is somehow melted into what
the bridal industry thinks would be appealing to new immigrant women who intend to get
married. The bridal markets sell themselves to undermine most women migrating to the
country to adopt the traditional European wedding. Immigration statistics from the
United States Census Bureau shows that for the past 30 years the population of the
United States has increased rapidly due to large-scale immigration, primarily from Latin
America and Asia. The foreign-born population rose from 9.6 million in 1970 to 14.1
million in 1980 and to 19.8 million in 1990. The estimated immigrated population in
1997 was 25.8 million. As a percentage of the total population, increased from 4.7
percent in 1970 to 6.2 percent in 1980, to 7.9 percent in 1990, and to an estimated 9.7
percent in 1997 (www.census.gov/population/www/documentation).

Model 1.3 shows

*Model 1.3 – Brides in the 70s and 80s*

1970

![Image of 1970 Brides](image1)

1980

![Image of 1980 Brides](image2)
Also, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reported that the years 2001 and 2002 1,063,732 people migrated to the U.S (http://www.uscis.gov). With these figures of migration come a myriad of different races and customs. Today there are more inter-racial and inter-cultural marriages more than ever recorded in the U.S. These masses bring all their culture and customs of marriage to the United States and somehow they get caught up in the web and the practices of the white-wedding, that only a tiny element of their wedding gives devotion or dedication to the customs of their origins. Later, the research tables would be presented to give a vivid description of different ethnic group migration of the US. In addition, other tables show the buying power, the areas of concentration and influence and earnings per household as they relate to this research.

Just recently Bride’s and Modern Bride alike have realized the change in diversity of its consumers, and little by little and just occasionally there would be feature stories in some issues about planning, or etiquette for an interracial wedding. Bride’s has sometimes tapped into the empathy of an ethnic bride, by featuring stories about the trials, tribulations and triumphs of an inter-racial marriage which is a great marketing strategy for multiplying their sales. Although these bridal giants have realized the changes in the market and have in some ways accommodated to some of the needs of multicultural brides, they have yet to change the face on the cover to recognize the vast growing multicultural market.
Chapter II

Where are The Publications for Brides of Color?

Bridal Multi-culture Publications and Their Chance for Survival in The Media Market

For many, many years, women and men have held, through the influence of the media, images of white women as the basic standard of beauty. Through movies, magazines and the cover of paperback novels we have seen the long slender shapely bodies with beautiful long, blonde or brunette tresses cascading from a pristine face with beautiful blue or emerald eyes with that expression of I-need-to-be-handled-delicately look, have all conditioned most of us into thinking that this type of woman will be the picture perfect individual to be married to; this is what most of the brides on the cover of the Bride’s magazine looked like during the 1940s and 1970s. Bride’s magazine’s 1960-spring issue has on the cover a bride with all smiles, surrounded by three men who seem to be fighting each other and warding off danger that might come to her which in general represents protection of the most precious thing in the world (see Model 1.2).

Today times have changed; brides of color have realized how important it is to be represented in their own line of beauty and matrimonial customs. But where can such a bride find a bridal magazine that would cater to her specific needs? These magazines are not found in common book stores like Barnes and Noble or Borders and Books neither are they on the newsstands? So where are they? The research prompted further investigation.
After a week of searching and with no results, I eventually got a break when a pop-up ad from a bridal website stated: “register here for a free year subscription to Continental Bride.” That was the welcomed break I needed to immerse myself into this project. Everything about the website was very appealing, but when and where was I suppose to get this magazine because I needed right then and there? After doing an overview of the magazine I was very impressed with what they had to offer. Continental Bride catered to:

“exploring the new era of a multicultural Britain, and celebrating the diversity of culture, tradition and the exponentially increasing population of migrant communities in the UK. It is the 1st ever bridal magazine of its kind catering especially for the unique needs of the modern woman of Middle-Eastern, Caribbean, African and Asian descent in the UK, USA and Africa (Continental Bride, 2003).

I checked their contact information page to find out about distributors in the U.S. After some much needed research I found that it was distributed to only Borders and
Books in the U.S. My trip to Borders and Books was a disappointment because none of their stores carried it or had ever heard of it. I was now on a quest to obtain this magazine. I didn’t have time to wait for a subscription to kick in, so I solicited my friends in the UK for any multicultural bridal magazines that they could find. The magazines of color that I found in the U.S. were *For You* and *BridesNoir*, which catered to African American and Brides of Color respectively, and *Shaddi Style Magazine* that geared to meet South Asian brides living in the U.S. The international bridal magazines were *Asian Bride*; also for South Asian brides, *Continental Bride* and *Mahogany Bride*; for brides of color (dominated mostly by African and Caribbean women). The only other bridal magazine that I could not find at newsstands or book stores was a bridal magazine for Northeast Asian brides and one for Latina brides. These magazines though small in numbers, suggest at last the emergence of publications that can be potentially successful. I started the process of comparisons of all these magazines to those of the bridal giants *Bride’s* and *Modern Bride*. Comparing the two top sellers to the other magazines was not much of a task; the first thing that they clearly differed in was advertisement capacity, compared to *Bride’s* and *Modern Bride’s* 400 plus pages of only advertisements. Other elements examined were the photographic finish, the choice of colors, price and the cover finish. What I also noticed was that the photography for *Mahogany Bride*, *Shaadi Style* were the poorest of quality and basically made it an unattractive bridal magazine to purchase. *Continental Bride’s* cover had a very high gloss effect, which gave it a very contemporary look, yet there was a bit much photography buffing that made the models seem artificial. All of the magazines had their own multicultural twist and contained the
same ideals as that of *Bride’s* and *Modern Bride*, for example: finance, wedding etiquette, travel, honeymoon and home furnishings.

There are many factors that determine the success of any bridal magazine, and money is the main foundation and one of the most important factors. Money spent on printing, distribution, advertisement and content are some elements that determine a magazine’s survival and success in the market. Another factor is readership; which establishes how well the magazine is accepted by the public, the more people that read or subscribe to a magazine is usually a good indication that the product fulfills the needs of its consumers, but the brides-of-color magazines which needed more visibility in the areas where diverse communities are most saturated, were the most difficult products to find. I thought that gaining access to brides of color magazines in a world where diversity and multiculturalism thrives would be easy but that was far from reality. It made me believe that there might be some kind of territorial authority of how bridal magazines are distributed and the mechanics that go into dominating certain areas. Chapter three will go more in-depth into the factors needed to producing a successful magazine.

**Support**

I visited quite a few bridal expos with the intention to get feedback about what people think about the conception of a multicultural bridal magazine. I assumed that the vendors, advertisers and patrons at these expos would have better insight and personal perspectives on the multicultural bridal market and whether a magazine like this would survive or is worth supporting. Renowned African-American wedding gown designer
Therez Fleetwood states that one of the reasons why brides of color magazines are rare or are unsuccessful in the attempt to reach their potential market is that they don’t provide enough experienced services for consumers to trust or reach out to; thus making it hard for consumers to invest. One distinct example as I’ve seen was; few experienced gown or dress designers. This may then jeopardize the long-term support that these new publishers need to survive on the market. Fleetwood also reinforces her comment by stating that; “the reason why white bridal magazines do well is that people of color usually never want to take chances with new comers that provide the services they need…..for example, in my dress design business they’d prefer to leave the services they’ve found which suits their every need, and then turn their backs and patronize white retailers and manufacturers, at least this is what I have experienced in the African-American/Caribbean community.” Fleetwood also states that brides of color want the “couture” look but at bargain prices. “Some people don’t understand the labor-intensive work that designing and creating a dress require, and that creating a name for oneself will mean adding value to your time and work which goes the same for a bridal magazine” (Interview with Therez Fleetwood, October 2003).

There was quite a difference at the South Asian and European bridal expos (the European expos usually appeal to everyone). Most of the attendants that I interviewed at the European and Asian bridal expos welcomed the idea of a multicultural bridal magazine; some attendants mentioned that this might be profitable exposure to multicultural bridal markets and would support the venture. I also noticed that the attendees seemed very eager to use the services provided by vendors at these expos, a few attendees made spontaneous purchases that were in effort to complete their weddings,
quite the opposite at the African American/Caribbean bridal expo. It was hard to find documented information that explained this type of behavior; my assumptions led me to believe that African American/Caribbean patrons felt it necessary to support what they were already familiar with (European traditions and current publications) instead of taking a risk. Financial stability was not a factor for the poor response to vendors at the African American/Caribbean bridal expo because they are just as economically stable as other ethnic groups. My observation of the patrons at the other expos was the type of working class of people that attended. Most of the attendees that I spoke to were well paid professionals in medicine and economics, some were entrepreneurs, or gained most of their fortune through family wealth. Judging from my observation, it is evident that if a multicultural bridal magazine were to be produced, the most financially stable group, according the economy, would be the premier group to feature from issue to issue.

One of the concerns of patrons was an apprehension of being lost among the multitude of diverse ethnic information that reaches consumers. How would a multicultural magazine mainstream its services to meet and create special interests to diverse consumers of the bridal community? For one, making some of the characteristics of the dominating bridal magazines transferable; like the advertisements and features would be one of the standard assets but focusing more on trends in a particular culture and highlighting more features may prove to be more substantial than over advertising. Secondly, it is evident that support plays a major role in the success of any magazine; the effects can be either positive or negative. Since bridal magazine consumers are accustomed to a certain format it is possible that the change in format can impose a negative effect on support that consumers give. On the contrary it can be positive for
new markets, helping to divert business opportunities into multicultural markets and communities. Part of chapter three and most of chapter four will explore the factors that will address the issue of reaching potential markets of this particular publication.
Chapter III

Publishing and Marketing a Multicultural Bridal Magazine!
What’s Needed - How to Start?

Represent!

_Bride’s_ and _Modern Bride_ magazine have no doubt dominated the bridal scene for what seems like forever and they have marketed in areas that are deemed non-traditional, meaning the areas where there is a large concentration of ethnic groups saturation. These magazines have marketed their products and services for years in affluent areas of the U.S., e.g., New York, California, and Boston. Only recently, these bridal magazines started incorporating minimal images of interracial weddings and multicultural marriage customs on their pages. These publications figured that using these minimal images would ultimately satisfy the needs of an ever-growing multicultural diverse community. They then use this poor showcase of diversity as a marketing tool to sell their medium in areas of ethnic distribution. Still, never changing the format to suit the bride of color. It looks to be a perfect marketing schema to persuade brides to buy, as if ethnic brides owed these bridal hegemons a favor for bringing just the minimal or basic goods and services to them that they may never use. In order for brides to have a variety of goods and services that suit their needs, a multicultural bridal medium would provide the perfect platform and perfect catalyst to create and sustain multicultural business markets.

The areas of the U.S. that are recorded to be densely populated by different ethnic groups or show intermingling of ethnic groups are: Texas, New York, New Jersey, San Francisco, California and Florida. These areas are considered to be the favored entry points for the majority of immigrants. Of these states, the groups of people that most
dominate them are Hispanic, East Asian, South Asian, Middle Eastern, African and Caribbean (US Census, 2000). Demographic trends clearly show that America's already diverse population will become even more so in the next ten to fifteen years. Ethnic minorities constitute a growing share of the population (see Figure 1), and heterogeneity within all ethnic groups is growing. According to *Population Matters*, A RAND program of Policy-Relevant Research Communication, changes in the U.S. population mix stem largely from immigration. Thirty-eight percent of the Hispanic population and 61 percent of the Asian population are immigrants. Not only has immigration remained steady at high rates for decades, but a greater percentage of immigrants are choosing to remain in the United States. Nearly every U.S. ethnic population has undergone significant changes in recent decades, but the main story in U.S. demographic trends over the past 20 years is the explosive growth among Hispanic Americans, from 6.9 million in 1960 to over 35 million in 2000, and projected to grow to 55 million by 2020. Relatively high birth rates among resident Hispanic Americans, combined with high levels of migration from Latin America, account for this change. This group remains ethnically heterogeneous. Mexican Americans constitute about 65 percent of Hispanic Americans and are concentrated heavily in the Southwest. Puerto Ricans, the second-largest group, are clustered primarily in northeast urban areas, especially New York. Cuban Americans, the third-largest, are concentrated almost exclusively in Florida. Growing groups of immigrants from Central and South America have taken up residence in other urban areas, including New Orleans, Washington, D.C., and Chicago ([http://www.asian-nation.org](http://www.asian-nation.org)).
Although most immigrants migrate to attain U.S privileges, most hold steadfast to their culture, and try to maintain their old culture in a new land. With this concept in mind a multicultural bridal magazine needs to investigate the social classes of individuals that migrate to the country, both male and female. This investigation should determine the spending patterns according to race, which will eventually become the determining factor for representation of the feature group for the cover of the bridal magazine. For example; if each magazine issue represented different ethnic brides or couples, or researched and addressed topics sensitive to their market, it might not be too long before this exposure creates a loyal readership among patrons.
The Buying Power of Multicultural America

Research done by Magazine Publishers of America shows the markets that are most inviting for this new venture, which are the Hispanic/Latino, African American/Black and the Asian American markets. The first series of table represents the Hispanic/Latino market and the growth trends by country of origin, the areas of concentration by origin and U.S. cities.

The table below shows the three largest Hispanic/Latino country groups represented in the U.S. are Mexico, Puerto Rico and Cuba. While Mexicans represent nearly 60% of the entire Hispanic/Latino population, all of these segments charted double digit growth surges from 1990-2000. The group with the most growth was “other Hispanic/Latino,” which is extremely diverse because it represents people from 20 different countries, including 17% who did not identify (by country) at all. To get a better picture of these growth trends Figure 1.3 shows the geographic concentration by country of origin and figure 1.4, concentration by city.

**Figure 1.2 - POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**
Figure 1.3 – GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Figure 1.4 - AREAS OF GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION BY U.S. CITY
According to MPA, Hispanics/Latinos tend to settle in the ten urban locations listed above. Here alone, magazine marketers can effectively reach 60% of the entire Hispanic/Latino population. And, because they number more than one million, Hispanic/Latino residents greatly contribute to the cultural and economic fabric in these locations and could possibly do the same for a new multicultural publication. Other statistics show that New York features the greatest diversity of Hispanics/Latinos where 31% are Puerto Rican; 17%, Mexican; and 13% Dominican. Some positive consumer profile reveals that while the Hispanic/Latino median income is lower than the U.S. Average, sources affirm that more Hispanics/Latinos are moving into the middle class (earning at least $40,000). In fact, in the top 85 metropolitan areas in 2001, 14.3% of Hispanics/Latinos aged 18-34 earned household incomes of $50,000 or more — vs. 13.6% of the general population age 18-34 in the same 85 metropolitan areas. Miami/Ft. Lauderdale boasts the highest Hispanic/Latino median HHI (household income) – $57,472 – followed by Chicago and San Francisco.

Also, Hispanics/Latinos are an increasing proportion of the total affluent market — defined as adults with household incomes of $100,000 or more. From 1991-2000, the growth of affluent Hispanics/Latinos rose 126%. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino households earning $50,000+ per year is expected to increase 50% between now and 2005. It is evident that this market is a solid and sure foundation that will add to success of this multicultural magazine.

The African American/Black and Asian American markets have just as much or even a better potential as that of the Hispanic/Latino market. According the U.S. Census Brief on the Black Population, the African-American/Black market was up almost 22%
between 1990 and 2000, representing 13% of the U.S. population and wielding an estimated $646 billion in purchasing power. The buying power of this group is expected to reach $852.8 billion by 2007, thus increasing their potential for this new niche market to survive. American Demographics states that now that the African-American community is 36 million strong they are a vital part of the over all population. They are expected to grow faster than the U.S. average over the next five years – an 11.6% projected increase between 2002 and 2007. The following figures will illustrate the geographic concentration by U.S. region, the projected growth trends by city, the buying power of African Americans, the magazine readers; their preferences and the magazine circulation respectively and relating to the research.

*Figure 1.5 AREAS OF GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION BY U.S. REGION*
U.S. Census Bureau 2000 shows that African-Americans/Blacks are most concentrated in the South, and the percentage continues to grow. Overall, the South gained approximately three million African-Americans/Blacks in the 1990s. This is roughly double the number of African-American/Blacks that the South gained in the 1980s (1.7 million) while the Northeast region has recently experienced a decline in the number of African American/Black residents. This shift in residency hardly interrupted buying and spending initiatives and growth trends. Below, figures 1.6 and 1.7 shows growth trend and buying power of African-Americans in the market that can increase the chances of exponential magazine sales.

*Figure 1.6 GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION AND PROJECTED GROWTH TRENDS BY U.S. CITY*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGNATED MARKET AREA (DMA)</th>
<th>GEN MKT RANK</th>
<th>AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK POPULATION (000)</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL U.S. AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK POPULATION</th>
<th>% AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK OF TOTAL MARKET POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,792</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,708</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,355</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,326</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,266</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,072</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas-Ft. Worth</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Strategy Research Corp. 2002; American Demographics, November 2002
American Demographics shows in the 10 DMA’s (Designated Market Area) listed above, that magazine marketers can effectively reach a large portion of the U.S. African American/Black market – 40 percent of the total African-American/Black population. The top three metropolitan areas with the largest projected growth for African-Americans/Blacks are Atlanta, Washington D.C. and New York City by absolute numbers. Among the top 10 markets, Dallas, Atlanta and Fort Lauderdale have the largest projected African-American/Black population growth by percent. Figure 1.7 below shows that: Twenty-six percent of all African-American/Black households had incomes of $50,000 a year in 2000 (approximately 3.7 million African-American households). There are 1.4 million African-American households with annual incomes of $75,000 or more. And, almost 60% of all African-Americans/Blacks today earn more than $25,000. The ten markets below represent 58% of the U.S. African-American/Black population and also account for 62% of total African-American/Black U.S. buying power.

Figure 1.7 - AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK BUYING POWER
The U.S. Census mentions that like the average U.S. consumer, African-Americans/Blacks read a variety of magazines in a range of categories. The top five categories for African-American/Black readers are General Editorial, News Weeklies, Women’s Interest, Home Service and Music. Unlike the average U.S. reader, Music ranks among the top five categories with African-Americans/Blacks (for the average U.S. reader, men’s titles rank fifth among the top five magazine categories). Not surprisingly, African-Americans/Blacks are the heaviest consumers of African-American magazines. The following chart, compiled by Mediamark Research Inc., indicates that African-Americans/Blacks read general market publications as well as those specifically oriented to the African-American/Black market.

More than eight out of 10 African-American/Black adults (84%) are magazine readers – reading 13.3 issues per month, compared to 9.7 issues (per month) for all U.S. adults. These adult African-American/Black magazine readers are younger than the average U.S. magazine reading population and have more children at home. Nearly three out of four African-American/Black adults (74%) who read magazines are between the ages of 18-49 (compared to only 64% of the U.S. adult population). Both the African-American/Black and the total U.S. population household income for magazine readers exceeds that of the general population, these are positive results because it reveals that this group may be more likely to patronize an upcoming multicultural bridal magazine. Figure 1.8 compares the total U.S. population and the African American/Black magazine readers.
According to Mediamark Research Inc. the source that compiled the following chart states that like the average U.S. consumer, African-Americans/Blacks read a variety of magazines in a range of categories. The top five categories for African-American/Black readers are General Editorial, News Weeklies, Women's Interest, Home Service and Music. Unlike the average U.S. reader, Music ranks among the top five categories with African-Americans/Blacks (for the average U.S. reader, men’s titles rank fifth among the top five magazine categories). Not surprising, African-Americans/Blacks are the heaviest consumers of African-American magazines.

The following chart indicates that African-Americans/Blacks read general market publications as well as those specifically oriented to the African-American/Black market. And in this category the *Bridal Guide* ranks number 16 amongst the major publications that are usually read by this group. This is in accordance with the bridal survey that was
distributed which states that of the 3 major magazines; *Bride’s, Modern Bride* and *Bridal Guide* that more African American/Blacks prefer the affordable and practical applications that *Bridal Guide* had to offer. Figure 1.9 shows the top titles by African American/Black audience composition.

*Figure 1.9 – Top Titles by African-American/Black Audience Composition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOP TITLES BY AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK AUDIENCE COMPOSITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA/B% Total U.S. Adult Population (18+)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap Opera Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esquire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GQ-Gentlemen’s Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap Opera Digest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWE Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESPN The Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridal Guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Census identifies African-Americans/Blacks from age 0+ versus MPR data above is based on African-American/Black Adults aged 18+.
Source: Mediamark Research Inc., Fall 2002

The final group of concentration is the Asian American market. There was not much information on the various subgroups, to that end, some advertisers and agencies have defined segments to strengthen their efforts in reaching this diverse group. According to information found in the source: *Marketing to the Emerging Majorities*, Admerasia, one of the largest advertising and multicultural marketing agencies specializing in the Asian-American markets, clusters the various Asian-American subgroups into three broader regional groups: Northeast Asians, Southeast Asians and South Asians (descriptions
found in the “Definition of Terms”). U.S. Census 2000 reports that almost 90 percent of all Asian-Americans come from just six countries: China, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea and Japan. While Chinese-Americans and Filipino-Americans are the two largest groups by country of origin within the Asian-American community, other groups relatively new to the U.S. such as Asian-Indian-Americans, Vietnamese and Koreans have become more numerous in recent years. Immigrants from India represent the fastest growing segment – more than doubling in size since 1990. This statistic is proven in various parts of the tri-state areas: New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The population and growth trends of these groups are shown below in figure 1.10.

Figure 1.10 – POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

![Table showing countries of origin by foreign-born population with 500,000 or more immigrants in 2000]

According to the 2000 Census, more than 60% of all Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders are concentrated in ten states. The five states with the largest Asian-American markets account for 62% of the group’s buying power. By comparison, the five states with the largest total U.S. buying power account for 38% of the total U.S. buying power. Figure 1.11 and 1.12 shows the areas of geographic concentration and the buying power of Asian Americans.
FIGURE 1.11 – AREAS OF GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION BY U.S. REGION

The largest Asian-American population centers – Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, they still account for much of the group’s population growth. In fact,
these three DMA’s account for 37% of the total gains during the past decade. The African American/Black, Asian American and Hispanic/Latino markets all have unique characteristics that if exploited and combined can form an empire in the multicultural bridal industry that dare to be surpassed.

**Effective Marketing, Advertising of A Multicultural Bridal Magazine**

I passed by a newsstand at the New York Port Authority and was caught by the spectacular array of magazines on the shelves; I obviously drifted to the bridal section and was quite spellbound by the many selections (with the same type faces that is) nevertheless, right there and then I realized something and that something was being captivated and attracted to the promises on the cover that these bridal magazines assured.

Also, the perfection in detail put into the covers that influence consumers into being caught in the web of magazine deception – the power of advertising and creative marketing. Most bridal magazine covers usually throw at you what they’re going to do for you: “get great abs in time for your wedding,” what they have in store for you: “a sure find- choose from 180 wedding gowns” and what will work for you: “get the best reception for less,” basically everything is all about you, just the way brides-to-be like to feel when it is that special time. The promises, the clever advertising and marketing are the various strategies that cause the bridal magazine industry to gross at least $600 million in sales per year. This format works well for the current bridal magazines but would this format work the same for a multicultural bridal magazine; can a multicultural bridal magazine like this cause someone to drift to the bridal section of a book store, would it be able to stand on its own and exude its purpose on the newsstand? A
magazine like this needs careful strategic marketing and planning to maintain its recognition and survival on the market. Cheryl Woodard, the author of *Starting or Running a Successful Newsletter or Magazine* summarizes several steps (of which I would mention a few) to making a new magazine reach longevity in the market. The first step according to Woodard states that first one has to establish a bond with the readers or the market that they intend to reach which is more or less based on trust and predictability, if these lines are established it then makes way for the publisher to exploit the market to bring what the reader needs ([www.publishingbiz.com](http://www.publishingbiz.com)). Woodard also mentions that new magazines that fail to establish a relationship, fail to produce a profitable readership. As an extension of step one the article mentions that you have to figure out how to locate your audience at a reasonable cost which would determine how consumers will pay to get this publication. In the case of publishing a multicultural bridal magazine which is directly targeted to reach brides of color it will be cheaper to understand and fulfill the needs in that market rather than to reach a mass audience. Another important factor that was mentioned in this article is finding advertisers that will support this venture that matches the specific demographic profile that this magazine intends to reach. After identifying this potential market the next step is creating a commodity that suits the bridal industry. The second process to creating a successful magazine according to the article is knowing exactly what your audience wants to read and packaging it appropriately and consistently so that readers will want to continue to read it. Woodard also mentions that the best way to make a magazine attractive to consumers is studying the competition and designing around them, offering readers the features that they usually ignore. This is often the foundation for establishing a favorable
marketing momentum, the article mentions that building a viable publishing business is important:

“Short-lived relationships are rarely profitable. So even if a new publisher can find a good audience and create a product that grabs their attention, there is still a critical problem to solve: how to build a publishing business that will prosper well into the future. The trick is to build upon your initial successes until you have created solid, enduring relationships within your market.

In the very short term, most publications lose money, especially in their early years while they are working to find an audience and win their trust. Their initial losses can range from a few thousand to many millions of dollars, depending on the kind of publication.

Publishers start to make money only when they begin to transform their early connections in a market into lasting relationships by turning casual readers into regular customers, creating predictable relationships with advertisers, and developing new products that they can sell to their loyal customers. Along the way, publishers have to assemble the people, vendors and resources they need to continually provide top-notched products to their loyal customers” (Woodard).

Woodard mentions a step about “converting the casual readers into regular customers,” though this pattern may work for most magazines it may not be quite the same for the bridal industry since the bridal magazines are only purchased or subscribed to for a short period, usually within the time of engagement which on average lasts only thirteen months according to The Knot (www.theknot.com). Establishing a permanent readership among bridal consumers may be a bit difficult unless the subscriber is an individual whose business directly involves contact with the bridal industry. Only a few magazines have been able to warrant a regular subscription and survey results show that Martha Stewart Weddings has been successful at doing so.

Black Enterprise magazine published an article called “Publishing for Profit” which features Dana Powell the twenty eight year old bridal magazine publisher of BridesNoir, a magazine for brides of color. Powell mentions that publishing is a risky venture and when considering potential readership, one has to keep in mind that total
circulation is the number of magazine copies printed multiplied by the magazine’s pass-along rate. The pass-along rate is the number of times a magazine is read and then passed to a new reader which Powell claims that bridal magazines have (*Black Enterprise*, 2004). The pass-along rate is very important to the bridal industry since they still depend on word-of-mouth for exposure. Although advertising exposure is needed, publishingbiz.com warns that publishers should limit or control the number of advertisements that tend to be aggressive and bombard consumers, like the 1000 plus ads that the top current bridal magazines have today. It’s usually better to set congenial ground rules at which both the publisher and advertisers can agree. Also, inviting the most appropriate and least ads can improve the effectiveness of a bridal magazine. Too much advertising can jeopardize its purpose.

According to laughingbear.com there are a lot of additional factors that need to be in place to produce and market a successful niche geared magazine. One has to keep on top of submissions that need answering, schedules, securing concrete relationship with advertisers that are willing to take the risk to advertise with you either selling or buying advertising space, distributors, printers, writers, etc (*www.laughingbear.com*). The article also mentioned the time, energy and money that go into such a project:

A magazine also requires a well thought out commitment to sticking with it until it starts to pay off. That can mean carrying expenses for a year or more until it starts paying for itself. The single biggest problem I've seen with magazine startups is they put everything into the first issue expecting it to sell when really you end up giving the magazine away for several issues (*www.laughingbear.com*).

Also mentioned in the article is the *experience* needed to start a magazine, it cautions that before one decides to put all finances into a magazine project, they mention that it is
better to work for a magazine similar to one that you envision starting up, this in turn will help with deciding what will work for you. Another element needed to publish this type of magazine, is the fight and focus of literatures than advertisements. The fight is that since there are some many literary magazines out there, although one intends to be different by changing the format, it would be taking a risk to deviate from the norm to bring in money. For bridal magazines the norm has been using advertisements to push sales and the possibility for this magazine to survive using a bit more literature than advertisements might work since a multicultural bridal magazine is non existent.

In order for it to be recognized it will have to use the traditional routes of media advertisement. Using local radio and TV stations will allow advertisements in multiple languages to reach and interest brides-of-color. Also, since many cultures celebrate years and months differently from that of western cultures; e.g. Chinese New Year, it might be profitable to consider these periods for the highest yields in bridal magazine sales, by using these cultural events it is more likely that consumers may become engaged in persuaded into supporting this venture. Participating in bridal expos, trade shows conventions and seminars are additional ways to multiply the presence of an aspiring medium. Unique ways to spur likeability and intimacy with bridal subscribers might be hosting cultural pre-marital ceremonies, creating cause related marketing partnerships; like donating portion of the proceeds of the magazine sales to charitable organizations, and fun creative count-down calendars, that will not only dictate to brides what need to be done before the big day, but also educating her of different types of brides and bridal customs that exist around the world. If these factors remain common features and trade mark of this magazine there is no doubt that this will create healthy competition.
Competition and trend can be a threat of rival bridal magazines; this element can sometimes backfire and instigate revolutionizing ideas that can work for them and against this magazine’s marketing objectives.

**Marketing Obstacles**

Popularity and success usually comes with a price. And there are many obstacles that can hamper the success of an aspiring multicultural bridal magazine. Advertisers are the heart of magazine survival today, and almost 95 percent of the bridal magazines currently on the market are powered by advertisers; this is evident of the 400-600 pages of *Bride’s*. In 1997 *Modern Bride* brought to the forefront a new meaning in advertising, when their spring issue carried 1,264 pages through April, a 9.1% increase over the same period of the presiding year. Following right behind was Conde Nast publications’ *Bride’s* saw ad pages rise 2.6% to 1,247 (Adage, 1997). With advertising like this brides will be less likely to purchase other bridal magazines since issues like these promises to be a bride’s one stop shopping solution. This may then cause a change in sales of other bridal magazines.

Most advertisers depend on issues like these bridal magazines to market their product with the expectation that their goods and services reach thousands of customers. If advertisers don’t get the response that they expect from consumers, they can pull their ads (all according their contract status with the media transportation) and move to a competitor to foster their survival. Since this proposed multicultural bridal market is already fickle retailers and manufacturers are more concerned about their reputation as it is tied to an entity that is so new, hence the obscurity of multiple advertisers in new
publications of brides-of-color magazine. Most of these issues are loaded with features stories and advice on the wedding but hold little presence of advertisers.

Cassandra Bromfield, who specializes in ethnic bridal custom designs, states that advertisers are concerned with risk and the survival of their own businesses, they are afraid of the liability factors that can associate with their type of market (Interview – Cassandra Bromfield, 2003). Over-expenditure of funds and resources may also contribute to poor marketing. Some newcomer bridal magazines in the industry, try to use the standards of marketing of a bridal superpower that are geared to millions of brides in the U.S. and abroad instead of focusing on something unique to grab the attention. They spend excessive amounts of money to try to copy and compete with their counterparts hoping that this will in effect attract consumers. A lot of the elements of the major bridal magazines that are transferable has proven to be successful in brides-of-color magazines, for example; advice columns, dresses, food, bridal customs, but with their own ethnic twist.
Chapter IV

Survey Methodology and Analysis

Design and Development of The Survey

The survey divided into two sections was made up of closed-ended and open-ended questions (see Appendix). In Section 1, there were ten close-ended and two open-ended questions, in addition to personal information about the respondents. The questions asked were primarily designed for only people in the bridal industry, but in order to retain non-biased results the survey was distributed to a variety of participants. In Section 1 the Likert scale was used to measure the participants’ observation and awareness of the bridal industry and bridal publications that are in existence.

The scale consisted of five evaluation methods: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Section II was a combination of the participants’ demographics and assessment of bridal culture knowledge. This section included Age, Race/Ethnicity, Sex, Languages Spoken, Education, Marital Status, and Education. Section II also amassed the participants’ knowledge of publications that are currently on the market and questions structured to give the respondents an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Developing the questionnaire at one point seemed to be most tedious. The survey was first tested with ten individuals, five male and female respondents. Surprisingly enough, the test survey which expected more commentary and views from females came back with most of comments made by males. A few questions were restructured and then sent out to diverse groups of individuals for final assessment.
Purpose of The Survey

This study was executed to test the study of, and the changes that can possibly be made in the bridal industry. The research was to capture the experience of professionals in the bridal industry, particularly brides. It was also to test the importance of the industry to those that partake of it and to test some of the convictions that were out there stating: “most brides seem to buy into the consumerism of the bridal industry”. In Section 1 the purpose that the survey served was to understand bridal consumers’ perspectives and perceptions on bridal publications. This survey also steps into the arena of testing the public’s awareness and knowledge of diversity issues. The survey questioned the fairness or at least tried to encourage justification for the representation of diversity in these magazines. In addition, it questioned the influence that the leading bridal publications currently have today in the bridal community that can possibly affect the future of this phantom publication. Section 1 one also assumes that most brides are ready for this type of bridal magazine and dared to test the satisfaction of those that are presently out there.

One thing that almost every consumer can familiarize them self with is brand. Brand, in this study is most important because since the reputation and longevity of a brand determines the success of that product, the loyalty, trust and commitment of consumers is the deciding factor and the fate that will then determine the success of such a publication. The quest of the survey is to continue to find whether or not people are ready for a shift in bridal publications and try to continue to pursue and accommodate
changes that could be made to include and satisfy the majority of consumers in the bridal industry.

Say What! - Interviews and Survey Opinions

Although much research was done on the industry statistically and theoretically, nothing surpasses actual interviews and the experiences relating to research information for a multicultural bridal magazines and the industry. My research afforded me the opportunity to interview with individuals that have spent many years pursuing their passion for the industry and in some cases working to change the current format of the current publications. I had the opportunity to interview the Editor-in-Chief of *Bridal Guide* magazine – Diane Forden, Sumit Arya of the Association of South Asian Brides, Tracey Porpora freelance writer who has written for many bridal publications and newspapers and Keisha Monk-Myrick radio personality and an aspiring editor of her own bridal magazines *Chocolate Brides*. Each of these individuals gave me different points of views on the potential of the existence of this bridal magazine with respects to the industry today. I also had a great deal of comments from the survey which highlighted a numerous issues that warranted addressing.

My interview with Diane Forden, Editor in Chief of *Bridal Guide*, was geared to finding out what bridal magazines find more purposeful and profitable for the success of their magazines. The interview also incorporated some personal views of the editor regarding the current publication industry, in addition to positive feedback on change. One of my opening questions was whether she was satisfied with the way multicultural brides were represented in the current bridal publications. Forden responded saying, “We
at *Bridal Guide* always try to address diversity and incorporate multicultural women who
pose as brides in our photo shoots……we always make the effort with women of color,
however, putting women of this nature on the cover most magazines aren’t willing to take
that type of risk, we try to incorporate all types of women because we recognize that
there is a growing diverse market that needs just as much attention”. My assumption is
that the Editor of *Bridal Guide* is open for an opportunity for something like this to
happen and would be willing to try something different to gain an expansion in these
untapped market areas. This then lead into the question of survival in the competitive
bridal market. Forden mentions that because Hispanics are leading and other ethnic
groups are gaining momentum in demographics today there is a better chance for a
magazine like this to endure the aggressive bridal industry. Although there may be a
chance for survival, Forden points out that the survival of this potential magazine will not
go without struggle. She mentions obstacles that will challenge the growth potential of
this publication like distribution expenses, finding competitive advertisers – what’s in
style and attractive, magazine funding and placement– test issues, competition for
newsstands and top notch book and drug stores, just a continuation of production factors
that need to be in place before the launch of this project.

My interview concluded with whether *Bridal Guide* and the other leading bridal
magazines play the role in helping to encourage and influence consumer spending.
Surprisingly enough, Forden agreed that they do somewhat. Forden states, “I think the
bridal magazines do, it is what is expected….bridal magazines have been following this
pattern for so very long and has been so successful at it that it hardly ever changed format, only with a few modifications to trend. Bridal magazines already know what potential brides expect, we sort of dictate the needs for that perfect wedding day. It is what is still most popular today”. The notion that the influence on the market is still in existence does in fact show that the consumers in this market can be easily manipulated to follow a custom with little consideration for change. I attempted to reach Bride’s via phone and email for an interview but never got any responses.

In my attempts, I reached out to freelance writer Tracey Porpora whose specialty is in the bridal industry and has written for several bridal publications. Porpora mentions that although her writing assignments feature “how to” stories and not targeted to any specific segments addressing bridal population but more brides in general, she realizes that times have changed in the bridal publication world and that the bridal magazines currently are slow to change.

Marketing multicultural brides and weddings can be a proven difficult challenge in today’s publication industry, but Porpora mentions that if specifically geared to a multicultural audience focusing on such topics like dress, marital customs and traditions there would definitely be a place in the industry if the proper research and marketing was conducted. In hindsight I asked the writer if she thought that the bridal industry was interested in a multicultural bridal market, she states: “I think the bridal market would be open to a magazine focusing on the multicultural bride or the bride who is planning a multicultural wedding. However, because bridal magazines don’t tend to have long-term
readership, the marketing of such a publication would have to be ongoing and specific to a multicultural audience to be successful”. Porpora goes on to mention that the birth of a magazine like this would need to have in place a strong advertising base that would not only support the magazine through revenue, but also prove to be interesting to the publication’s target audience. She also cited that good editorial content geared toward issues facing the multicultural bride or a bride planning a multicultural wedding would need to be highlighted in every issue.

As mentioned earlier in my research bridal expositions otherwise know as “bridal expos” was another platform that helped me with understanding bridal consumerism. Sumit Arya who started Dulhan Bridal Expo and the South Asian Association of brides gave me his opinions and insight of his take on the bridal industry. Sumit Arya was actually a photographer who saw a need in the South Asian bridal market that only seemed to be more exposed abroad and not here in the United States. He realized a growing potential market among South Asian brides in New Jersey and different parts of the U.S. and decided to fulfill that need and capitalize on that market. He is now in the process of producing his own bridal magazine – Dulhan Magazine, and he shared with me his methods and reason for going into the bridal market. He also gave his opinion and analysis on the perspective of the creation of a multicultural bridal magazine.

I asked Arya what triggered his interest in South Asian Bridal market as opposed to the customary European bridal industry and he mentions that in his early years of being a photographer his initial interest lay in publishing a magazine that would incorporate the ethnic values and interest of East Indian traditional wedding customs. According to Arya “I saw a need for a market that the European bridal industry failed to
address….the original idea was to start a magazine but with the up front expenses of a magazine I decided that a bridal expo would be a better idea.” Arya felt that producing the expo before the publication, gave consumers a glimpse up front of the type of service and goods that they may eventually patronize. If customers familiarize themselves with vendor and product they will know then what to expect when the magazine is published. He also thinks that getting the money upfront from vendors who are willing to participate in his expo is a much more profitable and easier process than, producing something that may not give you instant financial gratification.

Arya states, “this business is all based on credentials, somewhat like a credit system, if people are familiar with your name and product they are then most likely to trust you, therefore the sensitivity of spending money would not then be a big issue.” In the present publication world it is quite the opposite. The popular bridal publications can afford to throw expos in their most busy seasons, simultaneously in busy states throughout the country because they have long earned their status in the bridal publication world, they in fact sponsor many expos that squeeze out other potential expos that meet a particular market of multicultural weddings according to Cassandra Bromfield.

Arya’s first issue of Dulhan Magazine launches in fall 2004, automatically I thought the launch might be a threat to an aspiring multicultural magazine but realized that he is only concerned with fulfilling the need of his niche market, which only focuses on South Asian brides. I asked him his views about the production of a bridal magazine that covers different ethnic groups of people and he mentions that his concern for a magazine like this is that it might be sought of an encyclopedia for people
who may want to broaden their knowledge about different brides and marital customs. He goes on to mention that most brides want to be the center of attention and might not want to be bombarded with several other aspects to weddings. A publication should try to form that special relationship with the consumer so that they may not be persuaded to look elsewhere. Arya openly admits, “having a multicultural bridal magazine may not serve or accommodate a specific group and might be prone to extinction if it does not recognize a serve a specific market.” I agree with Arya’s rational for the production of the magazine, however, I disagreed with his notions about what a magazine might be used for if it is produced. His belief that most brides wanting to be the center of attention is basically correct, because that is the case for all brides, and implying that the magazine may be used as an informational source is rewarding but he is basically saying that a magazine produced in this context cannot fulfill its obligation that brides need for the inception of there perfect wedding day.

On the contrary I think that today since there are now multitudes of concepts and ideas for weddings this is the best era to stray from the traditional European wedding style. The fact that a new magazine promises to be unique, bold and contemporary is what brides are looking for today. Even if brides are still looking to stay within the traditional concepts of a European wedding there is evidence in today’s magazines that mix retro-European trends of something new and culturally elegant creating a whole new outlook of a wedding.

Arya’s South Asian Bridal expo catapulted the conception and questions of a possible multicultural bridal expo. I asked him if he thought the idea would be a feasible approach for expanding ideas to a multicultural bridal market and he stated that the idea
might be a little far fetched for expo producers in this industry, Arya feels that since most weddings are based on customs and religions the concept of a multi-religious expo might be more acceptable for the breakthrough in a multicultural market. Although Arya’s suggestion had a bit of rational, I was opposed because I saw this idea as an opportunity to open up into untapped markets to expand and reach customers of all areas. An alternative solution he mentioned would be merging mainstream Christian and other multi-religious customs which might work well since a large percentage of weddings today continue to incorporate Christian ceremonies in wedding proceedings, as in African American and East Indian wedding traditions. I had the opportunity to attend two multicultural diverse weddings that help reinforce the possibility that a multicultural bridal magazine had a chance to exist. An Indian wedding I attended incorporated both East Indian wedding traditions and European Christian customs which is something customary among Guyanese and Trinidadian cultures. The couple had a three day ceremony that started with musical celebration in dedication to the bride and groom, using the mangeera and jhal (different size pairs of cymbals) and drums usually called tassa(s). The next was the Thaka which is a ceremony where the bride and groom dedicate themselves to each other. The Haitian/Filipino wedding that I attended also shared traditional customs that was important to understanding the couple’s tradition of matrimony.

In addition to the interviews, there were many concerns, comments and suggestions also made by respondents of the survey, which I took into consideration to address. Most of the comments and concerns circled around diversity issues, change in format of current bridal publications and the anticipation of the debut of such a magazine.
Some of the comments were very intense and went into areas that was not initially the basis of this research but made me quite aware of the concerns that the respondents or potential supporters need to know before the investment in an amateur publication project.

A Caucasian female respondent who participated in the survey seemed quite offended by the present popular bridal publications that only feature “skinny, blonde, blue eyed,” women on covers. Before her comment I realized that her observance was something that needed serious attention and was a very valid perception to the inclusion and sensitivity of all types and sizes of women. With the extra pressure of planning a wedding most full figured brides do not want to be reminded that they need to, or have to loose weight to look good for that perfect day. And the bridal magazines that are out there sort of radiate that message. An article in the Los Angeles Times entitled: “Here Comes the Bride…..and Her Personal Trainer” highlights a soon to be bride that formulated a new commitment in loosing weight from a size 4 to fit into a size 2 before she selects any gowns. In the article the thirty year old bride-to-be had not yet set a date for her wedding but was working toward loosing 10-15 pounds on her 4-11 foot figure to fit into a size 2 wedding dress (Los Angeles Times, 2003).

Some engaged brides of color that I interviewed saw this as extreme, desperate compulsive behavior that not only jeopardizes the bride’s health but can possibly make makes her neurotic on her wedding day. The group stated that it should not matter what anyone else thinks about what you look like on your wedding day; the only person that should matter at that point in time is the groom. In some cases brides that are full-figured may not be able to loose to weight, possibly due to health issues or other relating factors,
says an engaged women at local hair salon. After an interview with Kesha Monk-Myrick Radio personality, I realized how important the issue of finding the right services for full-figured brides was. Monk-Myrick is in the process of developing her own bride of color magazine called *Chocolate Brides*, and mentions that the development of the bridal magazine was not in itself an easy task with other competing brides of color magazines already on the market. Monk-Myrick and her husband decided on creating a message board for brides as a platform for brides to network and formulate support groups that will help with information for planning their big day event. Monk-Myrick mentioned that one of the concerns of brides that participated on the message board on her website were about the representation of full figured women in her aspiring magazine and whether she would use this uncommon format for brides on the cover of her magazine. Monk-Myrick said that one of the reason for creating the message board was to actually get responses like these, and mentions that she definitely plans to expose this untapped market of women that needs the exposure and to exude to other women that it is alright to be full figured because there are services that cater to all their needs as well. She also mentioned that this is a great way to know what the community thinks and thus help create unlimited topics to highlight in her magazine.

Monk-Myrick also realizes that this can be a big risk where format can determine the life and longevity of her magazine and is willing and prepared to take the chance of thinking outside the box for it to work. According to Myrick: “its either gonna work or not, I have a strong feeling it will, but the worst case is not knowing if you don’t try…” (Interview, Kesha Myrick, 2003). I did a bit of research on bridal magazines that cater to the needs of full-figured brides, and I could not find any. However, there are several
websites, articles, indexes and bridal fashion forums that give practical and non-criticizing information for brides that are full figured. David’s Bridal the nation’s number one and largest retailer of wedding gowns sell directly to their costumers causing the prices of wedding gowns to be affordable (Geller, 2001, pp.224) to all women including full figured women. David’s bridal actually makes gowns starting from 14W to 26W which according to a representative of David’s Bridal is the frequency of sizes that are usually purchased by full figured women. Alfred Angelo wedding gown designer also makes dresses that accommodate full figures and is featured in the top selling bridal magazines but is advertised at a minimalist and irregular rate. Filene’s Basement is another department store that has bridal rush sales where there are gowns that are affordable to accommodate full figured women. An attendant mentioned that although they have had more traditional sizes throughout the years they have extended the range of sizes to accommodate all shapes and sizes.

According to editor in chief of Modern Bride magazine, Antonia Van De Meer, the typical bride reassesses her image and projects a picture of what she thinks her life should be on her wedding day…..that’s why personal trainers are added to the long list of advertisers and suppliers that make getting married a $600-million-a-year industry. This comment then spurred off other observations of affordability of this one day event. A respondent wrote: “I find that very few couples can afford the fairy-tale weddings that these magazines portray…..most of the weddings connoted fantasy instead of reality and most likely the majority of the consumers can’t relate or afford what they see in bridal magazines.” It seems today brides-to-be are looking for realistic and inexpensive ways to have a wedding without all the mish-mash. According to research, today more couples
are paying and planning for their weddings and paying less as opposed to 30 years ago when the majority of wedding were paid and planned by parents of the bride or groom. According to online survey done by the Knot.com 31% of engaged couples will pay for their own weddings; 24% will be the parents of the bride; 5% both bride and grooms parents; 1% grandparents; 1% groom’s parents and 2% other. Some couples are taking a more realistic approach to the one-day special event by keeping their wedding to a minimal but tasteful inexpensive event (www.theknot.com). “The Bride and Her Checkbook” featured in American Demographics states that engaged women are having more fun planning their weddings and that three fourths of mothers are helping but not calling the shots as it were years earlier (American Demographics, 1998). Couples today are looking to use most of their money to make future investments for family and additional ventures of their new lives as a couple, instead of using all on one thing. The Knot.com also mentions couples estimated that 11% would spend less than $5,000. on their wedding; 6% will spend more than $30,000.-$40,000. and 26% will spend $5,000-10,000. With less spending on the wedding more women are adding their wedding dresses to the list of the “inexpensive”.

An online poll was done by The Knot.com and revealed that 40% of future brides planned to spend $800 or under for their wedding dress and only 4.5% planned on spending between $3000.to $5000. Although brides are spending less money on European style wedding dresses; an East Indian respondent mentioned it is quite the opposite for ceremonial gowns like Saris and Lengha’s used in East Indian tradition. She mentions that it is expensive especially when you have to import the really nice fabric
and materials to make an extraordinary outfit, and even if you do find it here in the U.S. one ends up paying quite a price for it to be made or even purchased. “They hold a lot of elaborate detail just as much or maybe even more than that of the really nice European gowns….,” which in most cases multicultural brides-to-be tend to compromise culture for couture and go with what’s cheaper. The statistics and comments made prove that less money is being spent on the things that mattered most to brides almost since the Victorian wedding was conceived. A female respondent of the survey admits that *Martha Stewart Weddings*, the subordinate spin off of *Martha Stewart Living* helped her to plan a practical *inexpensive* wedding, although the simplicity of most of the things in the magazine are just the opposite. She states that the magazine gave great tips on making bouquets, your own weddings favors and invitations, table center pieces, recipes, home decorating, everything! The best thing about using *Martha Stewart Weddings* magazine as an all-purpose wedding resource she admits is the fact that you can cut out the middle man which is the wedding planner/coordinator. The respondent also mentions that the time and money she intended to spend on a wedding coordinator; she found all the necessary elements needed to plan her wedding from start to finish in *Martha Stewart Weddings*, which now makes a “Wedding Workbook” insert available to brides.

The “Wedding Workbook” is a seven page insert in the magazine that has a timeline that incorporates, budget, guest-list, photography, music, flower and reception seating planners. The magazine actually shows you the classy way of doing things on a detailed step by step basis and does not subject you to the prices that are advertised in the magazine. The great thing about the magazine is that it mentions ideas about materials that can be substituted to make your wedding day Martha-Stewart-like. I also observed
that *Martha Stewart Weddings* isn’t condescending, meaning that the covers of her wedding magazine focus on images that are used at weddings; not women that may draw attention to her taste in brides. She usually has a wedding cake, a bride’s bouquet or slipper, a cake topper; anything relating to weddings but no faces. I think *Martha Stewart Weddings* magazine cover advertising strategy works well in the bridal market because the covers are not subjective; it speaks directly to brides that are looking for practical ideas that will work for any type of budget.

Some respondents mentioned that when getting married *Martha Stewart Weddings* is really the only wedding magazine you need and maybe two or three back issues that will add more creative ideas. It is actually a great how-to magazine where you get what you pay for; as opposed to the other magazines that have pages and pages of bombarding advertisements and fluff articles. According to *New York Post*’s – *On The Newsstand* a weekly magazine summary mentions that *Martha Stewart Weddings* is giving Bride’s magazine a run for their money, and was ranked the best bridal magazine out of the four featured which included *Bride’s, Modern Bride* and *Elegant Bride* another spin off of Conde Nast which has a Martha-like savvy. According to the article Conde Nast adds more pop and playfulness to *Elegant Bride’s* portfolio and features new concepts like, what your pet should wear to the wedding, which I think may have already been done in their rival’s magazine (New York Post, 36).

However, *Martha Stewart Weddings* still follow the same pattern of the top selling bridal magazines where the majority of the women featured in the magazine are still Caucasian. An East Indian respondent voiced her opinion on the importance of having a multicultural bridal magazine and states that most of the mainstream bridal
magazines borrow from other cultures; like dress customs, food and ceremonial rights because it is what is new and trendy, but in some cases disrespectful to other cultures. She states she has seen in these magazines European brides in sari-like gowns, others practicing traditional Indian wedding customs but only did so to start or highlight trend. Some do not show a true representation of multicultural weddings; just the minimal is done to appear as if they do care about the cultural changes in wedding today. The respondent revealed that it is important for a magazine like this to be created so that people not only understand why other ethnicities practice their matrimonial customs but dedicated to the serious research that is helpful to creating a contemporary multicultural wedding. Another respondent mentioned that The Knot sometimes do their best to be inclusive of all customs and cultures but they also usually do the bare minimum to patronize customers.

Analysis and Summary of Statistics

Some respondents disagreed that mainstream magazines influence brides. A respondent voiced in her comment that if a bride is set in her way to have a certain type of wedding there is no magazine that can possibly change her cultural convictions. “People know what they want and will go after it until that satisfaction is had or that need is met.” I realized that some respondents thought that advertisers hold the key to the bridal magazines’ success and felt that these advertisers dictate the content, which is why they may not see people of color as targeted consumers. Statistics from the survey suggests that 55.9% of African- American/Caribbean, 28.8% of white and 5.1% of Hispanic believe that the top selling bridal magazines on the market influence consumers
into buying European wedding traditions, this suggesting that maybe a shift in the current bridal publication strategy might make an interesting turn in business.

Highlighting and adding to the previous comment, a respondent felt that African-Americans and other ethnic groups have as much as, or even more buying power than that of Caucasians, but feels that this redundant pattern is safe for the market to prosper which obviously leaves other cultures underrepresented and is geared to the market that is assumed to be the dominant consumer. The pie charts below depict the different race/ethnicities that believe that there is a strong potential for this magazine to survive.

A male respondent that was very insightful in his comments mentioned that the number one thing that he believes that bridal publication owners feel is that all the factors incorporated in their magazines are universal when that it not the case. He mentioned that he was very involved in planning his wedding with his wife because he did not want a wedding based on someone else’s opinion, and that is where couples eventually loose creativity then get drawn into the monotony.
Not everyone thought the idea of a multicultural bridal magazine would work in this competitive bridal market. I got feedback from an Asian respondent that brought quite a few noteworthy issues that I succinctly mentioned in chapter three of the research.

The respondent was concerned about the magazine addressing the Asian Community particularly Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and Indian and cautions that should the magazine be so generalized it would then fall into being generic causing it to be almost identical to what is on the market right now. The respondent also thinks that an aspiring magazine like this should partner with other popular ethnic women’s magazines like *Essence, Ebony, Honey* or *Latina* that may decide to publish bridal issues every few months, this strategy she mentions might lessen the impact of publication failure.
Most of the concerns that the respondent mentioned are very realistic elements that will determine the outcome of such a magazine but most magazines that already exist on the market started with a blueprint of ideas and ended up being top sellers, my point being that creative marketing, distribution, and yes; funding is what can make the difference of such a magazine.

There are no limits to producing a medium like this, the closest thing relating to the spread of multicultural weddings is found on the program *A Wedding Story* usually aired daily on The Learning Channel network. This program usually summarizes an engaged couple’s courting and marriage experience and 65% of the time they involve interracial or multicultural customs. Another program that I recently saw on The Discovery Channel was *Weddings of the World* which gave an overview of how weddings ceremonies are practiced in different parts of the world. This caused great excitement for me because it shows that the ideas of multicultural weddings are starting to infiltrate our society which further proves that producing a multicultural magazine is not far out of reach.

As mentioned earlier in my research, communities continue to become diverse and migration of other ethnic groups continues to propagate our society and I feel that there is a possibility that a market for a magazine like this exists. Of course this magazine would not be able to address all the issues of all cultures and provide all the services to every ethnic bride, no bridal magazine has ever done that and it would be unfair to say that this magazine can do that, in fact I don’t think that any magazine has achieved that. I think the reason for a magazine’s survival and the things that keep consumers coming back for more is that consumers also have the ability to integrate
thoughts that will make a magazine more suitable to their needs. That’s why the majority of magazines (or all in fact) have a special section created for consumers to voice their opinion e.g. “Letters to The Editor” is not just a section that is created to measure how many people read or subscribe to a magazine but to get ideas and a feeling of what people are looking for. I think the reason why a magazine like this should exist is that it would be a positive option for brides of color; it would be a great home for multicultural businesses to gain exposure, especially in a market that beats them out and make them non-existent to the growing multicultural society. Let’s face it you don’t have to be married engaged or divorced to see that something is definitely lacking in the leading bridal publications and how they reach consumers. Today a large percentage of marriages or weddings performed are either inter-cultural or interracial and a magazine like this may be better equipped to address issues and research information that the current bridal magazines don’t. A multicultural bridal magazine might help to break up the conformity that bridal consumers have been fed for far too long. I believe that breaking the trend would be good for posterity and maintain the cycle of creative marketing and competition which is always needed to measure.
Chapter V
Waiting For a Dream To Come Alive

Summary

During the course of this research I was able to gain insight into the history and the mechanics of the bridal magazine industry, and also the fundamentals that make the launch of a new bridal magazine like this work. The influence that the current bridal magazines have had on the multicultural consumer has conditioned them into following a trend that may be hard to break, especially with a new publication that claims that it can give this new market everything that the current magazines didn’t. Looking back, it seems that history, loyalty and a keen ability to start trends are just a few important factors that combine to make the historic bridal magazines enormous publishing successes, while they still continue to prove to other bridal magazines, both regular and upcoming, that they still have the power to retain their throne in the bridal industry.

There were many voiced opinions and research results that proved that the production of this magazine may be a successful forthcoming. The combination of research and opinions also revealed that today’s market is quite fertile and ready for this new publication. In this chapter I will conclude with the future outlook of this aspiring magazine and reiterate the importance of its existence. In addition, I will make recommendations that may possibly foster relationships in markets that will make this magazine’s appreciation to its investors and consumers rewarding. I will also inject my
own opinion on what this new turn in the bridal industry may mean for the current bridal magazines that dominate the market today.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

If one were to look back twenty five years ago at a typical bride-to-be and her wedding arrangements one would notice that it was all planned and managed by the mother of the bride. As mentioned in statistics earlier, brides today are much older and able to spend more than brides of the past, which makes them a more attractive demographic to the bridal market. Today, that same demographic is now multi-culturally diverse with the same spending patterns of that of Caucasian counterparts. The top bridal magazines on the market have to keep in mind that the fast approaching multicultural bridal market needs special attention. Their woeful ignorance and disregard for the last seventy years has shown that they have little or no faith in multicultural markets and could possibly be a detriment to their longevity if they continually ignore the screaming statistics that can cause a positive change.

Some multicultural magazines have already taken the bold step to creating and fulfilling that void that bridal consumers are looking for. However, their step has not yet propelled them into areas of visibility for their target consumers and thus creates a problem for making the sales that they need to maintain their survival. These magazines’ dormant performance has led some of them into extinction and pushed them into debt, causing new releases of multicultural bridal magazines to be a threat to investors. Some of these magazines start off not having enough operating cash or the financial and budgeting information that they need to make this business work. Often times these start-
up publications have inexperienced employees with no prior experience in publishing frequently causing the demise of the start ups.

I think these start up magazines should continue to press their way to being recognized in this unrecognized market. Since the current bridal market shows unrelenting ability to open up in diverse markets, it would be in the best interest of upcoming multicultural bridal magazines to find ways to make this market interesting and attractive to existing bridal magazines. As mentioned in chapter three, launching ideas like having seasonal bridal pullouts dedicated to multicultural brides, trying new circulation strategies, increasing web presence, attending trade shows, conferences and seminars are other additional ways to increase the potential of becoming established.

In my research, I realized that most of the multicultural bridal magazines were found abroad. This discovery led me to believe that an opportunity for international partnerships may be possible. If these bridal magazines foster relationships on an international basis it may increase circulation and cut back on money and resource squandering that most start-ups get caught in. This affiliation can also open up to new trends in diverse markets, building the fidelity that is needed to generate money for new external ventures.

In chapter three I mentioned that some media have taken the step to starting the inclusion and recognition of different types of wedding customs. Since the bridal industry have become more aggressive in reaching consumers, I think the creation of a bridal television network would do wonders for up coming bridal start ups.

I think the appropriate research and marketing would not only revolutionize the way brides get their information in the 21st century but create for the first time a platform that
can display and include all cultures thus creating the balance that the bridal industry needs.

The creation of a multicultural bridal magazine is not only a dream but a possibility. There are several testimonies and evidences around us today that prove that dreams are worth working towards. Multimillion corporations and organizations that were tagged “destined for failure” turned out to be leading giants in their niche markets, which puts the likelihood of this magazine within the reach of any investor who cares to nurture and watch it grow in a market that continues to become diverse. This is not just the start of a new publication, but the foundation to start of a whole new era that can span from generation to generation.
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Hispanic/Latino Market Profile © Copyright 2003 Magazine Publishers of America


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http://www.asian-nation.org/population.shtml
Appendices
Appendix A

Survey

Part I - Survey Questions

Based on the scale below, please circle the answer that most closely represents your opinion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA Strongly Agree</th>
<th>A Agree</th>
<th>N Neutral</th>
<th>D Disagree</th>
<th>SD Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Weddings today and at least 50 years ago focused on European traditional-style weddings (white dress, church ceremony, etc.).
   - SA A N D SD

2. Most brides do not pay attention to who is on the cover of bridal magazines.
   - SA A N D SD

3. I do not pay attention to the faces on bridal magazines.
   - SA A N D SD

4. Only a small percentage of cultural weddings/rituals/brides are recognized in today's bridal industry.
   - SA A N D SD

5. I am very satisfied with the current bridal magazines on the market and how they represent multiculturalism.
   - SA A N D SD

6. Different women or couples need to be on the cover of such a magazine.
   - SA A N D SD

7. It is difficult to find a bridal magazine that tailors to specific needs of multicultural brides.
   - SA A N D SD

8. There is a strong potential market for a multicultural bridal magazine.
   - SA A N D SD

9. There is a strong possibility for this magazine to be successful.
   - SA A N D SD

10. Modern brides are ready for this type of bridal magazine.
    - SA A N D SD

Comments___________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
### Part II - Assessment of Bridal Culture Knowledge

Based on your experience and/or knowledge of bridal publications, please complete this questionnaire/survey.

Please check answers or explain accordingly.

1. **Age:**
   - Less than 18____
   - 18-24____
   - 25-34____
   - 35-44____
   - 45-54____
   - 55-64____
   - 65+____

2. **Sex:** Male____ Female____

3. **Ethnicity/Race:**
   - White____
   - Black/African American/ African Caribbean____
   - Asian____
   - Pacific Islander____
   - Hispanic____
   - Other______________________________

4. **Primary Spoken language**
   - English____
   - Spanish____
   - French____
   - Russian____
   - Creole (Patois)____
   - Other_______________________

5. **Marital Status**
   - Engaged___
   - Married___
   - Single___
   - Divorce___

6. **Level of Education**
   - Some high school____
   - High school graduate____
   - Some college____
   - Undergraduate degree____
   - Some graduate school____
   - Graduate degree_____
7. What bridal magazine(s) below are you familiar with? Check all that apply.

- Asian Bride
- Bridal Guide
- Bride’s
- BridesNoir
- Continental Bride
- For You
- Mahogany Bride
- Modern Bride
- Shaadi Style
- The Knot
- Wedding Bells

8. Do you think the predominant bridal magazines do a good job of representing a multi-cultural bridal community? Please explain.

Yes    No

9. In your opinion, do you think that the top selling bridal magazines influence their consumers into buying European wedding customs and traditions e.g. (white dress, church ceremony, etc.)? Please explain.

Yes    No
Appendix B

*Bride’s Magazine Throughout the Years*
Changing Bridal Customs  80

*Bride’s Magazine*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
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Changing Bridal Customs

1990

Today 2004
Appendix C

Brides of Color Magazines Currently on The Market
Multicultural Bridal Magazines
Appendix D

New Bridal Magazine Launches 2003
New Bridal Magazines 2003