

## ENTREVESTOR: Advanced Publishing keeps eye on technological trends

CAROL MOREIRA

Published January 14, 2016 - 4:06pm



Trish Kiley is president and CEO of Advanced Publishing, a digital media company in Saint John, N.B.

For Trish Kiley, president and CEO of digital media company **Advanced Publishing**, success in business means anticipating trends in publishing and technology.

Forward-thinking is essential because the Saint John, N.B., company helps publishers make digital versions of their publications for viewing on multiple devices.

Kiley anticipated the boom in phablet use in 2012. Phablets are phones with larger screens, midway in size between smartphones and tablets. They have led to more content being read on mobile devices.

She also foresaw the rise of digital media back when she founded her company in 2003.

“Being in the digital space, we sensed what was coming. Craigslist was starting a free classified advertising service in the U.S.,” she said.

“We foresaw that ads would be given away free, then upsold (up-selling allows money to be charged for a premium ad). Kijiji did that, and they’re now owned by eBay and dominate the classified market in Canada.”

Kiley said she tried to share her insights about the impending sea change with newspapers, but most didn’t listen.

“At first, we thought newspapers would be our biggest group of clients, but they seemed to be stuck in their ways and missed the boat on much of the changing horizon.

“Most owned their own printing presses, did everything in-house, and they didn’t see the need for digital versions of their publications.

“They had the classified advertising market sewn up, and they subsequently lost most of that.”

Kiley said her six-employee company provides clients with a full range of services designed to help them maximize their digital magazine readership and advertising revenues.

Advanced is tweaking its technology to make its product so easy to use it could provide a less expensive self-service model.

“It’s often difficult to provide full-service and self-service models at the same time, however. It’s hard to be good at everything.”

Changes are also being made to the way magazine stories scroll when read digitally.

“We have to ensure readers see adverts as they scroll digital versions, but we also make stories scrollable in simple text for mobile devices; really, things are moving to a more hybrid approach.”

Kiley enjoys the challenges and responsibilities of entrepreneurship, although she never intended to found a startup. Raised in Fredericton, she studied chartered accounting at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John and then worked in the corporate world.

“I fell into entrepreneurship. I was CFO of cable company **Fundy Cable** in New Brunswick. After that, I looked to buy an existing traditional business in Saint John but couldn’t find one.

“I worked for the **Exigen Group**, a software company in San Francisco. One of my shareholders suggested this idea. I thought it was time. I was 40, and it was now or never.”

When she started Advanced, she received investment from the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation, which retains some investment in the company, and three other private investors, who she subsequently bought out.

At first, business was slow, but the introduction of the iPad in 2010 changed everything because it made reading digital content much easier.

“The iPad created a tipping point that made publishers see that digital content wasn’t going away,” she said.

Trends will continue to shift, but Kiley is happy with the niche Advanced has created.

“We’re not going after mega publishers. Most of our clients don’t have their own technical team. They outsource to us. We work with a lot of associations.”

Advanced faces a lot of competition.

“Our competitors are creeping up all the time, but we have a lot of knowledge,” Kiley said.

“We’ve been in the space for 13 years. We have many strategies. ... Advanced is now a sustainable business. It’s never going to be a \$100-million company. I don’t want that. It’s a lifestyle business for me.”

**Carol Moreira is a principal of [www.Entrevestor.com](http://www.Entrevestor.com), a news and data site for Atlantic Canadian startups.**