

# CLICK2BID BRINGS IN MILLIONS FOR THE WEST



Plus News Community Media survey reveals business optimism

West Australian Newspapers last week announced the results of their recent Click2-Bid online auction. Hundreds of vendors contributed \$5.6 million worth of product that the newspaper auctioned. This combined with over 16,000 registered bidders made Click2Bid the biggest ever online auction in the southern hemisphere.

The Click2Bid auction, and others like it run by other newspapers and media properties, are implemented by InXcess which specialises in sales programs that bring in incremental revenue for media companies in Australia and overseas.

It worked like this for *The West Australian* – retail businesses were approached to offer items for inclusion in the auction. Generally a newspaper publishes a print catalogue several days before the auction goes live online. The website [www.click2bid.com.au](http://www.click2bid.com.au) was launched to further showcase the products, provide details of vendors and facilitate the bidding process.

Provided the items met reserve and sold (reserve is set at 50% of retail price or higher for motor vehicles and real estate), **the newspaper kept the money paid by the winning bidder and the vendor in return received advertising credits to the full retail value of the products that sold.** All revenue generated was incremental. Even where an existing client participated, their credit was used above and beyond their contract spend commitment.

“The response to Click2Bid has been overwhelming. Our sponsors, QBE and Professionals, and vendors and bidders alike have all helped to make Click2Bid an amazing success,” said **David Bignold**, sales director at *The West Australian*.

The auction platform offers a solution for attracting new clients and recovering waning advertiser commitment resulting from the economic downturn, explained InXcess consultant **Nicola Walsh**.

“It is a win, win, win scenario. **The newspaper generates incremental revenue and recaptures declines in usual spending levels. The advertisers fund their campaigns at a wholesale cost of their products,** and consumers get a fantastic deal at up to 50% off the usually selling price of the item(s) purchased.

“Any media company with a strong brand can implement an equally successful initiative,” said Walsh. “As we’ve proven with *The West Australian*, it is possible to ensure the local media company, local retailers and local residents benefit equally from innovative programs like online auctions.”

**Paul Holt**, CEO of Retravision Western Australia, was one of the first vendors to sign on to the Click2Bid project. “Retravision committed almost \$1 million worth of product, all top brand names in home electronics and appliances. Overall we were very happy with Click2Bid and look forward to being involved again next year.”

The response from other major vendors has been much the same, said Walsh, with the John Hughes Group selling 20 cars, the Satterley Property Group selling two blocks of land and the WA Housing Centre selling a display home. **Click2Bid generated over \$3 million worth of incremental revenue for The West Australian.** The newspaper will be donating \$100,000 of the Click2Bid proceeds to Telethon.

InXcess has also worked with WAN on other programs including the base forward sales program, Printworx, and other strategic consultancy services as requested.

## NEWS COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS SURVEY SMEs

A News Community Media survey of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) revealed that **the majority of participating businesses face the current economic climate with growing confidence.**

The News Community Media SME Index Survey was conducted by Access Management Corporation (AMC) from June 16 to July 17, 2009, and is one of Australia’s largest and most comprehensive SME Surveys, with nearly 2,000 respondents nationally.

Driving the survey for News Community Media was the marketing manager for Quest Community Newspapers, **James Flaherty**, who told *Mediaweek* they will now be polling SMEs every six months.

Despite the optimism, over 60% of the surveyed businesses rated revenue, profit and cash flow as being the major challenges faced by SMEs.

The survey also revealed varying degrees of confidence from state to state. **South Australia and Western Australian are the most optimistic about the next 6-12 months, whilst New South**



James Flaherty

**Wales is the most pessimistic and less confident.**

New South Wales is the only state report declining business revenue 4.8%.

Survey results revealed that 29 of respondents were dissatisfied with the Federal government

The survey revealed that many businesses are making informal decisions regarding the marketing programs, with 58.9% not preparing an annual marketing plan, or making an attempt to identify the cost/benefit of a marketing spend.

Flaherty explained, “Our vision when creating this survey was to give a voice to the businesses which create the communities our newspapers serve, bringing employment, opportunity and wealth to the corner of Australia we all call home. We wanted to take their pulse, to find out what was really happening in their world and to share the opinions with the wider community through our publications.”

Surveys will in future be conducted every November and June with the results published soon after.

Flaherty, who has a background in data and business-to-business analysis at agencies in the UK, said he “understands how powerful research and analysis can be”. He added that the results will be used to drive editorial in group newspapers. **“If we are finding grassroots optimism we can pass that onto the communities we represent.”**

One of the questions asked was the channels SMEs use to promote their business. Flaherty cautioned against reading too much into the initial results as there is no existing data to compare the results to. However a comparison of website and local press advertising were at the top of the list. The least used channels included cinema advertising, online banner ads and radio advertising. JM



News Community owns the Quest group in Brisbane which publishes the *Albert & Logan News*. The other News groups are *Cumberland and Courier* (Sydney), *Leader* (Melbourne), *Messenger* (Adelaide) and *Community Newspaper Group* (a JV in Perth with WAN)