

Local Media Consortium and Local Media Association Announce Expanded Industry Education and Training Tools as a Result of Magid Study on Branded Content Campaigns

New Study Identifies how emerging advertising strategy gives local media organizations a new opportunity to define their brand, increase revenue and improve advertiser satisfaction

NEW YORK, Aug. 28, 2019 – The Local Media Consortium and the Local Media Association today released the results from their second in a series of studies from the Branded Content Project to examine how the local media industry can help its advertisers understand, engage and benefit from branded content campaigns. The report, conducted by leading business strategy company Magid, finds that education and training are vitally needed to help the industry define and better market the benefits of branded content to advertisers to allay concerns about budget, ROI measurability and creative control.

An innovative partnership funded by the Facebook Journalism Project, the Branded Content Project invests in identifying best practices and expanding programs to help facilitate industry-wide revenue growth, engagement and success through branded content. This newly released study encompasses results from 10 advertiser-based focus groups and eight executive interviews arranged through seven alpha partners selected by the Branded Content Project through an application process. Alpha partners include media companies with some success offering their advertisers branded content, interest in expanding their branded content offerings, and willingness to engage in testing, research and planning to share results industry-wide.

“The deeper we get into the Branded Content Project, the better we understand the vast potential of branded content to play a vital role in advertising strategy for local advertisers, but we also recognize that much work is needed to help our industry reap the benefits from branded content,” said Julia Campbell, white paper co-author and Branded Content Project lead. “Magid’s research includes valuable insight on obstacles and areas of opportunity for local media organizations to support advertisers with branded content offerings. We are pleased to share this report with our members and the broader industry, and to announce additional plans and testing to further the industry’s ability to educate advertisers and grow revenue for their local initiatives.”

Among the findings detailed in the white paper include the need to define branded content, which is largely unclear to advertisers. The LMA and LMC define it as any sales initiative that uses content to engage the user and is paid for by a client who participates as part of the content, helps supply the content or sponsors the content that is distributed across any platform. The report also details top drivers of branded content in the local space as: stealth of advertising; value and perception; and time with target market, engagement with customers. It highlights top obstacles of selling branded content, which include budget and ROI measurability; uniqueness, time and creativity control. Magid’s report also outlines several opportunities for local media organizations to use branded content to define their local brand and increase revenue through flexibility, authenticity, budget and measurability.

A common theme throughout this research project finds that the biggest obstacle facing local media teams is educating sales teams, advertisers and audiences on the benefits of branded content. Magid’s report recommends implementing branded content packages that include various platforms to gain coverage across audiences and to make it worth the advertisers’ efforts, as well as training AEs, producers and advertisers. As a result of these findings and recommendations, the Branded Content Project alpha teams are creating action plans and diving into testing that encompasses educational events, video explainers, better reporting and audience engagement.

“The advertiser focus groups and executive interviews we conducted with the alpha partners selected for the project shed light on local advertisers’ needs and interest in branded content, and how they could better leverage it as part of their overall advertising strategy,” said Cassandra Milbrandt, revenue strategy consultant, Magid. “We are honored to be a part of the important work being done by the LMA and LMC to vet, test and execute business models related to branded content.”

After examining the research and learning from advertiser focus groups made possible by the partnership between the LMA, LMC and the Facebook Journalism Project, the Branded Content Project team has announced the following action plans:

- Branded content guide. The team will create a branded content guide covering best practices, sales strategy, pricing recommendations, content creation suggestions and advice on incorporating promotions, events and social media into local media initiatives.
- Workshop. The LMA and LMC will conduct a branded content workshop at Elevate!, their industry leading, joint conference in September.
- Beta round. The project will be opened up to 20 beta organizations beginning September 18.
- Industry Education. Continued updates on, insight from and actionable recommendations resulting from this research project are available at www.sellbranded.com.

To read the full white paper, including detailed alpha insights, recommendations and action plans, visit https://www.localmedia.org/advertiser_whitepaper.

About the Local Media Consortium

The Local Media Consortium delivers economic value through strategic partnerships on behalf of nearly 90 local media companies in top markets across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, and includes more than 3,300 outlets. By harnessing the combined volume and scale of its members, the LMC reduces costs and increases revenue with technology and service providers like Google, Facebook, Monster and others. The aggregated LMC audience footprint spans 1 billion unique monthly visitors and its member companies serve more than 6 billion pageviews to consumers. More information is available at <http://www.localmediaconsortium.com/>.

About the Local Media Association

The Local Media Association is a thriving and innovative association that serves local media companies (newspapers, TV, radio, directories, digital news sites, and more) as well as research and development partners in the industry. LMA assists local media companies with the digital transition via cutting-edge programs, conferences, webinars, research and training. They are intensely focused on helping local media companies discover new and sustainable business models. Learn more at <https://www.localmedia.org/>.

About Magid

Magid is a consumer-centered business strategy company delivering courageous thinking that shapes better experiences, products and services. Since 1957, thousands of local and global brands in over 40 countries have engaged the firm for bold ideas that have helped achieve innovation and success. The Magid team is passionately curious and driven by the pursuit of improving human experiences with every engagement.

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