

Finding your Niche

YOU only have to look at the latest ABC Audit results to see that "niche" titles continue to grow at the expense of their more generalist counterparts. This is not a new trend and in the "information age" customers are seeking very detailed and credible information about their chosen interest.

Looking at the market it is easy to see the different categories, there are many special interests, for example, Motor magazines, fishing magazines, craft magazines and surfing magazines. These are niches of publishing in their own right, but if you look closely you will find the areas of interest are even more targeted. For example, under the craft category magazines like *Australian Smocking*, *Jill Oxtan Cross Stitch & Beading*, and *Rubber Stamper* Magazines all provide the reader with information on these specialist crafts at a level where these magazines are often used by teachers of the various crafts for resource material. Similarly in the motor category *Performance Ford* magazine, *Fast Fours* magazine and *Street Rodding* magazine are all recognised authorities in their respective areas of interest. You may think surfing titles are all the same but titles such as *Australian Surfing Life*, *Long Boarding Magazine* and *Body Boarding* all have a distinct readership profile with limited cross over.

Customers are prepared to pay for specialised information that they can not get any where else, and a closer look at these titles will reveal the more specialised the title is, generally the higher the cover price. Value is still important and many of the titles will carry project plans or patterns that are unique to the magazine and have real value but are included in the cover price.

These titles also lend themselves to 'line extensions' or special issues where 'The Best Of...', the 'Year Book' or 'How to' guides that compliment the information contained in the regular magazines are published. For the newsagent these specials and guides provide add-on sales to the regular 'parent' publication as the customer will have already been informed of the special through the regular title.

RDS Circulation Manager Martyn Alberry says Newsagents who have identify a strong category of special interest can quickly grow it by expanding the range, actively promoting the titles to their customers and maintaining their stock levels. "We use our extensive events database to target regional events that tie into niche magazine subjects; these include surfing contests, craft shows and motor events like the Summer Nationals in Canberra. All these events provide an opportunity to promote and sell more copies through the newsagents in the area where the event is taking place." After all, newsagents are still responsible for over 70% of all magazine sales.

Special interest publishers will promote too. Eras Lazarus NDD's Client Service Manager says "many of our special interest publishers will be only too pleased to work with newsagents to promote their magazines and interested newsagents should contact their local RDS office to participate."

Niche titles provide the variety that helps to maintain the newsagent's position as a destination shop; this means that people buying *Performance Ford* Magazine, for example, enter the shop planning to purchase this specific product. Once people are in the store, they will purchase the magazine they



intended to buy, but may also buy other items on impulse.

It's a strong formula for successful sales and profitability, high cover prices, regular frequencies and information that customers cannot get anywhere else. Niche titles are strong contributors to any newsagent's business and just because they are niche does not mean they are small in circulation. Take a closer look at the niche titles that do well in your shop and work with distributors and publishers to realise their full potential.

Australian BirdKeeper is the very best and most diversified avian magazine.

As a full colour and glossy bi-monthly publication, each issue contains regular features and articles on all popular cage and aviary birds.

