S.O.S.—October/November 1994

"We market to well people, not sick people"

October 1, 1994 By Sean Strub

The headline above is what one major vitamin supplement company told us, when explaining why they would not advertise in *POZ*.

Selling advertising for any magazine is tough. Selling advertising in a magazine about AIDS is even tougher, which is why we have worked so hard to adhere to the highest standards of a professional magazine, including first-rate writing, superior design and premium production values.

So far, after a lot of effort and a lot of money, we are far ahead of our projections in both newsstand sales and subscriptions but significantly lagging in advertising.

Many advertisers don't want to be seen as marketing to people with AIDS for fear of being labeled exploitive. Some feel it would reflect poorly on their product; they don't want their brand name to be associated with illness. Some have personal biases; a marketing executive at a major record company told us he found *POZ* "disgusting and exploitive."

Disgusting and exploitive that we inform, inspire and improve HIV positive lives? It is far more disgusting and exploitive for major corporations earning millions off people who are HIV positive to not support AIDS community publications. It is far more disgusting to dismiss people as consumers with vibrant, active lives, simply because they are HIV positive. It is far more disgusting to assume -- and promote through their non-support -- that people who are HIV positive simply shut down and die.

You can help. If you want *POZ* to succeed, let our advertisers know you appreciate their support. Call their toll-free numbers, request information, write letters and affirm their decision to support *POZ*. Especially those advertisers with information-based advertising that serves a purpose independent of their marketing objectives. Let them know that their advertising dollars are what has enabled *POZ* to distribute more than 300,000 free copies to date.

Better yet, contact advertisers who ought to be in *POZ* but aren't and urge them to give us a try. Advertisers listen much more carefully to their customers than they do to advertising sales people. Copy your letters to us and we'll follow up.

Thanks for joining us.

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