

AL-JAZEERA DAILY WINS PRESTIGIOUS IFRA AWARD

A very prestigious award and highly prized amongst the newspaper cognoscenti has been won by the Al-Jazeera Daily newspaper. Published by the Al-Jazeera Press, Printing and Publishing Establishment, the Daily won the Best Newspaper Prize for newspapers having a circulation of between 80,000 and 200,000 on the Asia Continent in the open field of printing for 2007.



Khalid bin Hamad Al Malik



Al-Jazeera-Daily

The awards are in the gift of IFRA, the newspaper trade body and IFRA is a fiercely independent organisation and it is this fact that makes winning the award so prestigious, but probably the real honour is in the esteem it generates amongst the competing newspapers.

The award was presented to Al-Jazeera newspaper's deputy editor in chief, Abdul-lateef Al-Ateeq y the President of the Philippines Gloria Oroio, patron of the ceremony held in the Philippines. The event drew big groups of local and international journalists and editors who gathered in part to cover the event, but also to enjoy the proceedings.

These awards don't come without an enormous amount of hard work and considerable financial investment in efforts to raise quality standards. Al-Jazeera editor in chief hinted at the way it was no overnight success when he told Middle East Printer: "We achieved what we set out to do and I am so happy that this win came as a result of our human and financial efforts."

Discussing the award with Middle East Printer he explained that the success was down to a range of strategies: "We have invested in the most modern quality control and management systems and backed this up with extensive staff training and we also installed our third GOSS press. Our production line is highly computerised with many modern technical advancements."

Al Jazeera was established in 1960 and was the first Saudi Arabian newspaper to embrace the digital age as well as print for local consumption. Initially an intranet was used for distribution and in time developed an outlet on the Internet. Wise strategies structured its site to enable output to be bought and down loaded to individual printers.

Source : www.meprinter.com

FIPP 36TH WORLD MAGAZINE CONFERENCE DAY 1: EMBRACE THE CHANGE

A clear message came from Day 1 of FIPP's 36th World Magazine Conference at the World China Hotel in Beijing on 14 May 2007. "Embrace the change", said the majority of speakers to more than 950 delegates from over 60 countries.



The "change" is the digital revolution that is on top of mind of most publishers around the world.

FIPP President and CEO **Donald D. Kummerfeld** started things off in his welcome speech with a message that stuck throughout the day: "This Congress is taking place in what we call a global transformation. I believe print will remain an important part of our future and perhaps the most important part for many. But we are now being offered a great opportunity to reach a greater audience – far greater than we could reach with print alone. This is exciting and frightening at the same time."

The morning's keynote speaker, **John Rose**, Partner, Boston Consulting Group, USA, talked about digital strategies for magazines – and that the only certainly right now is uncertainty.

"The only thing I know for sure is that whatever I say is probably wrong given the rate of change in the world that we live in," he said. "The right question to ask yourself is how do I need to change in order to change and react to the situation?"

He did emphasize, however, that uncertainties create significant opportunities, using magazines with higher readership than their physical circulations, and converting content into a mobile environment as examples.

Rose didn't recommend creating a long-term strategy because of the rapid rate of change. His advice was to perceive change and be connected to the world around you on a daily basis: "Change is here and more change is coming but the direction of that change is fundamentally unknown. You not only need to think about how you defend your core business but also how you access new opportunities. What you do tomorrow will be radically different based on those two factors but you have to do it tomorrow regardless of where you are.

In the *Digital Strategies Discussion* that followed, moderator **Don Kummerfeld**, led **Liu Danhui**, Vice President, Rayli Group, China; **Yu Guoding**, President, Business Weekly Media Group, Taiwan, China; **Paul Keenan**, Chief Executive, Emap Consumer Media, UK; **Torsten Klein**, President, G+J International, Gruner + Jahr AG, Germany; **Steven Pleshette Murphy**, President & CEO, Rodale Inc, USA and **Hugo Shong**, Executive Vice President, International Data Group (IDG), USA.

All of them, except for Murphy, said that they only make about three per cent of revenue from their consumer websites but that that rate is growing

rapidly. Murphy said Rodale is already at 10 per cent and expects to be at 30 per cent within a few years. Those with business-to-business (b2b) sites said their website revenues are already at approximately 20 per cent.

And then the “change” theme came again.

Keenan said: “At Emap, we’re in the process of changing what we do and how we do it. We’re rewiring how the business operates. We believe every magazine in our business will be changed by new media. Our contents and brands and relationships will do well for us in this new world.”

His positive outlook was echoed by Murphy: “Online is the best thing to happen to the magazine business since the printing press. Why? Because anything that creates a richer relationship with our customers can only be good for us. The question is how to we deal with it? The key thing is that the companies that win are those that will embrace the change.”

Kummerfeld summed up the session by saying: “The best thing to do is monitor, learn and experiment. Find out what works on an experimental basis and when you’re ready to invest, invest in people and in new technology. Restructure your company.”

The afternoon’s keynote speaker, **Patrick J. McGovern**, Founder and Chairman, of IDG, USA, talked about *Global Opportunities for Magazine Publishers in the Digital Era*.



“You have to learn how to create and maintain a specialized virtual world that will keep your audience,” he advised. “What’s the balance between their desire to get information and their desire to contribute to the information?”

He mentioned that IDG’s online growth is 30 to 35 per cent per year in the US. He anticipates that by 2010, 50 per cent of revenue will come from online.

And then he brought up change: “An ancient Chinese proverb says ‘Change creates threats but also opens the doors to new opportunity.’ In my 50 years of publishing, I don’t think I’ve ever seen a more exciting time. Good luck dealing with the threat and making it a great opportunity for you.”

In the following session, *Business Information Transition from Publishing to Multimedia Environment*, **Gordon Hughes**, President & CEO, American Business Media (ABM), USA moderated a panel that included **Li Ying**, Vice President and Chairman, CCID, China; **Erwin Reisch**, CEO, Alfons W. Gentner Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Germany; and Pradeep Gupta, Chief Managing Director and Publisher, CyberMedia, India.

Hughes talked about the success of ABM and how its business model now includes print, in person and online.

“In 2000, half of revenue came from print magazines,” he said. “In 2006, the largest revenue stream is face-to-face, magazines represent 36 per cent and digital now represents about 14 per cent of what our members do in revenues. We’re looking at almost a 35 per cent growth from 2000-2006.”

But despite that shift in revenue, magazines continue to be a very important part of the b2b industry, he said. “The information we provide remains as rich as it ever was before, but the dissemination of that information has changed radically. It was magazines that built and established brands and it was the magazines that created brand extensions. Today, a brand can start with a website or with an event. When you combine the internet and face-to-face, it’s a great combo, and when you add a magazine to that, it’s a knock-out in b2b.”

Reisch used the analogy of publishers being in uncharted waters in a dense fog, so his recommendation was to “think small, think scalable and think 100 per cent made to order.”

He said you need to test and invest. “You can’t afford not to test the future but always keep a close eye on the cost of these tests. The future is just around the corner. Sit down and draw a blueprint first, but have an eraser at hand because you will need to adapt constantly.”

The Congress broke into four simultaneous breakout sessions later in the afternoon: *Magazines in Developing Markets: China; Magazines in Developing Markets: Eastern Europe and Russia: Expanding Sales Outlets for Magazines and Getting More Efficient Distribution; and New Digital Platforms for Magazines: Mobile Devices*.

Source : FIPP

Middle East Publishers’ Association (MEPA).

Dubai Media City, Office 506, 5th floor, Building No. 2,
P O Box: 502038, Dubai, UAE. Email: mepa@mepa.cc, website: www.mepa.cc