

MULTICHANNEL

Armani, Porsche, Mandarin Oriental propel Departures up 46pc in 2011 ad pages

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By RACHEL LAMB



Marketers such as Giorgio Armani, Porsche, Mandarin Oriental,

Neiman Marcus, Caroline Herrera and Van Cleef & Arpels are among the 96 advertisers that have boosted American Express Publishing's Departures magazine 46 percent year over year in ad pages.

The publication saw particular growth in its May/June and October issues, but growth was gradual throughout the year. In addition to impressive print performance, Departures expanded its digital channels with a revamped newsletter, social media outlets and a mobile application.

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Luxury Daily

"I attribute most of the success to us getting out and telling the story that Departures is a no-waste media solution to reach out to affluent Americans," said Steven DeLuca, vice president and publisher of Departures, New York. "In the post-recession world inching along, luxury brands are really recognizing that the aspirational consumer has gone away and true luxury customers have remained.

"In the first half of the last decade, there were a lot of people running around with aspirational money and went more far-field than they would have in the past," he said. "But now it's back to the core customer.

"Everyone who reads us is affluent, lives a luxury lifestyle and has the luxury and spending power to buy luxury goods."

Departures, only available to American Express Platinum and Centurion members, is sent seven times per year to 1,040,000 individuals with an average household income of \$476,000.

New pecking order

One of the crowning achievements from this past year was Departures' latest November/Devember issue.

The latest print edition boasted a 32 percent increase in ad revenue and a 19 percent climb in ad pages – the biggest issue in three years, according to the publisher.

The publication's May/June issue was the biggest jump in ad pages year over year. The same issue in 2010 had 57.66 ad pages where the 2011 issue had 119.03 pages. This is a 106 percent increase in one year.

Furthermore, Departures' October 2011 issue was a strong increase from 2010, with 150.38 ad pages compared to last year's 91.77 pages. This increase was 64 percent.

American Express heavily promoted the October issue, especially by partnering with famed auction house Sotheby's to curate an exhibit celebrating the 15th annual Destinations issue of Departures magazine, "The New Asia" ([see story](#)).



Art from the Asia Now auction at Sotheby's

Departures was also nominated for the 2011 M.F.K Fisher Distinguished Writing Award for an article in the October 2010 issue.

In addition, Departures had five citations from the Society of Publication Designers.

Guide to the future

In addition to its print prowess, Departures upped its digital presence this year.

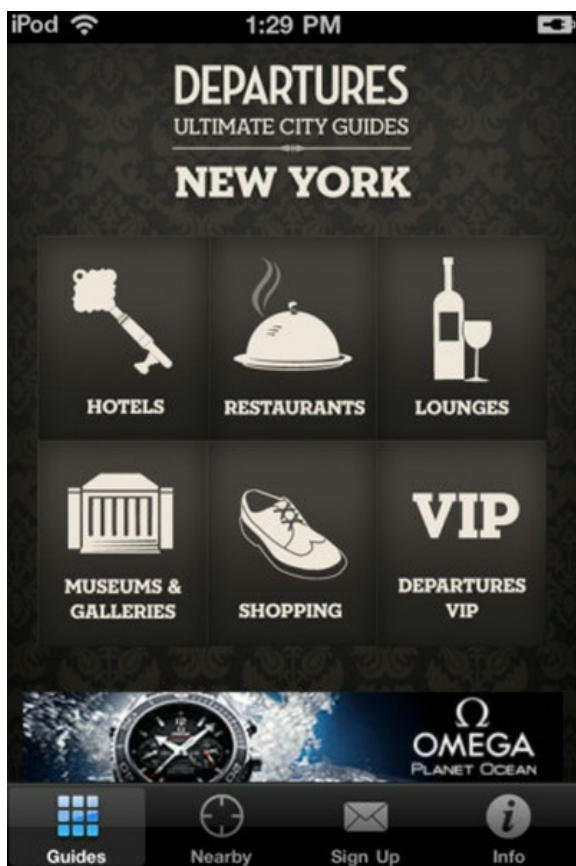
The publication updated its email newsletter, which goes out weekly to 50,000 opt-in consumers who wish to stay connected with the brand in between issues ([see story](#)).



Departures Dispatch email newsletter

Since one of the most valued features from Departures is the restaurant and hotel reviews section, it made sense for American Express Publishing to launch the new Departures Ultimate City Guide for iPhone and iPad at the end of August.

Consumers are able to look at restaurants, museums, shopping areas, hotels, lounges and VIP experiences in New York and eventually Hong Kong, Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Las Vegas, London, Buenos Aires and Paris throughout 2011 and 2012.



The Departures app

As for the future, Departures will strive to continue to grow ad pages and attract brands for discerning consumers, per Mr. DeLuca.

“The more the volatility in the economic world, the more our story actually becomes stronger,” Mr. DeLuca said. “This is because we are the people who have the money and spending power.

“I think that the greatest value that we deliver to the luxury world is that highly-targed, highly-efficient way to reach affluent Americans who consume luxury goods,” he said. “There are a lot of affluent people in America and just because you have a lot of money doesn’t mean that you want to travel or have high-end goods.

“However, that is why consumers get a platinum card. Departures helps them navigate that world.”

Final Take

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