

The ABC's of Circulation Management



**HOW CIRCULATION MANAGEMENT
HAS MORPHED INTO**

**AUDIENCE
DEVELOPMENT**

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Circulation Wears Many Hats Manager of Multiple Disciplines



- Customer Service Knowledge
- Data Base Knowledge
- Accountant
- Marketer
- Postal Expert
- Internet Savvy
- Manager of Multiple Vendors

Customer Service Knowledge



- Handling Customer Complaints to keep old customers and satisfy new customers
- Establishing Policies that the company can live with and minimizes problem areas.
- Reading Complaints – with an eye towards “is everything working as it should”?
- Knowing your customers – who are they -- how they view the publication and its role.
- An unhappy customer can be turned into a lifetime customer or lost for a lifetime.

Data Base Knowledge



- Every subscriber list is a data base
- Data is the life line of your magazine – it should be protected and saved often
- Building and updating the data base
- Data requires thoughtful development
- How can we share data across platforms – magazine to web – web to magazine
- Managing your Data to keep up-to-date

Accountant



- Do you charge for subscriptions? Who is responsible for the cash?
- Do you set annual budgets – what department is more complicated or impacts your budget?
- Do you mail your magazine at periodical postal rates – Annual SOO
- Analyze reports - provide management reports
- Analyze results and make recommendations

Marketer



- Who is responsible for Marketing – Building – Branding your magazine?
- Every New promotion/bind-in card is a marketing piece
- Every renewal and invoice is a marketing piece
- Every phone call you receive is a Marketing opportunity
- Who determines what lists/sources you use to build subscribers?

Postal Expert



- How do you mail your magazine
- What are the Postal Options
- Are there other methods to deliver your magazine
- Postal Regulations Postal Requirements
- What can the Post Office due for your Customer Complaints
- Annual Statement of Ownership - Accuracy

Internet Savvy



- Your Magazine Web Site
- How do you sell your own Magazine?
- What Customer Service options do you offer
- What data do you capture from your web site visitors?
- How do you use that Data?
- Is your magazine available electronically
- How do you use the internet to sell magazines?

Manager of Multiple Vendors



- Who manages the various outside Vendors?
- Fulfillment – in-house or outside?
- Who manages the Printer – finishing and mailing of Magazines?
- List sales or List Purchases for Marketing?
- Direct mail printers - letter shops
- Other Marketing projects

Religious Magazines - Circulation



- **Fundamental Circulation Facts**
- **Unique aspects to Religious Magazine Circulation**
- **Lists and other Marketing Sources**

Fundamental Circulation Facts



- 70 % of the US population as a whole reads Magazines
- 60% of the US population subscribes to magazines
- Even the best magazines have only a true 75% renewal rate – most are under 60%
- If you are not adding 3 to 5% (ave.) monthly **new** subscribers -- your circulation is in decline

Unique Aspects to Religious Magazine Circulation



- All potential church attendees may not want to read about religion
- Finding lists to use for direct mail marketing is limited
- Those lists that can be found are fatigued
- Grass Root Marketing is more important
- Who are your subscribers and does your Magazine speak to that audience?

Lists and other Marketing Sources



- If you use Direct Mail to sell subscriptions – the lists you use will have the most impact
- Look to the industry for clues as to what will work with direct mail and what won't
- Test – test – test some more. In order to be more efficient you must continually test.
- If you think you know what will work in marketing efforts – you are wrong (always)

Cost Savings You Can Use



➤ What are your magazine's major cost areas?

- 1) Printing
- 2) Postage
- 3) Fulfillment
- 4) Direct Mail

Printing



- Review printing costs at a minimum every 2 years
- Get quotes from at least 3 printers every 2 years
- Analyze not only the printing/paper costs, but also the postage - shipping and bindery costs
- Do each of the costs areas seem reasonable?
- Ask the printers about all charges
- Be prudent in looking at minimums and set up costs
– do these make sense?

Postage



- Are you using the lowest cost postage method? Periodicals? Non-Profit?
- Are there alternatives? You may not be a postal expert but your printer has one
- Are you co-mailing? What are your savings? Is this process delaying your magazine delivery?

Fulfillment



- Send out quotes for fulfillment every 2 years – even if still under contract
- Do you know what fulfillment companies best fit your circulation size?
- Are you familiar with Fulfillment pricing options – always ask for a Performa invoice
- What is the annual cost – how many year contract? Look at hiring a consultant to help determine the best options and pricing.

Direct Mail



- Quote out printing and letter shop costs semi-annually
- Trade out lists with other magazines (no cost) and great lists
- Utilize a pre-sort company to save postage
- Keep your own lists for this purpose – they generally work better