

Selling the Web

How should you structure your ad department?

BY WILLIAM SHIELDS

Wendy McClung learned the hard way. As executive vice-president, she oversees operations at Toronto-based Baxter Travel Media, publisher of *Canadian Travel Press*, *Travel*

Courier, six commercial websites and a publishing software development division.

When Baxter began establishing an extensive Web presence, the company was faced with the question: who's going to sell it? "When we first started, we felt that our print sales people probably weren't experienced enough and we didn't want to take them away from focusing on our print mainstays," she says.

A Web-only rep was brought in, with mixed results. On the bright side, the cyber rep upsold existing clients and demonstrated new media's remunerative potential. On the downside, Baxter was putting all its eggs in one basket, and when that rep left, as he ultimately did, the company suddenly had a gaping hole to fill on its sales team. These days, Baxters' print reps sell online space, too.

That integrated model seems to be the most effective way to structure your sales department at a time when print and online are in a state of fusion.

"I think it's a lot easier to educate an old print rep how to sell online than it is to bring in an online specialist and educate them about an entire marketplace," says Richard Elliott, executive publisher of *Marketing* and group publisher with Rogers' Business & Professional Publishing Group. "And clients want to see fewer, not more reps. If I can send in one market specialist who can represent all these media, the client is going to be thrilled."

The other downside to bringing in designated online staff is that it creates the unpleasant

(some say unfair) situation where established reps are asked to "hand over their prospect files and essentially their relationship with the client to some stranger who is going to walk in and, in their mind, cherry pick their territory after



They've wrestled with the question. Clockwise from the top left: Wendy McClung (Baxter Travel Media); Richard Elliott (Rogers, Business and Professional Publishing Group); T.J. Flynn (Transcontinental Media); and Niel Hiscox (CLB Media)

they've done all the legwork," Elliott adds.

At smaller companies, or larger companies that have "Balkanized" units that operate independently of one another—as is the case at Rogers' Business & Professional Publishing Group—engaging reps in all media appears to be the prevailing approach, but that's not the case at Canada's largest publisher of consumer magazines.

At Transcontinental Media, online-only reps are given room to run. T.J. Flynn, senior vice-president of sales and marketing, recalls that in the early days of the Web in the mid-1990s, Web ads were regarded as value-added and given away virtually for free by the print reps. "But early on, we recognized that it's a very different medium, with limited inventory, like broadcast. So we very quickly added online expertise, people who were not print reps but immersed in the online culture. Even to this day, when we have an online sales position, I have yet to see a print rep apply for the job." While there is a sales force dedicated to cyberspace, it operates within Transcontinental's Integrated Sales team. Flynn estimates that 60% to 75% of all online sales are part of a larger package bundled with one or more of the company's stable of 20-plus consumer magazines.

If you haven't the left to hire a cyber rep, then training is going to be key. "I meet some of these reps selling these new digital offerings, and they don't have the vocabulary and they don't have the comfort level and they don't want to come into my office and ask," says Niel Hiscox, vice-president of publishing media at CLB Media, "because they'd be exposing their weaknesses up the chain and people don't like to do that." The solution: Hiscox says he's looking into the idea of creating the position of new product development director. "That person would be a catalyst to work with all of our publishers and sales reps to identify opportunities and give them the vocabulary, even go out on a sales call with them...to be available as a resource across our [20] magazines."

And if you can't afford to create such a position? "Involve the reps in the creation of these new digital products," says Baxter's McClung. "Now we have weekly meetings, with IT, marketing, sales and editorial, and we talk about what we're creating...I think we just assumed that we could build [these sites] and say, 'Here, look what we've done for you! We've created another product so you can make more money.' It just doesn't work that way. I think maybe we should have got them involved a lot sooner." **M**

SALES REPORT

MAGAZINES POST ROBUST THIRD QUARTER RESULTS

Christmas came early for many consumer magazines this year. The latest sales data from Leading National Advertisers (Canada) reveals that 86 of the country's largest magazines posted a collective 6.5% increase in run-of-press ad pages in the third quarter of this year compared to the same

period in 2005. Not taking rubbery ratecards into account, that translates into a total quarterly spend of \$149.9 million, up 11.5% from \$134.4 million for the same period in 2005. Many titles enjoyed truly impressive double-digit gains in advertising. Following is a sector-by-sector (or, in some cases, a rival-to-rival) breakdown, based on growth or decline in ROP page counts—the purest measure of success.

Shopping: *LouLou* (88%); *LouLou*, French edition (57.7%); *Wish* (-15.2%). **Weekly news:** *Maclean's* (12.6%); *Time* (8.1%). **Fashion:** *Flare* (-7.1%); *Fashion* (1%); *The Look* (-25.9%). **Women's service:** *Chatelaine* (24.4%); *Châteline* (11.2%); *Glow* (17.5%); *Canadian Living* (23.5%); *Homemakers* (41.9%); *Madame* (2.1%); *Elle Quebec* (-12.4%); *Elle Canada* (5.7%); *Clin d'oeil* (-16.2%); *Coupe de pousse* (26.8%). **Business:**

Canadian Business (14.9%); *Report on Business* (27.9%); *Financial Post Business* (-16.5%); *Affaires Plus* (50.1%); *Profit* (52.3%); *MoneySense* (63.4%). **Shelter:** *Canadian House & Home* (45.7%); *Style at Home* (32.5%); *Canadian Home & Country* (97.6%); *Harrowsmith CountryLife* (-4.7%); *Decormag* (21.8%); *Les Idees de ma maison* (10%); *Decoration chez-soi* (12.6%). **Greenthumb:** *Gardening Life* (36.4%);

Canadian Gardening (28.7%). **Parenting:** *Canadian Family* (2.2%); *Today's Parent* (3.5%). **General interest:** *Reader's Digest* (17.5%); *Selection du Reader's Digest* (1%); *Canadian Geographic* (13.4%); *Vancouver* (4%); *Toronto Life* (-4.2%); *Now* (6.5%); *eye* (10%); *enRoute* (8.2%). **Special interest:** *explore* (-14.3); *Outdoor Canada* (1.2%); *Ontario Out of Doors* (-0.4%); *Canadian Home Workshop* (14.4%); *Cottage Life* (-5.9%).