

MinnPost

MinnPost has achieved the greatest revenue diversity among the sites studied and in 2010 hit the important milestone of reporting a year-end surplus. The site is steadily weaning itself from foundation grants.

The site focuses on developing a loyal readership of “news-intense” Minnesotans. Recently, it began innovating with interactive storytelling features.

Key Lessons: Revenue Diversification and Interactivity

Advertising and Sponsorships

Advertising and corporate sponsorships accounted for a quarter of MinnPost's \$1.28 million in revenue in 2010. The organization continues to experiment aggressively with various revenue sources, including:

- **MinnRoast:** Capitalizing on community goodwill, the site hosts an annual fundraiser that netted \$93,000 in 2010.
- **Content Sponsorships:** MinnPost in 2009 recruited four large institutional sponsors for specific content.
- **Sponsor Board:** Building on content partnerships, MinnPost allows sponsors to publish longer articles in a section of the site. These clearly labeled pieces may advocate for a policy, provide consumer information or display company expertise.
- **Banner Advertising:** MinnPost learned that advertisers are unlikely to buy the entire position. Instead, the site sells each banner a one-fifth position at a discounted price and publishes a rotation of five ads.
- **Unsold Advertising Inventory:** After unsuccessful attempts to sell open inventory to local advertisers at half price, MinnPost shifted to partnerships with two national ad networks to create a modest revenue stream.
- **Real-time Advertising:** MinnPost has also implemented “real-time ads,” which enable advertisers to post current specials and discounts on specific sections of the site. In the early going, this section-targeted advertising generated \$30,000.

Interactivity

MinnPost developed a variety of interactive features in the past year. The site:

- Added a full-time reporter specializing in data projects and crowd sourcing, who started The Intelligencer, which invites users who have direct knowledge or experience on certain topics to share it.
- Produced its first interactive content, You Fix the Budget Deficit, which has attracted more than 10,000 visitors.
- Created MinnPost Asks, an event series in which a reporter interviews a newsmaker in front of a live audience, after drinks and a light dinner. Two sponsors are paying \$7,500 each to sponsor six such gatherings a year.
- Introduced a Young Professionals Network, composed of young professional groups in the state, which has its own dedicated section on the site.

Key Facts

MinnPost

Site: minnpost.org

Founded: 2007

Mission: To provide high quality journalism for news-intense people who care about Minnesota.

Content: Local coverage of current events, politics, race, health, theatre and arts, plus columns by local citizens.

2010 Revenue: \$1.28 million

2010 Staff: 17

2011 Unique Monthly Visitors: 260,000¹

Local Market Size: 4.5 million Minneapolis-St. Paul residents²

Revenue

MinnPost reported a revenue increase of 20 percent from \$1.06 million in 2009 to \$1.28 million in 2010.

Donors and Members

The site's diverse revenue streams include a strong contingent of individual donors. The site has a range of donation sizes. In 2010, it relied on 13 large donors for 46 percent of the total donations. It also has a wide base in smaller giving, attracting 34 percent of total donations from 1,586 donors who give less than \$1,000.

The site had 2,400 members (essentially donors) by March 2011.

Revenue Goals

MinnPost expects to further reduce its dependence on foundation support to 10 percent by 2014. It expects to increase revenue from membership, events, advertising and sponsorship, as well as smaller streams from consulting and syndication.

The site also has initiated a philanthropic growth capital campaign that aims to raise \$1 million over four years that will fund a new content-management system, the addition of a technology staff member, a membership director and other investments. The campaign has commitments of \$520,000 to date.

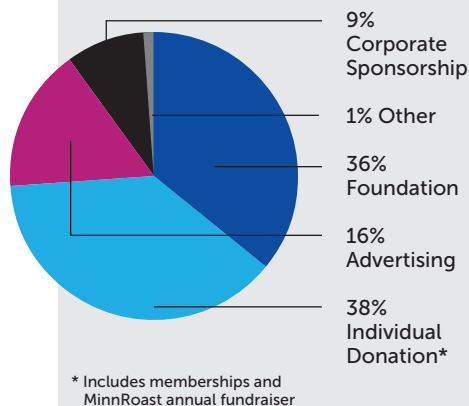
Expenses

MinnPost spent \$1.26 million in 2010, reporting a small year-end surplus for the first time since it launched in 2007. The site devoted about 60 percent of its expenditure of resources to editorial in 2010, compared to a 71 percent allocation the year before. Marketing and business development used a greater share of resources in 2010, about 20 percent, compared to 13 percent in 2009. At the same time, MinnPost increased the number of employees from nine to 17 while reducing its use of freelance writers.

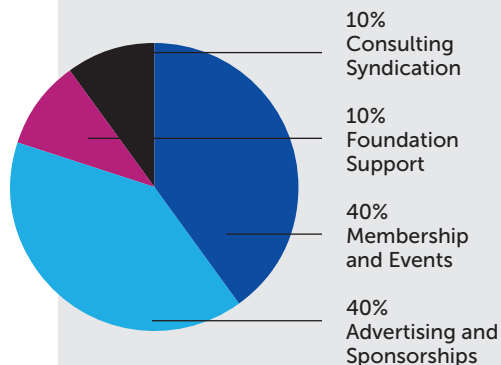
Website Analytics

MinnPost saw an increase in unique visitors to 260,000 in early 2011, up from 200,000 the previous year. The site focuses on visits and page views by Minnesotans, rather than on total unique visitors. Minnesotans account for 60 percent of visits and nearly 70 percent of page views. Average time on site was about two minutes overall and nearly three minutes for Minnesotans.

2010 Revenue - \$1.28 million



2014 Revenue Goals



2010 Expenses - \$1.26 million

