The Washington Times

GIS Increases Newspaper Subscriptions

Problem

Increase subscription rate of daily newspaper

Goals

- Increase advertising revenue.
- Improve approach to the advertising sales process.
- Implement controlled program of circulation growth.

Results

- Improved quality of advertising campaigns
- Targeted message to audience
- Better selection of mailing list
- Improved subscriber acquisition process
- Better coordination of campaigns between departments

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Bill Sutcliffe, Marketing Director,
The Washington Times

For more than 22 years, the Washington Times *has operated as a full-service, general-interest daily newspaper in the nation's capital. One of the nation's most quoted dailies, the* Washington Times *has a reputation for its hard-hitting investigative reporting and thorough coverage of politics and policy. Published by News World Communications, Inc., "America's Newspaper" has a daily circulation of 110,000 copies. Of these copies, 102,000 are paid subscriptions.*

The Challenge

Like all daily newspapers, the *Washington Times* must provide timely, attention-grabbing news and compete for readers against a variety of media such as other newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet. It strives to be a market-driven publication that responds to the needs and interests of its readers. The *Times'* circulation base is a delicate balance of product, price, service, and promotion. The *Times* wanted to significantly increase its circulation but needed to know about the types of people who read the paper, where these readers were located, and the best method to reach them. This initiative would require a multiphased analysis using data and software.
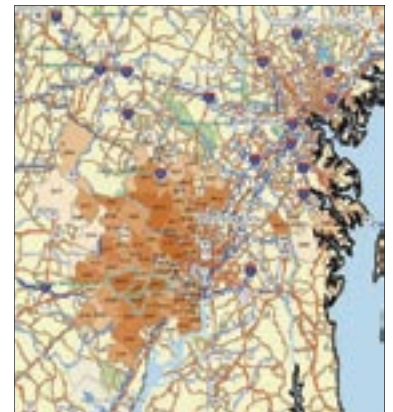
The Solution

The *Washington Times* chose ESRI's ArcGIS® Business Analyst software integrated with ESRI's demographic data and Community™ Tapestry™. "This package gave us the most tools and data for the price on the market," says Bill Sutcliffe, marketing director at the *Washington Times*. "It was an obvious choice for us to enhance our data-mining capabilities and organize our in-house subscriber and advertiser information." Because newspaper circulation is inherently based on geography, phase one of the analysis profiled the location of reader types. The *Washington Times* analysts mapped the locations of paid subscribers with ArcGIS Business Analyst to find the zip codes with the highest concentrations of subscribers. Subscriber penetration rates were calculated by zip code and census block group. This analysis produced 89 zip codes to be targeted in the Washington-Baltimore metro areas.

To refine the subscriber and reader profiles, analysts used Community Coder geocoding software to append Community Tapestry segmentation codes to each subscriber record by zip code. These targeted zip codes were then aggregated into one of the 65 Tapestry segments based on demographic variables such as age, income, home value, occupation, household type, education, and other consumer behavior characteristics. Results of this detailed analysis showed that almost half of readers live in three of the 65 distinct Tapestry segments. Nearly 46 percent of all paid subscribers were classified as: *Connoisseurs*, *Suburban Splendor*, or *Wealthy Seaboard Suburbs*. Analysts at the *Times* discovered a great opportunity for customer acquisition within eight additional specific segments that were similar.

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For example, the *Connoisseurs* segment represented 17 percent of the paid subscribers. Identified as a strategic marketing area (SMA), with 81,494 households, *Connoisseurs* was also one of the largest segments. Analysts noted that a defining factor of residents in this segment was their love of coffee. *Connoisseurs'* residents prefer Starbucks® coffees and beans and owning their own espresso/cappuccino machines. The *Washington Times* incorporated this data into ArcGIS Business Analyst to map coffee shops and coffee device repair shops. As a result of this analysis, the *Times* placed more newspaper box locations near these retail shops and subsequently raised the number of copies sold.
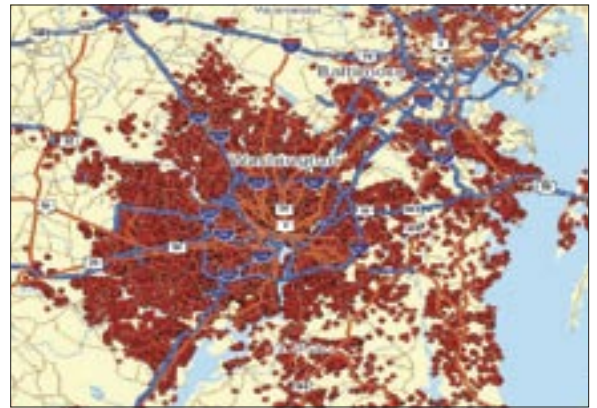
The subscription promotion designed by the marketing department included three separate brochures with different messages that would appeal to each of these Tapestry segments. Response results were impressive. Responses greatly increased in two of the three segments. Although the response rate in the third segment grew only slightly, the results showed the marketers how to refine the message to improve results in the next campaign and will allow the *Times* to respond quickly with a new campaign.

Learn more about ArcGIS Business Analyst at **www.esri.com/arcgisbusinessanalyst.**