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DEVELOPING A DIGITAL SUBSCRIBER BASE

DEPENDING ON THE TYPE of magazine you publish, it can be a fairly easy or a very daunting task to develop a digital subscriber base. It takes patience to be successful at adopting new technology and methods of digital distribution. With an older demographic it can be especially tricky to re-train old dogs, but we have proven that it can be done. With a niche audience that is far from tech savvy, it takes time to influence new and existing subscribers to take advantage of high quality content and stunning photos via their laptops, tablets and mobile phones. To date, approximately 35% of Motorcycle Mojo's active readers have a digital subscription.

We have listed some of the key points here that have contributed to the success of our own online campaigns and noted ways that others can apply the same methods to help ensure immediate and long-term success in this evolving digital environment.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN...THEN HIRE THE BEST YOUR BUDGET CAN AFFORD.

Nothing is more critical than the initial planning stages of an online marketing campaign. Evaluate what your target readers are doing online and brainstorm or send out a survey to determine the best ways to capture their attention. Whether it's using social media, search engine traffic or email newsletters, you must consider each method and track conversions to decide which areas to maximize your time and effort. Hire a skilled IT consultant to help guide you in the right direction. You can't do it all and sometimes it's hard to see the forest for the trees.

MOBILE

If you have a website with Google Analytics tracking installed, do yourself a favour and check how much monthly traffic is coming from mobile devices. In the past year alone, Canadian mobile browsing has skyrocketed. Now, before you get too excited you have to be aware that getting a "native app" developed for a specific device such as an iPhone can be costly. Consider developing a web-based application for your mobile users that is an optimized version of your existing desktop site. This can save you a lot of time and money, while providing loyal readers with a fast-loading, easy to use interface while on the go.

SOCIAL MEDIA

By now, almost everyone understands the power that social media can generate to make your online efforts a success. Regularly engaging your visitors and keeping them informed about upcoming articles in your magazine will

create anticipation for your release date. Offer digital users something extra that can't be put into a printed version of your magazine. Think desktop wallpapers, contests, videos... With the addition of QR codes, we have been able to take our readers along for a ride when publishing a travel story or motorcycle review. In our printed version we have included perhaps six photos, but with a QR code we allow our readers to see a full blown slide show or video where they can almost imagine riding alongside the author. Links to hotels, restaurants and attractions can be included and a real time-saver for anyone wanting to take a similar adventure.

Our website is constantly changing to ensure our readers keep coming back. We have one person on staff who is in charge of twitter, Facebook and contests. Another staff member updates news stories on an ongoing basis and keeps our forum in check.

ADVERTISING 24/7

Advertisers, much like readers must be kept engaged, eager and willing to accept change. Through digital subscriptions, advertisers are offered another avenue to reach out to their target audience in a much larger scope. There are no boundaries – the advertisers are available 24/7 through websites and product videos. Product demonstrations are brought to life with a click of a button. Your advertiser, who has paid to be on the pages of your magazine, is now enjoying additional coverage at no extra cost. It's a bonus for both advertiser and subscriber.

REDUCING COSTS

While many people still enjoy finding a printed copy of a magazine in their mailbox and sitting down to read it in their favourite chair, a lot is to be said for being able to step on board a plane with a tablet and enjoying hundreds of magazines in one small package. Reducing the need to print magazines can also be a bonus for the environment and it is definitely not a bad thing for a publisher. Printing eats up a lot of money and fewer physical copies means more profit which can then be rerouted into research and development of new technological advances which we know are tough to keep up with.

HAVE PATIENCE

It won't happen overnight but you will be surprised at just how quickly rumours can spread via social media and before you know it you will be seeing your magazine subscriptions sold worldwide — giving everyone access to your publication day and night.

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