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New Online School Subscription Agent Launches

ClassClick.net uses e-mail networking to solicit subs for school fundraising. BY BILL MICKEY

A NEW SUBSCRIPTION AGENT quietly launched early this year that may give other subscription agents in the school plan field, such as the Time Inc. giant QSP, a run for their money. ClassClick.net relies on e-mail networking, rather than face-to-face sales, to solicit subscriptions.

ClassClick is run by a number of former Time Inc. employees, including founder and CEO Grant Son, who worked on the acquisition and integration of QSP when Time Inc. bought it from Reader's Digest last November for \$110 million in cash.

From there, it didn't take long for Son to ramp up his own operation after leaving Time Inc. "We got rolling during Thanksgiving week and worked out the kinks. We really didn't get started until late January and have been taking the last couple months to work through a pilot phase," he says.

Son adds that the market is big, but fragmented. QSP, he says, generates \$300 million in sales and covers 10 percent of schools, leaving plenty of room for an operation like ClassClick.

A school administrator can log in and set up an online-based campaign. The administrator can craft an e-mail invitation and send it to parents, who then can create their own e-mail messaging to forward to friends and family.



ClassClick is a new agent that relies on an e-mail networking model to promote and sell subscriptions in a school fundraising environment. According to the company's CEO, orders average in the \$60-\$70 range.

Recipients can visit the online store and select their subscriptions. Renewals can be serviced here, too. Administrators are able to manage the progress of the campaign and generate reports.

Son says while the QSP model has a significant sales force of 300 reps—mostly retired teachers and coaches—research shows that about one-third of kids actually go home with the kits, which then generate about 1.2 magazines per order, or about \$22. "We're seeing orders in the \$60 to \$70 range," he says.

Currently, ClassClick has about 170 magazines participating in its plan. "The rule of thumb is to have the top 100 by circulation to offer schools a compelling program," says Son.