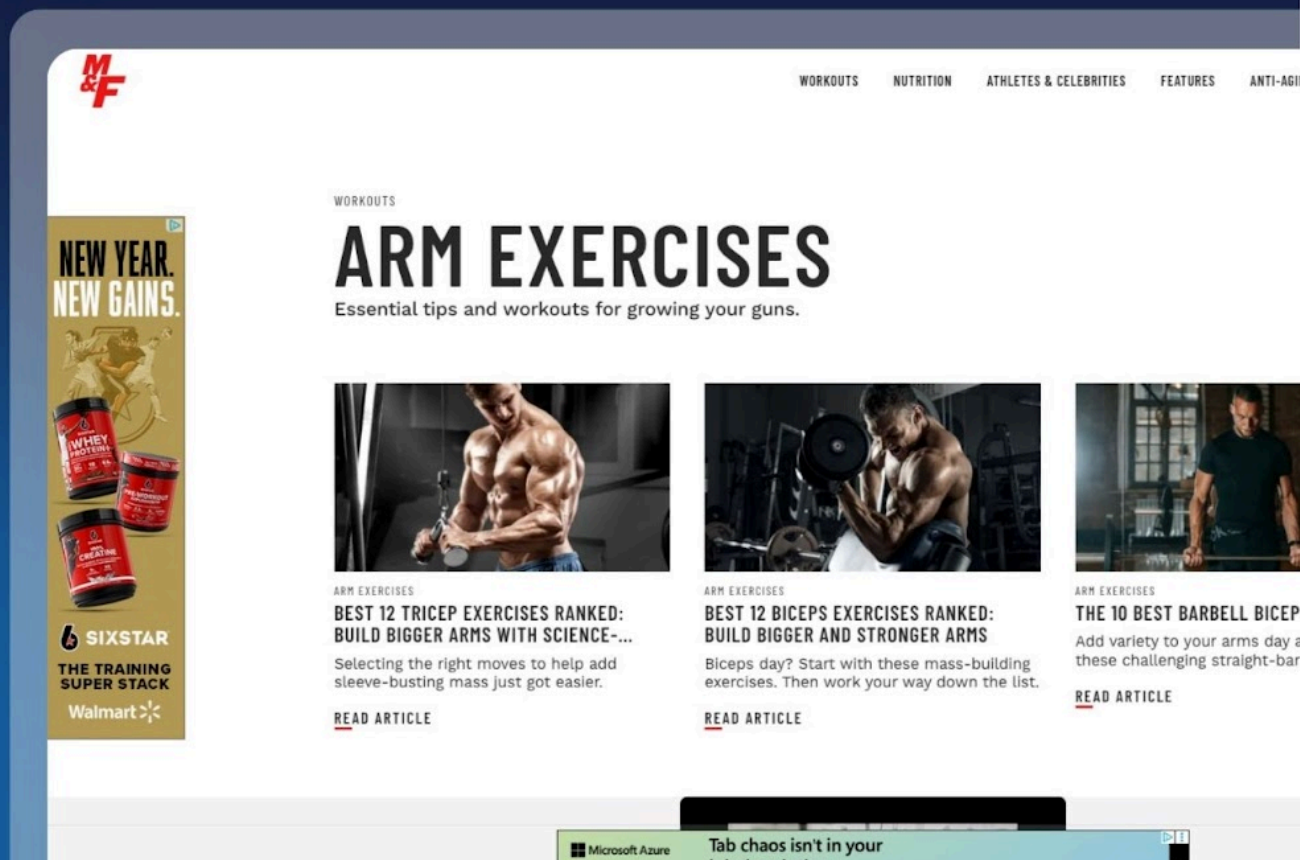


Case Study

How Muscle & Fitness Transformed from Print to Digital Powerhouse with 60–70% of Revenue



60–70%

Revenue from Programmatic

Programmatic advertising now drives the majority of total company revenue

Complete

Digital Transformation

Successfully transitioned from print to all-digital 4–5 years ago

Seamless

Direct Sales Integration

Internal sales team works alongside programmatic with zero friction

About Muscle & Fitness

[Muscle & Fitness](#) is one of the most iconic names in fitness media, delivering expert workout advice, nutrition guidance, and lifestyle content to fitness enthusiasts worldwide. With decades of brand heritage built through their legendary print publication, the brand has successfully evolved into a digital-first powerhouse while maintaining the authority and trust that made them an industry leader.

About four to five years ago, Muscle & Fitness made the bold decision to sunset their print publication entirely, pivoting to an all-digital content strategy. This transformation required not just a shift in content distribution, but a complete reimagining of their revenue model — one where programmatic advertising would become a cornerstone of their business.

The Challenge: From Print Revenue to Digital Monetization

The transition from print to digital is never simple, especially for a legacy brand with established revenue streams. Muscle & Fitness faced the classic publisher's

dilemma: how do you build robust digital advertising revenue without compromising the user experience that keeps readers engaged?

Like many publishers making this leap, the team needed a partner who could help them navigate the complexities of programmatic advertising while working seamlessly alongside their existing internal direct sales team. They needed sophisticated ad monetization, but they also needed someone who understood that subscription revenue remained a key part of their business model.

"We get quite a bit of traffic, and although it's great for our sales team to sell those spots directly, it just makes more sense to join forces with Playwire."

Jenny De Souza
Muscle & Fitness

Building a Revenue Partnership That Actually Works

The partnership between Muscle & Fitness and Playwire was built on a straightforward value proposition: Playwire handles the programmatic heavy lifting while the internal sales team continues running direct campaigns. No territorial battles. No complicated handoffs. Just a seamless integration that maximizes every available impression.

Through bi-weekly strategy calls with their dedicated Partner Success team, Muscle & Fitness gained not just a monetization platform, but a strategic advisor. The collaboration ensures that when the direct sales team closes a deal, it gets

prioritized appropriately — and when inventory isn't sold directly, programmatic demand fills in at optimal rates.

The Partnership: What Sets Playwire Apart?

For the Muscle & Fitness team, the partnership comes down to a few key differentiators:

Responsive, Practical Support

In an industry full of vendors who go quiet after the contract is signed, Playwire's Partner Success team stands out. The team is consistently responsive and supportive, treating every question as an opportunity to add value rather than an interruption to their day.

Data-Driven Insights That Actually Matter

For a digital-first operation, data is everything. Muscle & Fitness relies heavily on performance metrics to evaluate success, report to stakeholders, and make strategic decisions. Playwire delivers practical, concise analytics support — helping the team evaluate year-over-year and quarter-over-quarter performance with clarity.

"Data is super important. I have to evaluate performance and report back to our sponsors and shareholders. Playwire has been practical, concise, and supportive in helping us understand our metrics, making understanding performance seamless."

Jenny De Souza
Muscle & Fitness

Seamless Direct Sales Integration

Having an internal direct sales team shouldn't mean fighting with your programmatic partner over inventory. Playwire's approach ensures both revenue streams work together harmoniously. When direct deals come in, the process of prioritizing them over programmatic is smooth and straightforward: no friction, no surprises.

The Results: A Complete Revenue Transformation

The partnership has fundamentally shifted Muscle & Fitness's revenue composition. Today, approximately 60–70% of the company's total revenue comes from programmatic advertising, a remarkable transformation for a brand that built its legacy on print.

This isn't just about replacing old revenue with new; it's about building a sustainable, scalable business model for the digital age. The combination of programmatic efficiency and direct sales relationships creates a diversified revenue base that can weather market fluctuations.

Looking Forward: A Partnership Built for Growth

The partnership continues to evolve. As Muscle & Fitness balances subscription and advertising revenue streams, Playwire remains a strategic partner, testing new approaches and optimizing strategies to maximize performance across both channels.

For Muscle & Fitness, the journey from print powerhouse to digital revenue machine is a testament to what happens when legacy brands embrace change with the right partner. The metrics speak for themselves, but perhaps more importantly, the relationship works — practically, consistently, and without the drama that too often characterizes vendor partnerships.

When asked what she would tell other publishers considering Playwire, Jenny's response was simple: "Do it."

Jenny De Souza
Muscle & fitness