

The Fame Index

You don't own your fame — the public does.

Inside Puck's Paradox: How an Insider Brand Became a Global Habit

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By the Fame Index Editorial Team

When Puck launched, it wasn't trying to be everywhere. It was built as a boutique insider's conversation — an experiment in what happens when great journalists own their work and their relationships with readers.

Four years later, that conversation has quietly become a global ritual. From *Infobae* in Buenos Aires to *Times of Israel* liveblogs and *Hindustan Times* entertainment rewrites, Puck's scoops and citations have embedded themselves in the professional media bloodstream.

According to the latest **Fame Index**, which tracks behavioural brand equity across industries, **Puck's FY25 fame score of 79.7** places it firmly in the "Durable Loop Fame" tier — brands sustained by repeatable daily rituals, rather than one-time hype.

It's an unusually strong showing for a paywalled media company of its size, and it tells a deeper story about what the brand has built, and where it's headed next.

The Ritual Engine

Puck's behavioural strength lies in habit. Its *Daily Courant* newsletter lands in inboxes with the predictability of a market close. Its podcasts — *The Town*, *The Powers That Be* — have developed their own internal loops, where episodes feed into newsletters, newsletters feed into live events, and live events spark new conversations across platforms.

This isn't virality; it's architecture. The audience doesn't stumble upon Puck — it *returns* to Puck.

That's the difference between awareness and *ritualized attention*, and it's what the Fame Index measures.

Across the 2024–25 window, that structure held firm:

- the afternoon digest ritual continued,
- the attribution loop (“According to Puck...”) expanded into five languages,
- and the insider identity remained visible across all regions.

For investors and operators, that consistency matters more than any single traffic metric. It signals that Puck's fame is **self-renewing**.

The Paradox of Scale

Yet the same data also reveal Puck's paradox:
it built power by being *elite and closed*, but it now grows through *mass exposure*.

In 2025, Puck was cited not only by U.S. media insiders, but by global mainstream outlets reporting on its scoops — and even on *Puck itself*.

The proposed acquisition of *Air Mail* was covered in the *U.K.*, *Singapore*, and *Italy* as media-industry news.

In Latin America, “*según Puck News*” has become a familiar headline formula.

What began as a whisper among insiders has become a global signal — recognizable shorthand for credibility.

The question facing Puck's next phase isn't “Can it grow?” — that's already evident. It's **how to scale without dissolving the mystique** that made it valuable in the first place.

The Human Core

Fame Index data reinforce what Jon Kelly and his team have long understood:
the product *is* the journalist.

Puck's audience rituals are powered by the distinct personalities — Belloni, Ioffe, Schleifer, Cohan — whose voice and authority anchor the brand's identity.

This makes for strong connection and high engagement, but it also creates *concentration risk*: if the voices change, so might the relationship.

The challenge ahead is to institutionalize that charisma without flattening it — to make “reading Puck” a behaviour independent of any single byline.

That’s a transition only a few media brands have managed: from author-led attention to enduring brand-led trust.

The Long Game

The *Fame Index* doesn’t measure valuation or revenue; it measures **behavioural equity** — the kind of fame that compounds.

On that front, Puck is building the right foundation.

It has:

- repeatable global rituals,
- measurable audience return behaviour, and
- a brand myth built on access, not noise.

The Air Mail and Artelligence integrations will test whether that foundation can support a larger cultural architecture.

If executed with precision, those moves could evolve Puck from a boutique insider salon into the *institutional voice of the professional class* — without ever chasing mass-market volume.

Why It Matters

In an era when most media startups are algorithmic commodities, Puck is the rare brand whose fame grows *organically* — through credibility, repetition, and networked trust.

That doesn’t just build audience; it builds *equity*.

And while others chase reach, Puck is quietly constructing something rarer and more durable: **a media brand that behaves like a ritual, not a campaign.**

In short:

Puck’s fame is not a flash; it’s a habit.

And habits, once locked, are the purest form of brand equity there is.