

# TIP

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

OCTOBER  
2019

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"...it can be independence forever for those who value it sufficiently... if they give their allegiance to an association such as this one, they will be dedicated to keeping the spirit alive, and they will be doing it by helping each other."

-- Victor R. Jose IFPA Founding Conference  
September 20, 1980

## THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

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**Gary's Gallery**  
Sometimes the shots taken at a long ago event are just too much fun to pass up. Can you name every person in these photos?





# Made In Japan Means Something Different Now

Before iPads, iPhones, iPods, iMacs, iThought Mind Reading Machines, we used to listen to music completely unable to select the songs we heard. We listened to music on something called a “Radio.” One would tune this Radio Thingy to different frequencies to pick up broadcasts from Radio Stations nearby. Music, News, Programs, even episodes of Gunsmoke could be selected by tuning to different frequencies. Sometimes, if the weather was cooperating, we could even pick up CKLG in Vancouver, BC. Anyway, the radio my parents had was about the size of a refrigerator and sounded like tin cans and string. It had tubes that glowed as they “warmed up.” It was a thing of the future.



Then along came a thing called the “Transistor.” The transistor changed the world overnight. I saved my money to purchase an eight transistor AM radio for \$35 which is nearly \$10 million in today's currency. It was about the size of a small paperback. I was able to get the same stations my parents did but it fit in my hand rather than the living room. My radio was made in Japan, or so a sticker proudly pointed out. Within days the tuning knob fell apart, the case ripped, and the battery died. Back then “Made in Japan” meant something completely different than it does now. Then Made in Japan meant shoddy, cheap, and inexpensive. It was almost a joke for nearly a generation that Japan was synonymous with poor quality.

But just like the transistor changed things so did “Made in Japan.” Today it means quality, well-built, precise tolerances, good stuff, sometimes expensive. What made the difference? The people of Japan worked hard to improve as they grew. Kanban Systems (Just In Time) were developed to save money, improve efficiency and quality. The entire country was focused on getting better and becoming the best in the particular industry they competed in. The result is what I mentioned above. Made in Japan means the complete opposite it once did.

That brings us to the Free Paper Industry. To some people it meant bird cage liners, something you put down when you were painting or working on something greasy. Today the Free Paper Industry continues to buck the trend of paid papers by growing, improving, diversifying, simply getting better and becoming the best in print and digital. Who made it all happen? You did!

Don't stop now. Keep working hard. Your efforts are changing the world. ■

**The Editor's Letter**  
By Douglas Fry



## Publications for Sale:

**Multi-Generational Owned community shopping guide** for sale in beautiful south central Lower Michigan. Family owned for over 70 years, The Salesman Publications' owner is ready to retire and is selling her weekly/Sunday publication that home delivers nearly 50,000 copies via independently contracted carriers in Jackson, Calhoun and Northern Lenawee Counties. Established advertiser base with room to grow. Send inquiries to P.O. Box 1765, Jackson, MI 49204.

**Outstanding NY Monthly Free Distribution Regional Parents Publication.** In business 15 years; fabulous profit margins. 80,000 circulation. Solid digital components have been created to help drive revenue. Best brand in area! Exclusive listing; [info@kamengroup.com](mailto:info@kamengroup.com)

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## Newspapers • Magazines • Shoppers Book Publishing • Directories • Digital Media

**Dear Kevin (Kamen & Co. Group Services),**

Although you represented the sellers in this deal, I want to thank you, Kevin Kamen, for all that you did in brokering the sale of The Wave newspaper of the Rockaways in Queens, N.Y., to my family and me. Your leadership, negotiating skill-set and knowledge of the business, market and industry served as a most valuable tool throughout the entire process. When negotiations hit a bit of a snag you were able to masterfully get the two sides together to compromise. As the buyer of this wonderful legacy newspaper, The Wave of Rockaways, I want to personally thank you for everything you did to make the sale happen. You were always professional, reasonable and did a great job!

**- Walter H. Sanchez - Queens Ledger News Group, NY**

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What are the five most common roadblocks that are stopping you from exceeding your sales goals? All too often, as I teach ad sales training workshops, I observe the most common problem stopping sales people from being a raging success are random patterns passed off as a “sales process”. In this blog post we will explore five ideas to remove randomness from your sales life.

In sales that randomness is the new normal. I read hundreds of blogs posts each month via Twitter. Many “experts” push agendas like... “Reinvent yourself daily” or “Commit to nothing except change”. Really? This is sad. I have found the exact opposite to be true. Commitment equals greater results in life, love and business. I have also observed five roadblocks to sales success that we can tackle and fix today. If we can commit to fixing these five issues we will escape from Randomland and leave on a solid roadway for success. But, are you willing to commit to a new path for sales training success and leave Randomland behind?

Let’s explore these five ideas together.

**1. Call To Close Ratios** – Do you know your call to close ratios? Don’t just say yes. Do you really know how many calls you need to make to get to a meeting? Then, how many meetings you need to host to get to a closed deal? This is how I work my numbers each month. I work 50 clients to get to 10 meetings. From those 10 meetings I present 8 proposals. From the 8 proposals I normally close 5 deals. To beat this roadblock you MUST intimately know your call to close ratios.

**2. Total Sales Touches** – I have observed that it takes 12-15 touches to get a potential buyer to respond to what you are trying to sell. Most sales people give up after 4 attempts. This idea is easy to read but hard to fix. Do you understand what drip marketing is? Drip marketing is your ability to slowly and consistently place your sales marketing information, or message, in front of a potential buyer. Create email and voice mail templates that vary in length, tone and subject matter. Understand that an

immediate response is probably not going to happen. Use videos in your emails to boost interactivity. Increase your touches to beat this roadblock.

**3. Be Realistic When You Try To Fix Things** – Most sales people are unrealistic about the amount of time it will take to see a change in their ad sales results.

In most cases, once you commit to making a change to your sales process, it will take a minimum of 30 days to see the results. Very rarely have I observed a “quick fix” to a sales problem. When someone hires me as a sales coach, one of the first questions I ask before we get started is how committed that sales person is to the journey it may take to not only discover the core problem, but then fix that problem. To beat this roadblock, be patient.

**4. Don’t Procrastinate** – Most sales people wait until a deadline is looming to get serious about selling. Clients buy when THEY are ready to buy not when YOU are ready to sell. One of the keys to sales success is starting early and understanding your buyers purchase cycles. Are you committed to the total process or are you looking for a quick kill? In sales there are two types of people; hunters and farmers. Both are needed. One is not better than the other. Identify your sales personality and adjust your time frame for it. Meaning, farmers need more time to nurture the seed. So, if you are a farmer, plant corn early. If you are hunter, don’t wait until the last minute either. Just know that your style might not fit the client. To beat this road block, make plans to work hard months not days before a sales deadline.

**5. Seek Out Training** – Most sales people lack sufficient ad sales training to put best practices in place. So, this point is a bit self-serving. I get it. I am in the ad sales training and ad sales coaching business, but the point still remains true. What are you as a sales person doing to grow your skill set? Most serious sales professionals are looking to improve daily. Do you read sales blogs? What about hiring a sales coach? How about attending a sales

## Fixing 5 Common Sales Roadblocks

By Ryan Dohrn

training conference? The most common reality is that most sales people are waiting for their company to pay for the training or coaching. Why wait? Your investment in yourself, even in small ways, benefits who? You. To beat this road block, commit to training.

So, where do you grow from here? I would encourage you to review these five points of focus. Pick one and commit to it for a minimum of 30 days. Next, find an accountability buddy in your life that help you stay on track. Don’t know anyone or trust anyone... hire a sales coach.

In the end the success you desire is truly up to you. I have seen literally hundreds of sales people commit to change and they have walked away with greater satisfaction in work and life. I know that you can do this too. I just know it.

*I am here to help. Reach out to me free of charge. My first 30 minute minutes with you is always free. Ryan@BrainSwell-Media.com*



# Yes is More Than an Answer. It's an Attitude!

By Shep Hyken



Customers don't like to be told no. Any request or complaint that is met with a negative response may only add fuel to the fire. That's why I've been intrigued for years by Cameron Mitchell's philosophy—and also the title of his book—Yes is the Answer! What is the Question?

Why did I wait so long to write about this? I have addressed this topic in several other ways. For example, one of my favorite business strategies is “one to say YES and two to say NO”, which is all about empowering employees to say “yes” to customers. What made me want to write about Cameron Mitchell's concept now is that I recently had the opportunity to interview Cameron and learn directly from the “Master of YES” himself.

Cameron Mitchell is the founder and CEO of Cameron Mitchell Restaurants. There are about sixty of them and they are recognized for great food and great service across the board. As one might imagine, in the restaurant business you get all types of special requests. It would be very easy to say no to a customer for many of these special requests, but Cameron has a different philosophy.

First, Cameron emphasizes the idea that saying yes is philosophical. There are plenty of reasons you might say no to a customer, so you must train your people accordingly. Obviously, you must say no to anything illegal. For example, a sixteen-year-old at a restaurant is not allowed to order alcohol. But you can start with the idea that everyone should try to say yes. Then, through training, give employees examples that show them how far they can go. That's a good way to start embracing the “yes” attitude.

And “yes” really is an attitude. It must be baked into the culture of an organization. Employees must be empowered to say yes whenever possible or

to find creative solutions to make customers happy when the answer must be no.

If an employee asks permission for something they weren't sure they could say yes to, then that should be the last time the employee should ever have to ask permission for anything similar. Document those examples for others to follow. Train by citing examples of actual interactions between employees and customers. By the way, if someone crosses the line and doesn't say no when they should, that is a great training oppor-

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There are plenty of reasons you might say “No” to a customer, so you must train your people accordingly.

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tunity as well.

“Yes” is more than just a simple answer to a customer's request or needs. It's an attitude and a culture. Create an organization focused on taking care of the customer—this could mean saying yes or coming up with other ways to make the customer happy. Serve your customers with the “yes attitude,” and they'll serve you success for your business.

*Shep Hyken is a customer service expert, keynote speaker, and New York Times bestselling business author. For information, contact 314-692-2200 or [www.hyken.com](http://www.hyken.com). For information on The Customer Focus™ customer service training programs, go to [www.thecustomerfocus.com](http://www.thecustomerfocus.com). Follow on Twitter: @Hyken*

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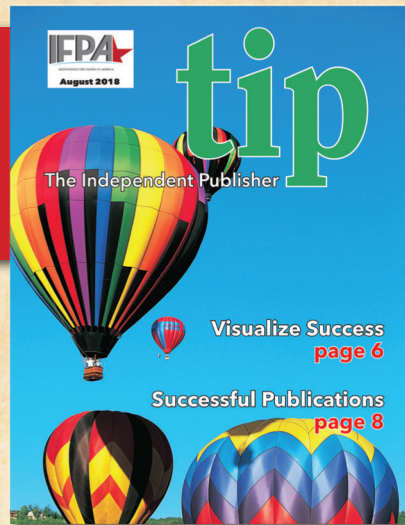


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# 5 Tech Tools to Grow Your Publishing Business

Publishers continue to face new challenges in the evolving industry of print publishing. However, new technologies are now giving publishers opportunities they never had. Here are a few technologies and services that can help you grow your business beyond print.



## SiteSwan Website Builder

### What is it?

Super easy-to-use platform that lets you build beautiful, fully responsive websites for your advertisers and other local businesses.

### How can it help you grow?

Open up a brand new revenue stream by offering affordable web design to your clients. Set your own prices and charge an upfront setup fee followed by a monthly service fee. Clients edit their sites themselves using a site editor branded for you. Sales training and marketing material is included, taking the guesswork out of how to sell digital. You even get your own marketing website to promote your services. Less than 50% of businesses have a website... you can change that and make money all at the same time.

**How much does it cost:** Plans start at \$149/mo  
[www.siteswan.com](http://www.siteswan.com)

## Ideal Directories

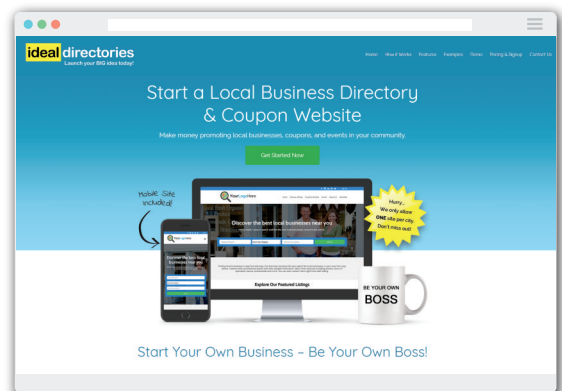
### What is it?

Turn-key business directory and coupon website that can be branded for your publication and market. Can easily be "bolted-on" to your existing website or run independently.

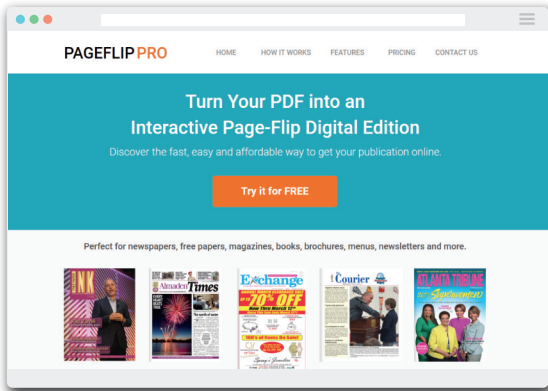
### How can it help you grow?

Offer your advertisers the best of both print and online with a listing on your local directory website. Businesses can even sign up and manage their listing themselves allowing you to generate a monthly revenue stream that is practically hands-off. You can create different pricing plans based on what features you want to offer, and money automatically gets deposited into your bank account.

**How much does it cost:** Plans start at \$99/mo  
[www.idealdirectories.com](http://www.idealdirectories.com)







## PageFlip Pro

### What is it?

A digital publishing platform that transforms your boring PDF's into high-definition, fully responsive interactive Page-Flip Digital Editions.

### How can it help you grow?

PageFlip Pro allows your readers to view your publication wherever they are. Now featuring a new responsive design for tablet and mobile viewing with lightning fast page load speeds, your website is always up-to-date with the latest version of your print publication. It's hands-off for you and advertisers love the added exposure the digital edition offers... plus it's all branded for you. You can also extend the shelf life of special sections. Recent updates to the platform include subscription management and banner ad integration.

**How much does it cost:** Pricing starts at just \$1 per page (based on volume)

[www.pageflippro.com](http://www.pageflippro.com)

## Exchange Classified Ads Platform

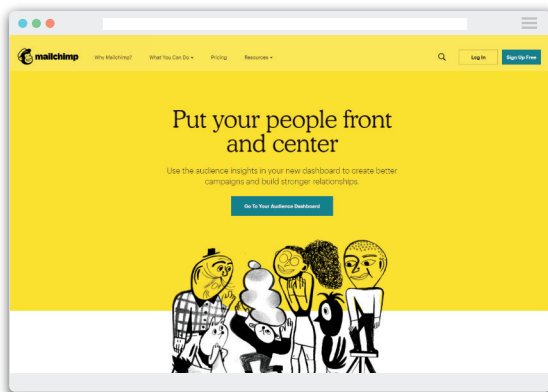
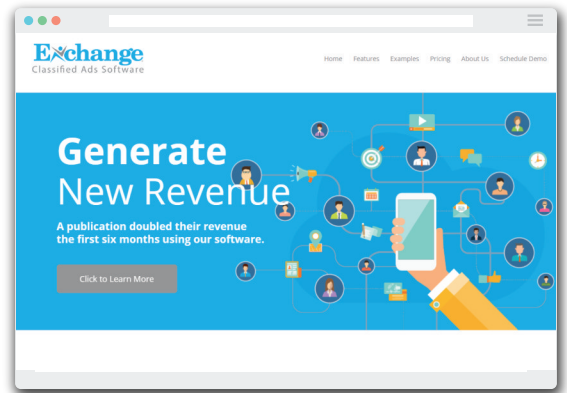
### What is it?

An incredibly robust, but simple-to-use software platform that powers your publication's website and classifieds system that can instantly boost classified ad sales.

### How can it help you grow?

This system will act like an additional classified salesperson! People who place Classified Ads get reminded to renew their ads before they expire and miss the deadline. Automated up-sell opportunities to add a photo to an ad significantly boost average ad cost. Your staff all have separate logins to proof incoming ads and customer credit cards are stored for more efficient renewals and re-orders. Save time, boost efficiencies, and put your publication's website & technology on par with major classified websites without making a huge investment.

**How much does it cost:** Contact vendor to request pricing  
[www.classifiedads.software](http://www.classifiedads.software)



## Mailchimp

### What is it?

An easy-to-use email marketing system that lets you send out thousands of emails at once.

### How can it help you grow?

With a few clicks you can put together great-looking emails and blast them out to your readers and/or advertisers. Announce the latest Digital Edition is online, or feature a seasonal print promotion. You can even sell sponsorships inside of the email blasts!

**How much does it cost:** Paid Plans starting at \$10/mo (based on subscriber list size)

[www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)



**IFPA BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER  
19, 2019**

President Rick Wamre called the meeting to order at 9:00am (EST). Board members present : Eric McRoy, Shane Goodman, Doug Fabian, Deborah Phillips, Manuel Karam, Jane Quairoli, Joe Nicastro and Executive Director Douglas Fry

**IFPA/AFCP UPDATE:**

Everyone received the letter of intent from AFCP. Further discussion of how to proceed will continue as the board meets in person next week in Philadelphia. Much discussion revolved around the wording of the letter. Rick offered to draft a letter with specific items as targets/goals to further this project. Rick will draft that in the next day.

**TREASURER'S REPORT-  
DEBORAH**

Net gain of \$23,000 for the month. For the year, January through August \$375,000 Income and \$208,000 expenses. Note\* CADNET verification rebate checks went out. Deborah made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Doug seconded it. All in favor. Motion passed

**2019 WONDER TWIN  
EVENT- DOUG**

Beat the original goal with 34 attendees. Douglas did a great job with the buyer intention books. All set and ready to go.

**2020 PUBLISHERS  
SUMMIT: MANUEL AND  
SHANE**

No new items to report

**SHARE GROUPS**

Sales Managers: Doug. Another great call. Technology and communication work flawlessly to give a great participant experience.

Publishers: Joe Had four or five on the call. Healthy discussion.

Specialty Publications: Rick. Will continue the call quarterly. Having trouble

rounding up programs. Shane will preview their Chamber Guides in October.

**COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMITTEE: MANUEL**

Finished up the postcard campaign for the Philly event. Very successful.

**ONLINE ADS: ERIC**

Having trouble getting "click to call" code to work. Starting over with new vendor.

**WEBSITE: DOUGLAS**

Website set up and changes easy to make.

**AD AWARDS: DOUGLAS**

763 entries. Up over 100 from previous years. Judging done. Will ship out awards to publishers rather than have them have to ship them home from the event in Philadelphia.

**CADNET VERIFICATION:  
DOUGLAS**

Went well. In 2020 will be trying to do it electronically as well.

**ADDITIONAL REVENUE  
STREAM: JOE**

Will present findings in person at meeting in Philly.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Shane reported that as of October 1st Kroger will be removing all Free Publication racks from their stores. He suggested Free Paper organizations send a letter to show their dissatisfaction. Shane will draft the letter and send it to Douglas and he will sent it to all board members and to SAPA.

Rick made a motion to adjourn. Joe seconded it. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:47am (EST)

# IFPA Board Minutes



## Gary's Gallery

Sometimes the shots taken at a long ago event are just too much fun to pass up. Can you name every person in these photos?







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SS-6  
SS-8  
SS-5

**Steel Distribution Boxes**  
C-6SD  
ST-91SD  
C-91SD  
C-2003SD



# Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

*Don't over think...* were some of the last words that I left you with last month... with good reason. There was a sentence I used "Phone numbers can use dots to replace the dash, but the feel is not correct," and I will do research to back up some of the things I say, just to be on the safe (correct) side.

Anyway, that's when I came across the website **overthinking-design.com**— a blog by **Piksl Design**— a treasure trove of detailed information! "How to write AM and PM," "Periods in Phone Numbers," "The Initial Caps Trap," and many more. For example, over the last 30-odd years I usually write AM and PM like this: 7:00am or 8:00pm.

After reading the article— which is quite thorough— I came away with a slightly different perspective. It is not about the "correct" way to write them because style guidelines vary, it's more about the most pleasing and readable. I will probably continue to create my AM and PM the way I have usually done. (Note: I am pretty close to the most pleasing and easiest to read.)

## Options for AM and PM in Print

The thought process in just this small aspect of presenting visual information is mind-boggling! I have included quotes from the author at the end of each "thought."

Starting with the use of **Periods**...yes or no to the use of periods after the letters. There's no right or wrong way, but read the "thoughts" that go into making that choice (you all know that I am a "no period" designer. *"So while I don't fault anyone for using periods, I find they feel old-fashioned and unnecessary. Skip the periods, especially in lists of times."*

The article then discusses **Capitals** versus **Lower Case**. How do they work when placed with numbers (time). *"Note that while I prefer lowercase over uppercase, the best solution is to use small caps."* Please note that most fonts don't offer this option and in terms of expediency, it's rarely used.

What about **Spaces**? Again, space or no space and there are some options to handle that conundrum. The thought process in this area gets a little involved, but again there are better choices.

The final "thought" is **Format** and how to choose based on readability, comprehension and professional use. No matter what choice you make be consistent. *"But the one thing I see many people do that I insist is bad design across the board is using multiple formats in the same sentence or layout. An event should not start at 9 am and end at 2:30 pm. If one time includes the minutes, all times should include the minutes."*

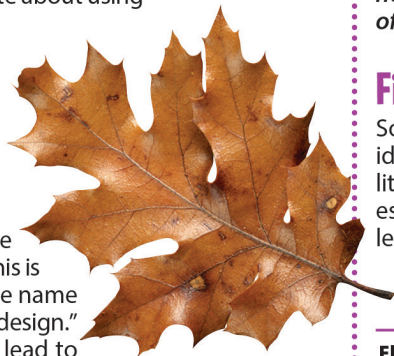
I really encourage you to read this article. It's not that long, but it would take up more space than I am willing to give up.

Besides, it's presented so well that I could not give it the justice it deserves. I also wanted to write about using periods (instead of hyphens) in phone numbers. And once again, there's an article that handles that detail on **overthinkingdesign.com**.

## Phone Numbers

Last month there was an ad that replaced the hyphens in the phone number with periods. This is not unusual, and remember the name of the website is "over thinking design."

However, over thinking can lead to



## Brands of the World

I was cleaning up my internet "favorites" and I came across a website that I used to use quite a bit. At times, the sales associate would bring in a logo from a national brand that was really bit-mapped or distorted, so the first place I would turn to was **www.brandsoftheworld.com**

Brands of the World has the world's largest collection of freely downloadable vector logos. You can even upload logos to showcase your work and help fellow designers (upload your logo to get feedback from your peers and you can critique other logos as well). They also have iStock images.

I can't guarantee you will find every brand, but they have a good selection of national and international brands—in vector format— so sizing is not a problem! They also have various tag lines attached to the logos and I've included a few samples below...



more information— and sometimes more clarity! Read about something as simple as a phone number and how we can actually make this easier to read and remember.

For example, the use of a dash... hyphen, en dash and em dash. Each has its own usage. The hyphen is often seen in compound words and phone numbers. Phone numbers can also be separated by periods and those do show up, but most of the time you will see the hyphen because it's comfortable and we are used to it. After reading this article that simple phone number may gain more respect. *"When it comes to designing text there are two main goals. Above all, you want the text to be understood and processed quickly. Second, you want the text to be attractive or, at the very least, appropriate. This applies to headings, it applies to body text, and it even applies to "scraps" of text—like phone numbers"*

Once more, check out **overthinkingdesign.com**.

## Final Thoughts

Sometimes we get into a way of designing (habit) and take the idea of don't over think to an extreme! In this case, I feel that a little over thinking helps me to understand why I use the devices and techniques in design to make me a better designer—at least a little more knowledgeable!

Under construction... I'm working on a new header...

 Until next time...

Ellen Hanrahan [hanrahan.in@att.net](mailto:hanrahan.in@att.net) ©2019



# The Stock Market for Ad Ideas

By John Foust

Daniel told me about an ad he created for a commercial real estate firm. “They prided themselves on the hard work they did for their customers. Their marketing manager said ‘shoe leather’ was their secret of success. When I heard that, I knew it would work in their ads.

“I found a stock photo of a shoe with a hole in the sole, then asked our creative department to enlarge the hole to make it more dramatic. The copy described the advertiser’s willingness to wear out their shoes to serve their customers. That photo was a real winner. It became the theme for everything they advertised.”

Stock photography can be an important addition to your creative toolbox. Here are some points to keep in mind:

**1. Look for an image to illustrate an idea you already have.** That is what Daniel did. “I knew I needed a picture of a shoe,” he said. “It was just a matter of finding the right one. A photo worked better than a drawing, because it was a picture of an actual shoe. Sure, we modified it, but the end product was still a real shoe.”

**2. Browse through images to find a new idea.** Sometimes you’ll have a general concept in mind. You just need a visual image to crystallize the idea.

Let’s say you’re developing a campaign for an investment company that has a long history of helping people navigate the ups and downs of the economy. Their philosophy is, “There’s no need to worry. Your investments are safe with us.”

You look through some stock images and find several distinct categories to consider – people, objects, activities and places. They all offer

fact that their houses sell quickly, because they are so popular?

**3. Don’t hesitate to modify an image.** Like Daniel modified the stock photo of the shoe, you can customize an image to fit your specific situation. “The change made the selling point more noticeable,” he said. “I knew the shoe would appear in small ads, as well as large ads – and I didn’t want anyone to miss the point.”

**4. Be sure to check the usage agreement.** Even if your publishing company has purchased a collection of

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That photo was a real winner. It became the theme for everything they advertised.”

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stock images, do some research before you present an idea to your client. You’ll want to make sure you have the proper permission to use the image how you want – and as many times as you want.

Without a doubt, the “stock market” for photographs is a great place to find ideas.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: [john@john-foust.com](mailto:john@john-foust.com)



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# Newspapers Will Survive and Flourish Long-Term

By Peter Wagner

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 recreation 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 un-investigated 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 keep-

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Newspapers will, more than ever, be the glue that holds thriving, changing communities together.

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ing 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 water cooler 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.

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.



October 2019

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.

**I began delivering daily papers for the Johnson City (Tennessee) Press-Chronicle when I was eight years old.**

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 ten 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.

## It's Time We Take a Serious Look Toward the Future

*By Kevin Slimp*



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.

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 the 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 words 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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