

## Media companies in flux, hyperlocal strategies and real-time analysis

ppi's 16<sup>th</sup> Open Days in Kiel: the yearly gathering of the publishing industry

**On June 6-7, 2016, over 160 guests from all over the world attended ppi's Open Days at the Atlantic Hotel in Kiel to discuss the latest trends and innovations in the publishing industry. Norbert Ohl, CEO of ppi Media for many years, officially opened the event and symbolically handed over the reins to his successors Hauke Berndt, Markus Feldenkirchen and Jan Kasten, who will take over as managing directors on July 1, 2016. Next year, ppi's Open Days will take place on May 29-30, 2017 in Hamburg.**

**Kiel, June 15, 2016** How can media companies meet today's new digital challenges? How significant is local journalism for publishers? And how does weather data affect ad sales or even internal production processes? These were some of the many interesting questions that were at the center of this year's Open Days in Kiel. With their presentations, a total of 14 international speakers, 11 of which were CEOs, gave a broad insight into today's challenges and possible solutions for publishers. Michael Maness from the Harvard Business School and Shannon Kinney from Dream Local Digital (USA) also shared their experiences. The event was rounded off by an interesting, entertaining evening function.

### Diversification is of fundamental importance

The media industry is in flux. Print is on the decline, and media companies need new strategies to open up new sources of revenue. A realistic approach is for publishers to diversify their product portfolio in order to minimize risk and not concentrate on just one area.

This approach is already favored by large publishers, some of whom also attended ppi's Open Days. Stephan Marzen, CEO of Rheinische Post - RP Digital in Düsseldorf, explained in detail how the company has been reorganized and now focuses on digital products and a large range of products in new business areas such as real estate, radio, TV or translation and document management. Christoph RÜth, CEO of the Madsack Media Group in Hanover, explained in his presentation how the group has already taken up the challenge of diversification by making the group's organization more flexible. Now, the portfolio of North and Eastern Germany's largest regional publishing company covers new business areas such as postal services or ticketing and events.

Along with strategic changes, however, a publisher's technical facilities are still the basic prerequisite for implementing these new strategies. In his presentation, Christian Wagner, managing editor of the Weser-Kurier Media Group, described the seamless integration of Content-X, ppi Media's flexible editorial software, to

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respond more quickly to today's trend towards greater digitalization in the media industry.

### **Hyperlocal solutions on the increase**

Hyperlocal products are becoming increasingly important for media companies, with the aim of combining local journalism with ads from local retailers and publishing them digitally, for instance via Facebook or WhatsApp. Regional media companies in particular can address specific target groups more efficiently like this and, at the same time, make advertising more accessible to local retailers.

Alexander Drößler, digital product manager at OWL-Digital, a subsidiary of the Neue Westfälische, Lippische Landes-Zeitung and Mindener Tageblatt, spoke about his experience with a hyperlocal strategy and about how the Neue Westfälische has built up a local news ecosystem. Together with the neighborhood portal, Lokalportal, last year's winner of ppi Media's startup competition "Free Coffee for a Year", OWL-Digital has started two pilot projects in East Westphalia in April 2016. So far, Alexander Drößler is extremely pleased about how the project is progressing and about the positive response from the local residents, and plans to expand this strategy and introduce a monetization model in the near future.

### **Big data and real-time analysis in advertising**

Besides the current challenges facing media companies, the speakers at ppi's Open Days also presented concepts for new business models. Dr. Meeno Schrader, a well-known TV presenter and CEO of Meteolytix in Kiel, presented a solution for creating weather-related sales forecasts. In the round of discussions following this presentation, a number of interesting advertising concepts for publishing companies were put forward on how to achieve a better conversion rate with relevant content. Weather data can also be used to optimize publishers' in-house processes. One example was to improve time management between production and delivery by taking icy weather conditions into account.

### **About ppi Media**

ppi Media GmbH is the leading international workflow specialist for newspaper and magazine publishers as well as printers, corporate publishers, groups and SMEs. Its main focus lies in the development of highly efficient software solutions on a global scale. ppi Media is the market leader in the field of automated newspaper production. 80% of all daily newspapers on the German market are produced using ppi Media products. Many more installations can be found in Asia, Europe, Africa and the USA. A subsidiary of the Eversfrank Group, ppi Media has its head office in Hamburg and branches in Kiel, Germany, and Chicago, USA, and has more than 100 employees.

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