

From Adweek Magazines' TECHNOLOGY MARKETING magazine

# INSIDER PASS E-LETTER

A daily boost of marketing intelligence

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## 15 MINUTES WITH

**Sean Daily, CEO of Realtimepublishers**

**By Peter Landau**

Earlier this month, the Santa Rosa, California-based technology publishing and marketing firm Realtimepublishers hit a major landmark, having generated more than 200,000 sales leads for its customers. Realtimepublishers produces high-quality IT eBooks that are written and published in "real-time" by industry expert authors.

So how do Realtimepublishers' eBooks help tech marketers accomplish their usual marketing objectives of lead generation, thought leadership and brand awareness? Each title is sponsored exclusively by a single vendor in a particular market, and that sponsor captures sales leads in the form of readers registering to read the title. Realtimepublishers has nearly 30 eBooks in publication and a growing list of customers. Technology Marketing recently sat down with Realtimepublishers' CEO and veteran tech industry author Sean Daily to find out about Realtimepublishers' eBook innovative marketing program.

### **Technology Marketing: How does the Realtimepublishers eBook marketing program work, and what makes it unique?**

Sean Daily: First and foremost, we publish high-quality, objective technical books written by the best authors in the industry. What's unique about our model is that our books are sponsored by a relevant technology company and published to the company's Web site chapter by chapter, as the book is written. Readers, who are naturally qualified sales leads based on their interest in that particular title, must register with the sponsor to access the eBook chapters.

This arrangement provides the sponsors with highly qualified prospects and return visitors because readers return to the sponsor's Web site again and again to receive ongoing chapter releases for the book. It's a marketing program based on the principles of permission

marketing -- prospects willingly giving you their information in exchange for something that interests them. We have created a win-win model in which vendors get access to their target market and their market gets access to high quality, free IT information from the industry's top authors.

### **What compels tech companies to devote large portions of their marketing budgets to eBooks?**

Our eBook program is an extremely efficient use of a company's marketing resources. It offers lead generation as well as simultaneously driving thought leadership and product branding. Savvy high-tech marketers realize that it's important to educate one's audience, and that high-quality offerings translate into high quality leads.

An objective eBook from an independent publisher and author is the ultimate high quality deliverable. Readers willingly give their information to the exclusive sponsor of each title because readers understand that they're getting access to content they would normally have to pay for in bookstores. Readers love our model and appreciate that these sponsors are putting quality information on their sites instead of just biased, product-centric white papers and brochures that are internally developed.

### **What kind of success do sponsors typically experience with Realtimepublisher's eBook programs in engaging their target market versus more traditional 'go out and get them' marketing activities such as tradeshow, print advertising, etc.?**

As technology industry vendors, our customers understand the potential Internet-based marketing has to reach a wide audience. In this economy, reaching your target market in a cost-effective manner is critical, and most companies don't want to spend their budget dollars on high-cost tradeshow, travel, and advertisements that have inconsistent results and risk low return on investment.

For example, with a tradeshow exhibit, there's no guarantee that booth visitors are qualified prospects, and companies might only acquire a handful of qualified prospects -- even at shows with targeted audiences. However, with our eBook program, a sponsor will typically average between 10,000 to 20,000 qualified readers, who not only return to their site month after month but are virtually guaranteed to have a direct interest in those technologies related to the sponsor's products and services.

### **Who are some of your clients?**

On the sponsored eBook side of the business, our clients include Microsoft, Citrix, NetIQ, Precise, Quest, Wise, and many other companies of all sizes. Some of our smaller sponsors use the eBook as their primary marketing program, while larger companies use it to educate their current audience and drive thought leadership. For example, AlterPoint and New Moon Systems used their eBooks to launch both their Web sites and initial product introductions, while Citrix used their book primarily to educate their existing market about the benefits of a new version of their flagship MetaFrame product.

The marketing goals of our clients vary, but usually include high-quality lead generation, corporate branding, thought leadership, market education, increased Web traffic, and author/expert associations. Outside of sponsored content, we also offer custom publishing

services for companies such as CDW who have utilized our services to generate high-quality custom technical guides to educate their audiences on a variety of IT topics. That's another big area of growth for us and something we're very excited about for 2003 and beyond.

### **You mention that your eBooks are delivered for free; what is your revenue stream?**

Sponsorship fees are currently the primary revenue source. Those fees include all aspects of the program from production costs to 2 years' worth of marketing for each title. We view our sponsors as marketing partners in promoting the book, and work closely with them for 2 years on each title to ensure that the title is a success. This involvement makes sense because it is in the best interest of both the sponsor and Realtimedpublishers to make sure each title is as widely read as possible.

### **What are some of the marketing opportunities you offer IT clients?**

Realtimedpublishers' eBooks offer a very unique opportunity for sponsors to secure thought leadership, gain a significant advantage over their competitors, and gather large numbers of qualified leads. We feel that we're very unique in having created a single program that brings all of these elements together in one package. As part of the eBook marketing activities we engage in on behalf of our sponsors, we often arrange promotions such as author appearances at the sponsor's booth at tradeshow, partial publications of the eBook on CD-ROM as a seminar or tradeshow give-away, eBook content excerpts for articles in print and electronic industry publications, author Webinars and Webchats related to the eBook, and so on.

Beyond the eBook programs, we have also expanded our array of services for 2003 to include custom Webinars with our expert authors on technology topics, custom white papers and tech guide publishing, and sponsored online e-zine articles. All of these activities revolve around the same unique value proposition that we offer at our core: The ability to associate with objective experts and expert content, and repetitive exposure to a large, targeted audience interested in the sponsor's products, services, and technology.

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