

Newspapers Share their Self-service Success Stories

Wave2 Media Solutions Newsletter

Issue 10

Live Customer Sites

Obits

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Welcome

Wave2 conducted its third Customer Forum in February. More than half of our customer base attended this session to listen to three current customers share their experiences:

Matt Long, Production Manager of the Raleigh News & Observer, provided a brief history of their nearly one year tenure using AdPortal.

Stephanie Lindstrom, Call Center Manager of the Idaho Statesman, talked about their experience in launching obituaries and their ambitious plans for 2010.

Suzie Schafer, Inside Sales Manager of the Virginian-Pilot, described how they've created a triad sales organization of telesales, direct sales and Wave2's AdPortal.

Even in one of the toughest advertising environments in anyone's memory, the results are very positive and are showing consistent improvement. Each presenter has been kind enough to share the highlights from their presentations below, and also to discuss their experiences with you. Each has included their email and phone number so feel free to contact them at your convenience. Wave2 is especially thankful to these and all of our customers, without whom we would not be enjoying the success that we are.

Raleigh News & Observer Rolls Forward with AdPortal



Matt Long, Production Director of The News & Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina gave a spirited presentation outlining the savings they have realized since implementing the Wave2 AdPortal. Their main objective had always been to cut costs, but now they are realizing some substantial revenue gains as well. They began with Wave2 in May of 2009 with an obituary application. Initially they offered 5 different styled obits, which was an increase over the single in-line obit they had been offering. This coupled with the addition of offering obits in their community zoned-pubs has resulted in an increase in obit revenue. They also saw savings by converting all celebration ads from another self-service company over to AdPortal. With just phone support from Wave2, they added a Real Estate application that went live last month. They expect to see savings in ad production expenses this year and expect to see it grow dramatically once the real estate market heats up again. Next up for N&O Advertising: a reverse publishing auto application, and then they plan to just keep rolling forward looking for ways to reduce expenses and grow revenue. Matt Long can be reached at (919) 836-5670 or by email mlong@newsobserver.com.

Idaho Statesman Has a Story to Tell



Stephanie Lindstrom, Call Center Manager at the Idaho Statesman believes they're on to something. They began using the Wave2 AdPortal application for obits around the middle of last year. They targeted their biggest funeral homes and very quickly saw an 80% adoption rate by the funeral homes to self-service. The funeral home directors like the convenience of the service, on-the-spot pricing, and the ability to accept credit cards. This has eliminated errors when quoting pricing to the family. In many cases, they build the obit with the family sitting there, see an exact proof, know the exact price, and can process a credit card for payment. Just like at Raleigh, Stephanie reported that they have also seen a substantial increase in obituary revenue. Stephanie attributed this to an increase in the average lineage of the ads, proving that when using self-service, advertisers will up-sell themselves. Not satisfied with just obits, The Statesman have soft launched celebrations this month and are planning Real Estate, a Cars.com reverse publishing application for autos and retail later this year. Stephanie can be reached at (208) 377-6284 or by email slindstrom@idahostatesman.com.

Virginian-Pilot's AdPortal Anchors Their Sales Strategy



Suzie Schafer, Inside Sales Manager at The Virginian-Pilot has ambitious plans for their Wave2 AdPortal. In 2009, they processed \$260,000 in sales through Pilot EZAds. In 2010, they're shooting for \$400,000. Sales come from two categories: retail print display and celebrations. They are adding rich media on-line display ads in the retail category, and obits targeted for funeral homes. Both are scheduled to go live by the end of March.

Suzie sees AdPortal not only as their self-service portal, but as a sales assistant to support their emerging sales strategy to integrate inside sales with direct sales. The Virginian-Pilot have been very aggressive in doing this and AdPortal is playing an important role by enabling inside sales to not only convert existing high-maintenance/low-revenue accounts to self-service, but to also actively pursue new customers directly. Suzie estimates that last year alone they saved over \$30,000 in designer costs by using AdPortal for both booking and building ads. Using basic reporting out of their DTI and CRM systems they have developed a variety of ways to target revenue: 90+ days inactive, churn accounts, as well as category-specific revenue. The partnership between inside sales and direct sales was a completely different strategy than the one in 2008, and it's proving to be the right one. By placing accountability directly on the reps to convert accounts to self-service and then tying that to metrics and compensation leaves no room for excuses and has resulted in a decrease in the cost per sale.

Suzie's team has grown Pilot EZads from roughly \$163k in 2008 to \$260k in 2009, and is now focused on achieving \$400k this year. She's experienced 3 consecutive months of retail display sales exceeding \$20,000 per month using AdPortal and plans to ramp up to an average of \$26k-\$30k per month. To drive those numbers they are expanding inside sales from 4 to 6, and will continue to offer a variety of advertising solutions for customers through the PilotEZads. Suzie can be reached at (757) 446-2648 or by email suzie.schafer@pilotonline.com.

For further information on Wave2 Media Solutions, please e-mail info.us@wave2media.com or call for a personalized on-line presentation (508) 366-6383.