

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

AD PRO Directory member growth up 155pc YTD

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The outlet's members-only program offers exclusive events and access to design industry insiders. Image courtesy of Cond Nast/Jenna Bascom Photography

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Cond Nast shelter publication *Architectural Digest* is celebrating the anniversary of its members-only club for industry professionals.

Founded in 2019, AD PRO has evolved from an exclusive news and events network into an ecosystem featuring various design resources. The numbers are in on the platform's latest introduction editors share that the AD PRO Directory, which launched in January 2023, has seen a 155 percent year-to-date member growth rate year-over-year.

"Our AD PRO Directory, which consists of around 700 architects, interior designers and landscape professionals across the U.S., is a huge focus for us right now," said Amy Astley, global editorial director and U.S. editor in chief at *Architectural Digest*, New York.

"We believe in these members and stand behind their work, and are always looking for ways that we can build relationships with them and celebrate their successes," Ms. Astley said. "Online events are one part of that, but we are also always looking for ways to fold these members into our activations with commercial partners."

"Builders and contractors are an essential part of the industry, and by more formally bringing them into the fold of AD through the Directory later this year, our offering to readers and the trade will be all the richer."

Building out AD PRO

Open-access and up-to-date, the AD PRO Directory features architects, interior designers and landscape specialists.

Listing recommendations from the *Architectural Digest* team, the database can be searched by profession and location, connecting clients with experts across regions.

"The Directory, which has grown tremendously since its launch in January 2023, distinguishes itself from other resources on the market in large part through its association with the magazine and its legacy," said Ms. Astley.

AD PRO DIRECTORY

The AD PRO Directory is now over a year old. Image courtesy of Cond Nast

"Being a member of the AD PRO Directory means that you have had your application personally reviewed and vetted by a member of our AD editorial team something that no other competitor can claim," she said. "When these applicants get the green light, they receive a profile on the architecturaldigest.com domain, as well as an AD-branded badge that they are free to share alongside their portfolios online."

Architectural Digest states that the larger AD PRO platform is generating significant revenue for the outlet.

Allowing its audience opportunities to interact with to the magazine's editorial team directly, while placing members in touch with each other, plus other top sector talents, the destination brings to life Ms. Astley's original vision.

"AD's reputation as the leading design authority carries a lot of weight and that's true for consumer and professional audiences alike," said Ms. Astley.

"We've taken that seriously as we've refined our value proposition on AD PRO as a trade resource over the past five years, and also as we have launched the AD PRO Directory, our new product for connecting readers of AD with approved designers they can hire," she said. "In both cases, we are always looking for ways we can bring our loyalists something they can't find anywhere else whether it's trend insights or business advice from AD100 talent, intel from our own astute editors, on-the-ground reports from major industry events, or curation of our 100-plus years of AD archives."



AD frequently hosts members at events in major markets such as New York City. Image courtesy of Cond Nast/Sean Sime

AD PRO also lends its community blueprints from past eras by granting access to previous issues of the publication via the AD archive. Future-facing, members have started receiving trend reports and “grow your business” content.

This, plus community events such as live networking panels in key markets and monthly virtual workshops, have all arrived within the last 12 months, *Architectural Digest* shares.

“Design professionals might find their way to AD PRO through any number of channels the magazine, social media, an article shared through an online aggregator, search,” said Ms. Astley.

“But the question is, how do you get them to join and, equally important, keep coming back?” she said. “We study our members’ behavior closely, and from that, we know that for them, community is big!

“With AD being at the center of so many conversations in design, we’re in a strong position to bring our users together, help them benefit from each others’ knowledge, and network with one another.”

AD PRO Directory turns one

The AD PRO Directory was announced in late 2022 ([see story](#)) and continues to scale.

“This year, we have made a big push to curate top voices in the design industry for virtual conversations around essential business topics, and invited audience participation in the events something that our members have enthusiastically embraced,” said Ms. Astley.

“In December, for instance, we held a workshop on designers’ paths to the AD100, with a conversation moderated by our global interiors and garden director, Alison Levasseur,” she said. “In January, I facilitated a virtual conversation with AD100 designer Nicole Hollis and her partner in life and business, Lewis Heathcote, which drilled into the nitty-gritty of setting up your business for a profitable year.



AD PRO events give members face time with industry giants, the editorial community and one another. Image courtesy of Cond Nast/Jenna Bascom Photography

“And just last month, our global visuals director Michael Shome held an online panel with preeminent interiors photographer Douglas Friedman and one of AD’s go-to stylists, Dorcia Kelley, on how to capture your work best for editorial; these are big names that our members are keen to learn from, and ask questions to themselves.”

In 2023, the outlet released a documentary short starring network talents. Directed by American filmmaker Kate Novak, “AD100: The New Taste” delves into the career journeys of some of the world’s most accomplished modern-day designers and architects ([see story](#)).

“Over the past few years, we have launched digital franchises that allow us to bring in readers with different priorities,” said Ms. Astley.

“For design enthusiasts seeking the best luxury interiors and groundbreaking architecture, there’s AD online and the print magazine,” she said. “For first-time homeowners or adherents of small-space living, there’s Clever; for the professional designer, there’s AD PRO; for the DIYer, there’s AD It Yourself.

“These audiences are adjacent, and at times, overlapping and by delivering them the stories they crave, we are able to stay at the

forefront of design conversation.”

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