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## ChicagoMod Magazine: A New Luxury Title That Promises To Deliver On Its Tagline By Showing Us How To Have A “Life Well Lived” - The Mr. Magazine™ Interview With Shannon Steitz, President & Publisher, ChicagoMod Magazine...

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A Mr. Magazine™ Launch Story...

“The first five years of any business is never a walk in a rose garden. (Laughs) I knew that when I set out to do this, so I was never expecting a walk in a rose garden. Also, this industry is a challenge. As you mentioned earlier, there is a lot of competition out there, and there will continue to be, regardless of the misconceptions about print. And certainly, around niche publications, I feel there is a heavy misconception.” Shannon Steitz (On whether launching two print magazines has been an easy endeavor)...

A luxury magazine geared toward the ultra-affluent market, ChicagoMod joins its sister publication, HudsonMod, and gives us a glimpse of modern-day luxury for the Chicago metropolitan area, while also offering international perspectives for its very niche audience.

Shannon Steitz is president and group publisher of MOD Media, the company that produces both ChicagoMod and HudsonMod and said that their newest publication presents a fresh and different look at all the things that pique the interests of individuals who have a minimum annual income of \$500,000, which she is the first to admit, is a very niche audience indeed, but one that isn't being served in the way that ChicagoMod delivers.

I spoke with Shannon recently and we talked about this latest endeavor and how her company, which includes a custom publishing division, focuses on partnering with its clients to meet key marketing objectives, something that Shannon said is a must in the luxury magazine business. She hopes ChicagoMod will create opportunities for its brand partners to connect with Chicago's most discerning audience and present the “Windy City” as a sought-after worldwide market for them.

The magazine will be distributed six times a year through exclusive in-home delivery to Chicago's most affluent residents between the ages of 35 and 55, at high-profile events in the Chicago area, and through placement in-room at hotels and resorts and in high-end establishments, such as luxury retailers, spas and private jet terminals. It's a beautiful, glossy publication that promises to deliver on its



tagline of showing its readership how to have a “Life Well Lived.”

So, I hope that you enjoy this up close look into a luxury market magazine and the woman behind it – the Mr. Magazine™ interview with Shannon Steitz, president & publisher, ChicagoMod Magazine.

**But first the sound-bites:**

**On whether people have asked her if she's out of her mind for producing another luxury title for an already crowded Chicago market:** I've heard that Chicago is a crowded luxury market before, but I don't really view it that way. Greenspun and Modern Luxury are there, that's two publications, and there are some others that we're certainly aware of as well. But I think that's just an indication that it's a viable market, really. Competition is good; I've always viewed it that way.

**On how her luxury titles differ from the others already in the marketplace:** From a content standpoint, people will see a distinction there, in that while it is a Chicago magazine, and we certainly have a lot of Chicago content, there is also international content to serve the discerning appetites of our ultra-affluent readership.

**On whether she thinks print is still the best way to reach that readership:** I think a customized, multimedia solution is the best way to reach any audience, including the ultra-affluent. Print is one of many pieces of the puzzle, and that's how we approach all of our client relationships.

**On what she offers in that multimedia approach:** We approach each relationship with a comprehensive needs analysis, really trying to understand our clients' objectives and coming up with custom-tailored solutions to meet them. And that's different for every client.

**On what some of those solutions are:** It really ranges, but at the end of the day, it's really about tapping into their perspective buyer who has the ability based on demographics, and we're able to deliver that more effectively, I feel, than most other media companies.

**On the magazine's tagline "Life Well Lived" and what it means:** As far as the meaning of a "Life Well Lived," we've learned over the years by interviewing many, many people and asking them what luxury means to them, it's so subjective and it means very different things to various people.

**On who would be standing in front of her if she could strike the magazine with a magic wand and turn it into a living, breathing human being, and would it be her:** It wouldn't be any one person. I think, certainly, my opinions weigh heavily, in terms of our publications, but at the same time, I look toward others on my team to collaborate and ensure that we're putting out the very best quality product that we can possibly produce. I'm the type of person that sits in meetings and encourages feedback from my staff, realizing at the end of the day that I don't know everything, and it's impossible to stay on top of everything that we have to cover.

**On whether her last five years in the publishing business with HudsonMod and now with ChicagoMod has been a walk in a rose garden, or she's had to face challenges along the way:** The first five years of any business is never a walk in a rose garden. (Laughs) I knew that when I



set out to do this, so I was never expecting a walk in a rose garden. Also, this industry is a challenge. As you mentioned earlier, there is a lot of competition out there, and there will continue to be, regardless of the misconceptions about print, certainly around niche publications. I feel there is a heavy misconception.

**On what motivates her to get out of bed in the mornings:** What makes me most satisfied is when I see that our services and our products are working on behalf of our clients, and that we're having a positive impact on their business. As a former CFO, there's nothing better than that.

**On what's next for her company:** That remains to be seen, but there will certainly be another market next year, and we'll continue to also grow the custom publishing division of MOD Media as well.

**On anything else she'd like to add:** I think Chicago is a great city and I'm so thrilled that we chose it for this magazine. I've spent a lot of time there. Aside from all of the statistics that support us moving into that territory, it's just a place that I now consider home myself.

**On what someone would find her doing if they showed up unexpectedly to her home one evening:** I'm rarely at home, you'd be lucky to catch me there, but you would certainly find me with my dog, Missy. I have a rescue that is half Shar-Pei and half Yellow Labrador. Her pen name is Hudson Maddie, as she grew up in the office of HudsonMod. So, I'm certainly with my dog and my children, when they're not off playing sports and doing their thing, because they take a lot after their mother, so they're rarely home as well.

**On what keeps her up at night:** Just thinking about the things that I wasn't able to get to during any given day. It's never fast enough; it's never good enough; it could always be done better, quicker and differently. So, I'm always looking to, basically, enhance and elevate all that we do as a company, in each and every publication.

*And now the lightly edited transcript of the Mr. Magazine™ interview with Shannon Steitz, president and publisher, ChicagoMod magazine.*

**Samir Husni: Do people ask are you out your mind because you published a print magazine five years ago, and now you're doing another one in a very crowded luxury market; what gives?**

Shannon Steitz: I've heard that Chicago is a crowded luxury market before, but I don't really view it that way. Greenspun and Modern Luxury are there, that's two publications, and there are some others that we're certainly aware of as well. But I think that's just an indication that it's a viable market, really. Competition is good; I've always viewed it that way.

And we do offer key points of distinction and unique offerings to our clients, so I think there's room for another publication, and there is certainly room for ChicagoMod.

**Samir Husni: When you say there's room for other publications and other points of differentiation; tell me the DNA of ChicagoMod, and HudsonMod, since you've been doing that title for five years now, and how are your titles different from the other luxury titles in the marketplace?**

Shannon Steitz: From a content standpoint, people will see a distinction there, in that while it is a Chicago magazine, and we certainly have a lot of Chicago content, there is also international content to serve the discerning appetites of our ultra-affluent readership. In order to receive ChicagoMod, one has to earn a minimum of \$500,000 annually, so we want to ensure that we're serving those appetites with insider perspective and content written by industry experts.

**Samir Husni: Do you think print is still the best way to reach that audience?**

Shannon Steitz: I think a customized, multimedia solution is the best way to reach any audience, including the ultra-affluent. Print is one of many pieces of the puzzle, and that's how we approach all of our client relationships.

**Samir Husni: Can you describe that multimedia approach in your client relationships; what are you offering besides the content of the magazine that is a different experience than they can get with Modern Luxury or Greenspun?**

Shannon Steitz: We approach each relationship with a comprehensive needs analysis, really trying to understand our clients' objectives and coming up with custom-tailored solutions to meet them. And that's different for every client. More times than not, given our track record on the events side, our clients do want us to host events. So, we typically produce events on their behalf, in addition to digital and other strategic marketing offerings.

**Samir Husni: Can you name a few of those solutions?**

Shannon Steitz: It really ranges, but at the end of the day, it's really about tapping into their perspective buyer who has the ability based on demographics, and we're able to deliver that more effectively, I feel, than most other media companies.

**Samir Husni: Your tagline is "Life Well Lived." And your Letters from the Publisher are so personalized, they actually reflect your life well lived. Do you see yourself as the persona of the magazine and it's a reflection of you?**

Shannon Steitz: As far as the meaning of a "Life Well Lived," we've learned over the years by interviewing many, many people and asking them what luxury means to them, it's so subjective and it means very different things to various people.

As far as what I view myself as, that's an interesting question because I've never thought of it. What is top of mind is, I view myself as a businesswoman and an entrepreneur; I love what I do and I think that represents a piece of that "Life Well Lived," loving what you do every day.

**Samir Husni: If you could strike the magazine with a magic wand and turn it into a living, breathing human being, who would be standing before you afterwards? Would it be Shannon Steitz?**



Shannon Steitz: It wouldn't be any one person. I think, certainly, my opinions weigh heavily, in terms of our publications, but at the same time, I look toward others on my team to collaborate and ensure that we're putting out the very best quality product that we can possibly produce. I'm the type of person that sits in meetings and encourages feedback from my staff, realizing at the end of the day that I don't know everything, and it's impossible to stay on top of everything that we have to cover. So, at the end of the day, yes, I think the magazine, of course, represents a fair amount of me personally, but also my staff.

And on our staff we have experts. If there's an auto feature, it's written by Ferrari magazine's former editor in chief, Dom Miliano. He's an expert and has driven every make and model car prior to writing about it. So, I really look toward my staff quite a bit to ensure that the quality level is there in this publication.

**Samir Husni: Has it been a walk in a rose garden for you these last five years with HudsonMod and now with launching ChicagoMod, or have you had some challenges along the way?**

Shannon Steitz: The first five years of any business is never a walk in a rose garden. (Laughs) I knew that when I set out to do this, so I was never expecting a walk in a rose garden. Also, this industry is a challenge. As you mentioned earlier, there is a lot of competition out there, and there will continue to be, regardless of the misconceptions about print. And certainly, around niche publications, I feel there is a heavy misconception.

I think we've been very fortunate, and we've been very blessed at the same time to have had the five years that we've had. Part of that is probably luck, and the other part is our hard work. We live this. There is a lot of blood, sweat and tears in every client relationship; in every publication that we produce, especially on our custom publishing side. So, nothing is a walk in the park. (Laughs again)

**Samir Husni: What makes Shannon click and tick; what motivates you to get out of bed every morning and look forward to another day in a life well lived?**

Shannon Steitz: What makes me most satisfied is when I see that our services and our products are working on behalf of our clients, and that we're having a positive impact on their business. As a former CFO, there's nothing better than that.

**Samir Husni: You began with New Jersey/New York, now Chicago; what's next?**

Shannon Steitz: (Laughs) That remains to be seen, but there will certainly be another market next year, and we'll continue to also grow the custom publishing division of MOD Media as well.

**Samir Husni: Is there anything else you'd like to add?**



Shannon Steitz: I think Chicago is a great city and I'm so thrilled that we chose it for this magazine. I've spent a lot of time there. Aside from all of the statistics that support us moving into that territory, it's just a place that I now consider home myself. And I couldn't be more thrilled.

In fact, we're premiering the magazine in Chicago very soon and Taylor Kinney and the cast of "Chicago Fire," a number of athletes and other celebs will all be lining the red carpet.

**Samir Husni: If I showed up unexpectedly to your home one evening after work, what do I find you doing; reading a book; watching TV; having a glass of wine; reading a magazine; or just playing with your dog?**

Shannon Steitz: I'm rarely at home, you'd be lucky to catch me there, but you would certainly find me with my dog, Missy. I have a rescue that is half Shar-Pei and half Yellow Labrador. Her pen name is Hudson Maddie, as she grew up in the office of HudsonMod. So, I'm certainly with my dog and my children, when they're not off playing sports and doing their thing, because they take a lot after their mother, so they're rarely home as well.

**Samir Husni: My typical last question; what keeps you up at night?**

Shannon Steitz: Just thinking about the things that I wasn't able to get to during any given day. It's never fast enough; it's never good enough; it could always be done better, quicker and differently. So, I'm always looking to, basically, enhance and elevate all that we do as a company, in each and every publication. Occasionally, does that keep me up at night? Absolutely. But not often, because typically when my head hits the pillow, I'm out, preparing to go onto the next day and the next adventure, which I love.

**Samir Husni: Thank you.**

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