

Hyperlocal gets a nationwide model; editors being recruited

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The paradox is obvious: newspapers are watching advertising revenues decline and are slashing local news staffs at the same time as “hyperlocal” websites are trying to gain traction.

Can hyperlocal succeed? Only by re-creating the “feet on the street” that generate economic incentives for local content!

Perhaps the most ambitious model also is the most likely to make it. A new venture named OurTown.com has launched more than 70,000 websites – including every U.S. ZIP code. (Check any ZIP by entering the number: xxxxx.ourtown.com or a city name e.g., Cincinnati.ourtown.com). OurTown.com is a nationally branded interactive and hyperlocal platform.

Editors are being recruited in local areas and the company expects to have 1,000 local editors licensed by the end of April.

OurTown includes an economic model through which editors can sell local advertising and receive 100% of the revenues, plus receive 40% of national advertising revenues.

It is this unique business model that portends success.

OurTown.com has captured the interest of people who have been using the internet at grassroots levels. They’ve been on social networking sites, adding their opinions to blogs, commenting at local news sites. All for nothing. Now they have an opportunity to be paid.

“We’re starting to hear from journalists, bloggers, teachers, realtors, and ‘mompreneurs’ in different communities across the United States,” according to OurTown executive Daryl Rhodes. “Every OurTown site allows the local editors to provide their own local content -- such as information on school news and sporting events, weddings, personal narratives, blogs, church news, opinion forums and community activities and calendars. This will be the best place for people to get specific information from their block, their ZIP and their residential area.”

But OurTown is not limited to hyperlocal news. The OurTown.com sites include content from Newser, Oodle and Yelp; state, national and international news from the New York Times, RSS feeds and more. Weather, lottery and other news are focused on local areas. Free classified advertising is expected to bring additional traffic. Local search, calendars and other features add interactivity.

“Local editors then can expand websites into their own functional and profitable business,” said Rhodes. “Local editors can earn more than \$35,000 a year depending upon the number of local ads sold and the amount of traffic they generate for their sites.”

For additional information about OurTown.com, please call Daryl Rhodes at 513.381.0777, or email DRhodes@OurTown.com.