
INFORMER



**Community
Papers of
Michigan**

September 2019



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Elaine S. Myers
C&G Newspapers
CPM Board Member

Why I Give a Damn About Community Newspapers

You may have wondered WHY for the past five and now six months, the headline on page 2 has been: Why I Give a Damn About Community Papers? Well, as you may have guessed...I'm going to tell you.

Once upon a time, shortly after the end of World War II, a hand-full of local newspaper owners decided to get together and meet. The purpose was to discuss what actions could be taken to improve their family owned, local shoppers and newspapers. What a concept right? That group was the beginning of what is now Community Papers of Michigan.

What would that have looked like back in the mid 40's? Nine or Ten "men" all gussied up in grey suits, white shirts, vests and ties, wing-tip shoes? Smoking Chesterfields, Camels or Pall Mall cigarettes. There may have even been a few Strohs or Blatz beers bottles and something to mix for a Seven n" Seven to consume during lunch. Of course, any "female" attending would have been there only to take shorthand, type notes on a

manual typewriter, or just to serve lunch.

What did they discuss? In addition to competing for news stories with "the BIG DAILY newspapers, there were a handful of radio and TV stations for these owners to compete with for the "scoop" on their local news story of the week. Those owners also had to compete for advertising and subscription dollars. Think about the dollars lost to newspapers because of radio and TV "jingles" for: Wrigley Gum, Faygo, Pepsodent and Colgate toothpaste, Cheer laundry soap, Halo shampoo, Ivory soap, and Kellogg to name a few? And the catalogs from Sears Roebuck, Yellow Pages, Readers Digest and whatever other competitive media existed, back in the day. While attempting to steal the eyes and ears of the local residents, these "competitive mediums" were helping to eat into the profits of those local family publications, and the owners were adamant about trying to improve that situation while serving the needs of their local community.

This article could never display the passion, responsibility, and dedication that existed with those owners. The newspapers were a part of the community along with being the family owned business. The newspapers were the result of the family's own, blood, sweat, tears. It was the result of the family possibly covering and writing a

breaking story, maybe taking photos, some owners may have even helped to position the hot-type on the plates.

The owners had INK in their blood. They knew most everyone in the area. Advertisers became were personal friends. Whatever was printed had a direct impact on their family, their neighbors, and the entire community where they lived, worshipped and shopped.

The reason I'm spotlighting this passion, involvement and dedication of nearly 80 years ago is because... I believe, it still exists in our Community Newspapers! We may not all be owners. Because of automation and normal business growth, we may not be as "hands-on" as they were, once upon a time.

We all may be hearing, "How's your newspaper doing?" Is anyone reading a newspaper anymore? Are businesses still purchasing ads with you? Then of course as I left the Dentist office the other day, (the Dentist advertises with C & G Newspapers) he remarked, "Oh, by the way, I LOVE you guys." As a community newspaper we are members of all the local Chambers of Commerce, we help to sponsor many of their events and our sales reps stay involved with the advertisers, much like, "Back in the Forties". (Continued on page 3.)

Why I Give A Damn (Continued from page 2)

Because I'm a sales & marketing manager at C & G Newspapers...I wanted to take the pulse of, and sort of measure the passion and perceived dedication that exists with our staff, so I asked them to complete a simple survey and I'm sharing a few of their responses with you. I invite you to do the same with your staff and I sincerely hope the responses you receive are as rewarding, invigorating and reassuring as these were.

Here it is:

Tell me two things:

1. What is it that you like about working at C & G Newspapers?
2. One specific thing do you like about YOUR particular job?

A-1: I love Sales, communicating with others and helping business owners, managers and advertising agencies meet their specific goals; Doing so, helps to make my personal goals, in life and business, a reality.

A-2: I like meeting and talking with clients and potential clients.

A-1 I like to help businesses grow their business.

A-2 Great work environment, friendly people and working for a family that truly cares about the individuals that work for them and the communities that they serve.

A-1 I like the interaction with business decision makers and being able to offer a variety of ad plans that can meet the businesses particular needs.

A-2 Any issues or problems are addressed immediately. All family members stop to give you undivided attention as we're constantly interrupting them like little kids always screaming for their needy little demands to be met. Gotta be irritating, but they don't act like it.

A-1 I like the action and thrill of meeting new people I like the "chase of the ad" I like trying to figure out what works when something doesn't. I like the rush I get, when helping out a new account.

A-2 I like meeting the people of my community. It makes me feel like part of the town . It makes me feel like I contributed to getting the word out about the business community.

A-1 I like the regular interaction with all my lovely customers.

A-2 I like my job because of the relationships I have developed with clients and co-workers, both personally and professionally.

A-1 I like working with smaller businesses. I have the opportunity to work with owners who may not have done much of any advertising in the past or on a limited basis. I like being the expert and offering advice on slogans, sale ideas and even how to price specific items. I feel that in our job we are often like an ad agency!

A-2 I love the challenge of developing and growing relationships with both new and existing clients. This then naturally leads to a bond of trust from business owners so they feel comfortable getting involved with not only myself, but more importantly, embrace and see the value of the services provided from C & G News as a vehicle to help grow their businesses in the community. I love to sell!!!

...And THAT's why I give a damn about Community Newspapers!

...I hope you all live happily ever after.

The End!



Check us out at

<https://www.facebook.com/communitypapersofmichigan/>

Our members are encouraged to contribute to this site with industry-related info, local editorial features and other information our members and readers would find interesting.



By Bob Berting
Berting Communications

What is The Core Value of Your Publication?

Your salespeople are telling your prospects and customers that you are the best newspaper in town or if you're the only newspaper, you're the best media choice in town. They go on to say you have the best customer service in town. But what is your core value? What is the value you bring to the marketplace that no one else can bring? What impact does that value have on the prospect, not intellectually, but emotionally? What value do you bring that will compel your prospect to ask you to fix their problems.

Principles of contemporary selling

Cut down on selling emphasis and begin using psychology and philosophy to translate your value. When you stop selling, your prospect will feel prone to open up and give you the reasons why he or she needs you to fix his or her problems. Isn't that what we want anyway? Salespeople who sell hard and relentlessly sometimes don't understand human nature—and it costs them. You still do your dog and pony show to sleepy eyes. Stop the show and ask questions about their problems and existing conditions. A key question is: "What conditions exist in your company that caused you to be interested in our publication?" Let them talk.

Never underestimate the propensity to purchase

You have seen this happen. A prospective advertiser will balk at spending \$1500.00, then turn around and spend \$2500.00 with a competitor. Why? Because the belief was there. The energy was there. The money is always there. Money is conceptual. Many times, the danger is that salespeople will make decisions for the prospect before they do. Don't make the decision for the prospect before they do. Don't make the decision for the prospect about anything, especially money. Also, sometimes the more one pays for something, the more value they attach to it—providing the value is actually there. The world is full of buyers who have bought half a solution only because of the salesperson's fear to talk in larger terms that would have solved the entire problem of the prospect or customer.

Never let your fears affect your selling

Often, we won't ask the question because we're afraid of the answer. The prospect is telling you about a severe problem he has. You need to ask "Why haven't you learned to solve this before?" By asking, you will be finding out an important part of his values—his own fear. From that, you can determine the best corrective action to take.

Don't overwhelm your prospect

You have tremendous knowledge about your publication—type styles, printing press capability, demographic statistics, website benefits, etc. You feel good about what you know and you want to start spouting all this information to the prospect. Many times, the reaction to all this rhetoric is actually wearing the customer out. Never wear out the one with the check.

So you know everything there is to know about newspaper advertising. But many times you don't know the customer's compelling problems that need to be solved—and you need to know them.

"See Bob's website at www.bobberting.com where you can opt-in to receive his Advanced Advertising Sales Monthly Memo, learn about his consulting service and see how he can become a columnist for your publication. You can also purchase his three e-book bundle for the newspaper industry, and learn more about all his training services including his tele-seminar and webinar programs. Bob is a professional speaker, sales trainer, and publisher consultant and has conducted over 1500 seminars for newspaper advertising salespeople, management, customers, and print media associations. Contact Bob at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408."



Donna Hanbery

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Dear SMC Members:

Recently the Postal Service had its periodic Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) meeting. There was not a lot of discussion about pricing, but in general, it appears that the price change should be very close to 2%. In the middle of this month, the August CPI numbers are announced and this is generally what controls the cap calculation.

It appears likely that the price changes and filing will occur in mid-October. Last year the filing was a couple of days early, on October 10th.

The Postal Service has given me assurances in a number of meetings I had with them, that it will pay closer attention to any aspects of any price change that are "out of whack" with the overall CPI adjustment.

Marketing mailers have generally been told that, other than parcels, they will not see structural or significant changes outside of the cap allowance.

As of this date, there has been no specific discussion or promises made on promotions.

As soon as additional information is released, I will share it with members.

On a personal note, I will be getting a full knee replacement in mid-September. It is my hope and plan to work as much as possible - as quickly as possible - after the procedure.

For any member emailing me and getting my out of office "I'm on a medical PTO bounce back" be assured that I am not going through anything other than an upgrade with new parts and will keep doing my best to keep SMC members informed.



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Color can get pretty complex. Fortunately we don't need to understand everything in order to create effective ads... but here are some more details you do need to know...

Color ^{MY} World 2

Ad Talk

* with Ellen Hanrahan

Last month we looked at basic color terms. There are books, articles and information on color theory, color usage and the psychological impact of color in advertising, but we don't have to know everything in order to use color effectively (we drive cars, but we don't have to know how everything works!).

We work with visuals in print, and as such, we need to reproduce the colors we choose across a range of output devices—computers, phones, tablets, printers and offset presses. There is a need for color management.

Every device has certain capabilities and there is no device that can reproduce exactly the full range of color that's visible to the human eye. Each device has a specific range or "gamut" of colors.

Again there's a lot of information, but we are only going to focus on two color models—RGB and CMYK.

Printing RGB

The RGB color model is an *additive* color model in which red, green, and blue light are added together in various ways to reproduce a broad array of colors. The name comes from the initials of the three *additive* primary colors, red, green, and blue.

In *additive* color models such as RGB, white is the "additive" combination of all primary colored lights, while black is the absence of light.

Printing in RGB is fine for most of the work we do in our daily lives. Most tabletop printers function with RGB inks and so we can do flyers, proofs, promos, etc. using just the printer. However, when we print newspapers or magazines, we manage our color using CMYK.

In the CMYK model, it is the opposite: white is the natural color of the paper or other background, while black results from a full combination of colored inks. To save money on ink, and to produce deeper black tones, unsaturated and dark colors are produced by using black ink instead of the combination of cyan, magenta and yellow.

R = Red
G = Green
B = Blue

Printing CMYK

In the offset printing process we use just four inks (there are some exceptions, as always!)... cyan, magenta, yellow and black, represented as CMYK.

The CMYK color model (also known as process color, four-color) is a *subtractive* color model, used in color printing, and is also used to describe the printing process itself. Though it varies by printer, press operator and press

run, ink is typically applied in the order of the abbreviation.

The "K" in CMYK stands for **key** since in four-color printing cyan, magenta, and yellow printing plates are carefully keyed or aligned with the key of the black key plate.

The CMYK model works by partially or entirely masking colors on a lighter, usually white, background. The ink reduces the light that would otherwise be reflected.

Such a model is called *subtractive* because the inks "subtract" brightness from white.

C = Cyan
M = Magenta
Y = Yellow
K = Black









Color and PMS

Pantone Matching System, that is! We have looked at some basic color terms (last month) and this month at the RGB and CMYK models.

There are other color models to choose from but most commercial presses in the U.S. use the *Pantone Matching System* when we want to specify "spot" colors. This is a largely standardized color reproduction system and by standardizing the colors, different manufacturers in different locations can all refer to the Pantone system to make sure colors match without direct contact with one another.

While the CMYK process is a method of offset printing color by using four inks—cyan, magenta, yellow, and black, the Pantone system's vast array of spot colors used 13 base pigments (15 including white and black) mixed in specified amounts (don't quote me, this may have changed—but it won't affect your life!).

The Pantone system also allows for many 'special' colors to be produced such as metallic and fluorescent. Pantone colors are usually described by their allocated number (typically referred to as, for example, 'PMS 130'). PMS colors are almost always used in branding and major corporations specify exactly what their logo color must be, using the Pantone System. Here are a few of the Pantone "spot" colors:

 PANTONE RED 032	 PANTONE PURPLE	 PANTONE REFLEX BLUE	 PANTONE 328
 PANTONE 117	 PANTONE ORANGE 021	 PANTONE 300	 PANTONE 673

Chevreul's Law?

Never heard of this one, until I started to explore the idea of color theories...

Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889) a chemist by trade, tried to produce a systematic approach to seeing colors. In 1839 he published a work that dealt with the "simultaneous contrast" of colors, and contained his famous law (Chevreul's Law): "Two adjacent colors, when seen by the eye, will appear as dissimilar as possible."

In our example below, the Pantone 300 square appears to be a little lighter against the dark background (it also looks to be a little bit larger, but I did not change the size or color of either!). This illusion produces the most obvious example of simultaneous contrast.



Most of us print on newsprint (very absorbent, lots of dot gain, colors are not always "crisp"), which means that if you run across a favorite color combination and there isn't very much black, you could probably omit black because "black on newsprint = mud." The "spot" PMS colors shown (below left) reproduce very well on newsprint.

That's the reason a lot of gray in an ad tends to lack contrast—unless you add white borders or other white relief to add that "pop."

Color Hierarchy on a Page

You may create any number of color combinations using the CMYK model, but it's best to practice restraint. Too many colors in an ad becomes too distracting and focus is lost.

It's all about proportions... so pick your **dominant color**, and the others then become accent colors.

Your **second color choice**, or accent color should be used more sparingly than your dominant color... you don't want the colors competing with each other. You are trying to create a color harmony or balance.

The **third color accent** should create a definite contrast... to call attention to some of the most important information in the ad so make it bold. Remember contrast? Colors that are too similar will fail in this regard.

Final Notes: Next month I'll wrap up color with some of my favorite "spot" colors; simple ways to use these colors effectively and some sample ads to give you an idea of how color can change and enhance the message.

Until next time...



I was an art teacher and changed to a graphic design career in the '80s. I write for IFPA TIP, and the CPM INFORMER. For info, PDFs of articles, or have ideas, e-mail: hanrahan.ln@att.net Ellen Hanrahan ©2019

GET REAL
THE PRINTED PAPER IS STILL A PUBLISHERS BEST ASSET!



By Peter Wagner
*Founder and Publisher,
The N'West Iowa REVIEW*

Newspapers Will Survive and Flourish Long-Term

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Any eighth-grader can launch an information and opinion website from a computer in the corner of his bedroom. But it takes financial backing, wise management, committed, professional writers and editors and a printing press to produce a credible newspaper.

If the strength and holding-power stand out in the printed word – if their printed paper is what makes them unique in their market – why are so many publishers betting their future on their website?

Sure, any wise publisher is going to have a website presence, but he's going to stake his future on his printed publication.

Family-owned neighborhood groceries, once a staple, were replaced by modern supermarkets the middle of the last century. But those neighborhood grocers were eventually replaced by today's convenience stores.

The same will be true of the hometown paper. The newspaper of today, attempting to be all things to all people, will eventually evolve into tomorrow's most read, most trusted local news source. Newspapers will, more than ever, be the glue that holds thriving, changing communities together.

But to do so, community newspapers must think local and be local. As recently as the mid-twentieth century,



hometown papers were still reporting who visited who and what was going on at the school, all the local churches and the Odd Fellow's hall. Community papers concentrated on local names and happenings never covered by outside media. They concentrated on the details of the American Legion Baseball game, who entered the hospital and the success of the summer rec program.

Newspapers must still provide the much-appreciated local news to survive and eventually grow. Print can do local information better than the radio station. Local radio has neither the air time nor reporting staff to report much beyond the headline of any story.

Local bloggers, independent websites and other digital formats never reach the broad audience of a subscription-

based or free distribution newspaper.

And independent websites are often not credible, choosing to share large doses of opinion with scraps of both worthy information and uninvestigated misinformation.

Finally, a newspaper covers the entire life of the community and clearly reports all that is important to the local reader. The neatly edited and attractively presented material, all in one easy-to-hold publication, makes keeping informed simple. That same reader would have to check a dozen local, independent, websites to even begin to obtain such knowledge and wisdom.

Content is everything. The number of editorial pages are not as important as the quality and originality of the stories printed on those pages. In order to survive today's cultural change, newspapers have to deliver (get the double meaning of deliver?) news and information the reader wants and might share around the watercolor that day.

But we have a difficult time ahead of us while waiting for others to recognize the need for, and importance of, the community paper. Newspaper circulation across the nation continues to decline. But many papers are doing so because the management is driving them in that direction, believing they can cut costs and increase reader numbers with a stronger on-line presence. (Continues on page 9.)



By Ryan Dohrn

*President/Founder,
Brain Swell Media LLC*

7 Ways to Boost Your Fall Ad Sales Numbers

For most ad sales professionals, the autumn season signals the beginning of the end of your ad sales year. Even if your fiscal year does not follow the calendar year, when you add the holiday season and new year celebrations into the mix, you have a double whammy that often brings ad sales to a slow crawl across the December finish line. Below are seven things I often share with my ad sales coaching and ad sales training clients at this time of year. I hope these ideas will encourage you to keep your energy high and your ad sales rolling forward this fall!

SPECIAL SIDE NOTE: Listen to the podcast on this topic in iTunes or SoundCloud: <http://360adsales.com/ad-sales-training-podcast>

Idea #1: Don't Believe the Crowd.

No one makes decisions this time of year. Lie. Let other ad sales people continue to believe this. In my ad sales training workshops I teach that most decisions to buy are made months before a deal is signed. If your ad sales process is to meet a new client, introduce your product or service, and get a signed deal after the first meeting, you are already doomed. Instant ad sales are rare. Learn from this error. Use this time of year to sell hard so that when the client's new budget is approved in the next fiscal year, you have the sale primed.

DO NOT wait until a budget is approved to start the ad sales cycle.

Another thing to consider is the simple 'use it or lose it' budget scenario. I have at least three clients that spend money before Dec 31 so that they do not lose the money in their next budget year. The "use it or lose it" money management plan is alive and well in most companies.

Idea #2: Look to Expand Your Client Relationships.

This is a great time of year for 'meet and greet', or 'lunch and learn' type meetings. As an ad sales coach, I call these 'non-ad sales meetings', or 'educational meetings'. Take advantage of the holiday spirit and plan meetings to drive knowledge, and to build relationships with new as well as existing clients.

Idea #3: Do Not Stop Prospecting.

Because many ad sales people feel that fall is a 'dead zone', they stop prospecting. Do not fall into this trap. While other ad sales professionals become dormant, you should look to be driving up your phone call and email volume. This will give you a leg up on the competition. From an ad sales training perspective, this needs to be a part of your daily routine. Never stop prospecting.

Idea #4: Re-ignite The Fire in What You Are Selling.

As the days get shorter so does our attention span. Also, the gray skies, as you drive to work, are less than inspirational.

The way you feel about your product affects the way you sell your product. This can cause you to sound and act lethargic. As an ad sales coach, I often ask my clients this question... "Go back in time and tell me what excited you about your job when you first started?" Then I ask, "Go back in time and think about what got you excited to sell this product when you first started?" I might also suggest that you listen to upbeat music on the drive to work. Change your screen saver or desktop image to something positive or fun. Find that love you once had for what you do, and re-ignite the ad sales flame.

Idea #5: Clean Up Your CRM Tools.

Really? Sounds like a bummer? Just do it! In my ad sales training workshops, I am amazed at how out of date many CRM tools are as we dig deep on client issues. Having your data in good working order is so important as you strive to be the best ad sales person in the land. Delete dead accounts. Trade accounts with others. Update outdated accounts. Do some CRM housekeeping.

Idea #6: Dig Deep on Your Personal Professional Development.

Use some of your down time to read a good ad sales book or a great personal development book. There are lists of great books everywhere online.

<http://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/27-books-these-successful-executives-say-inspired-them-the-most.html> (Continued on page 9.)

7 Ways to Boost Your Fall Ad Sales Numbers (Continued from page 8)

Watch inspiring videos online about ad sales or management. In general, dig deep in boosting your personal growth plan. Maybe you need to create your own personal growth plan. Perhaps you need to hire an ad sales coach or enroll in an ad sales training program. (Hint. Wink. Blatant promotional plug! Lol.)

Idea #7: Plan Out Your 2020 Wish List.

Who will be in your 'Top 10' list for next year? Create this list. Research the clients on this list. Place their names on a white board so you can see them every day. Develop an ad sales marketing plan for each client on this list.

Autumn is a weird time of year for ad sales people around the world. If you let the gray skies and holiday madness rule your ad sales life, you are setting yourself up for a

flat start to the New Year.

As an ad sales coach I love this time of year. I get really busy. Need some inspiration on any of the above ideas? If you do, reach out to me or my team for help. Ad sales coaching is a great way to help inspire you to dig deep and find the quality results you have been seeking.

Remember, if selling was easy, everyone would be doing it!

Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning ad sales coach and offers ad sales training to thousands of ad sales executives each year. He is also an international motivational speaker and the author of the best-selling ad sales book, *Selling Backwards*. Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media, a boutique ad sales training and ad sales coaching firm with a detailed focus on ad sales

training and coaching for media and technology companies. He is also the owner and publisher of Ad salesTrainingWorld.com, an online portal for ad sales training success.

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Newspapers Will Survive (Continued from page 7)

According to a recent Pew Research Center report, paid circulation was down 8% weekdays and 9% Sundays this past year.

Due perhaps to most papers having increased subscription and single-copy pricing, circulation revenue has held steady this past year. But unfortunately, display advertising dollars were down 13%.

Meanwhile, digital ad revenue has grown exponentially, but the majority of all profits have gone to Facebook and Google and not much to newspaper publishers, says the Pew report. What small increase there has been in local

digital revenue has not been nearly enough to cover the loss of once-empowered print display income.

Most important, however, as we view the continued importance of the printing press, traffic to all websites has seemed to level off. Individual time spent on these websites has declined as well. The average number of minutes per visit to digital news sites is down 16 percent since 2016, says the Pew report.

So, yes, current times are difficult. The culture is changing. But there is still a strong future for the printed word. Newspapers are not dead and need to

be in communities where someone is championing their value and producing an interesting, informative and worthwhile publication.

Peter W. Wagner is publisher of the award-winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 12 additional publications. He is often called "The Idea Man" and is a regular presenter at State Press Association and Publishing Group conventions and seminars. You can contact him regarding his programs "100 Ideas for Fun and Profit" or "Selling Print Advertising the Wagner Way" by emailing pww@iowainformation.com or calling his cell 712-348-3550 anytime.



GET REAL
THE PRINTED PAPER IS STILL A PUBLISHERS BEST ASSET!



by **Kevin Slimp**
kevin@kevinslimp.com



Newspapers Get Serious

It's time we take a serious look toward the future

Like many of you reading this column, I've been in the newspaper business a long time. I began delivering daily papers for the Johnson City (Tennessee) Press-Chronicle when I was eight years old. It's amazing my parents allowed me to deliver papers after my brother, who was twelve-year-old at the time, was killed while walking home from his paper route six years earlier. So, when I say newspapers are in my blood, I mean that literally.

For more than 25 years, I've worked as a consultant with thousands of newspapers in the U.S. and abroad. In that time, I've seen a lot of changes, and not just in the areas of technology and production.

Some of the changes have been exciting. Working on the development of the PDF printing method in the 90s has been one of the highlights of my career thus far. Traveling to major universities and professional groups to discuss the upcoming digital revolution in the late 90s and early 2000s was another interesting time.

Being invited to address groups including the National Economic Association, the National Press Club, and others about the effects of various elements on the newspaper industry, as well as the effects of the newspaper industry on society in general, has been a highlight of my career to date.

An issue that has concerned me over the past fifteen or so years has been the lack of unbiased leadership in our industry to keep us on track in accomplishing our core duties, while steering us away from negative influences that could be detrimental to our industry's future.

Whether out of a fear of upsetting powerful players in the industry or just being too quick to take bad advice, we've taken more than a few wrong turns over the past ten or so years. That's why I'm so excited about some of the work I, as well as others, will be involved in over the coming months.

My schedule this fall is probably the

busiest of my career. A quick glance tells me I'll be in just about every corner of the United States, as well as a lot of states in-between, to work with groups who are serious about helping newspapers take steps toward a brighter future. Let me share a little about a couple of these efforts. (Continued on page 11.)





Newspapers Get Serious

(Continued from page 10)

The North Dakota Newspaper Association Foundation is hosting a gathering in Bismarck in October 2019 to gain a better understanding of how newspapers can play a more vital role in the lives of potential readers in their mid 20s to late 30s.

On the Foundation's "dime," dozens of millennials from throughout North Dakota will descend on Bismarck, spend an evening together, then spend the following day in focus groups, which I will lead, all in an effort to learn what we can do to better meet the needs and interests of persons in this age group.

On December 6, I will be in Fort Worth, Texas, at the invitation of the Texas Center for Community Journalism, to meet with publishers to discuss digital journalism. There is no ulterior motive. No one has anything to sell. The goal is simply to spend a day together studying what is working, what isn't working, what should be left behind, and where community newspapers should be considering as we face the short- and long-term future.

I've noted with great interest the work Al Cross is doing at The University of Kentucky Institute for Rural Journalism

and Community Issues. The work being done by the Institute to deal with the issues of newspaper ownership and creation of new community newspapers could bear significant fruit.

A very successful young business owner stopped by to see me at my office last night around ten o'clock. Yes, it was a late day for both of us.

He is owner of a very successful company with several offices around the world. His company is a leader in its industry and I've been quite impressed as I've watched this group of young executives dominate their market so quickly.

What the young owner said to me took me by surprise.

"You know," he began, "you've got what we all want."

I wasn't quite sure where he was going, so I asked.

He continued, "We have grown like crazy, we have employees around the world, and we're making a lot of money."

I was still lost. It sounded to me like he had what most people want already.

That's when he landed the punch. "You do important work," he told me, "and you love what you do." After a pause, he continued, "I would trade with you in a heartbeat."

I could have shared some of the difficulties of my work with him, but instead let his word sink in.

"Well," I told him, I'd trade my age for yours, so how about we trade jobs and I get to be 28 and you be my age?"

We both laughed.

Let me leave you with this thought: We do important work...vital work. Don't let anyone fool you or lead you to think we don't.

I'm busier than I've ever been. I often work 12 and 14 hour days. It's 1 a.m. as I write this column. I don't do it because I'm getting rich. Trust me, I'm not. I do what I do because our work is so important, so vital.

As fall comes to an end, I'll share with you some of what we learn about millennials, the digital future, and anything else I learn in my travels that might be helpful.



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