

SHOP TALK

Monster Tabloid Attacks Admen!

Staff Reporters of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Some newspaper readers might have trouble swallowing stories headlined "Giant Humming UFO Smashes Windows and Scorches Earth" or "Simple 10-Point Plan Can End Agony of Arthritis." But more than five million people a week plunk down 65 cents to buy the National Enquirer, which ran those two stories last June. Do the buyers believe what they read?

An independent research company hired by the Enquirer's advertising department recently questioned 500 of the paper's readers on the credibility of 10 articles, including the UFO and arthritis pieces. On a scale of one to five, with five being "excellent," the readers gave the Enquirer a credibility rating of 3.6.

In a similar survey for the Enquirer, conducted by another pollster, the paper achieved a credibility rating of only 1.3 among advertising agency executives and 1.8 among executives of other companies. One respondent said, "It has no credibility at all." Another added, "By association, people might not believe our ads." Despite its huge circulation, big-name advertisers have long shunned the paper.

To the Enquirer, the surveys show that Madison Avenue is out of touch with Main Street. In its promotional literature, the tabloid admonishes potential advertisers: "You can't judge readers of the National Enquirer by asking non-readers their opinions."