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Through our experience we've learned that if you want to do something well, you have to know something about it. We would like to share some of what we have learned with you. Our newsletter is where you'll find marketing and visual communications topics related to retaining, communicating with and growing your organization's

BANKING ON PUBLICATIONS

Innovative ways to increase revenue from publication and product sales

Any newspaper or website you read these days has stories about how various companies and industries are fairing during the economy. Success stories full of innovative, "Why didn't I think of that?!" ideas, along with sad stories of companies we've all grown up knowing and loving being forced to close up shop. Unfortunately, it is not just mainstream companies that are being affected. Many associations and nonprofits across the country are either struggling or fearful these days. Worried about membership retention, sponsorship, donations and annual meeting attendance - organizations like yours are feeling a bit uncertain about revenue over the next six-eighteen months.

Instead of being Debbie Downer during these times, we want to point out the hope and prospect for growth or increase in revenue. Despite concerns of membership growth, conference attendance and such, a recent survey determined that the market for books, newsletters, and other print publications appears to be stable for the remainder of the year.

Increasing sales of products and publications seems like a great space for opportunity and growth. We've put together a few tips to help you examine how you are marketing publications, and hopefully help you identify ways to increase revenue in this area.

These are NOT tips on how to improve your publications. We're trusting that you already know what your members want and that you are creating targeted, valuable products. But, these are tips on how to better market your publications and entice the potential customer to pull out their credit card.

How engaging is the publication part of your website?

Before you start to determine how you can improve the marketing of your publications and products, you first must examine how you are currently performing. There are many tools available to analyze how the publication part of your website is performing, but we recommend Google Analytics. Besides being free, it is easy to use and comprehensive.

After a quick primer to Google Analytics you will become familiar with terms such as, Pageviews, Bounce Rate, Time on Site and New Visitors. You can interpret this new knowledge, trends and data provided by Google Analytics to work towards desired outcomes. You can identify who is coming to your site, how they are getting there, and what they are doing once they are there.



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This information provides you with a wealth of opportunity. For example, great cross-promotional relationships can be developed with sites that are directing traffic to your website. Also, you can identify what keywords are bringing users to your site and build a strategy around those keywords.

But, the big picture is that Google Analytics provides the clues on what visitors expect to see when they visit your website, and whether you fulfilled their curiosity or failed to meet their expectations. For any website that sells products, this information is vital for focusing on outcomes and planning for success.

To increase the performance of your publications page, you can use the information from Google Analytics to:

- **Tailor popular landing pages to entice visitors to stay on your site longer**
- **Identify pages that need a stronger Call To Action that will turn potential customers into buyers**
- **Easily track average order total and number of products sold to help establish goals**
- **Track how long customers are on site before they place an order**

Check out our blog post, [A Lesson in Using Google Analytics to Optimize Web Performance](#), to see how we used Google Analytics stats to improve the performance of one of our site's most popular pages.

The Shopping Experience

The more effort you put into selling the publications, the more likely the potential customer will find the value in the product. Whether you know it or not, simply using a small picture of the publication cover does two things for you:

- 1. Makes you seem like you are stuck in 1995.**
- 2. Gives the impression that since you haven't learned how to make the shopping experience more innovative, then you are likely incapable of producing innovative and fresh ideas for your publications.**

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If that is the reputation you want to have, then you can stop reading and continue to use your tiny picture. If it is not the way you want members to view your organization, then we recommend you keep reading.

People shop online for a few reasons: they are looking for the best deal; they don't have time to go to the store; or they want to buy something not easily accessible to them. However, even with the advances in making online shopping more secure and fun, people still prefer to go to the store. They want to touch, see and hold the product they are about to purchase. They want to judge it and weigh its value against the money they are about to spend on it. You may not be able to let them feel the texture of the paper in your publications, but you can give them enough of a taste to help them see the value and make a purchase.

There are many ways you can bring your publications to life and increase sales. Consider other online shopping experiences, such as Amazon.com - one of the largest book sellers on the internet. Amazon gives potential customers a quality experience of their interested book before purchasing. This includes:

- Detailed page views of the Cover, Table of Contents, first few pages and Index
- Detailed summary with quotes
- Reader reviews and ratings
- Suggestions for other books that might be of interest

Going beyond those easy-to-implement actions, you can generate more of a buzz around your publications taking advantage of social media techniques. Also, by utilizing each of these methods you will be able to provide key product information to potential buyers whether they prefer to read about the product, listen to a audio recording, watch a video or receive recommendations from like-minded professionals.

- Create videos of association members candidly talking about the publication's highlights and what they valued about it. Next, post these testimonials on YouTube or other social media sites.
- On the day your publication launches, conduct a webinar hosted by either key staff members or board members. Discuss how and why this publication was created. Summarize the publications key points, value, purchase information, and be sure to close with a strong call to action. Afterwards, turn this webinar into a podcast and post it on your website for future visitors to discover.





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Find New Ways to Get the Word Out

Once you've gone through all the work of increasing your website's performance and bettering the shopping experience, the next step is to tell people about your publications. Here are a few new ideas that will help you:

- **On your organization's blog, build up hype about the publication with sneak-previews. Be sure that each of your blog posts are easy for readers to share with other colleagues through the use of Delicious, Twitter, Digg or email.**
- **Through the use of Google's Blog Search, identify topical blogs that are related to your organization, or the publication. Offer a free copy of the publication to the blog author for them to review and then raffle off to their readers.**
- **Besides informing your Twitter followers about your publications, you can also draw their interest to the publication section of your website with enticing Tweets.**
- **Offer a pre-sale special to all your LinkedIn and Facebook connections.**

Even during tough economic times, the best and brightest will find ways of energizing their budgets and increasing revenue. Some may choose to pursue big, bold and risky ideas to pull them through slow periods, which can be fun and exciting, but also terrifying. We recommend identifying where you can play up your strengths. What are you good at? How can you make that more successful? Any association creating quality publications has a one-of-a-kind resource that can be used to catapult them into success and increased revenue. Oh, and when you are experiencing the fruits of these tips, you can send a thank you note to our office - we'd love to hear from you!

Notice a trend here? There's a lot of new technology and social media tips to build success. It's a shame that often associations and nonprofits are among the stragglers to hop on the bandwagon of strategies or ideas that are working in other industries. There are many companies that regularly include these ideas into every campaign they conduct, regardless of their target audience. Check out our blog for more tips how to engage younger members using social media.

