

Where Have All the Advertising Dollars Gone, and How Can You Get Them Back?

Chair:

Edward P Rekas

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for Experimental Biology
Bethesda, Maryland

Panelists:

David Ern

Carden Jennings Publishing
Charlottesville, Virginia

Herbert L Burklund

Scherago International Inc
New York, New York

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Publishers of scientific journals face more competition than ever before when they seek to increase advertising revenue. In addition to the traditional competition from other journals, advertisers have numerous other options, such as direct mail and the Internet, for getting their message out.

Nonetheless, a well-planned and well-financed effort on the part of a publisher can increase advertising revenue. The key to this effort is understanding the interrelationship between your readers, your journal, and the needs of potential advertisers.

Publishers also need, however, to be creative and consider innovative ways to serve potential advertisers beyond traditional advertising in the pages of a journal.

“The advertising market is going to continue to fluctuate”, said Anthony M DiBiase Jr. “If you want to grow new advertising revenue, you must look at new things.”

Edward P Rekas explained how the first step in developing an advertising program is understanding how your journal is perceived by advertisers. Some journals, such as Science and Nature, are seen as magazines. Readers often look through the entire issue page by page, and ads are interspersed

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throughout. As a result, such journals are often very popular with advertisers.

Readers often approach research and clinical journals differently, scanning the tables of contents for interesting articles. “While there are fewer ads [in research journals], ads get seen”, Rekas said. “Heavy research journals won’t make millions on advertising, but it is a good way to supplement revenue.”

David Ern outlined how his disappointment with an internally run sales effort led him to use an outside agency to sell advertising space in his journals. Such an outside agency, chosen well, can provide the expertise to serve existing clients, develop new clients, and provide support to develop marketing materials. Still, publishers cannot completely delegate responsibility for the sales effort. They must work closely

with the sales team to develop a clear marketing and promotional plan geared to the specific assets of the journal.

Herbert L Burklund noted that a journal’s selling points must address the competition, be credible, and appeal to potential advertisers. The media kit, a package of promotional material used to sell advertising, must contain 1 or 2 memorable messages aimed at the advertising buyer, not the editor’s ego.

Although the publisher must be aware of the needs of the sales force, he or she must also be vigilant, ensuring that the message sent by the sales force corresponds to the mission and tone of the journal. “I require that I be sent every piece of correspondence sent out regarding our publications”, Ern said.

Both Burklund and DiBiase noted that publishers, especially the ones that work for societies with extensive educational activities, can increase revenue by packaging their activities in innovative ways, such as bundling sales of journal advertising with exhibit space at an annual meeting. “You can take a weak publication and generate revenue if you have a hot meeting”, Burklund said.

DiBiase said clinical-journal publishers should also look for new opportunities. For instance, they can publish single-topic supplements sponsored by an advertiser that is willing to pay a premium for single-issue coverage.

Societies can use advertisers to underwrite special projects, such as audiotapes of educational presentations. And they can sell advertising space in their membership directories, annual-meeting guides, abstract books, and diaries. ■