SÜDKURIER Medienhaus, Germany

Facts and figures

The SÜDKURIER Medienhaus in Constance. Germany, is an innovative and leading regional media and service provider. Its business areas include daily newspapers, free papers, magazines, digital media, printing, communication services and logistics.

SÜDKURIER Online (www.suedkurier.de) is one of the largest regional online news portals in the state of Baden-Württemberg. The web portals bodenseeferien.de, kanews.de, SÜDKURIER Tourenplaner (touren.suedkurier.de), Regiostars (regiostars.suedkurier.de) and JOBS (jobs.suedkurier.de), designed to reach a wide audience, round off the company's portfolio.

Up to 80% time savings with AdX. In 2012, SÜDKURIER switched from Excel lists to a central ad reservation system for online ads. In retrospect, this was a very wise decision.

Initial situation

Before the cross-media ad reservation solution AdX was introduced, the online ad workflow at SÜDKURIER consisted of numerous manual processes and was run by one person only, the traffic manager. A small volume of orders for online ads on clearly structured pages were managed in an Excel-based plan. Their own in-house production system for online ads, WBO, provided a sound workflow for the downstream processes. The traffic manager had to book the online ads in this tool, which had a web GUI and a very basic booking mask. Entering orders in SAP and ad flights in the ad server (DART), however, was performed later on in separate worksteps, and were therefore basically redundant. With the growing number of digital ads, these processes reached their limit. The volume of digital ads increased too rapidly and websites were becoming increasingly complex, as was the overwhelming number of online products. All this required a new strategy and an up-to-date, integrated workflow for processing orders.

Primary objective: process optimization

The ad server, SAP and, for the time being, the WBO have stayed. Excel was replaced by AdX and the traffic manager is now a campaign manager and AdX power user. Automated worksteps, integrated processes to all third-party systems, as well as shared knowledge now form the basis of an automated, end-to-end online ad workflow at SÜDKURIER. Its primary objective was to make optimum use of existing resources, for example training the sales staff or expanding its range of products. "Our goal was to optimize the workflow for online orders so that integrated processes are created between the technical and commercial systems. Speed and flexibility in ad reservation are much more important for the internet as an advertising medium than for print. With AdX, we've created a foundation for this," says Dirk Frädrich, head of Process Management & IT at SÜDKURIER. Tobias Hinckeldein, too, campaign manager at SÜDKURIER, sees a lot of advantages in using AdX: "Online orders can be processed much more easily with AdX. The commercial and technical orders are created in AdX and distributed to the other systems via interfaces. Duplicate entries and a large number of manual steps are no longer necessary. And it's no longer necessary to maintain custom creative codes, DART zones and slot sizes - they're a thing of the past."

AdX: the software

AdX is the ad solution for the digital media. All administrative and production-related tasks are optimally integrated and coordinated: ads can be entered, managed, produced and billed in a single process. This

is possible due to the optional integration of SAP fields in the AdX GUI. All commercial processes run in the background in SAP IS-M/AM.

In order to maintain an overview in the multitude of online ad spaces, AdX offers a comprehensive GUI. All ad spaces are displayed clearly on an intuitive, dynamic user interface. Popular premium positions in particular can be managed very easily like this. All the information on a specific ad space can be accessed centrally any time.

AdX can be used for one specific medium or as a cross-media solution for print, web, mobile and tablet. An app for AdX Print is also available for field staff.

Workflow at SÜDKURIER
Both the commercial system SAP IS-M/AM and the ad server are directly integrated in the online ad workflow. Queries to both systems can be started and stopped from within AdX or created in DART according to the requirements supplied by OMS. AdX is, therefore, the central workflow tool for display advertising. The ad sales staff can acquire information via the campaign manager and AdX on free ad spaces on the websites. Prices are then requested and calculated from within AdX. AdX forwards the information to SAP IS-M/AM to be checked, and then displays the results from the commercial system on its own ergonomic GUI. Following approval by the customer, the salesman can then complete the booking. All the motifs for an order are given a central SAP order number. This enables data and processes to be found quickly and evaluated after booking has been completed. Evaluation is performed on the basis of data such as page impressions, clicks & runtime, which is supplied to AdX by the ad server.

"Performing the central booking processes with AdX has produced very positive results within a very short period of time. It only takes 10 minutes to complete a booking, i.e. enter and test for a banner in wallpaper format. This used to take half an hour longer. In the months following the installation of AdX, the workflow processes were optimized together with specialists from ppi Media. The close integration with SAP IS-M/AM ensures efficient handling of orders and provides data for reporting," says Dirk Frädrich.

Outlook
ppi Media's ad production system AdMan has been used in the print workflow at SÜDKURIER for a number of years now. The solution has undergone further development and online functions have now been added. For instance, sizes can be compared or flash motifs checked, if necessary edited in external editors and managed in a well-organized folder tree – for both combined motifs and wallpaper. The next step would be for AdMan to replace the HTML-based WBO system.

"With the additional AdMan function for AdX, we would be able to automate our workflow processes even further – which we feel is mandatory – and complete certain online jobs faster and, as a result, more cheaply. For local and regional display marketing, the saying that 'what doesn't cost a lot shouldn't cost too much' will apply even more so in the future," says Dirk Frädrich, who also holds responsibility for order management at SÜDKURIER. In August 2014, the SÜDKURIER also decided in favor of AdX Mobile, which optimizes the ad workflow in the mobile sector.