

# “I Read the Ads First!”..Really?

OUCH! We work hard to seek out interesting stories, select beautiful photos, fuss over the design of each page...then subscribers tell us *they read the ads first*.

Yep, we hear it often—and the two of us wince while our advertisers smile. We’re Mike Beno and Roy Reiman, the founders of *Our Wisconsin* magazine.

In truth, we find these reader comments gratifying, because they tell us folks are *having fun* with a particularly unique aspect of this magazine.

**Why Do They Read the Ads First?** It’s due to our highly popular “Where’s the W?” Contest. It encourages readers to scan the ads closely in each issue.

Here’s the background behind this one-of-a-kind contest:

In every issue of *Our Wisconsin*, we hide a tiny “W” in just three ads. Readers have to find all three Ws to get in on a drawing for that issue’s prizes.

**What Are the Prizes?** They’re offered by advertisers who choose to take part in this contest. They give \$100 worth of their product or services...in return, we deduct \$100 from the price of their ad. These product or service prizes likely don’t cost these companies \$100 out of pocket, so their ad cost is reduced.

But these prizes surely generate *greater attention* for our advertisers, because a single ad gives three types of exposure:

First, there’s the ad itself, then editorial mention on another page that describes the prize...and then editorial mention again in the following issue when the name of the winner appears with a description of the prize and the company offering it.

**Ever Hear of Any Magazine Urging Subscribers to Read the Ads?**

It’s another “first” for *Our Wisconsin*. And our readers *love this contest!*

As evidence, *over 12,000 readers* enter this contest after receiving each issue. That means each of these readers has studied the ads closely (our artist hides these wily Ws in the sneakiest places). Readers say they not only enjoy the thrill of the hunt, they also get family members involved. They challenge each other to see who can find all the Ws fastest.

**Now, Consider This:** Contest entries are allowed by postal mail alone—readers can’t enter by e-mail or phone. So that means these thousands of readers not only take the time to hunt, they also take time to write us a card or letter noting the exact pages and ads on which all three Ws were found.

Next, they must clearly print their name, address and phone number on their card or letter, affix a first-class stamp and then put the entry into the U.S. mail before that issue’s deadline.



## Now That’s an Engaged Audience!

And as every marketer knows, a *highly engaged reader* is one most apt to become a customer. With this novel approach, *our subscribers appreciate our advertisers...* because they know the more ads we run, the more prizes we can offer. In a typical issue, we give away *more than \$4,000 in prizes*, and over the past 11 years, we’ve given away over *\$210,000 worth of them*. See why readers are having so much fun? And why our advertisers love the added attention!

**Here Is Another Advantage to Advertising in Our Wisconsin:** We’ve pledged to our readers there will be no more than 25% advertising in any issue.

Most magazines operate on a 60/40 basis —60% ads and 40% editorial. Here at

*Our Wisconsin*, we turn those percentages on their heads.

Why? Our goal is to support this magazine primarily through subscriptions...with advertising revenue playing an important, but decidedly ancillary, role.

This allows us to accept fewer ads and offer subscribers much more great reading. We feel including as many stories and photos as we can is the best way to serve our readers. This makes our pages the *perfect environment* for your ad.

It means your ad will never be buried among hundreds of others that seem to run endlessly online and in mainstream magazines. Our low-ad ratio helps your message stand out.

**We Actually Turn Down Ads!** It’s true! Please be aware that once we hit our 25% advertising limit, we turn down the “latecomers”.

That may sound crazy in this day and age, but yes, we may be the only magazine

that turns down advertising. So reserve your space early!

The mission of *Our Wisconsin* is to celebrate all that’s great in the Badger State. Every page is brimming with Wisconsin pride. And it’s 100% positive...no negative news in this publication!

**Our Readership is Loyal.** That’s demonstrated in subscription renewals (satisfied subscribers). Across the magazine industry, renewals average around 40%. Our renewals are tracking beyond 70%. Now that’s *affinity and customer loyalty*.

Over 100,000 paid subscribers came to us in the first two years. In no time at all, this publication has become “Wisconsin’s Magazine.”


Here’s your chance to market your product or service across the state and lock in at our current rates, before they increase along with our circulation.

Call our advertising coordinator at 715/543-2311 or e-mail [Advertising@OurWisconsinMag.com](mailto:Advertising@OurWisconsinMag.com).

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Roy Reiman, Publisher

**Our Wisconsin**

  
Mike Beno, Editor