

Marketing in fish magazine

We receive a lot of requests about our marketing programs, ad rates and the nature of our readers from churches, ministries and businesses seeking to possibly advertise with us. We put this small report together in order to answer the most common questions, outside of the information found in our info package we send out to interested parties.

WHERE: The fish magazine targets the Christian community in greater Chattanooga. We print more than 10,000 magazines, and they are distributed to more than 550 spots, as far as Cleveland and Dalton, with the help of volunteers throughout the Tennessee Valley and North Georgia. Distribution spots include churches, ministries and businesses interested in promoting the magazine to their customers, clients and members.

READERS: We do not have marketing data on our readers, primarily because we are a small, grassroots publication and little funds to pay for a study, though we would welcome anyone interested in sponsoring such research. We could not exist, in fact, if it were not for the help of volunteer writers, sales people and distributors. We have been printing month to month, skipping only January each year, since April of 2000, when we launched our first issue, and we have seen qualitatively, that fish receives a strong response from the high school and college age crowd through to families with up to college-age children. Women seem to be a dominant reader of fish magazine, based on the types of calls and responses fish receives from the community, though men are picking up the publication as well.

PICKUP RATE: We do a good job of distributing the magazine, thanks again to help from volunteers, and we often have a 100 percent pickup rate in many of our distribution spots. Some spots are not that strong, and we do not track our pickup rates formally. We do watch for areas where interest may dramatically drop, and we have discontinued delivery before based on a low pickup rate. Unlike many other free publications you will find in our community, we are reluctant to leave an overabundance of copies at each location as our goal is to see as many picked up by area families as possible.

SCHEDULE: We print at the end of each month for the following months issue. Generally, we ask community entities to make all advertising and editorial submissions to fish magazine by mid month for the following month's issue. We've been asked for dates, and we could say the 15th of the month for friends needing a specific deadline. However, based on the needs of the churches and ministries we are trying to promote, as well as the time of year and holiday schedules, we often will push our printing deadline as late as possible, a few times printing near the first of the month and distributing fish magazine during the first full week of the month. Our goal is to print and distribute fish magazine before the first Sunday of the month for that respective month's issue. Occasionally we miss that goal, but fish magazine is designed to focus on events occurring over the course of the next two months, so editorially we attempt to make every issue relevant from a time point of view. If you have an event occurring within the first week of a month, we strongly encourage you to make your editorial and advertising submission for that event into the previous month's edition. There are issues that we manage to print and distribute up to a week before the first of the month. But because of our mission (see below) we often are printing as late as possible in order to help struggling ministries and churches (who are often poor planners) get their announcements into the magazine. Sometimes a church might not think about publicizing an event until a matter of weeks or days before the program, are we are slowly teaching many of those we serve the importance of planning and public relations.

ADS: Our advertising rates are listed on our website at the bottom of a standard contract we use. Generally, the longer one signs up for ads, the less expensive each ad costs. A one-time quarter page ad is \$150. When you sign up for the year, that price drops to \$100 each (per month), and the client is then eligible for the full annual discount on any other ad they choose, if they need to expand their image during particular months. Ad requests may be submitted by email, by fax or by snail mail -- though we undoubtedly prefer email. We will design ads for clients without extra charge, but we ask that those requests be made as early as possible to give us time for design and final approval. David Hamilton, publisher, deals directly with advertisers, though volunteers, on occasion, help him. Feel free to direct advertising correspondence with Mr. Hamilton.

MISSION: This is a complex issue, and we would refer you to information spread out in our info packet. Primarily, we want to promote things planned in the Chattanooga area that Christian families may not know about, and we have pet efforts here that we try to push because we perceive these groups need and deserve more exposure than they can currently manage. The Scenic City Women's Network is a good example. We try to help those groups find support, volunteers, money and visibility, regardless of whether they advertise, and that is why fish magazine was first developed and why we will continue to print as long as the doors are open to do so. We have a few folks who believe in our mission and advertise because they want to support this effort. We are glad they do and hope you will consider supporting us for more than just simple marketing.