

TIP

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

NOVEMBER
2019

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

THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER

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Gary's Gallery

Can you name each person in these photos?



It's More About What You Get Used To Than Talent

My parents had six children. Of them I am number three. As a result of the large family I guess my parents felt that losing one or two wouldn't be that big a deal. So, I got to do things as a kid that most families wouldn't have allowed. I climbed mountains, stayed away for weeks at a time hiking, and biked around the Puget Sound. You've already heard that I rode my bicycle to Canada for a week on two different occasions. They were great adventures but there was a one day expedition that we did each year that really showed what we were made of.



If we left our home early Saturday morning, headed north, crossed a mile long floating bridge, headed west, turned to the south, went over Mount Walker, circumnavigated Hood Canal, and looped back north to home we could bicycle 125 miles in a day. The first time we tried it we finished in about 14 hours. The next time it took 12. The last time we rode that 125 mile route we did it in an astonishing time of 10.5 hours. By today's standards that is slow as a turtle, averaging just over 12 miles per hour.

Now, with carbon fiber bikes, wheels, lighter than air tires, and aerodynamic underpants we can knock out a 125 mile ride in about 15 minutes. OK, maybe a little longer. It's not that I'm in better shape than when I was 16, far from it, it's what one gets used to that determines how far you can go.

It's pretty much the same idea with sales. I started out with 8 ads my first week as an account rep. I thought for sure I would get fired. But I kept at it, seeing as many businesses as would allow me the time. Never being a super star sales person I just kept hammering away, seeing each business each week not matter what they said. When I was promoted to Publisher of the Ad-Pak in Wilmington, NC I was all the way up to 30+ ads each week. Then I was made the Publisher. I kept calling on customers and since I felt more "sales oriented" as the publisher my account list and ad sales continued to grow. Before I left that paper I had a week high of 65 ads.

If I had gotten used to simply selling 8 ads each week I would be in a different business. Each week I sold just one more than the week before. I didn't become comfortable with mediocrity. If we work at improving each issue of our publications there is no telling how far we can go. It doesn't matter if you are in sales, production, design, or front office— get used to improving each week. ■

The Editor's Letter By Douglas Fry

**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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The basic rule in all ad design is that the eye has to be drawn to the ad and the reader has to be motivated to actually read the ad without succumbing to distraction or irritation. Certainly the selection of type faces is important with the emphasis on headings in sans serif type which reads cleaner and body copy in serif type, preferably in the 9 to 12 point range. The visual syntax of ad design is important and the popular “Z” path of ad elements is critical to the initial scanning pattern, which directs the eye around the ad (optical path).

WHAT YOU SAY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOW YOU SAY IT

However, in spite of all discussion about the attractiveness of the ad, what really helps the reader to buy is the content of the advertising, not its form—what benefits you are going to promise.

Many times, over-zealous graphic artists over-design ads so that the content is obscured and the important message is lost. The ad literally goes gray and the reader’s eye passes over it.

OVERDESIGNING COMES IN SEVERAL FORMS

These forms are the following:

1. Reverse type, which many times is too small and not readable.
2. Greatly exaggerated borders, which are distracting.
3. Graduations of dark to light and copy which doesn’t show up well in the process. The maximum screen for black type is 30 percent; the minimum screen for white reverse is 30 percent.
4. Backgrounds of prints and designs with type superimposed over them. Usually the type is difficult to read.
5. Too many boxes, sunbursts, and other visual elements that distract from the content of the ad.

THE BALANCE BETWEEN GOOD AD DESIGN AND POWERFUL HEADINGS

Don’t overlook the fact that the heading can be 80 percent of the ads effectiveness. There should always be a definite contrast between the heading and the rest of the ad. The message of the ad can be divided into units of thought which will incorporate sub-heads and body copy into each unit of thought.

THE FINAL ANALYSIS

Advertisers must provide reasons for people to shop with them.

What really helps the reader to buy is the content of the advertising.

They must give benefits to reach the subconscious mind of the consumer, motivating them to shop at their business.

The salesperson and the artist have to work as a team to decide the exact image to be projected for an advertiser. The graphic artist has to be creative, not only for a single ad but for ongoing campaigns that will not only tell the story, but build readership for the advertiser.

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. ■

Junky Ads— Letting Form Overwhelm Content

By Bob Berting
Berting Communications

2020 USPS Rate Changes

By *Donna Hanbery*
Saturation Mailers Coalition

On October 9, 2019, the Postal Service filed its proposed price adjustments for Market Dominant and Competitive products. The cumulative CPI that limits the price changes the Postal Service can make, when considered on an aggregate, class basis, was 1.9%. For publishers that use the mail for distributing free papers, to all homes, or do total market coverage (TMC) programs combined with private carrier circulation, the proposed rates for saturation mail brought directly to the local Postal station (the DDU) or entered at the SCF, are increases below the CPI rate cap. For mail entered at the SCF, there was no change in the current rates. The current rates for those products will continue in 2020.

For mail brought to the DDU, the rate change was an adjustment of approximately 1%. (The rate for saturation flats brought to the DDU with an address increase from 16.1 to 16.3 cents. EDDM flats (the simplified address format) at the DDU increase from 16.2 to 16.4 cents. In a call with association executives that took place in advance of the filing, the Acting Vice President for Postal Service Pricing, Steven Phelps, explained that the decision to not increase the SCF rate was based on the much higher than CPI increase last year, and in recognition of the hardship that this surprise increase had on mailers. SMC and our members have been talking to the Postal Service about last year, and the adverse impact of “surprise” rates on mailers’ papers and programs throughout the last year. The decision to NOT change rates was welcome and appreciated.

Regardless of entry point, there was no change in the rates for mailings that exceed 4 ounces, that are priced at the pound rate. The pound rate formula for pieces over 4 ounces remains the same as current rates.

The more disappointing announcement and decision, although not a surprise, was the decision to increase the price of a detached address label (DAL), currently at 4 cents, to 5 cents for any detached address label if the card has any advertising or marketing content on it. Cards with any advertising are being called Detached Marketing Labels (DML) and the USPS justifies the big price jump based on the value of the card to mailers as a premium product. For DALs with no marketing content other than an address, the increase in rate goes from 4 to 4.5 cents.

The decision to separate the pricing of cards used with nothing more than an address, and cards containing advertising or marketing copy, was first announced six years ago when the Postal Service wanted to raise the rate for a DAL from 1.7 to 5 cents. This USPS proposal was met with widespread industry opposition, and case stories, showing how the revenue from a card often helped keep a mailer or paper in business or sustained marginal zones.

The pricing for the DAL/DML and concerns that mailers market it like a solo piece that competes with other postal service products, like EDDM Retail, has been a sore spot with the Postal Service for years. As an industry advocate for shared mail programs and free paper publishers that mail, I have consistently tried to argue that mailers don’t “get a DAL” unless they are paying for a full saturation shared mailing, that shared mail programs, like free papers, are frequent and predictable mailings that help support local postal stations. Current regulations and pricing do not give the frequent mailer any better pricing than the occasional mailer. This change in DAL/DML pricing, and the Postal Service’s narrow-minded focus on how a card can bring value and a

more premium price for mailers, will need to be a topic for discussions with the USPS SMC members and free paper publishers in months and years to come.

One highlight of the filing was the news that the Postal Service will continue to offer promotions that are very similar in scope and timing to the promotions offered last year for 2020. Mailers that can send a qualifying, promotion eligible, mail piece, may be able to qualify for an up front, 2% discount, by participating in different promotion programs running from February 2020 until the end of the year. Throughout 2019, AFCP and Paper Chain worked with free papers to provide instructions, and an example of an approve ad copy, that publishers could use in their pieces to earn an up-front, 2%, postage discount. Promotions that saturation shared mailers can do in 2019 include the Tactile and Interac-

tive Mail piece and Engagement Promotion, running six months from February through July 2020, the Emerging and Advanced Technology Promotion, beginning March and ending August 2020 and the Mobile Shopping Promotion beginning August 2020 and ending in December.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FILING INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- The first-class stamp will remain at 55 cents. A private individual had successfully challenged the big jump from 50 to 55 cents and that pricing proposal was sent back to the PRC for further justification and consideration. No doubt that decision had some impact on holding the line on the first-class retail rate.
- The prices for priority mail and express mail, used by businesses and consumers, increased by over 4% with retail prices increasing 4.9% on average.

- The rates for periodicals increased in line with the 1.9% increase, within county periodicals getting a smaller increase of approximately 1.5%.

- The Postal Service continues to press the PRC, as part of its to be resumed 10-year rate review, to allow it to increase prices over CPI and to seek greater pricing flexibility.

Overall, with the exception of the 25% increase in DMLs the price change was not a setback for shared mailers and publishers that use the mail. But there remains much the Postal Service and industry could do to improve how pricing is done for shared mail programs, and to create more incentives and opportunities for the Postal Service to work with the industry to grow and maintain mail volumes. ■



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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

Ideal Directories

What is it?

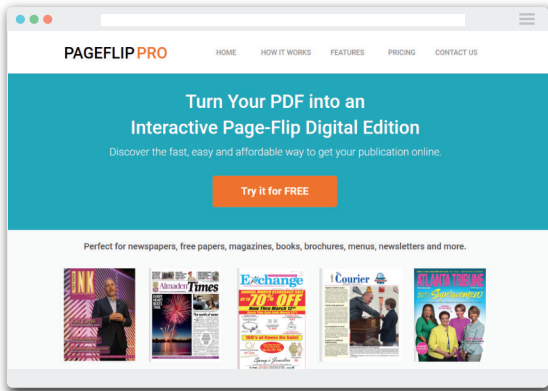
Turn-key business directory and coupon website that can be branded for your publication and market. Can easily be "bolted-on" to your existing website or run independently.

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





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

Exchange Classified Ads Platform

What is it?

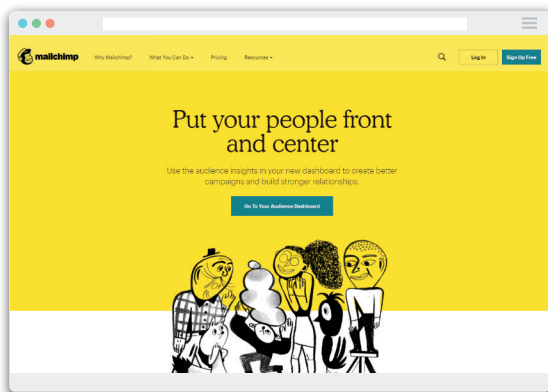
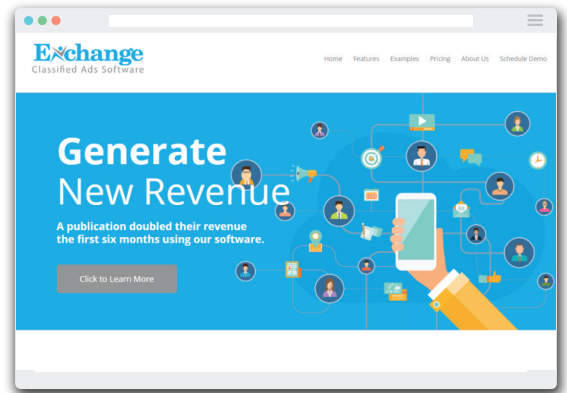
An incredibly robust, but simple-to-use software platform that powers your publication's website and classifieds system that can instantly boost classified ad sales.

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



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

IFPA Board Minutes

IFPA BOARD MEETING, THURSDAY OCTOBER 17, 2019.

President Rick Wamre called the meeting to order at 9:00am (EST)

Board members present: Doug Fabian, Eric McRoy, Shane Goodman, Joyce Frericks, Deborah Phillips, Joe Nicasro, Jimbo Marston and Executive Director: Douglas Fry

IFPA/AFCP UPDATE: RICK

Rick sent the letter to AFCP and Charlie was going to send it to the board. No update yet.

TREASURER'S REPORT: DEBORAH

January thru September Income is \$396,313. which is \$81,000 more than budgeted.

Expenses \$36,994 less than budgeted. \$141,820 Net Income through September 30. So far, \$135,455 more than budgeted. Joyce made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Seconded by Eric. All in favor. Motion passed.

2019 PHILADELPHIA POST EVENT SURVEY RESULTS: DOUGLAS

After reading the comments the event was well accepted. 83% out of 100% approval rating. We are working with Tim and Ryan and Tim and to make a video presentation where Ryan will further expand on real CVC data using it to prospect, sell, and retain customers. Also, Douglas received a note from the video company from the conference that the video should be ready in a day or two.

2020 PUBLISHERS SUMMIT: SHANE

On track. Have put together a list of 15 different subjects. The basic idea is to do a rapid fire piece using 12 presenters in 12 hours over a day and a half. Will be trimming the list and asking the help of board members to present topics. Will be a 30 minute presentation, 20 minute Q & A and ten min to regroup and get organized for the next session. Hopefully people will walk away with a lot of information on 12 different subjects and immediately apply it to their businesses to either build revenue or save money.

SHARE GROUPS

Sales Managers: Doug. The Sales Managers SHARE Group meeting continues to be strong and remains valuable to those on the call.

Publishers: Joe; Had a good call and good group. Topics are group driven.

Specialty Publications: Rick; Shane presented a program on Chamber publica-

tions. Only draw back was low attendance. Have made the call quarterly. In January planning on discussing rate cards and media kits. Hopefully by publicizing the topic in advance we will get better attendance.

NATS: JOE

Talked with his developer. Can set up free standing system. Joe can do a demo for the board and then they can decide if they want to go through with it. Demo could be done in ten minutes in a board meeting.

Communications Committee: Manuel not on the call

ONLINE ADS: ERIC

34 Publishers serving our Google Ad-sense Adwords code. About \$130. for IFPA. Click to Call functionality of this alternative solution does not exist. Reached out to developers and they will charge about \$500 to write a custom application for us. Not convinced it is worth the money. Still searching for a solution.

WEBSITE: JOYCE

All up to date. Eric questioned if we are using Google analytics on IFPA website, if so is anybody seeing it? Douglas can get a report for next meeting.

AD AWARDS: DOUGLAS

Sent out plaques on the 16th. Douglas has spoken to some publishers who have said they are "swimming" in plaques. He asked what the board thought of just sending certificates. Feelings were mixed. Rick suggested asking the winners their preference prior to purchasing the plaques in the future. Shane share that other organizations send one plaque with all awards on it. The cost for the current system is basically a wash. We will talk about it for next year after surveying the winners.

Old Business: None. New Business: None

Deborah made a motion to adjourn. Eric seconded it. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:40am. (EST)



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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TRYING TO GROW
MORE SUBSCRIBERS
AND REVENUE?

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Plastic Displays



Steel Distribution Boxes



Graphic Hooks

By Ellen Hanrahan

Life's not fair... We spent a lot of time trying to fit a ton of information into a very small amount of space... with a big fat black border... and at least three bursts to highlight "the important" stuff. Sometimes it just ain't gonna fit! But, we made it work!

So when we found ourselves faced with little text and more space, or as I called it "Terse Text," we were challenged! Be careful what you wish for!

Both ads are 2x3 (I've reduced to 80% for space) and were done in black and white. If you wanted to add color, the **Bookkeeper** ad could have color added to the graphic block backgrounds and maybe I would color the wide border on the **Ballet Guild** ad with a very pale color tint in the background (about 10%).

BOOKKEEPER

So imagine the joy, the wonder, the feeling of freedom... the sheer panic—when we get an ad that has six words and one telephone number! Take a look at this ad for a bookkeeper.

So what do we do with all that space! Simply making all the words really big isn't a very good solution because we actually read groups of words. Making the words bigger may make it harder for someone to read. Think about it, the closer you are to something, the more difficult it is to "see the big picture." So we keep the words at a comfortable, readable size and plan the space around the words to call more attention to them.

On our 6-column by 16-inch pages, these ads are not that dominant. By surrounding the words with grey, we have carved out an area that calls attention to the entire ad and we did it without the use of any clip art.

BALLET GUILD

Same size ad, with a few more words, but still with plenty of room, and this one does use clip art (from **Metro Newspaper Service**). The art was clipped from a larger group and placed to call attention to and enhance the information.

The use of the wide border adds a stage-like quality, and the artwork is integrated into the text, rather than being used to just fill a space. Movement is created by the angle and size gives it dominance in the ad and helps lead the reader into the ad.

Type was kept at the same size to provide consistency and unity and the bold type was used to provide contrast and help the name of the organization, classes and class dates stand out—the important "stuff."

In the **Bookkeeper** ad, the type itself was used as a design element. Since we have so few words, it is easier to get away with this technique. If there is a lot of information, there needs to be more structure.

DESIGN ATTRIBUTES

Both ads share the same amount of space and the ability to stand out from the other ads that will be placed near them. Both ads have a "visual connection," an alignment, to create a more cohesive unit. All we are trying to do is pull the elements in an ad together—to make them look as if they belong there.

Readers need visual cues to tell them that the information is a unit. A border is one simple way to bring all the items together. Repeating shapes, colors, symbols and type sizes also unify and help control "visual clutter" in an ad. Developing consistency in handling of any of the elements of design creates unity. Text is used as a design ele-

ment in **Bookkeeper**, while art helps unify the message in **Ballet Guild**. Both ad treatments, though different, work because they were designed to.

Design performs many functions—it serves to organize information; indicate arrangements of elements; produce a planned sequence of events; denote similar meanings and/or symbols; and make visual statements.

Designing an ad (or anything for that matter) is simply organizing the information and the graphic material into the most readable and coherent manner possible. At times we forget the importance of the message or function of the ad as we get involved in all the bells and whistles of the software we use.

Good design results from knowledge and experience—how well you can communicate. Good layouts get your message across, organize the information and grab the reader's attention. Keep this in mind, and we are on our way to develop an expertise in making sound decisions in the design and creation of any visual message.

Final Thoughts

Sorry, just thought of some thing that is slightly "annoying." For example, the word "Available."

I once did an ad that used available six times! It's not necessary to repeat "a given." That's why people advertise—to let consumers know

what's available! If a store has gift certificates or offers gift wrapping, I know it's available because you told me that you had them. The word available means to be used or obtained, but it seems to be over-used in advertising.

"Gift Certificates Available" is OK, but avoid "We have gift certificates available." Just more words without any clearer meaning... especially when space is at a premium. Thanks for letting me "rant."

 Until next time...

Ellen Hanrahan hanrahan.in@att.net ©2019



Creating Believable Advertising

by John Foust

“Willing suspension of disbelief” is a cornerstone of entertainment. The term was coined in 1817 by poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, author of “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” It refers to the fact that an audience must temporarily suspend rational judgment in order to enjoy a story or presentation.

The person on the screen is an actor, not the actual person he or she is portraying. People who wear capes can’t really fly. The woman in a magic act isn’t really cut in half.

Suspension of disbelief is a good thing. We do it with ease. It makes mystery novels interesting. It makes ghost stories around the campfire more fun. And it keeps us on the edge of our seats when we go to action movies.

All of this is fine in the entertainment business, but things are different in the real world. Consider this profession of advertising. Suspension of disbelief is not necessary. It’s an ad creator’s job to encourage *willing* belief. Here are three points to keep in mind:

1. Tell the truth. It all starts here. Once someone catches a person in a lie, it’s hard to believe anything else that person says. The same goes for advertising. Stretch the truth and pay the price in the marketplace.

Of course, there are laws protecting consumers from bait-and-switch promotions and other deceptive schemes. But what about exaggerations and unsubstantiated claims? Although most of them are not technically illegal, these seemingly innocent copy techniques can be just as misleading.

Consumers are confused when competing advertisers each claim to be the “best.” And they are suspicious when every sale is promoted as “the biggest sale in our history.”

2. Use evidence. Just like attorneys are well armed with facts to back up their positions in the courtroom, advertisers should support their claims with evi-

dence. Saying, “This new widget will save money” is not nearly as effective as saying, “The XYZ Board’s tests show this new widget can save up to 10 percent on your energy costs.”

A testimonial is another form of evidence. To be believable, testimonials should feature real customers, not professional actors. Real customers add authenticity to marketing campaigns, because they have actually used the advertised product.

3. Focus on benefits. Every advertiser wants people to believe their products and services are the right choices. The fastest way to do that is to talk in terms of benefits.

An audience must temporarily suspend rational judgment in order to enjoy a story or presentation.

Benefits generate belief. Think of the things you have bought for yourself. Every purchase was based on the benefits those things would provide. You chose Residence A over Residence B, because it offered better features, location and price. Car A was a better fit for you than Car B, so you chose Car A.

Willing suspension of disbelief and willing belief are both based on trust. When we go to a movie, we say, “I trust you to entertain me.” And when we encounter the right kind of advertising, we say, “I trust the information in this ad to be reliable.”

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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. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com



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Traditional Network Stations Don't Usually Report Their Lower Viewership

by Peter Wagner

I'm amazed at how the traditional, over-the-air, television networks consistently report that "newspapers are dead." Their anchors report that story time and again, but never report their own losses in viewership.

The most recent example took place on the October 6, 2019, broadcast of CBS News Sunday Morning hosted by Jane Pauley.

I usually enjoy the Sunday morning's excellent reporting and off-the-wall feature stories. But I resent the network's obsession with condemning the future of the printed newspaper.

The specific comment on October 6 was part of a piece about a new HBO production honoring the importance of Jimmy Breslin and Pete Hamill in glory days of New York journalism. They were "deadline artists," the cross-network promotion story stated, "in a time when newspapers were still king."

But the negative comments didn't end there. In an attempt to hammer their point, the segment was introduced by Jane Pauley saying the "Newseum in Washington, DC, would be closing later this year as so many newspapers had over the last decade."

"Over 1,800 newspapers have recently closed, merged or reduced the number of days they're printed," Pauley said.

She didn't add that Gannett Company, the national newspaper publishing chain which includes USA Today, has been known for providing much of the Newseum's funding, is entering a merger with Gatehouse Media. Gatehouse, which is reportedly assuming total management and the Gannett name, is known for running a much tighter financial operation.

But even more importantly, what Pauley didn't report, and the network never reports, is that network and cable viewership is also greatly reduced. Especially over-the-air network numbers.

An associate recently told me about a comment made by a relative who manages a network TV station in a major metro market.

"The total number of households watching the five network, over-the-air stations in his city," the station manager shared, "did not even total the equal time viewership any one of the stations had ten years ago."

More importantly, TV Guide, which should be a positive spokesperson boosting the television industry, reported in its October 10 issue, that 2019's fall premiere week attracted a smaller audience than last year, as it has year after year for the last five years. In

The networks are suffering a huge decline in their viewership.

2015 the new season introduction week attracted 33.9 million viewers across America. In 2016 that number dropped to 29.9 million and in 2017 to 27.1 million.

This fall, only 22 million viewers bothered to turn on their television sets to catch the new season of over-the-air network programming. That's 13 million viewers, or over one-third less viewers, than five years ago.

The networks are suffering a huge decline in their viewership and yet they continue to point a finger at print as being the only victim of one generation's dependency on social media.

There is a difference in television and print and a major reason so many community newspapers are continuing to do so well.

That reason is easily summed up in the word local! Locally owned and published community newspapers still have

a solid connection with all that is local.

Television stations are forced by economics to plant themselves in major markets. Their broadcast news departments have to cover huge geographic areas, sometimes crossing state lines, in their attempt to be all things to all viewers. That hit-and-miss reporting fails to create the loyalty and following desired and needed by small community and even many regional businesses.

Local papers, in contrast, are able to concentrate their coverage of their hometown and nearby rural area. They are both capable and committed to reporting the latest information about the town's school district, from the city manager's office and county courthouse, regarding the downtown business district and the local churches.

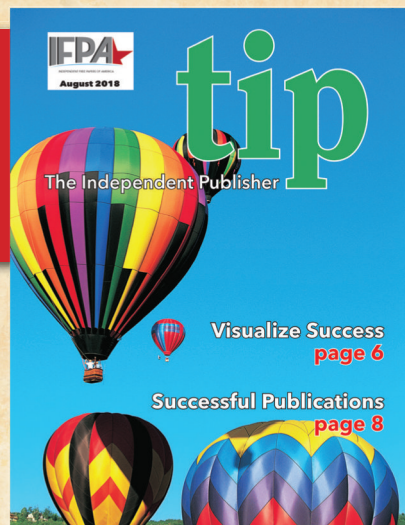
They are stories alive with personality. That includes details from the weekend's football games, the most recent meeting

of the local Kiwanis club, a report of some honor given a local citizen and the upcoming events at the senior center.

Time and again I have watched the Main Streets of small towns without a newspaper disappear. Community newspapers, produced by families invested in the town's future, are that community's guarantee they will continue to exist and prosper.

Large town television stations have enough problems without using their time and energy taking potshots at newspapers. According to recent national reports younger Americans are disconnecting from cable and even their rooftop antenna at an alarming pace. Instead they are circumventing traditional broadcast distribution and turning to the many streaming services now being offered. Streaming services with no local news or consensus building local information.

Newspapers have a great future and an important story to tell about their permanence and readership. But to make sure the community knows and understands the facts, the entire staff from publisher to news staff to sales team need to get out on the street and tell it.



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I'm all for getting customer feedback. There are different ways to go about it. Ask customers on the way out of a store, call them on a phone or send follow-up surveys via email. I wrote about surveys a few years ago. The gist of that article was about getting more customers to fill out those surveys. Two areas were covered: timing (when the survey was sent) and length (how long it takes customers to complete). Without rehashing the entire article, timing is important. Don't wait two weeks to send the survey. And don't make it too long.

Think about what you're asking the customer to do when you send them a survey. Let's say you own a restaurant. On the way in, you want your customers to be greeted warmly before enjoying great food and friendly service. At the end of their meal, you want them to experience genuine appreciation as they leave. That final part of the experience—the genuine appreciation as they leave—makes for a great last impression. The next day, you send the customer a survey.

Now, there is nothing wrong with that survey. After all, this is where you get feedback. But consider this. After that wonderful experience and that fond "farewell until next time," this becomes the new last impression. Let me repeat, so it's very clear:

The survey is your new last impression.

That is why it's important that the survey is done the right way. Here are a few dos and don'ts to consider:

- Don't send the survey too soon. I once received a survey before I even left the property of a hotel I was staying at.
- Don't wait too long to send the survey. I've received surveys two weeks after my experience with a company. I can barely remember what I did yesterday, let alone two weeks ago. Okay, this is a slight exaggeration, but you get the point.
- Don't make the survey too long, caus-

ing "survey fatigue."

- Don't send the same survey over and over again to the customer who visits you over and over again. Please, remember me as a person, not a repeat transaction.
- Do send the survey to the customer at the right time, which varies depending on your type of business.
- Do personalize the introduction to the survey. Make the customer feel like a valued person and not, as mentioned above, a transaction.
- Do thank the customer once they respond, and if they have a specific suggestion, let them know they have been heard.

We spend a lot of effort, and even money, to turn prospects into customers. We do our best to create a good customer experience. Don't let the last impression be tainted with a survey that is improperly delivered. The last impression, good or bad, is a lasting impression.

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. For information on The Customer Focus™ customer service training programs, go to www.thecustomerfocus.com. Follow on Twitter: @Hyken



The Survey Shouldn't Be the Last Thing the Customer Remembers About You

by Shep Hyken

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