

ShepHertz helps regional publishers across India with digital video transformations

ShepHertz is a service provider and enterprise platform that helps organizations undergo digital transformations. It specializes in areas such as APIs, Big Data, AI, and IoT.

OPPORTUNITY

ShepHertz saw an opportunity to use its technology to help Indian regional print publishers create digital video news content and build a video presence. It wanted to provide traditional newspaper print publishers with digitization tool sets, such as applications, streaming services, content hosting and delivery, analytics, etc., which would ultimately help them transition online and into digital video.

APPROACH

ShepHertz created an ecosystem for news video creation, processing, and aggregation. It then went through a process to select small and large news media publishers from all over India, and partnered with them to help them bring their individual digital video strategies to life.

Uncovering potential publishing partners: ShepHertz wanted to uncover potential partners from a pool of 20K news publishers across top Indian states. The ShepHertz team designed a selection framework, which took into account demographics, income, literacy, and digital factors, as well as market factors such as print circulation, YouTube presence, region (e.g., whether they were in smaller towns), content focus (e.g., sports, women, social, etc.), and language (e.g., vernacular languages like Urdu, Assamese, etc.). A shortlist of 1.4K publishers was the result.

Establishing a video journey framework: ShepHertz created a five-step framework to determine where publishers were in their digital video journey (e.g., novice vs. advanced), so they could address challenges and move forward. This benchmarking exercise helped shorten time to market, ease onboarding, and guide publishers through best practices.

Creating a publisher outreach program: A team was selected for the publisher outreach program. They took the online YouTube certification program to better understand content ownership, asset monetization, and YouTube's tools and systems available for content creators and partners. Outreach to publishers began early in 2019, and onboarding for 100+ selected publishers began several months later.

Helping small and large publishers: The ShepHertz team adopted a two-pronged approach to help publishers with their digital video capabilities, depending on their size and digital video maturity:

1) Small publishers: Shephertz helped small publishers with no video presence create new YouTube channels. Ninety new channels were created by traditional print publishers and onboarded with ShepHertz. The small publishers received assistance in content creation, editing, and publishing. For example, Shephertz created 12 video formats so publishers could create content more easily in a templated format. These included templates for interview style videos with branded backdrops, pictures and clips with audio narration, and presentations with key highlights using a pointer.

2) Medium and large publishers: Shephertz accelerated the growth of medium to large publishers (with more than 1K subscribers and 40K hours of watch time on their YouTube channel) by partnering them with a multi-channel network

(MCN) for technology and distribution support. Eleven channels were onboarded with the MCN partner and given advanced support around audience development, digital rights management, and broadening production to include more exclusive content to help improve monetization.

RESULTS

By the end of 2019, ShepHertz had reached out to 500+ channels from across 19 states. Overall, it helped 100+ publishers with their video strategy and publication goals:

- **9K+ total videos** created by print publishers.
- **60+ new channels** producing news content on a daily or weekly basis.
- **19 channels** producing video events and features.

ShepHertz saw many large and small publishers drive exceptional growth over the course of the project, including:

- **One large publisher in India's north east**, The Sentinel, started adding video for developing news stories and working with an MCN partner. It saw **78% growth in YouTube subscriber numbers and 73% growth in watch time**.
- **One small, local newspaper**, Daurti Delhi, had no previous video presence, but it launched a YouTube channel and uploaded text-to-video versions of key print stories. It now produces **eight to 10 videos per month**.

LEARNINGS

Give publishers the specific help they need: It was crucial to first identify the digital maturity of news publishers in order to give the assistance they needed — organizations at different stages will need different types of support. A "one size fits all" approach doesn't work because each organization has unique and varied needs on its digital video journey. Customization is essential if you want to help publishers drive long term digital video success.

Create a monetization support system: Publishers need help finding a path to monetization so they can continue to grow sustainably. ShepHertz made it a priority to create a support system to do this by nurturing a hyperlocal advertising agency ecosystem.

“**Through our deep outreach across 19 states of India, we were able to understand the pulse of the publishers and the challenges faced by them to begin and sustain their digital journey.**”

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