

Planning a Web Site, Publisher Buys a Harvard Alumni Magazine

Richard Pérez-Peña

A small New York publisher on Friday bought 02138, a magazine for Harvard alumni, with visions of expanding it into social networking and event sponsorship, and then duplicating the operation for each Ivy League school.



Manhattan Media bought 02138 from Atlantic Media, publisher of The Atlantic and National Journal, and the magazine's young founders, Bom Kim and Daniel Loss, who held a minority stake. The price was not disclosed.

The deal was something of a surprise; Manhattan Media's involvement had been kept quiet, and published reports said in April that Sandow Media, publisher of Worth magazine, was on the verge of buying 02138, which is named for Harvard's ZIP code.

Mr. Kim will stay as publisher. Tom Allon, president and chief executive of Manhattan Media, said he hoped the executive editor, Richard Bradley, would also stay. The magazine will go from four issues a year to six, he said.

"We plan to launch a companion Web site that's a social networking Web site for Harvard alumni, and sponsor a series of events, alumni events, around the 02138 brand," he said. "We think this is a sort of new paradigm in publishing. I think people do share common interests when they're alumni of a university."

Over the next few years, Mr. Allon said, "Our plan is that this is the first of what will become eight Ivy League magazines, sites and events companies," one each for Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Penn, Princeton and Yale. Though he is an alumnus of Cornell and Columbia, Mr. Allon said the next project would probably be Yale or Princeton.

The Harvard magazine first appeared in 2006, offering articles on alumni and staff, and campus goings-on. It publishes an annual Harvard 100, a ranking of the university's most influential alumni: last year, its top five, in order, were Al Gore, President Bush, Justice Anthony Kennedy, Senator Barack Obama and Bill Gates. Mr. Allon said he planned to publish similar rankings for each Ivy League school.

The magazine, mailed free to about 100,000 Harvard alumni, is supported by ads, and the other magazines would follow that lead. "Paid circulation, I think, is a dying model," he said.

Manhattan Media owns 10 publications, including Avenue magazine, New York Press and several other local weekly newspapers in Manhattan, and two monthlies on New York politics: City Hall and The Capitol.

The company is owned by Mr. Allon and Isis Venture Partners.

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