

Driving Print via the Web

*Howard Finberg, Managing Director,
Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist
Consultancy, LLC, USA*

The presentation on how newspapers increase print circulation using their web presence and includes examples and suggestions on how to do it

www.digitalfuturist.com

E-mail questions, suggestions to:
finberg@digitalfuturist.com



Come Together

Driving Print *via* Online

Ifra Asia Presentation by
Howard Finberg
Managing Director,
Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy



Some of My Background

The Digital Futurist Consultancy

- ✓ Help newspaper managers understand the impact of technology on their businesses
- ✓ Help Web site managers with content and revenue challenges
- ✓ Help emerging companies understand the media industry

Experience in newspapers & newsrooms

- ✓ The Arizona Republic
- ✓ San Francisco Chronicle
- ✓ Chicago Tribune
- ✓ The New York Times

Experience in technology & strategy

- ✓ Technology leadership at The Republic
- ✓ Technology leadership at Central Newspapers
- ✓ Technology venture funding at CNI Ventures

Other experience

- ✓ Presidential Scholar at Poynter Institute
- ✓ Senior Fellow at American Press Institute
- ✓ Co-Director, Online News Association's Digital Journalism Credibility Project

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy




Circulation and New Media

Unique dynamics of print and online audiences

- Work of NAA Circulation Federation's committee
- Research by *Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy*
 - 1st phase research was 2001
 - » 100+ interviews
 - » 100 sites reviewed, analyzed (separate from interviews)
 - » 290 responses to circulation managers survey

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy



Using Online to Drive Print

Our goal

- ✓ *Define, understand and improve acquisition and retention of print subscribers using electronic media products*

This presentation's goal

- ✓ Give you highlights from the study and our suggestions

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Complementary Roles

What we studied

- Relationships between consumers and the newspaper
 - ✓ Leverage and strengthen joint efforts of print and online staffs
- Cooperative approaches
 - ✓ For reader acquisition
 - ✓ Building customer relationships
 - ✓ Identifying the necessary technology

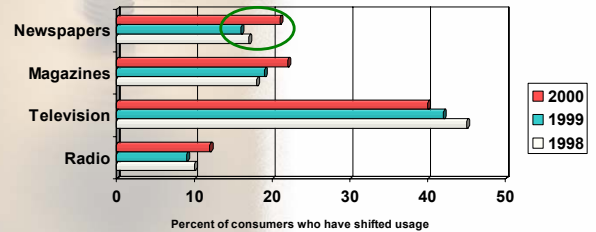
Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Media Use Landscape

Challenges and opportunities

- ✓ Shifting habits of media consumption

Consumption shifts in media because of Internet



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Study Summary

What we found was encouraging

- Several newspapers have successful techniques
 - ✓ Driving print subscriptions.
- Success depends on cooperation
 - ✓ Sounds obvious, but often not realized
 - The ability of circulation and Web departments to work cooperatively

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Study Summary

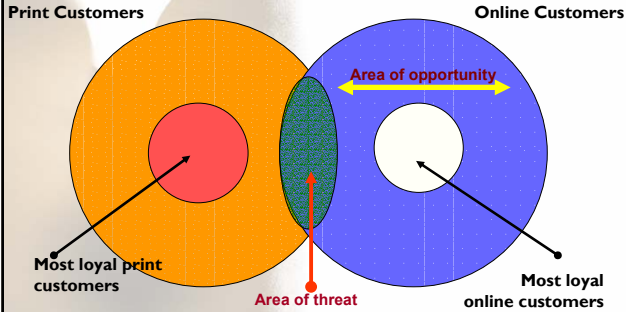
However...

- Customers face an increasing number of routes to and away from our products
- We conversely must be open to expanded opportunities to market through these multiple routes
 - ✓ We need to use each platform to strengthen its siblings

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

The “Sweet Spot”

Identify and go after *new* opportunities

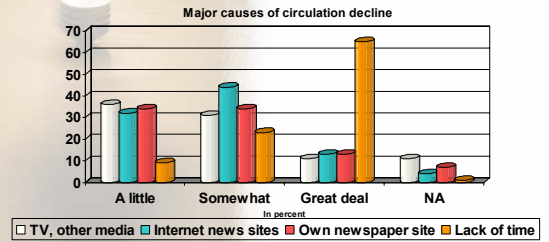


Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

We believe you cannot point to online as the *single* cause of erosion of circulation

- Our survey found that lack of time is still No. 1 cause



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

There are successful models

- There is *opportunity* to acquire print subscribers through online
- However, *few* newspapers are contributing to subscription growth via Web sites
 - ✓ Many are making only modest efforts

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Challenges

- What should be the definition of “customer”
 - ✓ Customers who use both print and online are more valuable
 - These “multi-channel customers” need to be more strongly wooed and rewarded
 - » Joint efforts of the print circulation and online staffs

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Challenges

- The relatively low profile that circulation areas have on many newspapers' Web sites
- We make it hard for customers to find the **SUBSCRIBE** link

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Circulation Executive Survey

- 91% say they have a link to "promote print subscriptions"

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

The Reality

100 Site Survey

- Only **77%** sites have a "call to action" on their home page
 - ✓ 23% of sites have no fixed link to circulation
- Less than half -- **48%** -- have a "call to action" above the "fold"

*Worse case:
6 pt type
at the bottom
of a navigation bar*

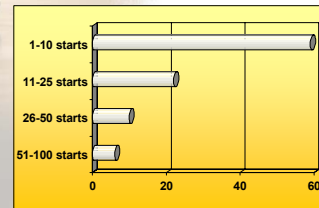


Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Circulation Executive Survey

- Most Web-generated starts -- **59%** -- account for less than 10 starts a week
 - ✓ This was true across all circulation sizes



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Challenges

- The complexity of the online customer group
 - ✓ These consumers expect a high level of sophistication
 - Secure transactions
 - Competitive pricing
 - Convenience
 - Ease of buying

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Challenges

- Online customers expect to complete transaction without having to talk to a person
 - ✓ Conversely, they want a person available just in case

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Challenges

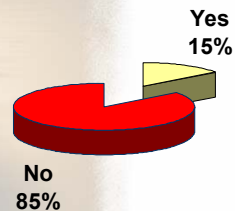
- Online subscription acquisition depends on many factors
 - ✓ As an industry, we need to more stringently track various factors
 - Offers, time, placement, context, content ...
 - ✓ A lack of technology to support electronic transaction
 - Need to link online and circulation systems

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

Circulation Executive Survey

- Q: "Do you offer a unique Web-only subscription price?"



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

What's working

- *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*
 - ✓ Generates more than 6,000 orders a year
 - Driven by contests
- *The Spokane (Wa.) Spokesman-Review*
 - ✓ Put **SUBSCRIBE** links on both the top and bottom of their home page to boost online orders

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Subscription Acquisition

What's working

- *The Poughkeepsie (NY) Journal*
 - ✓ Tracks retention of Web starts against starts through other sales methods
 - Web starts rank among the highest retention rates, yet among lowest in marketing costs
- *The Austin (TX) American-Statesman*
 - ✓ Uses a relatively simple piece of marketing: a bill stuffer
 - **Doubled** their weekly subscription renewal orders coming via the newspaper's online site

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Pop-up Heaven

Pop-ups and pop-unders are the most effective form of advertising (IAB 7/2001)

- Some examples ...

Waterbury (CT) Republican
Baxter Bulletin of Northeast Arkansas
Cabin Dan [www.cabindan.com]
[www.thecabin.net]



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Customer Relationships

Some are using interactive aspects of online

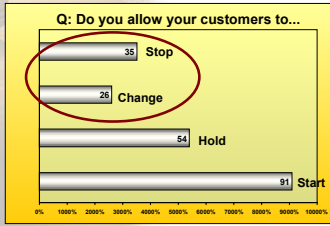
- Helps solidify existing customer relationships
- Builds bridges to new customers
 - ✓ But examples tend to be isolated
- Most newspapers surveyed are not seizing the Web's opportunity to extend and strengthen customer relationships

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Customer Relationships

Circulation Executive Survey

- We allow customers to start, but not stop
- We don't allow customers to be in control
 - ✓ My paper, when I want it ...



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Customer Relationships

Challenges

- The expectations of the customer group
 - ✓ Customers expect "always on" service – seven days a week, 24 hours a day
 - ✓ They expect a variety of formats for service:
 - E-mail
 - Fax
 - Telephone
 - Connect-to-chat
 - Menu-driven help

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

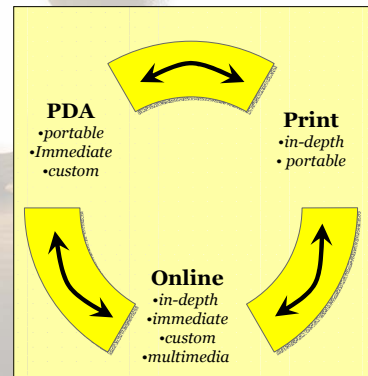
Customer Relationships

Challenges

- Achieving what we call "Circular Push"
 - ✓ Constant flow of traffic among all products

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

"Circular Push"



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy
Copyright 2001

Customer Relationships

Challenges

- How to overcome our general lack of cross-promotion between print and online
 - ✓ What promotion there is, is occasional, not ubiquitous
 - ✓ Developing successful multi-platform loyalty programs
 - Make customers, especially multi-channel customers, feel valued and rewarded
- How to extend relationships without invading privacy

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Customer Relationships

What's working

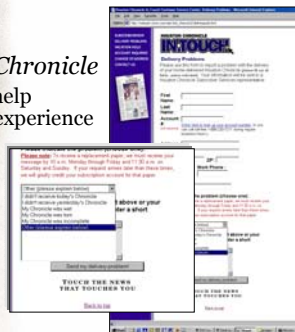
- *The Houston (Tx) Chronicle*
 - ✓ In.Touch online customer service center
 - Walks customers through common service needs
 - Making the system idiot-proof without making customer feel like an idiot

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Customer Relationships

What's working

- *The Houston (Tx) Chronicle*
 - ✓ Pull-down menus help customer through experience



Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Technology

System incompatibility is the heavy anchor

- Challenges:
 - ✓ Most newspaper circulation systems *do not* talk to Web e-commerce systems
 - Most newspapers rely on a "kludge"
 - » E-mail to the circulation department
 - » E-mail to the online department which is sent, we hope, to circulation department
 - » Requires a customer to call a phone number listed on the Web site

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Technology

Circulation Executive Survey

- **95%** say they Web and Circulation systems are not linked directly
- ✓ *Thank goodness for “sneaker net,” said one large newspaper group*

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / “Come Together” / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Subscriber Acquisition

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- ❑ Ensure **SUBSCRIBE** link is “above the fold” on home page
- ❑ Ensure **SUBSCRIBE** link is repeated on the lower half of the page

Quick Quiz:
Do you know for sure if your call to action button says **CIRCULATION**, **CUSTOMER SERVICE** or **SUBSCRIBE**?

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / “Come Together” / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Subscriber Acquisition

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- ❑ Review and discuss customer feedback
 - ❑ Share with circulation *and* online staffs
 - ❑ Share with appropriate technology staff members
- ❑ Ensure someone “owns” the circulation Web area
 - ❑ Make certain pages are always up-to-date and working

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / “Come Together” / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Subscriber Acquisition

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- ❑ Collect and analyze customer data and usage patterns
- ❑ Track Web-driven subscriptions weekly and monthly
 - ❑ Note the effects of contests, discounts, promotion and marketing effects, etc.
- ❑ Match Web starts against other sales types

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / “Come Together” / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Customer Relationships

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- Ensure that all the basic offline customer service functions are available online
 - Start
 - Renew
 - Stop
 - Hold
 - Late/no paper
 - Donation
 - Gift subscription, etc.

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Customer Relationships

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- Ensure that all online customer service queries get timely responses.
 - If 7 x 24 is not an option, consider either matching your print customer service hours
 - Expanding online into hours currently not served by print customer service

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Customer Relationships

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- Provide and promote customer service through the maximum number of routes
 - Telephone, e-mail, fax, Web page menu-driven, connect-to-chat, etc.
- Provide both online and offline rewards for customers
- Provide more / better rewards for multi-channel customers

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Customer Relationships

Circulation and online managers must work cooperatively to

- Move from occasional to ubiquitous cross-promotion
- Run new promotions against a checklist:
 - Can a customer use this content / promotion through the medium of his choice?
 - Does this content / promotion strengthen customers ties to our brand across revenue channels?
 - Does this content / promotion push customers through additional revenue channels?

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Action items / Technology

New delivery methods experiments

- Circulation executives should explore new methods
- Be prepared for slower-than-desired change
- Establish meaningful return on investment models
- Show how an integrated approach will pay for itself
 - ✓ New subscribers without telemarketing
 - ✓ Pay in advance
 - ✓ Retention

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Summary

Complementary roles of print and online gradually taking shape

- Newspaper Web sites growing out of childhood
- Digital media can promote print readership, subscriptions
 - ✓ Just as print can generate traffic for the online products
 - This is an area that also needs some more specific research as to what drives print customers to online

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Summary

Newspapers can seize opportunity

- Lead customers to multiple platforms products
 - ✓ Accomplished through inter-departmental cooperative efforts
 - And by learning from successful examples of other newspapers, other industries

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy

Summary

Understand the unique attributes and opportunities of each medium

- Senior management needs to understand integration challenges
 - ✓ Systems
 - ✓ Promotion
 - ✓ Culture
- Quick solutions can be transitory and incomplete

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / "Come Together" / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy



From this start ...

Additional areas of research

- What kind of orders are most successful?
 - ✓ Test pop-ups, pop-under windows
 - ✓ Test various offers
 - Free, 25% off, 50% off
 - Does it matter where the ad is placed?
 - ✓ Can the Web drive single-copy sales?
 - ✓ What is the retention rate for online customers?
 - ✓ Is there a way to stop online “cancel” orders?
 - What kinds of offers? Which techniques?

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / “Come Together” / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy



Thank You

Howard Finberg & Leah Gentry

✓ *Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy*

– finberg@digitalfuturist.com

✓ **To order a copy of 72 page report go to**

<http://www.naa.org/artpage.cfm?AID=3838&SID=187>

Or call 1-800-651-4622

Ifra Asia Conference 2002 / “Come Together” / Finberg-Gentry, the Digital Futurist Consultancy