

# Fredericksburg Standard Earns Record Revenue with the Addition of a Mobile App

Since 1978, the Fredericksburg Standard has been producing its biannual printed visitor guide, GoFredericksburg, to help serve the 1.5 million tourists that come to enjoy this quaint Texas hill country town. The addition of a mobile app to their product mix helped to earn them record revenue for their 2015 spring edition. We visited with Editor and Publisher, Ken Esten Cooke, to uncover the details about their successful move into mobile.

## Product Innovation is Key



Cooke explains that continual product evolution has been an important strategy for the Standard to gain and retain advertisers. They first converted their visitors guide to magazine stock which has been a hit with advertisers, and then introduced a companion mobile app, GoFred, in late 2014.

*“The main thing it shows is that we are keeping up to date with trends and digital products. Let’s face it, some small-town newspapers fight the perception of being old school, so adding an app to our products helps a lot. Our customers see that we’re investing in new things to add value for them and I think it’s appreciated.”*

The mobile app is also opening up doors with new advertisers.

*“Clients who may not be interested in weekly newspaper advertising might talk to us about our app and learn about some other products, such as our web ads, our daily email newsletter or our niche publications. We feel like we’ve got something for just about anyone.”*

## Multiple Revenue Strategies Maximize Profits

The Standard’s experience with selling digital had previously been limited to banner ads on their website but foraying into mobile ads was an easy transition with a bundling strategy. The paper is conscientious of bombarding their clients with too many options instead choosing a multimedia package approach.

*“Instead of approaching our existing customers with another product, we thought it would be best to pair the GoFred app advertisement with our print visitors guide, GoFredericksburg. That encouraged more print advertising, which is still our bread and butter, and advertisers are rewarded with a presence on this new app.”*

*“Over the next few years, our industry will likely morph from selling print, web and app products separately into an all-in-one, inclusive product that will help our advertisers gain exposure across the mediums. That will be a win-win.”*

A major app sponsorship with the area hospital helped to underwrite the cost of development and forge a deeper relationship with their main advertiser.

*“Hill Country Memorial is a forward-looking and very brand-conscious entity. We approached them about being the premiere sponsor and we charged them just \$250 a month. We probably could have got more, but they are our number one print customer, so we wanted to offer it to them first while being kind to their advertising budget. It’s a top small hospital nationally, so this helps them expose their brand to a national, even global, audience since we get visitors from all over the world.”*

### **Creating Value for Advertisers Helps to Close Deals**

The flexible Bar-Z app platform enables the Standard to carve out different advertising options based on their desired advertising program.



*“For full-page ads, we offered them the full package – 24 photos, plus a video, and all the listing, including GPS, click to call, social media click options and more. We did the same for smaller advertisers, too, just offered them fewer photos and options.”*

*“We want it to be a customer-friendly option, so advertisers will see that they are getting attention from the app, whether it’s someone just passing by and dropping into their store, to getting phone calls, “Likes” or web hits straight from the app.”*

*“I love the GPS that will let people know when they’re within a certain distance of a business that’s on the app. As many visitors as we have walking on Main Street, that’s extremely valuable to restaurants and retailers there.”*

### **Creating Product Synergies Drives Results**

The organization has been able to leverage its multiple products to reach different audiences on multiple mediums and with different targeted content.

*“There are tons of cross-promotion opportunities. Since print is still the most popular medium with our readers, we have advertisements for the app in every edition and in our various niche publications. Even in our hunting guide, there was an ad for the GoFred app. Why? Because*

*everyone has a mobile device and everyone can find something they'll like among our 200-plus advertisers on the GoFred app."*

*"We also want to keep the brand awareness alive locally in our print products, so we are developing a GoFred Calendar of the top entertainment picks to have in our weekly newspaper."*

*"We have tons of information about local businesses, attractions and events in our print guide, but not everyone is going to thumb through all 164 pages when they visit. However, most everyone is carrying a mobile device and Bar-Z's app offered an attractive way to reach people who want to visit wineries, or who are walking down Main Street window shopping without a set agenda."*

### **Proven Success since the Launch of their App**

The Standard has enjoyed great success with their overarching mobile and print approach and is dedicated to continually improving their app to further drive audiences, increase revenue and meet the needs of their advertisers.

*"Our GoFredericksburg Visitors Guide revenue was a record \$146,000 this spring. We did raise our prices to include a presence on the app. Even if we only dedicated 6 percent of revenue to the app, we would have made it profitable. But we view this as a value-added product, so it's worth much more – probably closer to \$15,000 each edition or around \$30,000 for the year."*

*"I think it's a cool app. We came up with a snappy logo and we're promoting it with our brand. Bar-Z's service is great and I or a sales person or Matt Ward (Digital Media Director) can call anytime and get questions answered quickly. Mostly, for customers, it's user-friendly."*

*"We love it, and we're looking forward to making it even better as time goes on and this market continues to grow."*

### **Download the GoFred App**

