



Open Road Integrated Media's Data and Tech Marketing System Can Double Sales

Publishing partners pay no out-of-pocket fees for the company's "white-glove" service

Open Road Integrated Media (ORIM) continues to reinvent and revitalize its marketing platform to address the changing needs of its publishing partners, which include Abrams, Grove Atlantic, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Ingram, and many more. Whether it's through the Ignition marketing-as-a-service program or the company's data-driven approach to content marketing and book discovery, ORIM is both seizing the moment and looking ahead. *Publishers Weekly* caught up with Open Road CRO/CMO Mary McAveney to chat about how the company is sustaining its momentum, navigating unprecedented times, and boosting book sales for both large and small publishers by as much as 400% or more.

What's new at ORIM? Tell us a little about how the company has continued to grow, even during a pandemic.

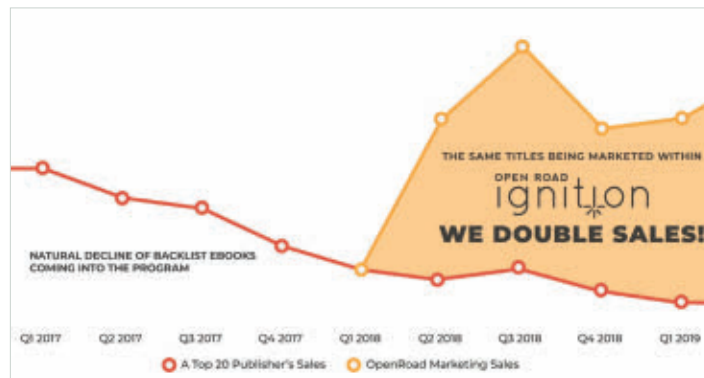
Let's start by emphasizing that we are currently looking for tens of thousands more titles to market. We have increased the number of e-books we market to more than 30,000, and our system is still underutilized. We continue to refine the way we work with our publishing clients, because as a marketing-as-a-service company, our goal is to help publishers in every way we can. We are always improving and refining our marketing technology stack and our data operation as we take on more titles, because we market efficiently and at scale. Our goal is to scale our business 10 times without stressing our system.

Has the pandemic made your services even more vital for publishers? What about authors?

We have all witnessed a seismic shift in consumer behavior, which began even before the pandemic. We could see that shopper marketing had begun to change significantly coming into 2020. We saw that with the increase in the number of Amazon stores and

how they were structured for a seamless in-store/online experience that retail needed to augment traditional in-store levers (shelf talkers, endcaps, front-of-store displays) with online discovery tools. That online discovery has only become more important during the pandemic. Consumers are gravitating to e-commerce more than ever before. With that behavioral shift comes new opportunities. We can no longer solely depend on the organic discovery that occurs online. To augment that, Open Road invests in building

technology that is heavily dependent on data, which allows us to market thousands of titles at a time, rather than just the traditional backlist or frontlist, which requires a greater concentration of resources. With Ignition's full-service marketing program, the publisher does nothing and spends nothing. In addition to this "white-glove" service, ORIM also provides access to our audience of more than three million readers through more traditional content marketing products—including newsletter features, banner ads, deals, giveaways, as well as custom sponsored content—that are available à la carte.



What kind of sales growth can publishers expect when working with you?

We have delivered significant uplift on inactive titles, essentially creating revenue where none existed, and have delivered great uplift on active titles, which has an even bigger impact on revenue. Our clients earn double-digit increases in

net revenue on their titles without any out-of-pocket marketing expenditure and with no drain on resources.

In what significant ways has ORIM helped change the industry, perhaps forever?

There are certainly specific success stories, ranging from frontlist experimentation that landed titles on the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times* bestseller lists to gaining new readerships for dormant titles as a result of our marketing. But the heart of our story is that we can do this for so many titles. Only a very small percentage of titles in typical trade publishing actually receive any marketing. We are finding we can deliver an effective marketing effort, that generates real revenue, and can scale to serve hundreds of thousand of titles. We set out to change the publishing dynamic in which 80% of the resources are devoted to 20% of the titles, and we are finding that we can.

on that experience through search engines and algorithms that help generate title discoverability. Metadata plays a tremendous role in this, as does a one-to-one relationship with readers we've developed through our content-driven messaging that uses readers' favorite authors and genres to introduce undiscovered works.

Can you speak to what makes the Ignition program so successful and how it differs from your content marketing program?

Through the Ignition program we now provide full-service marketing for 30,000 e-book titles, spanning 55 publishers including four of the top six U.S. publishing companies. There is no financial risk to the publisher, as all of ORIM's earnings come from a share of the uplift we deliver. From metadata revisions to advertising and promotion, ORIM handles all of the marketing and we cover all costs. We have built a marketing platform unlike any other in publishing; it is proprietary