

CASE STUDY

HEARST DIGITAL MEDIA

Who is Hearst Digital Media and What Were Their Objectives?

Launched in March 2006, Hearst Magazines Digital Media is the unit of Hearst Magazines dedicated to creating and implementing the digital online and mobile strategy for Hearst's magazine brands and other sites, which serve the company's consumer audience. Hearst Magazines is a unit of Hearst Corporation (www.hearst.com) and one of the world's largest publishers of monthly magazines, with nearly 200 editions around the world, including 19 U.S. titles and 20 magazines in the United Kingdom, published through its wholly owned subsidiary, The National Magazine Company Limited. Hearst reaches more adults than any other publisher of monthly magazines (74.1 million total adults, according to MRI, spring 07).

The first large-scale project for Hearst Digital Media was to launch separate web sites for each of the Hearst magazine titles and bring all of the development in-house. Executives at Hearst were also interested in developing content on the site beyond editorial information that was provided in the print publications. The purpose of this enhanced content was to drive increased interaction time on the site, thereby improving the value of its advertising. Some of the sites that have already launched include www.cosmopolitan.com, www.seventeen.com and www.redbookmag.com.



How is Arkadium Helping Hearst Accomplish its Key Business Objectives?

Hearst had previously worked with Arkadium when their sites were hosted through iVillage.com. Based on that positive experience, Hearst was interested in having Arkadium help with the development and creation of new site content. As a casual game developer, Arkadium has extensive experience in selecting and licensing relevant titles from its existing library of over 125 casual games. The company also develops customized games and re-brands existing games to ensure they resonate with site visitors.

"Each of our brands has a distinctive personality and audiences who are drawn by the specific content, tone and personality of those brands. We believe the only way to really capture those audiences for their online media time is through highly brand-resonant sites, with the most used Web 2.0 features," said Chuck Cordray, Vice President of Hearst Digital Media.

In meeting with the executives at Hearst Digital Media, Arkadium was able to better understand their key business goals and learn more about each publications' demographics. The Arkadium team recommended that Hearst develop a game center for each of site that included a mixture of re-branded and exclusive custom games.

"We felt it was very important to clearly differentiate the game centers so that they would resonate with each sites' visitors and drive higher interaction times. From experience we know that the more customized a game center is to a site's demographic, the more time users spend interacting on the site, which is a win-win for all constituents," said Jessica Rovello, Chairman of Arkadium.



SEVENTEEN Editor's Assistant

match the branding of the publication and characteristics of a site's visitors. For includes games for younger women such xu is a take off of the wildly popular game mbers for some exciting play. This game was re-branded using Arkadium's existing Sudoku game engine.

For Seventeen.com, Arkadium created the exclusive custom game "[Editor's Assistant](#)", a game that invites teens to step into the shoes of the unsung hero of the magazine world: the assistant to the editor-in-chief.

Arkadium took a slightly different approach to the games housed within the Cosmopolitan



COSMOGIRL SUDS

Magazine game center. To meet the needs of the more mature target audience, Arkadium worked with Hearst to develop both custom and re-branded games that were a little racier and in-line with the editorial vision of the publication.

For example, in "[Boy Toy](#)" the player controls a cute, sweet guy that exists solely to serve his virtual girlfriend. Equally racy is "Strip Poker," a naughty re-skin of 5-card draw that reveals a half-naked hottie when the game is won.

Over the past six months Arkadium has worked closely with Hearst to launch seven of game centers and will continue with other publications including Esquire.

"If people just want to play games, they can go to big portals like Microsoft or Yahoo, where they have huge libraries of standard games," Kenny Rosenblatt, CEO of Arkadium says. "But they will never be able to play Editor's Assistant or Boy Toy on those big sites, because they're customized for, and relevant to, the Hearst properties," he adds.

Hearst Reaps the Benefits from Customized Game Centers

The success of the game centers has been apparent to Hearst and in-line with what Arkadium has experienced with other clients. Clients find that when games are customized and relevant to their site, visitors tend to play longer and interact for extended periods of time on game pages. This translates into more valuable and often higher CPMs for advertisers.



The average Arkadium game, depending on the game's objective, is played between 10-15 minutes. This greatly improves the overall value of advertising for a brand and ultimately, the longer game play helps to create unmatched awareness.

"It all comes down to customization, relevancy and creating a fun experience, but we have also found that some of the "standard" games also do well. Mah Jongg is the most popular game with the Good Housekeeping reader, which tells us that the tried and true are still very resilient and also relevant," said Mr. Cordray

The week that "Editor's Assistant" went live, about 20 percent of the page views on www.seventeen.com were devoted to games, reports Hearst. Of the page views devoted to games that week on the Seventeen web site 75 percent were for the new game. By comparison, for a typical Hearst Web site, 8 percent to 20 percent of the page views are for games.

"We have loved working with Arkadium and have been very pleased with the overall experience. Needless to say we are quite happy with the boosts in time spent on our site through the gaming center that we have developed," continued Mr. Cordray.