# FOURTH QUARTER FY2024 EARNINGS

**DECEMBER 12, 2024** 





### SAFE HARBOR

The information provided in this presentation may include forward-looking statements relating to future events or the future financial performance of the Company. Because such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties, actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Words such as "aims", "anticipates," "plans," "expects," "intends," "will," "potential," "hope" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based upon current expectations of the Company and involve assumptions that may never materialize or may prove to be incorrect. Actual results and the timing of events could differ materially from those anticipated in such forward-looking statements as a result of various risks and uncertainties. Detailed information regarding factors that may cause actual results to differ materially from the results expressed or implied by statements relating to the Company may be found in the Company's periodic filings with the Commission, including the factors described in the sections entitled "Risk Factors," copies of which may be obtained from the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. The Company does not undertake any obligation to update forward-looking statements contained in this presentation.



# **FOURTH QUARTER AND FULL YEAR 2024 RESULTS**

### Q4 Revenue

Total Operating Revenue \$159M, down 2% YOY<sup>(1)</sup>

Total Digital Revenue \$82M, up 13%<sup>(1)</sup>

- Digital subscription \$24M, up 30%<sup>(1)</sup>
- Digital advertising \$52M, up 8%<sup>(1)</sup>
  - Amplified Digital<sup>®</sup> Agency \$28M, up 21%<sup>(1)</sup>

Total print revenue \$77M, down 14%<sup>(1)</sup>

### Q4 Cash Costs<sup>(2)</sup>

Total Cash Costs \$143M, up 4% YOY

## Q4 Adjusted EBITDA<sup>(2)</sup>

Adjusted EBITDA \$17M

### FY24 Revenue

Total Operating Revenue \$611M, down 8% YOY<sup>(1)</sup>

Total Digital Revenue \$299M, up 11%<sup>(1)</sup>

- Digital subscription \$84M, up 41%<sup>(1)</sup>
- Digital advertising \$194M, up 2%<sup>(1)</sup>
- Amplified Digital® Agency \$99M, up 11%<sup>(1)</sup>

Total print revenue \$312M, down 21%<sup>(1)</sup>

### FY24 Cash Costs<sup>(2)</sup>

Total Cash Costs \$553M, down 10% YOY

### FY24 Adjusted EBITDA<sup>(2)</sup>

Adjusted EBITDA \$65M



<sup>(1)</sup> Same-store revenues is a non-GAAP performance measure based on U.S. GAAP revenues for Lee for the current period, excluding exited operations. Exited operations include (1) business divestitures and (2) the elimination of stand-alone print products discontinued within our markets.

### INDUSTRY-LEADING DIGITAL GROWTH







2024

2021



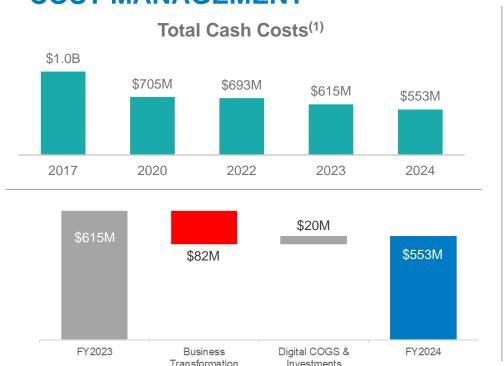
<sup>(1)</sup> Same-store revenues is a non-GAAP performance measure based on U.S. GAAP revenues for Lee for the current period, excluding exited operations. Exited operations include (1) business divestitures and (2) the elimination of stand-alone print products discontinued within our markets.

Gannett

Lee

TownSquare

# STRONG TRACK RECORD OF SUSTAINABLE COST MANAGEMENT



### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Proficient in driving efficiencies
  - Current base of \$187M of direct costs associated with our legacy revenue streams that will be managed with associated revenue trends
  - Ongoing initiatives aimed at optimizing manufacturing, distribution, and corporate services
- Digital transformation fueled by thoughtful investments
  - Significant investments in talent and technology of \$10M funded successful execution of Lee's Three Pillar Digital Growth Strategy
  - Incremental investments in marketing & branding of \$1M drove \$24M of Digital Subscription revenue growth
  - Digital COGS increased \$8M YOY to support revenue growth at BLOX Digital, Amplified Digital® Agency, and other Digital Advertising

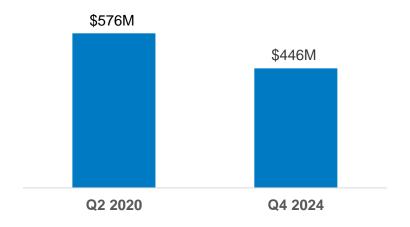


Managing legacy business & investing in digital future

### CREDIT AGREEMENT REPRESENTS STRATEGIC ASSET

- \$130M debt reduction since refinancing in March 2020
- Favorable credit agreement with Berkshire Hathaway
  - 25-year runway with no breakage costs or prepayment penalties
  - Fixed annual interest rate, no financial performance covenants and no fixed amortization
- Pension plans now frozen and fully funded in the aggregate with no material pension contributions in 2024
- Asset sales more than \$13M for the year
  - Identified approximately \$25M of noncore assets to monetize

### **Significant Gross Debt Reduction**

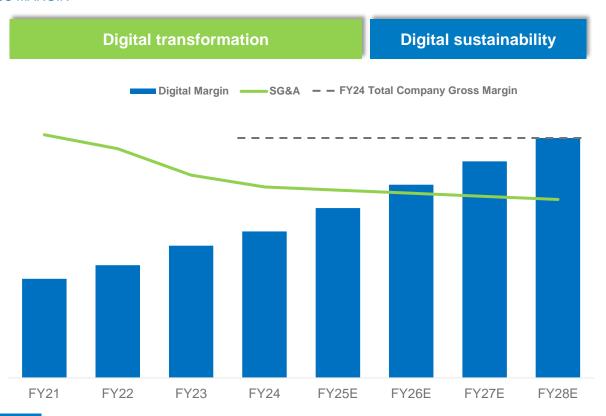




Monetization of noncore assets will propel debt reduction

### LEE NEARS SUSTAINABILITY FROM DIGITAL REVENUE

**GROSS MARGIN** 



### **KEY HIGHLIGHTS**

- Digital revenue replacing print revenue and growing at 17% CAGR since 2021
- Digital gross margin<sup>(1)</sup> growing at a **13% CAGR** since 2021
- Digital subscription revenue and gross margin growing at a 44%
   CAGR since 2021
- Amplified Digital® Agency revenue growing at a **34% CAGR** since 2021
- Digital gross margin<sup>(1)</sup> expected to exceed total SG&A costs in FY26
- Digital gross margin<sup>(1)</sup> remains strong at **72% margin**

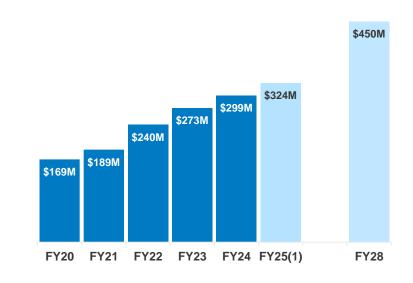


<sup>(1)</sup> Digital Gross Margin is a non-GAAP performance measure calculated by Digital Revenue less Cost of Good Sold ("COGS") directly tied to digital products. Digital Margin excludes all Selling, General, and Administrative ("SG&A") costs.

### LONG-TERM OUTLOOK: DIGITAL REVENUE

#### DIGITAL REVENUE GROWTH IS FUELED BY AMPLIFIED AND DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION GROWTH

- Amplified Digital<sup>®</sup> Agency will drive digital marketing services revenue growth
- Our owned & operated digital products provide a unique opportunity to grow high margin digital advertising revenue
- We expect significant growth in digital subscribers
  - Expect 1.2 million digital subscribers by 2028, assuming modest penetration of the current addressable market
- We expect to drive digital subscription revenue even faster
  - Expect ARPU expansion as introductory pricing becomes a smaller piece of the subscriber base
  - Maximizing ARPU through data and sophisticated analytics





Lee expects \$450 million in Digital Revenue in 2028

# **2025 OUTLOOK**

Key Metric	2025 Outlook
Total Digital Revenue	YOY growth in the range of 7% - 10%
Adjusted EBITDA <sup>(1)</sup>	YOY growth in the low-single digits



### THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

#### TECTONIC SHIFT IN TECHNOLOGY & LEE'S MARKET LEADERSHIP

#### **DIGITAL BEHAVIOR**

- · Traditional search declining
- · Al search rapidly growing
- · Content production costs dropping
- · Hyper-personalized commerce growing

#### **OTHER STRATEGIES**

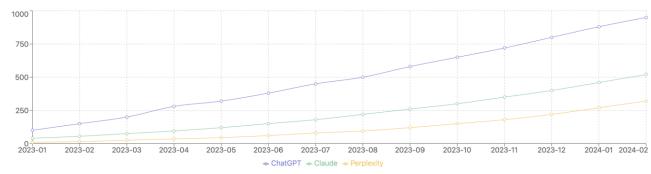
- "Fair-Use" lawsuits
- · News industry government initiatives

#### **WINNING STRATEGIES**

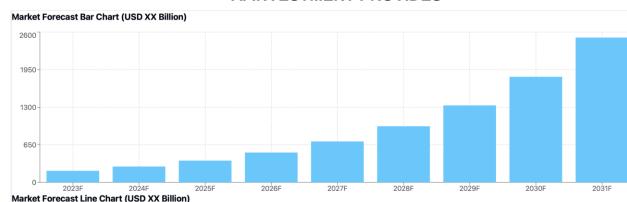
- Lee taking the leadership position
- · Partnerships to build AI foundations
- Hyper-local search & content
- Disintermediating Google in the "Last Mile"
- Al paywall subscriptions
- · Al-driven ad creative
- Al-enhanced news content

#### CONSUMER ADOPTION ACCELERATING

#### Al Search Engine Monthly Active Users Growth (Indexed)



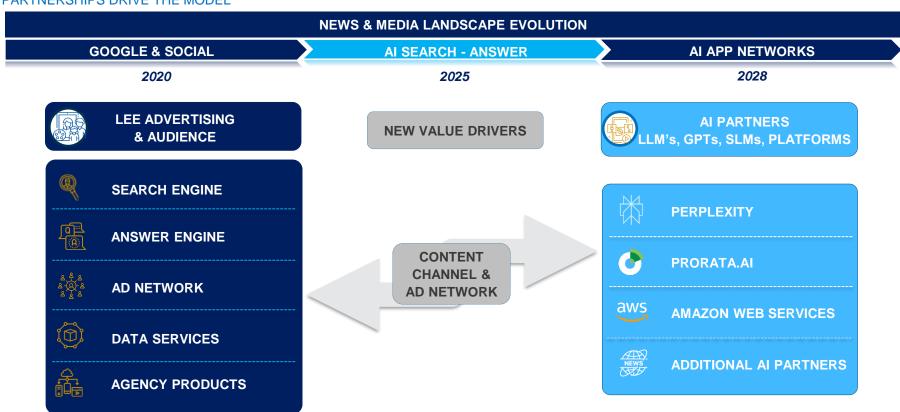
#### AI INVESTMENT PROVIDES





### AI CREATES A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE THE MODEL







### NON-GAAP RECONCILIATION

The Company uses non-GAAP financial performance measures to supplement the financial information presented on a U.S. GAAP basis. These non-GAAP financial measures, which may not be comparable to similarly titled measures reported by other companies, should not be considered in isolation from or as a substitute for the related U.S. GAAP measures and should be read together with financial information presented on a U.S. GAAP basis.

The Company defines its non-GAAP measures as follows:

Adjusted EBITDA is a non-GAAP financial performance measure that enhances financial statement users overall understanding of the operating performance of the Company. The measure isolates unusual, infrequent or non-cash transactions from the operating performance of the business. This allows users to easily compare operating performance among various fiscal periods and how management measures the performance of the business. This measure also provides users with a benchmark that can be used when forecasting future operating performance of the Company that excludes unusual, nonrecurring or one-time transactions. Adjusted EBITDA is a component of the calculations used by stockholders and analysts to determine the value of our business when using the market approach, which applies a market multiple to financial metrics. It is also a measure used to calculate the leverage ratio of the Company, which is a key financial ratio monitored and used by the Company and its investors. Adjusted EBITDA is defined as net income (loss), plus non-operating expenses, income tax expenses, depreciation and amortization, assets loss (gain) on sales, impairments and other, restructuring costs and other, stock compensation and our 50% share of EBITDA from TNI and MNI, minus equity in earnings of TNI and MNI.

Cash Costs represent a non-GAAP financial performance measure of operating expenses which are measured on an accrual basis and settled in cash. This measure is useful to investors in understanding the components of the Company's cash-settled operating costs. Periodically, the Company provides forward-looking guidance of Cash Costs, which can be used by financial statement users to assess the Company's ability to manage and control its operating cost structure. Cash Costs are defined as compensation, newsprint and ink and other operating expenses. Depreciation and amortization, assets loss (gain) on sales, impairments and other, other non-cash operating expenses and other expenses are excluded. Cash Costs also exclude restructuring costs and other, which are typically paid in cash.

Same-store revenues is a non-GAAP performance measure based on U.S. GAAP revenues for Lee for the current period, excluding exited operations. Exited operations include (1) business divestitures and (2) the elimination of stand-alone print products discontinued within our markets.

Gross Margin is a non-GAAP financial performance measure that enhances financial statement users overall understanding of the operating performance of the Company. The measure isolates operating costs that directly support revenue. Depreciation and amortization, assets loss (gain) on sales, impairments and other, net, other non-cash operating expenses, Selling, General, and Administrative ("SG&A") compensation and SG&A other operating expenses are excluded from Gross Margin.

TNI and MNI - TNI refers to TNI Partners publishing operations in Tucson, AZ. MNI refers to Madison Newspapers, Inc. publishing operations in Madison, WI.

#### Management's Use of Non-GAAP Measures

These Non-GAAP Measures are not measurements of financial performance under U.S. GAAP and should not be considered in isolation or as an alternative to income from operations, net income (loss), revenues, or any other measure of performance or liquidity derived in accordance with U.S. GAAP. We believe these non-GAAP financial measures, as we have defined them, are helpful in identifying trends in our day-to-day performance because the items excluded have little or no significance on our day-to-day operations. These measures provide an assessment of controllable expenses and afford management the ability to make decisions which are expected to facilitate meeting current financial goals as well as achieve optimal financial performance. We use these Non-GAAP measures of our day-to-day operating performance, which is evidenced by the publishing and delivery of news and other media and excludes certain expenses that may not be indicative of our day-to-day business operating results.

#### Limitations of Non-GAAP Measures

Each of our non-GAAP measures have limitations as analytical tools. They should not be viewed in isolation or as a substitute for U.S. GAAP measures of earnings. Material limitations in making the adjustments to our earnings to calculate Adjusted EBITDA using these non-GAAP financial measures as compared to U.S. GAAP net income (loss) include: the cash portion of interest / financing expense, income tax (benefit) provision, and charges related to asset impairments, which may significantly affect our financial results. Management believes these items are important in evaluating our performance, results of operations, and financial position. We use non-GAAP financial measures to supplement our U.S. GAAP results in order to provide a more complete understanding of the factors and trends affecting our business.



# **QUARTERLY REVENUE COMPOSITION**

(Millions of Dollars)	Q1 FY2023	Q2 FY2023	Q3 FY2023	Q4 FY2023	FY 2023	Q1 FY2024	Q2 FY2024	Q3 FY2024	Q4 FY2024	FY 2024
Digital Advanticing and Mankating Convices	47.7	46.3	49.9	49.3	193.2	46.5	45.4	49.9	52.5	194.2
Digital Advertising and Marketing Services YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	11.3%		7.8%		173.2 6.4%	-1.1%		47.7 1.6%	7.5%	2.0%
Digital Only Subscription Revenue	12.3	14.0	15.7	18.7	60.7	19.5	20.3	20.7	23.9	84.3
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	56.2%		43.3%		51.4%	60.2%		34.1%	29.9%	41.2%
Digital Services Revenue	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	19.4	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	20.5
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	2.2%	2.1%	12.6%	15.3%	7.8%	4.9%	7.6%	6.0%	5.1%	5.9%
Total Digital Revenue <sup>(2)</sup>	64.8	65.0	70.5	73.0	273.2	70.9	70.8	75.8	81.6	299.1
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	16.9%	11.5%	14.4%	13.6%	14.1%	11.0%	10.7%	9.2%	13.0%	11.0%
% of Total Revenue	35.0%	38.1%	41.1%	44.5%	39.5%	45.5%	48.3%	50.3%	51.5%	48.9%
Print Advertising Revenue	41.8	31.5	29.2	23.3	125.8	24.4	18.7	18.9	19.4	81.5
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	-24.3%	-23.2%	-26.9%	-30.2%	-26.0%	-27.6%	-29.4%	-24.8%	-13.9%	-24.5%
Print Subscription Revenue	67.4	64.6	61.8	58.8	252.6	51.9	49.0	47.6	49.1	197.6
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	-15.4%	-16.3%	-20.7%	-25.0%	-19.3%	-22.5%	-23.5%	-22.4%	-15.9%	-21.2%
Other Print Revenue	11.1	9.6	9.8	9.0	39.5	8.5	8.1	8.3	8.4	33.3
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	-2.2%	-6.7%	-8.3%	-14.8%	-7.9%	-22.8%	-15.5%	-14.4%	-5.3%	-15.0%
Total Print Revenue	120.3	105.7	100.8	91.1	417.9	84.8	75.8	74.8	76.9	312.3
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	-17.2%	-17.5%	-21.4%	-25.5%	-20.3%	-24.0%	-24.3%	-22.2%	-14.3%	-21.5%
Total Revenue	185.1	170.7	171.3	164.0	691.1	155.7	146.5	150.6	158.6	611.4
YoY % <sup>(1)</sup>	-7.4%	-8.2%	-9.6%	-12.1%	-9.3%	-11.3%	-10.6%	-9.1%	-2.2%	-8.3%



<sup>(1)</sup> Same-store revenues is a non-GAAP performance measure based on U.S. GAAP revenues for Lee for the current period, excluding exited operations. Exited operations include (1) business divestitures and (2) the elimination of stand-alone print products discontinued within our markets.

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<sup>(2)</sup> Total Digital Revenue is defined as digital advertising and marketing services revenue (including Amplified), digital-only subscription revenue and digital services revenue.

### RECONCILIATION OF NON-GAAP FINANCIAL MEASURES

(Millions of Dollars)	Q4 FY2024
Net loss	(9.5)
Adjusted to exclude	
Income tax benefit	(4.2)
Non-operating expenses, net	10.0
Equity in earnings of TNI and MNI	(0.7)
Depreciation and amortization	6.2
Restructuring costs and other	7.1
Assets loss on sales, impairments and other, net	6.5
Stock compensation	0.6
Add	
Ownership share of TNI and MNI EBITDA (50%)	0.9
Adjusted EBITDA	16.8

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**TNI** and **MNI** – TNI refers to TNI Partners publishing operations in Tucson, AZ. MNI refers to Madison Newspapers, Inc. publishing operations in Madison, WI.

**Rounding** – Items may not visually foot due to rounding.



### RECONCILIATION OF NON-GAAP FINANCIAL MEASURES

(Millions of Dollars)	Q4 FY2024	Q4 FY2023
Operating Expenses	162.9	156.1
Adjusted to exclude		
Depreciation and amortization	6.2	7.5
Assets loss on sales, impairments and other, net	6.5	6.1
Restructuring costs and other	7.1	4.6
Cash Costs	143.2	137.9

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Rounding - Items may not visually foot due to rounding.



# Q4 SAME-STORE NON-GAAP REVENUE RECONCILIATION(1)

(Millions of Dollars)	Q4	Q4	\$	%
(Millions of Bolidis)	FY2024	FY2023	Change	Change
Print Advertising Revenue	19.4	23.3	(3.9)	-16.9%
Exited operations	0.0	(8.0)	0.8	NM
Same-store, Print Advertising Revenue	19.4	22.5	(3.1)	-13.9%
Digital Advertising and Marketing Services Revenue	52.5	49.3	3.2	6.5%
Exited operations	(0.0)	(0.4)	0.4	NM
Same-store, Digital Advertising and Marketing Services	52.5	48.8	3.6	7.5%
Total Advertising Revenue	71.8	72.6	(0.7)	-1.0%
Exited operations	0.0	(1.2)	1.2	NM
Same-store, Total Advertising Revenue	71.8	71.3	0.5	0.7%

(Millions of Dollars)	Q4 FY2024	Q4 FY2023	\$ Change	% Change
Print Other Revenue	8.4	9.0	(0.5)	-6.1%
Exited operations	-	(0.1)	0.1	NM
Same-store, Print Other Revenue	8.4	8.9	(0.5)	-5.3%
Digital Other Revenue	5.3	5.0	0.3	5.1%
Exited operations	-	-	-	NM
Same-store, Digital Other Revenue	5.3	5.0	0.3	5.1%
Total Other Revenue	13.7	14.0	(0.3)	-2.1%
Exited operations	-	(0.1)	0.1	NM
Same-store, Total Other Revenue	13.7	13.9	(0.2)	-1.6%

(Millions of Dollars)	Q4 FY2024	Q4 FY2023	\$ Change	% Change
Print Subscription Revenue	49.1	58.8	(9.7)	-16.4%
Exited operations	(0.0)	(0.4)	0.4	NM
Same-store, Print Subscription Revenue	49.1	58.4	(9.3)	-15.9%
Digital Subscription Revenue	23.9	18.7	5.2	28.1%
Exited operations	-	(0.3)	0.3	NM
Same-store, Digital Subscription Revenue	23.9	18.4	5.5	29.9%
Total Subscription Revenue	73.0	77.5	(4.4)	-5.7%
Exited operations	(0.0)	(0.6)	0.6	NM
Same-store, Total Subscription Revenue	73.0	76.8	(3.8)	-4.9%

(Millions of Dollars)	Q4	Q4	\$	%
	FY2024	FY2023	Change	Change
Total Operating Revenue	158.6	164.0	(5.4)	-3.3%
Exited operations	0.0	(1.9)	1.9	NM
Same-store, Total Operating Revenue	158.6	162.1	(3.5)	-2.2%



<sup>(1)</sup> Same-store revenues is a non-GAAP performance measure based on U.S. GAAP revenues for Lee for the periods presented, excluding exited operations. Exited operations include (1) businesses divested and (2) the elimination of stand-alone print products discontinued within our markets.

# FY24 SAME-STORE NON-GAAP REVENUE RECONCILIATION(1)

(Millions of Dollars)	FY2024	FY2023	\$ Change	% Change
Print Advertising Revenue	81.5	125.8	(44.3)	-35.2%
Exited operations	(0.9)	(19.1)	18.2	NM
Same-store, Print Advertising Revenue	80.6	106.8	(26.2)	-24.5%
Digital Advertising and Marketing Services Revenue	194.2	193.2	1.0	0.5%
Exited operations	(0.1)	(2.9)	2.8	NM
Same-store, Digital Advertising and Marketing Services	194.1	190.3	3.8	2.0%
Total Advertising Revenue	275.7	319.0	(43.3)	-13.6%
Exited operations	(1.0)	(21.9)	21.0	NM
Same-store, Total Advertising Revenue	274.7	297.0	(22.3)	-7.5%

(Millions of Dollars)	FY2024	FY2023	\$ Change	% Change
Print Other Revenue	33.3	39.5	(6.3)	-15.8%
Exited operations	(0.0)	(0.4)	0.4	NM
Same-store, Print Other Revenue	33.3	39.1	(5.9)	-15.0%
Digital Other Revenue	20.5	19.4	1.1	5.9%
Exited operations	-	-	-	NM
Same-store, Digital Other Revenue	20.5	19.4	1.1	5.9%
Total Other Revenue	53.8	58.9	(5.1)	-8.7%
Exited operations	(0.0)	(0.4)	0.4	NM
Same-store, Total Other Revenue	53.8	58.5	(4.7)	-8.1%

(Millions of Dollars)	FY2024	FY2023	\$	%
(Millions of Dollars)	F12024	F12023	Change	Change
Print Subscription Revenue	197.6	252.6	(55.0)	-21.8%
Exited operations	(0.2)	(2.2)	2.0	NM
Same-store, Print Subscription Revenue	197.4	250.4	(53.0)	-21.2%
Digital Subscription Revenue	84.3	60.7	23.6	38.9%
Exited operations	(0.1)	(1.0)	1.0	NM
Same-store, Digital Subscription Revenue	84.2	59.7	24.6	41.2%
Total Subscription Revenue	281.9	313.3	(31.4)	-10.0%
Exited operations	(0.3)	(3.2)	2.9	NM
Same-store, Total Subscription Revenue	281.7	310.1	(28.4)	-9.2%

(Millions of Dollars)	FY2024	FY2023	\$ Change	% Change
Total Operating Revenue	611.4	691.1	(79.8)	-11.5%
Exited operations	(1.3)	(25.5)	24.3	NM
Same-store, Total Operating Revenue	610.1	665.6	(55.5)	-8.3%



<sup>(1)</sup> Same-store revenues is a non-GAAP performance measure based on U.S. GAAP revenues for Lee for the periods presented, excluding exited operations. Exited operations include (1) businesses divested and (2) the elimination of stand-alone print products discontinued within our markets.

FY24 includes the 53<sup>rd</sup> fiscal week.

### **EXTERNAL SOURCE LINKS**

https://www.abiresearch.com/news-resources/chart-data/report-artificial-intelligence-market-size-global/

https://www.nextmsc.com/report/artificial-intelligence-market

https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/artificial-intelligence-ai-market

https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/artificial-intelligence-market-74851580.html

https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1474143/global-ai-market-size

https://explodingtopics.com/blog/ai-statistics

https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/artificial-intelligence/publications/artificial-intelligence-study.html

https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2023/07/10/as-ai-becomes-mainstream-who-will-remain-in-the-fourth-stage-of-technological-business-development/

https://explodingtopics.com/blog/perplexity-ai-stats?t

https://productify.substack.com/p/how-perplexitys-growth-is-changing?t=

https://whatsthebigdata.com/perplexity-ai-stats/?t

https://whatsthebigdata.com/claude-ai-statistics/?t

https://www.cnbc.com/2024/12/04/openais-active-user-count-soars-to-300-million-people-per-week.html?t

https://www.namepepper.com/chatgpt-users?t

