



Audit Bureau of Circulations



Dwell Magazine Uses ABC's Subscriber Profile to Increase Advertising Revenue, Reduce Costs

Situation

Convinced of the importance of modern design and inspired to support it, Lara Hedberg Deam launched the first issue of *Dwell* in October 2000. She envisioned a magazine that showcased modern architecture and design in an intelligent yet accessible way. An independent, privately owned publication, *Dwell* has seen its circulation quintuple over the past five years.

Issue

As a newly launched publication, *Dwell* sought a well-known research supplier to lend credibility to its initial subscriber study. A subscriber study is used to measure a publication's demographics as well as readers' behaviors and attitudes. Subscriber studies are critical to the media planning and buying process, especially for a new publication. Unfortunately, *Dwell* had to pay a premium price for this "stamp of approval."

Solution

Searching for a more cost-effective, yet similarly credible solution, *Dwell* partnered with a respected, though more affordable research supplier. They then used the Audit Bureau of Circulations' Subscriber Profile program, which was able to verify the validity of the subscriber process and results based on the program's standards, as agreed upon by an industrywide advisory committee and strongly supported by the media planning and buying community. ABC's Subscriber Profile provides a high level of credibility to *any* study conducted by *any* supplier, provided it meets ABC standards.

Results

- Increased advertising revenue by \$100,000.
- Reduced the cost of subscriber studies by \$6,000

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Dwell is the brainchild of Lara Deam, who started the publication because she envisioned a magazine that showcased modern design and architecture in an intelligent yet accessible way. Launched in 2000, the independent, privately owned *Dwell* now has more than 250,000 subscribers.

As a new publication in a competitive category, *Dwell* faced ad sales challenges and recognized the value of syndicated audience research to raise its profile among advertisers. Syndicated audience research helps publishers sell ads by describing who the readers are, their interests and behaviors, and why the publication is a compelling advertising prospect.

However, many publications are not included in these services because they simply do not meet the minimum measurement standards of the large researchers. Instead, publications such as *Dwell* use subscriber studies to help document and profile their subscriber base.

These studies can help non-measured publications produce an audience prototype, which estimates the size and demographics a title would likely receive if it were reported in a syndicated study.

In 2001, as a growing title, *Dwell* decided to hire a well-known research supplier to lend credibility to its subscriber studies. However, these “name” firms often came with a steep price tag for their services.

In the past when we conducted subscriber studies, we were in the position of having to choose one of the larger, more well-known research suppliers,” said Michela O’Connor Abrams, President and Publisher of *Dwell*. “Their services were costly, but we felt we had no alternative.”

In 2003, *Dwell* elected to work with the Subscriber Profile third-party research verification service offered by ABC, the leading provider of verified print media information in North America. Subscriber Profile enabled a less expensive solution that still provided credibility to *Dwell*’s chosen research supplier.

Subscriber Profile’s multi-step auditing process included:

- Validating *Dwell*’s subscriber file and pulling the sample (something research suppliers cannot certify is complete or representative)
- Verifying that the correct questionnaire and cover letter were mailed to the selected list
- Confirming the accuracy of the data from the time the questionnaire was received by the supplier until the report was issued
- Authenticating that the data cleaning/weighting and tabulation processes were properly executed.

Increased revenue through more advertising sales

Dwell used the ABC-verified demographics to build a prototype that was more widely accepted by advertisers and agencies. According to Abrams, the prototype allowed *Dwell* to “better leverage the information to gain entrée into new agencies and advertisers.”

As a direct result of Subscriber Profile, *Dwell* acquired two accounts worth \$100,000 in revenue.

Reduced the cost of subscriber studies

ABC’s Subscriber Profile service enabled *Dwell* to hire a more affordable research supplier, Erdos & Morgan, to conduct the magazine’s subscriber research. In 2003, *Dwell* saved more than \$6,000 using ABC’s service, including the Subscriber Profile fee. As a result, *Dwell* no longer needed to hire the higher cost research firm.

“The Subscriber Profile service has effectively leveled the playing field,” said Abrams.

Pleased with the increased revenue and decreased costs associated with Subscriber Profile, *Dwell* continued its participation with ABC’s service in 2005.

“Subscriber Profile has allowed *Dwell* to work with more cost-effective suppliers while still providing advertisers with top-notch subscriber research,” said Abrams.



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